

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

PARENTING WORKSHOP

Draft, 08.23.19
AVP New York

Special Topic Advanced Parenting Workshop

Suggested Agenda

Session 1—Influences in our lives.

Welcome

team Team intro

team Opening talk

How the parenting workshop is different—we will begin by exploring our own childhoods and who helped to shape us, then move to our ideas about what good parenting is and finally look at the challenges of parenting from inside prison. This is not an easy workshop. Please take care of yourself. Remember you have the right to pass. If you need to leave the room, if you need to talk, please let a facilitator know. Please look out for each other—take care of the group. When you leave each day, know that you are tender and more vulnerable than when you arrived so please do not engage in risky behavior or seek conflict. You do not need to be a parent to benefit from this workshop.

How AVP works—Orientation: Road Map, Philosophy

Community Agreements

Schedule + Attendance

Housekeeping

Buzz word

Unanswered questions, Clinics

Agenda Preview

Gathering: My adjective name and a nick name or other name someone or ones within my family called me as a child and how it affected me is...

Grounding: Choose on from Grounding Techniques p. 23+24

Break

Ex: Adjective Name with a Gesture

L+L: Big Wind Blows

Session 2—Perspectives on parenting.

Agenda Preview

Gathering: My best memory as a child is...

Ex: Concentric Circles

1. When you were growing up, who were the important men in your life and how would you describe your relationship with each of them?
2. What have these men taught you about what it means to be a man?
3. When you were growing up, who were the important women in your life and how would you describe your relationship with each of these women?
4. How have the women from your childhood influenced your feelings about women and how you treat women?
5. One way I want to parent differently than the way I was parented is...
6. A hope I have for my child / children or the children in my life is...

L+L: Choose one with physical movement here.

Break

Ex: What I Value in a Child

If there is time:

Ex: Reflections on our own childhood and upbringing.

1. Divide the group into four groups—with not more than 4 in each group. If the group is larger than 16, give the fifth group a repeat question.
2. Give each group one of the following questions to discuss:
 - a. How I acted out to gain attention
 - b. How I expressed myself to gain approval.
 - c. How my caregivers responded when I acted out and what were their motives/perspectives.
 - d. How my caregiver showed approval and what were his/her methods.
3. Each group reports to the big circle.
4. What new awareness or insights did this process bring?

Evaluation Sessions 1+2

Closing: Texas Hug

Session 3—Perspectives on parenting.

Welcome to Day 2: Please sit comfortably,. Relax on your skeleton. Stop. Stop in your body. Let go of what you want, like and understand. Feel your breath, your heartbeat, the unconditional gift of life. Open. Feel the transforming power of life. Life is valuable, you are alive and valuable. Nothing you can say or do will make you any more valuable than you are right now. This is it. This is enough.

[This meditation is offered by Nadine Hoover.]

Agenda preview

Gathering: The most important thing I wanted and did not receive from my parents as a child was...

Grounding: Emotional Freedom Technique (tapping) and Meditation or Fingers—see Grounding Techniques

L+L: Choose one with physical movement here.

Break

Ex: What I Care About

Brainstorm: How does a child know that he or she is loved?

Note: The goal of parenting is not to make our children love us. If it is, then we should get a pet. If our goal is that they become healthy and emotionally strong individuals, who know and accept themselves, and are loving and productive people in the world, then it is likely they will come to love us. In short, our children have no obligation to love us. It's a choice.

Ex: Four Styles of Parenting

Session 4—Dealing with Conflict.

Agenda Preview

Gathering: A time I felt good about how I handled conflict in a relationship is...

Ex: Stand on the Line

L&L:

Break

Ex: Father / child role plays

Evaluation: Sessions 3+4

Closing:

Session 5—Parenting Skills.

Agenda preview

Gathering: Something I have thought about from yesterday is...

Ex: Green Light / Red Light (from Facilitator Training Manual) + "I" Messages review if time allows

Ex: Conflict Inventory

L+L:

Break

Ex: Parenting in the Visiting Room

Session 6 — Improving Relationships.

Affirmation Posters

Agenda Preview

Gathering: A relationship I admire and why... (This can be a couple relationship, a parent / child relationship, a sibling relationship, a friendship etc.)

Ex: Knock Knock: Fatherhood Inside

L+L:

Ex: NO, Positively

Break

Ex: Improving Relationships

Session 7 — Closure.

Agenda Preview

Gathering: Something I will take from this workshop is...

Ex: Picture Exercise

L+L:

Break

Forgiveness Meditation

Ex: Car and Driver or other trust exercise

Graduation—certificates with affirmation posters are on a chair in the center of the circle. A facilitator calls up the first graduate and names two parenting skills he has. That person then calls up the next graduate, naming two parenting skills that person has etc.

Open Questions

Where we go from here?

Evaluation Sessions 5+6

Closing: Yarn Web

Other exercises that can be used in the Parenting or Fatherhood or Manly Awareness workshop:

Strengthening Relationships

IALAC: I Am Loveable and Capable

Communication Challenge

Beliefs that Lead to Partner Violence

Gaining Status—Girls

Maintaining Your Cool

Handouts:

Emotional Honesty Talk

Children Learn

Discipline Do's and Don'ts

Fatherhood Tips

Five Questions

Never Violence

Parenting Facts

Relationships and Marriage

Thoughts on Being an Incarcerated Parent

Beliefs That Lead to Partner Violence

Purpose: To become aware of the underlying causes of violence in a relationship

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Copies of the handout for everyone

Process: Read and discuss the handout.

How do these statements reinforce gender stereotypes?

Do these statements imply that men are aggressive, stronger, and more capable than women in general?

Do any of these statements reflect the idea that men are natural leaders and should be in charge?

Which statements are true? Which are false? Why?

Why might beliefs like these lead to violent behavior?

Are beliefs "ingrained" or taught by family, religion, culture, etc?

What influences have we had in life that teach us violent behavior?

What beliefs could be used to blame someone or something else for violent behavior?

How are minimizing, denying, and blaming related to violent behavior?

Example: When a police officer stops a driver and asks him if he knows how fast he was going, the driver may come up with one of the following responses:

1. Minimizing - I wasn't going very fast. It was really no big deal.
2. Denying - I don't know how fast I was going. (Or, I'm sure I wasn't speeding.)
3. Blaming - My kid was screaming in the back seat and I just couldn't focus.
4. Justifying - I'm late for an important appointment.

When people use these tactics to rationalize their violence with their partners, it takes away accountability for a person's actions. It leads to confusion and mistrust in the listener.

Can anyone describe a time when you or others in your life used these tactics to rationalize violent behaviors? What was the result?

BELIEFS THAT LEAD TO PARTNER VIOLENCE

ANGER CAUSES VIOLENCE

WOMEN ARE MANIPULATIVE

IF I DON'T CONTROL HER, SHE WILL CONTROL ME

SMASHING THINGS ISN'T ABUSIVE OR THREATENING; IT'S VENTING

SOMETIMES THERE IS JUST NO ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE

WOMEN ARE JUST AS VIOLENT AS MEN

WOMEN WANT TO BE DOMINATED BY MEN

SOMEBODY HAS TO BE IN CHARGE

JEALOUSY IS NATURAL IN MEN

MEN CAN'T CHANGE IF WOMEN WON'T

THE WORLD IS A DANGEROUS PLACE

I MUST SURVIVE

I CAN TRUST ONLY MYSELF

I WILL GET WHAT I WANT WHEN I WANT IT

I'M DOING NOTHING WRONG

I'M TOO SMART TO GET CAUGHT

IF I GET CAUGHT, I CAN TALK MY WAY OUT OF THE SITUATION

IF I CAN'T GET OUT OF IT, THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE LIGHT

Communication Challenge

(For an Advanced or Special Topics Workshop)

By Michael Shane Hale

Purpose: To increase awareness of challenges in conversations and then build skills to overcome those challenges.

Time: Approximately 1 hour

Materials: The Communication Challenge Handout, pencils and paper

Introduction:

1. Pass out the “communication challenge” handout and go over the concepts with the group.
2. Identify the three types of conversations (“What happened?” - “Feeling” – “Identity.” Ask the group for a couple of ideas of what each type of conversation may sound like or be focused on: **What are some of the things you might hear in the ‘What happened?’ conversation? What do you think the ‘Identity’ conversation would be about?**
3. Introduce “A Battle of Messages” and “A Learning Conversation.” Stress the differences in these two approaches to conversations by asking: **What does it take to have a battle? What does it take to learn?**

Explain: **We have individual choices as to how we approach a conversation. What TP guides might help us to transform a “Battle of Words” into a “Learning Experience”?**

Application:

1. Have participants count off by two’s. The one’s take their chairs and face the two’s to their right. Assign the one’s to be the first to speak.
2. Reintroduce the “What happened” conversation. Give the participants a scenario: then give the first speaker an assumption, and begin to talk. After a minute or so, give the first speaker the “goal” to achieve, and let him continue.. After three minutes, have the speaker stop. Let the speaker become the listener and the listener become the speaker. Give the same or a different assumption and goal to the new speaker.
3. Give the pairs a new goal and assumption to work through “A Learning Conversation.”

This is repeated with the other types of conversation: “Feeling” and “Identity.”

Bringing it Together:

Bring the participants back together in a horseshoe (as in Speakout or Fishbowl). Have the participants compete to see who can achieve the goals for “A Battle” or a “Learning” conversation most convincingly. The level of applause will indicate the most believable.

Reflect on the Experience: Close the horseshoe into a large circle, and ask the following questions to deepen understanding of the challenges:

Conflict Inventory

Purpose: To become aware of the common barriers to good, healthy relationship between separated parents or between parent and care-giver

Materials: Copies of handout (next page).

Time:

Instructions:

1. Post the “I” statement formula and review it with the group:

When (in this case it can be a “you” statement because you are speaking of that person’s behavior but only name what the behavior is)

I feel...

Because I need... (name YOUR needs. This is not what you need the other to do.)

And what I’d like to see happen is...

2. Distribute copies of the list on the following page.
3. Each participant chooses one or two conflicts relevant in his current life. If you do not have children, think of a common conflict your parents or caregivers had about you.
4. **In small groups:**
 1. Divide the group into groups of three or four.
 2. In the small group, each participant shares the conflicts they chose. The group then tries to see the situation from the parent or care-giver’s point of view. What are the needs of each person in the conflict? Is it a need to know that he or she is loved? That he or she is a good parent? To have control over his or her life? To not feel left out? To feel secure?
5. **Open role plays:**
 1. If this is a prison workshop, begin with conversations that can happen in the visiting room.
 2. Set up two chairs, facing each other.
 3. Explain the open role play process: that in each chair will be a person playing the role of someone in the conflict. Different participants can sit in or step in at different times in order to further the conversation or change (flip) the exchange altogether.
 4. Suggest the following: If your goal is to resolve the conflict, and you know that you can only do that through communication, notice the words that shut off conversation and the words that might express disagreement, but allow for the other person to further clarify her point of view. You might try: “I disagree or I feel annoyed at that” but quickly follow up with a respectful question that looks for more information from the other person, not one that looks like a trap for the other person. Even if you disagree, an open-

ended question (A tell-me-more type of question) respects what she or he is feeling. Do not to make matters worse by blaming. Stay open. Listen. Respond respectfully to what you hear, always working toward finding a way forward.

Processing:

Brainstorm the barriers to good relationships you noticed during the role plays. Leave the poster posted during the Improving Relationship exercise—refer to during “Setting Goals” process.

I have conflict with my child's mother / father (or care-giver)...

1. When we disagree on how our child should be disciplined.
2. When s/he challenges me on things.
3. When I want to visit my child more often than s/he likes.
4. When s/he tells me I should pay more child support.
5. When I bring my new partner around her/his or my child.
6. When I see her/him with a new partner.
7. When I challenge the heavy influence of her/his parents over the care of my child.
8. When her/his mother or father disrespects me.
9. When s/he complains did I hang out with my friends too much.
10. When I talk with or see with other women or men.
11. When I show up late when I come to see or take my child.
12. When I question how s/he spends the money that I give her/him.
13. When s/he tells my child stuff about me that I don't like.
14. When s/he allows her/his partner to talk bad about me.
15. When I want her/him to bring my child to visit more often than s/he does.
16. When s/he wants me to discipline my child for something done days or weeks or months before.

I have conflict with my child's mother / father (or care-giver)...

1. When we disagree on how our child should be disciplined.
2. When s/he challenges me on things.
3. When I want to visit my child more often than s/he likes.
4. When s/he tells me I should pay more child support.
5. When I bring my new partner around her/his or my child.
6. When I see her/him with a new partner.
7. When I challenge the heavy influence of her/his parents over the care of my child.
8. When her/his mother or father disrespects me.
9. When s/he complains did I hang out with my friends too much.
10. When I talk with or see with other women or men.
11. When I show up late when I come to see or take my child.
12. When I question how s/he spends the money that I give her/him.
13. When s/he tells my child stuff about me that I don't like.
14. When s/he allows her/his partner to talk bad about me.
15. When I want her/him to bring my child to visit more often than s/he does.
16. When s/he wants me to discipline my child for something done days or weeks or months before.

Handout

Emotional Honesty and Parenting

Parents must create an environment where the child is free to be emotionally honest. The primary way to create an emotionally safe environment is through *emotional validation*. Honor your child's feelings by not arguing with them. When all of us are accepted and validated emotionally, we aren't afraid of being rejected or punished for expressing any feelings, thoughts, questions or perceptions we might have. This what we want for our children. When they are accepted as they really are, they feel a strong sense of inner security. Because they are not as afraid of being rejected for what they feel (as opposed to how they behave), they can be more emotionally honest with their parents.

On the other hand when children are discouraged from being anything less than fully emotionally honest, the parents don't truly see them. In fact, they begin to hide from their parents. Over time, children can drift further and further away emotionally from their parents. During adolescence, this distance often becomes more evident. Then when the adolescent is legally free to leave the home they may avoid contact with the parents, or they may stay in contact only out of a feeling of obligation or guilt, rather than a desire to share things with them. In these cases, the parents don't really know the person who has been living under the same roof with them for all those years.

1. What are the qualities that I believe define a man / woman, a good person, and what of them do I own?
2. What principles do I use as a guide in my life? Since being a father / mother is not the same as being a parent (being a father or mother is a status while being a parent is a lifelong activity), what do these qualities and behaviors have to do with parenting?

Father / Child role plays

Purposes

To begin to feel what a child may feel while in conflict with his/her father. To practice inviting transforming power into situations of conflict with our children.

Materials

None.

Time

This exercise will take some time. Be sure to give it what it deserves.

Demonstration

Two facilitators act out the following role play:

A negotiation between a father and his 16 year old son. The father is watching his one and only favorite television show, and the son comes into the room and wants to watch the Final Four College Basketball Game. There is only one television set in the house. Maybe the father wants to listen to son's request and son only insists. The father repeats his firm desire to watch the one show he never wants to miss, and the son persists in telling his father about his own intense desire to see this game -- which he argues will never be rebroadcast, a once in a lifetime game. Maybe the son tries to humor the old man into giving up his favorite program for the game, while the father feels his son's continued lack of concern over what he wants. The two come to a win-win solution but only after a back-and-forth session that made them work for it.

Processing the role play:

What did you see in this role play?

Make sure it gets mentioned that the father really wanted his son to acknowledge his privilege and right to see his favorite show after a long day at work **before** anything could get started as to a solution.

Also that the son only wanted his father to acknowledge the importance of the game for him.

Only when the son says he has an idea about how they could watch both shows "together," then the father could perk up and be interested in listening.

The clash of "who has the more deserving argument" does not usually lead to a win-win solution.

Acknowledging the other's position, showing that you are listening, and that the feelings of the other matter to you, does a lot to move us along the path to reconciliation.

A conflict that is respectful and caring on both sides and when both sides "get something" in the end can strengthen rather than weaken a relationship.

"Before we do the next piece of this exercise, let's talk about open-ended questions versus closed-ended questions."

Instructions

Say, *“In this part of the exercise, you will be in pairs and you will have two conflicts to act out with your partner. We will all be acting simultaneously so try to make it real enough so that you feel what your character would feel in a real life situation. You will be in the role of a child—a boy in the first scenario and a girl in the second. It is very important as parents that we try to understand what our children are feeling—what is it like to be that child. So this is a chance to begin to understand.”*

Put participants in pairs by counting off by half of the number of people in the group so that people are paired with the person sitting across the circle. The pairs sit facing each other. Spread the pairs about the room so that they will be less likely to overhear others.

Within pairs, participants decide who will play the role of a 10 year old boy and who will play the role of the child’s father. Say: *“Fathers, you suspect that your son is smoking weed and drinking. Your son’s grandmother has said she has seen him smoking but you have no evidence. Children and fathers remember to try to stay open to Transforming Power. Are there any questions? Begin.”*

After some of the pairs quiet, say *“30 seconds.”* After 30 or more seconds, call *“Cut.”*

Ask *“What happened?”* Take responses from a few pairs.

Ask *“Was any pair able to come to an agreement?”*

Now everyone stand and turn around and shake your character off. Tell your partner your adjective name.

If there is time, you can reverse the roles and re-play.

Now the person who played the father in the last role play, you will now play the role of an 11 year old girl and the person who played the boy will now play the role of the father. Say: *“Fathers, you are on the phone with your daughter and she says she doesn’t want to visit you. Are there any questions? Begin.”*

After some of the pairs quiet, say *“30 seconds.”* And then call *“Cut.”*

Ask *“What happened?”* Take responses from a few pairs.

Ask *“Was any pair able to come to an agreement?”*

Now everyone stand and turn around and shake your character off. Tell your partner your adjective name.

If there is time, you can reverse the roles and re-play.

Processing questions:

When you were in the role of the child, did you feel respected by your father? listened to? Or did you feel rejected or demeaned?

Did you sense that your father was able to hear you and change how he sees you?

Did you see your father differently after talking with him?

Was there love during the exchange?

When you were in the role of the father, was it difficult to listen to your child without reacting?

Did you ask open-ended questions?

Were you surprised by what you heard from your child?

Did you learn anything new about your child or yourself?

Father to Son / Son to Father

Purposes

To consider what questions might lie between fathers and sons.

Materials

2 sheets of paper per participant

pencils

Time

Unknown

Instructions

1. On the first sheet of paper, participants, in the role of a father (mother for women participants throughout the exercise), write three questions they would like to ask their son (daughter for women participants throughout the exercise).
2. Fold the paper in half and collect in a basket.
3. Divide the group into groups of four.
4. Each participant draws a paper from the basket.
5. Participants read the questions to their group and consider them as a group, allowing 3 minutes per set of questions.
6. On the second sheet of paper, participants, in the role of a son (daughter), write three questions they would like to ask their father (mother).
7. Fold the paper in half and collect in a basket.
8. Each participant draws a paper from the basket.
9. Participants read the questions to their group and consider them as a group, allowing 3 minutes per set of questions.

Processing

What did it feel like to be in the role of the parent?

What did it feel like to be in the role of the son or daughter?

What did you learn?

Will you do or ask anything different the next time you are on a call with family?

How does this exercise relate to Transforming Power?

for Parenting or Forgiveness Workshop

Forgiveness Meditation

By Elizabeth Nguyen

If possible, dim the lights to create a quiet atmosphere.

Introduction: “Plant your feet firmly on the floor, feel the chair beneath you, supporting you, sitting tall but relaxed. Gently close your eyes if that’s available to you. If not, look at something that will not cause a reaction in you such as the floor. Breathing in deeply, filling up to the top of your lungs. Exhale completely, pushing your navel to your spine, getting all the stale air out.”

“We’ve done a lot of external work. This meditation is a time for us to do some internal work. As I read, listen and visualize the things I am describing. At one point I will say, ‘Stand up and speak...’ Don’t actually stand and speak but imagine that you do.”

Read slowly and deliberately:

Think of someone you are having a hard time forgiving.

Pause.

Imagine that you are in an empty theater. The space is cool and dark. You walk down the center aisle and sit down in the front row.

The stage is wide and dark, the curtains closed.

Then the curtains draw open and the person, the one you are having a hard time forgiving, is there.

Pause.

Think of all of the ways that this person has hurt you. Think of all of the pain this person has caused you.

Long pause.

Then stand up and tell this person how you feel. They do not say anything back. They stand there, alone on the empty stage. You can tell them everything. You can tell them all the things you’ve always wanted to tell them.

Long pause.

Now you sit back down and the curtains close. When they open again the person is there—the same person you are having a hard time forgiving. But now they are a child.

Pause.

We know that people who hurt people usually do the same kinds of things that have been done to them. Think of the harmful thing that may have happened to this person as a child.

Long pause.

Now the curtains close again. When they open the child is bathed in a warm green light, a healing light. The child is receiving everything h or she did not get as a child and everything he or she needs.

Pause.

The curtains draw close. They open and the child is gone, but the light is still there. You can choose to walk up to the stage and into the healing light and receive what is there, what you need.

Pause.

When you are ready, open your eyes and come back.

Four Styles of Parenting

The [Alternatives to Violence Project](#) in Newcastle has been exploring workshops on nonviolence and conflict resolution with parents and partners. The following is an exercise Gener Lapina and Graeme Stuart have developed (with input from Anne Hoffman) to explore [four parenting styles](#):

1. Authoritarian
2. Permissive
3. Uninvolved
4. Active (often called Authoritative).

The styles are based on a combination of two dimensions: how responsive (or warm) parents are and how demanding and controlling (or strict) they are. For the workshops, we are using the dimensions of warmth (from very warm to harsh) and expectations (from having high expectations in regards to your children's behaviour to having very low expectations).

Purpose: To understand the four styles of parenting and explore what impact each has on the child.

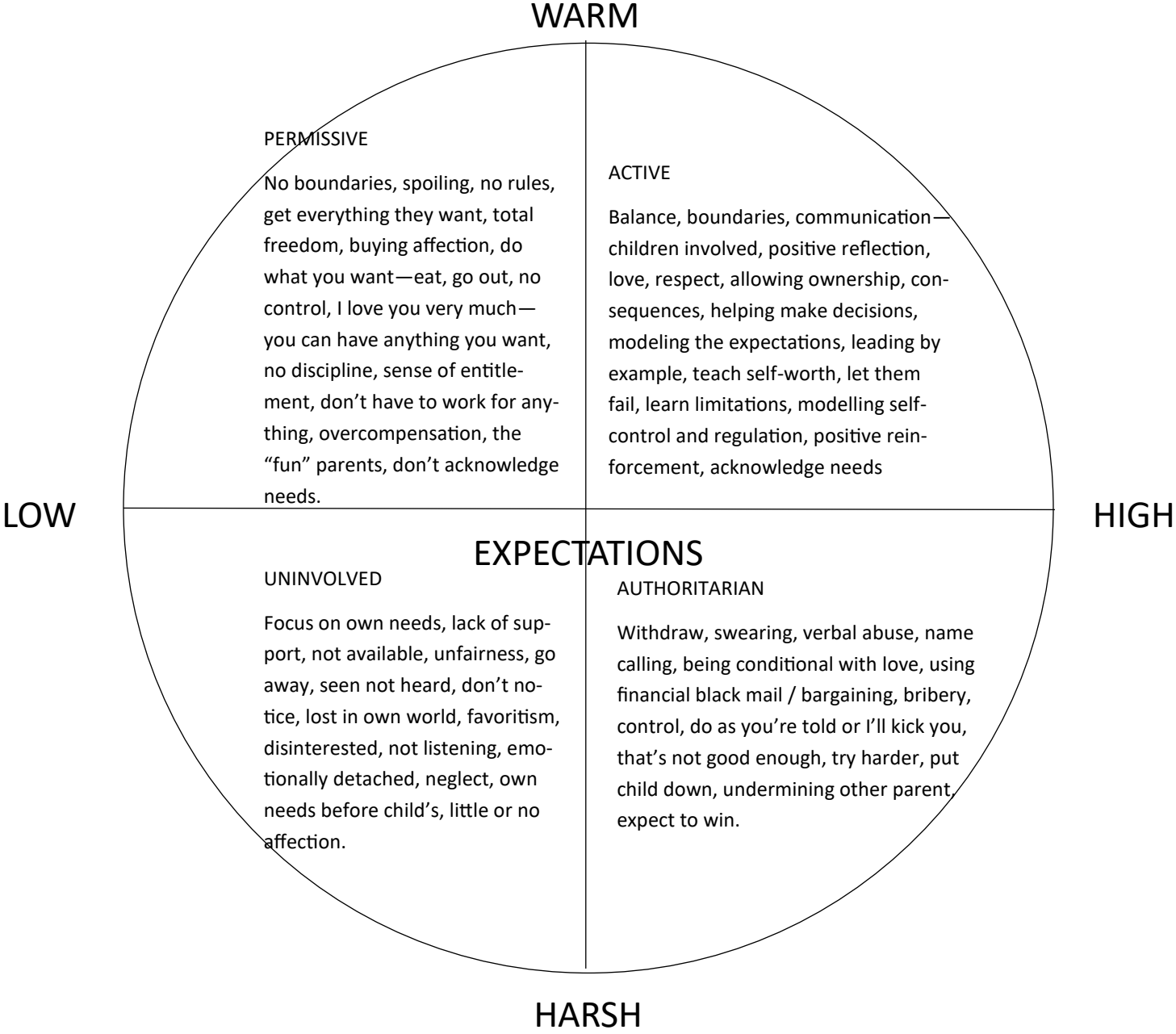
Time: 40 mins

Materials: Prepare a large compass (using four sheets of flip chart) with the labels Warm and Harsh on the vertical axis, and Expectations on the horizontal compass.

Process:

1. Brainstorm some of the expectations parents can have for their children (particularly in relation to their behaviour). We write their responses outside the compass on the right-hand side of the sheet (and use the left-hand side as well if we need to).
2. We ask what parents do or say when they try to make their children meet their expectations in a cold or harsh way, and write their responses in the bottom right-hand quadrant.
3. We ask what parents do or say (or not do and say) if they don't care what their children do and show very little love towards their children. These responses go in the bottom left-hand quadrant.
4. We ask what parents do or say if they are very loving towards their children but let their children basically do whatever they want. These responses go in the top left-hand quadrant.
5. We ask how parents can be very loving towards their children but still have high expectations of them. Again we invite words and actions. These responses go in the top-right hand quadrant.
6. We often have discussion about the four styles as we go.
7. We then introduce the names of the four styles (Authoritarian, Uninvolved, Permissive, Active) and write them outside the circles.
8. If we have introduced four responses to conflict (Turtle, Shark, Teddy Bear, Owl) we ask the group which of the responses to conflict relate to each of the parenting styles, and relate the styles back to the [Transforming Power mandala](#).
9. We explore how these styles can act like a compass to help guide us. After the last workshop we thought it might be helpful to think about how we can move up and down the scales rather talking about moving between the four styles. (E.g., asking, "When might you want to be more loving or less loving?" and "When might you have higher expectations and when might you be a bit more flexible?") By doing this we can avoid the group to feel we are judging their behaviour and help them to think about how they have choice in their approach to parenting.

Four Styles of Parenting



Gaining Status—Girls

“Many women do not recognize themselves as discriminated against; no better proof could be found of the totality of their conditioning.” Kate Millet

This is a brainstorming and prioritization activity in which you ask participants to think about the status of girls in the society where they live, as well as broader questions of gender and gender equality.

Purpose: To understand the status of girls in the contemporary society
To understand the social mechanisms by which society confers status on girls
To identify ways in which the status of girls can be improved

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Flipchart
Markers
Pens
Blank paper

Process:

Ask participants the following question:

What gives status to girls in your society?

You should take note of all the answers on a flip chart or wall chart. Brainstorm for as long as the ideas are flowing freely but for not more than 20 minutes or so.

Then ask the group to split up into pairs and to rank the five most important things on the list from 1-5 (1 is most important, 5 is the least important). Give them 15 minutes to complete their ranking.

Then ask the pairs to compare their list with that of any other pair sitting close to them. Ask the groups of four to make their own rank order on the basis of the two lists prepared by the pairs. Give the groups 20 to 30 minutes for this ranking.

Ask the groups of four to present their rankings to the whole group.

Debriefing and evaluation:

Begin the debriefing by reviewing the results of the ranking exercise.

Is anyone surprised by any of the results?

Ask participants if they consider anything particularly noteworthy?

- Is there any difference between the first list and the second list?
- Why do you think there is a difference?
- What do we want to change about the status of girls?
- What are we able to change?
- How can we change those things?
- Why are girls affected disproportionately when it comes to gender-based violence?

What instruments are in place to protect the rights of girls?

Tips for facilitators

This exercise can also be well complemented by input and discussion on the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Consult Compass^[2] for more information about these instruments of human rights protection or for good advice about working with ranking techniques if you have never worked with this method before.

Suggestions for follow-up

This exercise can be followed up appropriately by the development of group and personal action plans on the improvement of the status of girls.

Ideas for action

If participants demonstrate an interest in the issue of the status of young women and girls worldwide you can suggest that they consider reading more about it in the 'World Youth Reports' published periodically by the United Nations (Youth Unit). These can be found online at www.un.org/youth. Your group could, on the basis of the information gained, consider developing a campaign to improve the position and status of young women and girls locally or internationally.

[2] www.coe.int/compass

GATHERINGS AND CONCENTRIC CIRCLE TOPICS - Relationships

A relationship I admire and why...

A time I had fun in a relationship was...

A time I needed more self control was...

The hardest part of keeping a relationship is...

An act of kindness I can do in a relationship is...

A time when I felt good about how I handled a relationship situation is...

Something I've said/done I wish I wouldn't have said/done is...

A relationship I would like to heal is...

An important thing I've done for someone else (either accidentally or on purpose) is...

I often stereotype people as... and I feel they stereotype me as....

Someone I'd like to build a relationship with is...

Think of a relationship in your life. What do you receive from it? What do you give to it?

A person in your life you admired and wanted to be like was... because....

A time when I was assertive, rather than aggressive was... and the result was...

The attitude or treatment I most dislike from others is... because...

The attitude or treatment I most appreciate from others is.... because...

A problem in a relationship that I have the most difficulty with (or have never resolved) is...

Qualities I would want in the person who marries my child are...

Qualities I find important in a friend are....

Grounding Techniques

Purposes: To give short, simple, effective techniques to use when distress levels rise to the point that a person begins to get carried away with emotion, in other words when the person begins to “daydream,” “fly,” lose language or dissociate. To help a person come back to their senses and be grounded in the present. To increase a person’s capabilities to bring themselves back to present time using techniques that are easy to use in any setting.
Note: These activities are written for facilitators or companions to lead, and we recommend that they be learned with the help of another person. Some of these activities, indicated by *Italics*, are better done always with a companion to help the distressed person return to present time.

An Object “Take a small object in your hand—whatever you can reach, a small stone, a pen, a cell phone, whatever. Look at the object and describe it in as much detail as possible—its color, texture, size, shape, read any writing on it, what it is used for and so forth.”

3 2 1 “Look around above eye level and name three things you can see, three things you can touch, three things you can hear; now two things you can see, two things you can touch, two things you can hear; then one thing you can see, one thing you can touch, and one thing you can hear.”

Fingers Ask everyone to raise two fingers (index and middle finger on one hand) in front of their face and have their eyes follow the two fingers as they move from one side of the body to the other, crossing the center line of the body, weaving through the air. Stop a moment, rest and repeat.

Five-Letter Word Suggest a five-letter word. Ask people to think of geographic places, types of food, or other categories, that begin with each of the five letters.

In This Chair (or On This Floor) While sitting in a circle, say to everyone, “Feel your bottom on your chair (or floor). Notice the legs of the chair go down to the floor. Notice the floor goes out to the walls and the walls go into the foundation of the building. Notice the foundation goes into the ground and the ground spreads out to be the town of [Name] which is on the earth and the earth is a large ball of mass in the universe. The universe supports the earth, which supports the town of [Name], which supports this plot of ground, which supports the foundation of this building, which supports the walls, which supports the floor, which supports the chair, which supports me. I am supported by all of this.”

Closed Eyes [Recommendation: do this with a partner to help bring you back into the present. Remember that emotion builds inside. If the emotion is too high, then this approach may make it worse, not better. So, use this activity when it helps. If it makes you feel worse, stop immediately and use “An Object” or “3, 2, 1.”] When you are ready, close your eyes and remember your personal safe place, then ask yourself what it is you need right now. Before opening your eyes, say a concrete but unusual word such as “Snapdragon,” “Frog” or “What color is my shirt?” Something that pulls you into present time.

Silence Sit silently. Ten minutes is good; twenty will take people deeper. When you feel the group has become calm and centered and it is time to move on, simply say, “Thank you.” You may take hands on either side around the circle or shake the persons’ hands beside you.

Pleasant Memories Ask everyone to sit comfortably. “I will talk you through a few steps to recall a pleasant memory. When we get to the step where you are actually feeling really good and happy, we want to imprint that memory with a physical code. You may pick your own physical code, but often it is gently pinching or rubbing the skin between your thumb and first finger with the opposite hand. Whichever hand you use, always use the same hand when imprinting or recalling pleasant memories. So right now gently pinch or rub the skin between your thumb and first finger or pick your own simple, tactile action.” [Pause.] “Okay, now stop.” [Pause.] “Now, relax your breathing. Relax your eyes. Relax your mind. Smile. Remember a pleasant memory. Try to use all your senses to remember this pleasant memory fully. What colors do you see? What and who are around you? What sounds do you hear? What is the air like? As you feel the full goodness or happiness of the memory, do the action you have chosen.” Give the participants time to recall and rub their hand. When you see everyone doing their action for a bit, then say, “Okay, you can come back now. If you do this frequently, whenever you need to shift your mood or energy, you can repeat your action while recalling pleasant thoughts and the memories and feelings will tend to come to you more quickly even in difficult times and circumstances.”

Gong If you have a gong, you may use it. Say to everyone, “If it’s comfortable to do so, close your eyes; if not, that’s okay, but if your eyes get heavy you may close them later. Let your mind follow the sound.” Hit the gong and wait until the sound is completely gone.

Walk or Run If someone is carried away with emotion, invite them to a safe, quiet place away from others. Give them a moment to adjust to being out of the group. If they still don’t feel they can rejoin the group, invite them to go outside with you and walk really fast. If that doesn’t work, then run. After a bit you can return. If someone “goes berserk,” then take them outside to walk or run.

I.A.L.A.C. (I Am Loveable And Capable)

Michael Shane Hale

Purpose: To show participants that events in their lives have a powerful way of impacting them both positively and negatively. Negative impacts can be transformed into positive ones. As much as we can “tear down” ourselves and others, we have the power also to “build up” ourselves and others as well.

Materials: Paper with the initials I.A.L.A.C printed on one side. **If the exercise is done in small groups, each participant will need his/her individual I.A.L.A.C. paper.**

Process:

The exercise is essentially the same no matter what the size of the group. Depending on the size, the time, or if it is a special topic workshop, the exercise can be adapted to fit.

Begin by explaining that the IALAC paper represents “I am Loveable and Capable,” which all of us are at birth, and which represents our self esteem. Events in our lives either tear down or build up that feeling. We are going to first look at events that have torn away some of our IALACs, and then we will look at ways that we can rebuild it.

Either break the group into small groups of no more than 3, or seat the group in a large circle of no more than 8-10.

FOR SMALL GROUPS:

Phase 1 (In small groups of no more than three): **Tearing down.**

Give people a minute to think about the events in their lives that have had a negative impact on them. Ask them to choose five or six. Explain that they are to take turns holding up their IALAC papers, and begin to tear away pieces, with each tear sharing an event that has made them feel unloveable and incapable. Ask that people not give the details, but simply identify the event. For instance, the participant may share a time they were told “You’ll never amount to anything.” Or “When I was molested.” Or, “When a teacher told me I was dumb.” The participant will continue until the paper has completely been torn and the pieces lie on the floor before the participant.

Note: It is important to have some time of silence for people to digest phase 1, before going on to Phase 2

Phase 2 (In small groups): **Building up.**

Give people a minute to think about the good things that have happened in their lives or the positive qualities that they have. These could be “I am honest” or “as a child I helped my grandma wash the dishes,” or “I have a child that I love,” or “I am working toward getting my G.E.D.” Then, taking turns, participants will pick up a piece of the paper at his feet and state the positive and then repeat, until all of the papers are in their hands.

FOR A LARGE GROUP (should be 8 or fewer):

Phase 1: Instead of giving individual papers, there should be one large paper, and after thinking of events, participants will be asked to choose one, and taking the paper, state what it is as he/she tears off a piece of the paper and places it on the floor in the center of the circle. Then, pass the paper to the next person, who will do the same.

Phase 2: Beginning with the same person who started before, the participant will state something positive about him/herself when picking up one piece off the floor, hold it, and then pass the piece to the next person, who will state something positive while picking up a second piece of paper, and hand these to the next person, and this will continue until the last person is holding all of the papers.

Processing Questions:

Did you notice similarities between the events that tore at you and the events you heard others torn by?

Did you recognize yourself as the person doing the tearing as well as the person torn? If so, how?

Was it empowering to find positive things that could help you rebuild what has been torn?

How can we keep feeling empowered even when events or conditions (such as imprisonment) tear away at our self esteem?

How can we help others feel empowered when they feel torn by events or conditions? (Our children, our families, people we share the condition of imprisonment with)

Was it liberating to speak out about the effect negative events have had on us?

FOLLOW UP: This could be a lead in for participants to establish personal goals (see Life Lines).

FOR A SPECIAL TOPIC WORKSHOP: This exercise could focus participants on the special topic chosen for the workshop.

Improving Relationships

Purpose: to help people become aware of the blocks to relationships, and to learn ways to reach beyond these blocks.

Materials: Newsprint and Magic Marker for the Barrier Brainstorm
Handouts for “Setting Goals for Improving Relationships”
Pencils

Step 1: Barrier Brainstorm

Ask people to brainstorm the things that keep us from having positive or “good” relationships. Some of these may be the same as our focus goals in the second level workshops (anger, poor communication, etc.)

Step 2: Small Group Sharing

Ask people to write down the name of a person with whom they would like to have a better relationship.

Break the group into small groups of three or four (or, if the group is small (8 or under) you might want to keep everyone together in a U-shape, with one chair facing the group).

Say the following: Each person will have a chance to share his situation with the group and receive help from the group.

- a. Begin by explaining to the group as best you are able, what the problem seems to be. Try to describe what happens, rather than giving your interpretation. For example, rather than “She gets all upset and angry,” describe what the person says and does, as well as what you say and do.
- b. After you finish, people in your group may ask you questions to clarify what happens.
- c. Then, complete the statement: “What I’d like to have happen is ...”
- d. Members of the group will then offer suggestions as to what steps you might take to improve the relationship.

After each person in the group has had a chance to have his situation discussed, pass out the handout and pencils.

Handout

Setting Goals for Improving Relationship

I want to improve my relationship with _____

What I would like that relationship to be like: _____

My first goal will be: _____

Steps I will take to achieve this goal:

I will (activity): _____

By (date): _____

I will (activity): _____

By (date): _____

Skills I need to work on:

Knock Knock: FATHERHOOD INSIDE

Based on Daniel Beatty's poem Knock Knock

Purpose: Explore the impact of incarceration on children

Time: 20 minute to 1+ hour – depending on how deep the group chooses to go.

Materials: Daniel Beatty poem Knock Knock (attached)
(Paper & pencils, for some of the options)

Sequence:

Read poem

Process

Processing: (select from the following)

How do you feel, having listened to the poem?

What words or phrases struck you?

There are four characters in the poem (child, adult child, father, imagined father). Which do you identify with? Which would you like to become?

What would you write to your own child today?

What would you write to yourself today?

What would you write to your father?

(optional – have participants write the letters instead of speaking them, then share if they want)

Suggested preparation for the exercise: Watch Daniel Beatty's performance of Knock Knock on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXQ2eRHkIDc>

Knock Knock

By Daniel Beatty

As a boy, I shared a game with my father—
Played it every morning till I was three.
He would knock knock on my door,
And I'd pretend to be asleep till he got right next
to the bed.
Then I would get up and jump into his arms.
"Good morning, Papa."
And my Papa, he would tell me that he loved me.
We shared a game,
Knock knock,
Until that day when the knock never came,
And my Mama takes me on a ride past cornfields
on this never-ending highway
Till we reach a place of high rusty gates.
A confused little boy,
I enter the building carried in my Mama's arms.
Knock knock.
We reach a room of windows and brown faces.
Behind one of the windows sits my father.
I jump out of my Mama's arms and run joyously
towards my Papa's,
Only to be confronted by this window.
I knock knock trying to break through the glass,
Trying to get to my father.
I knock knock as my Mama pulls me away
Before my Papa even says a word.
And for years, he has never said a word.
And so, 25 years later, I write these words
For the little boy in me who still awaits his Papa's
knock.
"Papa, come home, 'cause I miss you.
I miss you waking me up in the morning and telling
me you love me.
Papa, come home, 'cause there's things I don't
know,
And I thought maybe you could teach me
How to shave,
How to dribble a ball,
How to talk to a lady,
How to walk like a man.
Papa, come home, 'cause I decided awhile back
I want to be just like you, but I'm forgetting who
you are."

And 25 years later, a little boy cries.
And so I write these words and try to heal
And try to father myself.
And I dream up a father
Who says the words my father did not.
"Dear son, I'm sorry I never came home.
For ever lesson I failed to teach, hear these words:
'Shave in one direction with strong deliberate
strokes
To avoid irritation.
Dribble the page with the brilliance of your ball-
point pen.
Walk like a God, and your Goddess will come to
you.
No longer will I be there to knock on your door,
So you must learn to knock for yourself.
Knock knock down doors of racism and poverty
that I could not.
Knock knock on doors of opportunity
For the lost brilliance of the black men who crowd
these cells.
Knock knock with diligence for the sake of your
children.
Knock knock for me.
For as long as you are free,
These prison gates cannot contain my spirit.
The best of me still lives in you.
Knock knock with the knowledge that you are my
son,
But you are not my choices."
Yes, we are our fathers' sons and daughters,
But we are not their choices.
For despite their absences,
We are still here,
Still alive,
Still breathing,
With the power to change this world
One little boy and girl at a time.
Knock knock,
Who's there?
We are.

Maintaining Your Cool (Roleplaying)

Curtis and Debbie

Curtis and Debbie have a four-year-old son, Jamie, who lives with Debbie and her parents. Debbie's parents have to drive them to visit Curtis who is incarcerated. In the Visiting Room, when Jamie runs around, shouts, or in other ways acts up, and Curtis attempts to discipline or talk to Jamal about his behavior, Debbie's father interrupts and disciplines Jamie. This has happened before, and Curtis is increasingly frustrated. He is also afraid that his son will grow up not thinking of Curtis as his father. Act out this situation so that Curtis manages his anger in a healthy way.

Paul and the telephone

Paul is an 18 year-old father who is having difficulty getting news of his child from the child's birth mother. He has been trying for over a week to get in touch with her by telephone. One night as he has been waiting in line for over an hour to use the phone, the man who has finished using the phone motions to another man to come and take it over. Paul is steaming, because he knows that the blocks will soon be sent back to their cells. Act out this situation so that Paul manages his anger in a healthy way.

Darryl and his Dad

Darryl, is 23 but has been in prison since the age of 17. He has a 7 year old child who lives with his parents, while the birth mother is going to school and working. His parents come to visit, but will not bring the child, because the child's birth mother refuses to let them. Every time he tries to talk to his parents about it, his parents tell him they will "think about it." Although Darryl has participated in several programs and has a job in prison, his father continues to raise the issues of his prior behavior as a teenager. Act out this situation so that Darryl manages his anger in a healthy way and tries to talk out the situation with his parents.

Process:

Place participants in groups of three or four. Assign one of the situations to each group.

Allow 10-15 minutes.

Reconvene the group. Ask the small groups to perform one by one.

Debrief and de-role the participants after each role play.

Ask the participants: What was it like to play your roles?

Ask the group:

Where did you see transforming power in the role play?

What strategies did the actor(s) use to channel their anger in a positive direction?

Making Decisions

Purpose: We will use decisions made in the recent past to explore ways to make decisions more effectively in the future.

Process: Complete the information asked for in part one.
Then, in small groups, we will share those decisions and get feedback from one another.

PART 1:

Briefly describe one difficult or important decision that you made in the past month or so:

Describe how you went about making that decision:

What was your goal in this situation?

What did you think was the worst thing that could happen?

Who or what influenced you in making the final decision?

How did the decision turn out? Did things turn out the way you thought they would?

PART 2:

Share your decision with your small group and the process you used in making it.

Then, ask yourself and your group the following question: **WHAT WERE MY CHOICES?**

Give time for each person in the group to offer other choices that you might have had in making that decision.

Write any notes here:

PART 3: Make a note to yourself here: What would you do differently next time?

Never Violence

A story told by Astrid Lindgren
(author of Pippi Longstocking)

"Above all, I believe that there should never be any violence." In 1978, Astrid Lindgren received the German Book trade Peace Prize for her literary contributions. In acceptance, she told the following story:

"When I was about 20 years old, I met an old pastor's wife who told me that when she was young and had her first child, she didn't believe in striking children, although spanking kids with a switch pulled from a tree was standard punishment at the time.

But one day when her son was four or five, he did something that she felt warranted a spanking -- the first of his life. So she told him that we would have to go outside and find a switch for her to hit him with. The boy was gone a long time. And when he came back in, he was crying. He said to her, "Mama, I couldn't find a switch, but here's a rock that you can throw at me."

All of a sudden the mother understood how the situation felt from the child's point of view: that if my mother wants to hurt me, then it makes no difference what she does it with; she might as well do it with a stone.

And the mother took the boy onto her lap and they both cried. Then she laid the rock on the shelf in the kitchen to remind herself forever: never violence. And that is something I think everyone should keep in mind. Because violence begins in the nursery -- one can raise children with or without violence.

Too often we fail to understand situations "from the child's point of view," and that failure leads us to teach our children other than what we think we're teaching them.

“NO, Positively”

Developed by Mindful Margaret (AVPNY) and Bravo Bobbi (Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, NY).
Refined by participants at a mini-workshop at AVPUSA Gathering, 2014 and AVPNY fall gathering.

Purpose: Identify the good reasons for saying “no” and practice skills for saying “no” in a positive manner.

1. Gathering: A time I should have said “no” but I didn’t. . .

2. Discussion: Why didn’t you say “no” at the time? Why is it hard to say “no”?

3. Presentation/Brainstorm:

The positive no (based on work of William Ury – “The Power of a Positive No”).

Draw the image of a tree, with a solid trunk made of the word “NO”.

Fill in the roots with the basic reasons why it can be important to say “no” (e.g. maintaining appropriate boundaries, honesty, etc).

Then fill in the branches with the fruit (results) of the positive no (e.g. respectful relationships, energy and resources for other activities, etc).

4. Fishbowl and Charting:

Techniques for a positive “no”.

What would help the listener accept that “no”, and would minimize the potential negatives identified in step 2 above?

- a. Participant demonstrates saying “no” to a specific request.
- b. Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the “no” (a “tree in hurricane” meter is a good opportunity for kinesthetic involvement).
- c. Invite comments on the specific actions that were effective and positive in each.
Create a chart of successful techniques, based on the comments.
- d. (optional) Repeat demonstrations to refine the techniques of saying “no”.

The chart of techniques is likely to include:

- i. Engaging the asker with respect (and when possible with friendship)
- ii. Body language that is assertive but not aggressive
- iii. Calm tone of voice
- iv. Stating common ground and shared values
- v. Avoiding platitudes that invite confusion
- vi. An explanation is not required, but if it is offered it should be honest and might take the form of an “I-message”
- vii. An explanation is often an invitation to negotiation (“Since you are busy Tuesday, what about Saturday?”) You should be clear about whether you want to negotiate around the no, and are willing to say “yes” if certain conditions change.

5. Practice in pairs: Prison scenarios: "lend me _____" , "steal some ___ for me"
"tell me who _____" "let me _____" .

Community scenarios: "join this committee" " help fundraise for "

6. "No" and Transforming Power -- review the bases of TP and how each connects with the positive
"no"

Parenting in the Visiting Room

Purpose: (to be discussed at the end, not at the beginning): Parents are a model for their children in the visiting room. Children scrutinize adults at all times. They examine what adults say and how they say it; a father's behavior toward their mother and toward them, and eye-contact and body language are messages to them. They will note any sense of hostility in the room, and especially toward C.O.'s. Studies indicate that children are similarly influenced when they see their fathers and mothers demonstrate a lack of respect for authority, even that authority which is imposed.

Materials: Newsprint + markers for each small group

Time:

Part 1

Break the large group into groups of 4 or 5.

Discuss within groups what your experience is regarding the circumstances of family visits in the visiting room. Consider the following scenarios:

a mother believes her partner, the child's father is not giving her enough attention and is paying too much attention to the children;

a father is critical of the care-giver's parenting of his child and this angers the care-giver since he has not been an active parent for several years.

What are the needs of the father, mother or care-giver and child or children in each scenario? Consider what questions the incarcerated person might ask, how should he or she position their body in order to convey what they would like to convey? What should they be doing?

Ask each group to write on newsprint up to ten good parenting tips the group can agree to.

Part 2

In the large group, ask each group to read aloud their list of parenting tips, and then post them. After all of them have been read and posted, have the group point out which tips have been repeated, and which ones might be combined. Ask for a volunteer to combine the lists during a break, so that the group produces its own "Good Parenting in the Visiting Room Guidelines."

(If it is possible, a facilitator might type it and make copies for participants. Otherwise, make paper and writing implement available for participants who wish to copy it.)

Part 3

Parental Decision-Making:

Participants are in small groups (4 or 5 people). The facilitator reads a scenario to the participants. They have three minutes to discuss possible responses and to try to reach consensus on a response. The facilitator then asks each group to report to the whole group what their response would be. Choose three scenarios in total.

Sample scenarios

1. You are in the visiting room with your children and their mother. One of the children is being boisterous. A guard calls over: "Hey you, keep that kid under control or I will!"
2. You are in the visiting room with your wife/girlfriend, your child and some members of your family. Another inmate at the next table speaks to your wife/girlfriend in a flirting manner.
3. You are in the visiting room with your two children and their mother. Your child says something disrespectful to his mother and you tell him firmly that he is never to speak to his mother that way. The child responds by saying "You can't make me do anything. You're in jail."
4. You had a child by one woman, and you are now married to another. Your wife tells you that the mother of your child and she had an argument, and now the mother will not let her bring your child to visit you.
5. A father sends his three young children unattended to the corner within five minutes of the visit vs. another father who, after a half hour into the visit, escorts his three young children to the corner and plays with them for a few minutes before returning to their mother.

Questions on parenting:

1. What opportunities are there for good parenting in the visiting room?
2. What opportunities are there for children to learn positive values from incarcerated men in the visiting room?

Picture Exercise

Purposes: To practice empathizing with children. To practice feeling in the role of a parent.

Time: 30 minutes.

Materials: 45 pictures of children or children with parents
Feeling Faces handout—p. E-24 of Basic Manual—one per participant

Process:

Place the pictures around on the floor in the center of the circle.

Ask everyone to choose one or two that speak to you.

Divide the group into groups of four people each.

Distribute the Feeling Faces handout.

Post the following questions:

1. What do you imagine the child is feeling? If a parent is present, what do you think that parent is feeling?
2. What did you imagine might be happening in this picture?
3. What happened just before this photograph was taken or what do you think may happened in the next few moments?
4. Is there anything in this picture that reminds you of a feeling or an experience from your own childhood?

Within the small groups, each person has a chance to respond to the three questions.

Processing Question:

What new learning did you get from this activity?

Relationships — talk

Relationships are the most fundamental part of human existence. From the moment we are born, we are totally dependent on relationships - especially maternal relationships. As we grew older, some types of primary relationships were absolutely vital for our ongoing development. Without them, we would never have survived.

No relationships = no life. That is how crucial it was in those first years of our tiny lives. We didn't know whether our parents were in a marriage or not. It didn't really matter. What mattered was whether someone, anyone, was in some type of maternal-paternal relationship with us. Marriage may have helped or hindered, but what was essential was that someone cared enough to be in some type of committed relationship with us and took care of us.

Relationships make us both vulnerable and secure. The same dynamic remains throughout our life: whether in a friendship, a romance, in a marriage, as a daughter or son, as an employer or employee - whenever anyone else is involved in our lives, that puts us in many types or levels of relationships.

Relationships, unlike marriage, are inescapable, unless you want to live as a hermit in total isolation, never relating to anybody. Is that really an option?

Deep friendship, real intimacy, profound sense of mutuality, vibrant communication, common ideals, shared dreams, commitment, and fidelity. These are all attributes which for many are formalized in marriage vows, which may in the end, be the essentials for happy, healthy, and long-term relationships. They not only give the partners joy, but they also may provide the offspring with the parental relationships so necessary for a good start to life.

Stand on the Line

Purposes: To become aware of our beliefs and the beliefs of others. To note our similarities and differences. To open ourselves to holding multiple truths. To seek to understand others' perspectives and views that differ from my own.

Time: 30 minutes.

Materials: List of statements (held by the facilitator).

Process:

Ask everyone to stand.

Point to one wall. Say *"Standing at this end of the room says that I strongly agree with the statement."*

Point to the opposite wall. Say *"Standing at that end says that I strongly disagree. Imagine there is a line running between the two walls. Each person may stand anywhere on that line. Standing at the half way point would indicate that I neither agree nor disagree or that I am unsure."* Demonstrate where agreeing somewhat would be and then where disagreeing somewhat would be.

Say, *"We will do this mostly in silence. I may ask people to give one sentence explanations about why they are where they are but mostly we will do this in silence. When we move, please note where you are and where others are."* Say: *"Remember that it takes courage to be different and that here we honor and celebrate our differences. All viewpoints are welcome. No one viewpoint is right and no one is wrong."*

After each statement is read and people are in position, ask one person from each extreme, *"Why are you where you are?"* Responses should be brief. This is not a time for a debate. Only call on others if they show a desire to speak.

If a commonly held point of view is not expressed, it is up to the facilitator to say, *"Some people who would stand here believe..."* Do not allow for more than 3 minutes of discussion per statement. Keep it moving.

These statements are controversial and may make you uncomfortable but the hope is that we can learn from each other in the process and expand our awareness. You always have the right to pass.

Read each statement twice and allow time for participants to find where they will stand.

1. Men and women are equally capable of caring for children.
2. Fathers should stop hugging and saying "I love you" to their sons when the sons become teenagers.
3. Men who father children should be forced to pay child support.
4. You become more of a man once you have fathered a child.
5. If a father has no money, it's best to stay out of his child's life.
6. It's okay to use violence if you've been disrespected.

7. In general, men who are dating women should pay for the dates.
8. A man who cries easily is weak.
9. It's a woman's responsibility, more than a man's, to take care of birth control.
10. It's okay for a man to marry a woman of a different race.
11. When a couple splits up, it's best if the children live with the mother.
12. A man should be willing to take any type of job to support himself and his children.
13. It's not a father's job to do things like change diapers, bathe and feed young children.
14. If a parent is having serious problems on his job, it's okay for him to quit before having another job.
15. It's more important for women to take care of their health than for men to take care of theirs.
16. The biggest barrier between a man and his children is the child's mother and her family.
17. There are things a man should never tell a woman.
18. Marriage messes up good relationships between men and women.
19. It doesn't matter what a man does to earn money (even things that are illegal) as long as he supports his children.
20. If a parent is incarcerated, that excuses him or her from parenting responsibilities.

Processing Questions:

What did you notice about yourself in this activity?

What did it feel like doing this activity?

What new learning did you get from this activity?

What will you take away from this activity?

Strengthening Relationships

Purpose: To analyze our relationships

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: small paper and pen for everyone

Process:

1. Working alone, think about an important relationship that you are in.

Answer these questions:

a. What assets or strengths do I bring? (name at least five)

b. Name five problems with this relationship?

c. What can I do to make this relationship better?

2. Find a person in the group you feel comfortable with and share what you wrote down.

Processing:

* How did this exercise feel?

* What did you learn about yourself?

* How could this reduce violence?

What I Care About

Purposes: To learn what values we and others hold and why and what role they play in our decision-making.

Materials: Pencils and What I Care About handout.

Time: 35 mins.

Process:

Step 1. Begin by brainstorming “What is a value?” (If not generated by the group, add: “something that really matters,” “what you believe in,” and “what you believe is right or wrong.”)

Step 2. Then brainstorm “How do your values influence you?” (If not generated by the group, add: “they guide our decisions, how we spend our time, what we buy and how we behave.”)

Step 3. Say: *In this activity, we will look at a list of goals and values and decide which are most important, somewhat important and not important to you.*

Step 4. Distribute the handout “What I Care About” with pencils.

Step 5. Say: *This handout is for you. You will share from it only what you wish to share so please be as honest as you are able to be with yourself. For each item, check one of the three boxes that says how important the item is to you—is it very important, somewhat important or is it not important to you? When you have rated each item, go back and place a star next to each of the three items that are most important to you.*

Step 6. Give the group time in quiet to complete—wait until all have stopped working. Assist any who have difficulty reading or understanding.

Step 7. Ask participants to count off by the half the number of people participating in the exercise (participants + facilitators) and pair up with the person with the same number.

Step 8. Say: *In your pair, share with your partner anything you wish to share from your responses. What was most important to you and why, what was less important and why and what is not important any why.*

Step 9: Processing questions (in big circle):

1. *Who would like to share what is very important to them and why? Least important and why?*

2. *Of the very important items which will be difficult to accomplish? Which will be easy?*

3. *What did you learn about your values and which do you want to pass on to the children in your life and how?*

4. *For your own reflection: How would your parents or care-givers have responded?*

Handout

What I Care About

Please indicate how you feel about the following values or goals by placing a check or X in the appropriate column.

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
Being popular			
Looking good			
Having more children			
Being married / having a life partner			
Doing a good job raising my children			
Having fun			
Being respected			
Making money			
Getting a job I enjoy			
Hanging out with my friends			
Doing something to help other people in my community			
Having a nice car			
Having a good sexual relationship			
Being a good athlete			
Living by my religion			
Getting along with my family			
Expressing my creative side (music, dancing, writing etc)			
Staying healthy			
Having friends I can depend on			
Living by the traditions of my culture			
Having a good education			
Having my own home or apartment			
Making it on my own			
Traveling to new places			
Taking care of my parents in their old age			

*Now that you've finished, go back and put a star * beside the THREE items that are most important to you, the ones you wouldn't want to live without.*

What I Value in a Child

Purposes: To become aware of my preconceived notions of what a child should or should not be—so that by becoming aware of these notions, I can let go of those that are not helpful to children in my life. To become aware of what others value in children, to listen, to expand my own perspective.

Time:

Materials: Copies of Handout: What I Value in a Child
Pencils

Process:

1. Distribute handouts and pencils to participants.
2. Instructions to participants: Circle the three values you value the most above all the others in a child.
3. Divide into groups of 3: compare your choices and come to agreement on three for the group.
4. Facilitator records a posted sheet the three choices of each of the groups, and then opens it for discussion

Processing questions:

1. During your discussion in the small group, did you find that you interpreted a value differently from someone else?
2. Did some values become more positive when someone explained how s(he) interpreted it and why s(he) chose it?
3. Would anyone whose values changed in the discussion like to speak about why?
4. What would your parents or care-givers have chosen from this list?
5. How did their choices affect you as a child?

Handout

What I Value in a Child

1. A child who is loyal to me at all times.
2. A child who never gets his/her feelings hurt.
3. A child who is curious and asks many questions.
4. A child who always listens to me.
5. A child who never talks back.
6. A child who will always tell me everything
7. A child who has many friends
8. A child who can control his/her temper.
9. A child who can stand up for him/herself even if it means fighting.
10. A child who is a leader, not a follower.
11. A child who looks good.
12. A child more like me than like his/her mother.
13. A child who is very successful in school.
14. A child who is physically fit and healthy.
15. A child who will follow my religious beliefs.
16. A child who is respectful of me and other adults.
17. A child who feels good about him/herself.
18. A child who is honest
19. A child who is good at sports.
20. A child who is affectionate.

Handout

25 Ways to Be a Fantastic Parent

Throughout the year, the "Parents" board of advisors - a brain trust of the best pediatric doctors, developmental experts, and educators in the country - shares the latest thinking about raising happy and healthy kids in the pages of Parents Magazine. Here are some of the all-time best nuggets of their advice:

1. **Play with your children** - Let them choose the activity, and don't worry about rules. Just go with the flow and have fun.
2. **Put your baby to bed drowsy, but still awake** - This helps your child learn to soothe himself to sleep and prevents bedtime problems down the line.
3. **Take charge** - children crave limits, which help them understand and manage an often confusing world.
4. **Eat at least one meal together as a family each day** - Sitting down at the table is a relaxed way for everyone to connect - a time to share happy news, talk about the day, or tell a silly joke.
5. **Don't clip your child's wings** - Your toddler's mission in life is to gain independence. So, when she's developmentally capable of putting her toys away, clearing her plate from the table, and dressing herself, let her. Giving a child responsibility is good for her self esteem (and your sanity!).
6. **Read books together every day** - Get started when he's a newborn; babies love listening to the sound of their parents' voices. Find **lots** of opportunities to have conversations with your children.
7. **Get your kids vaccinated** - Outbreaks of measles and other diseases still occur in our country and throughout the world.
8. **Acknowledge his strong emotions** - when your child's meltdown is over, ask him, "How did that feel?" and "What do you think would have made it better?" Then listen to him. He'll recover from a tantrum more easily if you let him talk it out.
9. **Love your children equally, but threaten them uniquely** - They are individuals.
10. **Say "I love you" whenever you feel it, even if it is 743 times a day** - You simply cannot spoil a child with too many mushy words of affection and too many smooches.
11. **Avoid food fights** - A healthy child instinctively knows how much to eat. If he refuses to finish whatever food is on his plate, just let it go. He won't starve.
12. **Just say "no"** - Resist the urge to take on extra obligations at the office or become the Volunteer Queen at your child's school. You will never, ever regret spending more time with your children.
13. **Don't try to fix everything** - Give young kids a chance to find their own solutions. When you lovingly acknowledge a child's minor frustrations without immediately rushing in to save her, you teach her self reliance and resilience.
14. **Kiss and hug your spouse in front of the kids** - Your marriage is the only example your child has of what an intimate relationship looks, feels, and sounds like. Resolving conflicts in front of your family shows them how it is done. It's your job to set a great standard.
15. **Teach your baby to sign** - Just because a child can't talk doesn't mean there isn't lots that she'd like to say. Simple signs can help you know what she needs and even how she feels well before she has the words to tell you.

16. **Keep the television in the family room** - Research has repeatedly shown that children with a TV in their bedroom weigh more, sleep less, and have lower grades and poorer social skills.
17. **Know when to toilet train** - Look for these two signs your child is ready to use the potty: He senses the urge to pee and poop (this is different from knowing that he's already gone), and he asks for a diaper change.
18. **Respect parenting differences** - Support your spouse's basic approach to raising kids - unless it is way out of line. Criticizing or arguing with your partner will do more harm to your marriage and your child's sense of security than if you accept standards that are somewhat different from your own.
19. **Listen to your doctor** - If your pediatrician thinks your kid's fever is caused by a virus, don't push for antibiotics. Overprescribing antibiotics can cause medical problems for your child and increase the chances of creating superbugs that resist treatment.
20. **Give appropriate praise** - Instead of simply saying, "You're great," try to be specific about what your child did to deserve the positive feedback. It is more important that a child works hard and tries to do their best than to be "very smart."
21. **Encourage daddy time** - The greatest untapped resource available for improving the lives of our children is time with Dad - early and often. Kids with engaged fathers do better in school, problem solve more successfully, and generally cope better with whatever life throws at them.
22. **Cheer the good stuff** - When you notice your child doing something helpful or nice, let him know how you feel. It's a great way to reinforce good behavior so he's more likely to keep doing it.
23. **Let your kids place an order** - Once a week, allow your children to choose what's for dinner and cook it for (or with) them.
24. **Remember that discipline is not punishment** - Enforcing limits is really about teaching kids how to behave in the world and helping them to become competent, caring, and in control.
25. **Keep in mind what Grandma always says** - Children are not yours, they are only lent to you for a time. In those fleeting years, do your best to help them grow up to be good people.

Handout

Children Learn What They Live

by Dorothy Law Nolte, PhD

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves

and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place

in which to live.

Handout

Disciplining Do's and Don'ts

DO

- * **Catch them being good and praise their efforts.** Help them to see the positive effects of their behavior. Play together and have fun with your kids. Tell them you love them and give lots of hugs.
- * **Watch for clues that they are tired, hungry, etc.** Don't expect them to behave like miniature adults.
- * **Put pro-social behavior as a priority.** Focus on prevention - avoid the "triggers" which lead to bad behavior.
- * **Be consistent and find a circle of family/friends with similar rules to help teach your child.** Both parents and all other caregivers should agree on rules and punishments. Back each other up.
- * **Be clear, don't talk over their heads or lecture.** Give good reasons why a rule is important, pointing out the consequences if not followed.
- * **Choose your battles.** Don't try to enforce all the rules every time. Give children a choice, suggesting alternatives to undesirable behavior that would accomplish the objective so the child learns control over their own actions.
- * **Keep your cool.** Model good behavior to your child. Actively work toward resolution of conflicts with your child and with other adults. Consequences shouldn't be based on your level of frustration.
- * **Remember to keep your expectations age-appropriate.** Children under age three have very little ability for self control. They are emotionally driven, not yet rational. After age five they start to care about others and how their own behavior affects other people.
- * **Think about discipline as guidance and teaching.** Ultimately, the goal of discipline is to teach self control, not just correct bad behavior by enforcing the rules.

DON'T

- * **Exercise too little or too much control.** You want as few power struggles as possible.
- * **Focus on punishment as the center of discipline.** Instead, use praise and rewards on following rules. Don't shame the child or put them down in front of others.
- * **Employ harsh and rejecting forms of discipline.** Asking for a "time out" is better than hitting or spanking. (One minute of timeout per year of age is a good standard). Children raised non-violently will probably be nonviolent the rest of their lives.
- * **Overuse the word NO.**

Handout

RELATIONSHIPS:

Five Questions for Contracting and Clarifying Expectation

1. What DO I WANT that I'm NOT getting?

2. What am I getting that I DON'T WANT?

3. What am I giving that I DON'T WANT TO GIVE?

4. What would I like to be able to give you if things were better between us?

5. What am I getting that I DO WANT in this relationship?

Handout

Never Violence

A story told by Astrid Lindgren (author of Pippi Longstocking)

"Above all, I believe that there should never be any violence." In 1978, Astrid Lindgren received the German Book trade Peace Prize for her literary contributions. In acceptance, she told the following story:

"When I was about 20 years old, I met an old pastor's wife who told me that when she was young and had her first child, she didn't believe in striking children, although spanking kids with a switch pulled from a tree was standard punishment at the time.

But one day when her son was four or five, he did something that she felt warranted a spanking -- the first of his life. So she told him that we would have to go outside and find a switch for her to hit him with. The boy was gone a long time. And when he came back in, he was crying. He said to her, "Mama, I couldn't find a switch, but here's a rock that you can throw at me."

All of a sudden the mother understood how the situation felt from the child's point of view: that if my mother wants to hurt me, then it makes no difference what she does it with; she might as well do it with a stone.

And the mother took the boy onto her lap and they both cried. Then she laid the rock on the shelf in the kitchen to remind herself forever: never violence. And that is something I think everyone should keep in mind. Because violence begins in the nursery -- one can raise children with or without violence.

Too often we fail to understand situations "from the child's point of view," and that failure leads us to teach our children other than what we think we're teaching them.