

STRENGTHENING FAMILY COPING RESOURCES

Module Three: Session Ten – *The Power of Stories*

Date:

Facilitators Present:

1. Family Meal – Facilitators encourage and model appropriate conversation, sharing, and supervision of children. Remember to be sensitive to and empowering of the parent(s).

*Include conversation prompts for those families who are not being video recorded

2. Opening activities (Lead Facilitator)

- Welcome
- Rules (Facilitator)
- Give thanks for those who helped prepare the food and get the room ready
- Check in with each family
- Review schedule for the evening
- Opening ritual:

3. Communicating Without Words

- Review homework (Lead Facilitator)
 - Before we start our first activity, I want to take time for families to tell us about the activity they carried out this week. Allow each family to show and tell the group about their activity. If they didn't carry out the activity, ask them what got in the way.
- Communicating Without Words (Facilitator; 15 minutes)
 - Hand out dowels (one for each family member). Inform families the first activity for the evening will be done in silence. First divide into pairs.
 - Have two facilitators demonstrate how to use the dowels. They should use the palms of their hands or their finger tips to hold the dowels between them. They can demonstrate moving their hands around, watching each other to see how they move together. A third facilitator can join and show how multiple people can do it together.
 - Next, have the families try. Have them try in pairs first, and then with everyone all together. While they are working ask them questions such as "How are they letting each other know what they are going to do next?", "How are they working together to keep the sticks from falling?", "Who is taking the lead and can everyone be a leader?" Let families know that communicating is an important skill for a family.

4. Understanding Our Reactions (25 minutes) (Facilitator-Family Assignments)

- In family groups, talk about the word "trauma" and what it means. Explain PTSD symptoms, including anticipating that more bad things will happen, reminders of bad things that have happened & how people react to these reminders, re-experiencing what happened, avoidance, arousal/dysregulations, expectancies about self/world, and

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problems with relationships/trust. Have family members talk about their own experiences with each of these reactions to make them real.

- Talk about avoidance and how avoidance makes it hard to talk about what happened, but is a common reaction. Anticipate their avoidance by letting the family know that they may not want to come back the next few sessions. Problem solve by asking the family to come up with ways that they will work together to overcome their avoidance.

5. Telling about Bad Things That Have Happened (40 minutes)

- Talk with families about how they have been preparing themselves for this process through previous sessions by learning new skills as a family. Also, review why the narrative process is important (helps them to feel better, cope with what happened). Remember that some families may not be ready for a trauma narrative and will focus on building communication skills.
- Remind families about safety procedures, including use of safety plans, confidentiality, and reporting responsibilities. Use stress management during the session as needed.
- Help family develop a plan regarding their narrative. Work with the family to set some ground rules, such as who gets to talk, what the family is prepared to talk about, what the family is willing to talk about first, etc.
- Explain the process of developing the trauma story. First, they will make a list of all of the bad things that have happened. They can list which things to talk about, when things happened, which things were the least scary, and which were the scariest. Then, as a family, they will tell their story about the bad thing(s) that happened. They will decide how to start their story, what bad things they want to talk about in what order, how much detail to include, how to record their story, and how they will know when to end their story.
- Remind the family that everyone in their family has different experiences when bad things happen and everyone of them may remember what happened differently, and that's ok.
- Guide family through constructing a family trauma time line. Each family member writes the traumatic event(s) that have occurred on a blank postcard. They can put the cards in chronological order after all the traumas are listed.
- Make sure to allow families time to reach an appropriate stopping point and regain emotional balance before ending.

6. Closing Activities (10 minutes)

- Thank everyone for taking part in tonight's group (Lead Facilitator)
- Check that everything was covered/summary of session (Lead Facilitator)
- Share a good thing about each family (Team)
- Introduce topic for next week (Facilitator) – Remind families of the following: Remember that this is hard work that you are doing. Use your coping skills during the week to take care of yourselves. Hand out "Using Your Coping Skills." Reach out for support if it gets too hard.
- Review tasks/homework for the following week – Not applicable
- Planning contacts for the week – **Continue system for families to contact one another**
- Closing ritual (Lead Facilitator):

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