



Objectives:

- To increase the families' ability to share trauma stories.
- To co-construct a shared trauma narrative.
- To express and share trauma pain.



Threads:

- Module III is meant to use the skill sets that the family has learned and practiced to help them cope with and move beyond their trauma history.
- Overarching goal of this and the coming sessions is helping families with the process of talking about the trauma, as opposed to the goal of having a "finished" trauma narrative. This process can be a very slow one, and taking the time to comment on and discuss the family's process of talking about the trauma is at least as important as talking about the trauma itself.
- The activity reinforces the realization that everyone in the family is potentially impacted by trauma(s).



Preparation:

- Send out reminders of group to families.
- Prepare all materials.
- Food and facilities planning and preparation.
- Decide on facilitators' roles.
- Update on the status of each family in the group.
- Anticipate any problems that might arise during the session.



Homework Due:

- Using Your Coping Resources



Session Overview:

Activity 1	Family Meal	30 Minutes
Activity 2	Gears	15 Minutes
Activity 3	Family Narrative	55 Minutes
Activity 4	SIT Practice	10 Minutes
Activity 5	Closing	10 Minutes



Homework to be Assigned:

- Using Your Coping Resources

**Materials:**

Tables (1 for each family)
Centerpieces
Nameplates and session schedules (1 for each family)
Place settings/Napkins
Nutritious meal/Drinks
Phones for recording
Gear sets (1 for each family)
Paper
Pens
Crayons/Markers
Toys
Chore charts and star stickers (1 pack for each family)

**Handouts:**

Gears	M3.S14.Gears
Conversation Prompts	M3.S14.Prompts
Using Your Coping Resources	M3.S12.Using.Coping.Resources
Phone Tree	M3.S14.Phone.Tree
Contact Sheets	M3.S14.Contact.Sheets
Family Rating Form	M3.S15.Feedback
Participant Log	M3.S15.Log
Clinician Rating Form	M3.S15.Clinic.Measures

**Posters:**

Rules Poster	Group.Rules.Poster
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Activity 1: Family Meal

30
Minutes**Goals:**

- To facilitate an intimate family interaction.
- To increase awareness of the importance of routine within each family.

**Materials:**

Tables (1 for each family)
Centerpieces
Nameplates and session schedules
(1 for each family)
Place settings/Napkins
Nutritious meal/Drinks

**Handouts:**

Conversation Prompts

**Posters:**

Rules Poster

**Instructions:**

Facilitators prepare room by setting tables (one for each family). A simple centerpiece for each table is a nice touch. A nameplate and schedule for the session's activities are also placed on each table. Hang poster with group rules listed in a prominent place where all the families can see it.

Food should be pre-cooked and ready to serve. Food can be served buffet or family style.

Parent(s) gather their children around a table and share a meal together.

Before serving the food:

Lead Facilitator: *We are so happy to have you back with us tonight. Let's begin.*

Co-Facilitator _____: *First let's thank name of cooks for fixing this wonderful meal. Please help yourselves to some food. Parents, why don't you serve your children first and then make a plate for yourself. Parent(s) should be encouraged to serve their children and then themselves.*

Co-Facilitator _____: *To help your family have a good time during dinner, you might want to ask each other these questions or talk about the ideas on these cards. Hand out conversation prompts.*

After the Meal:

Co-Facilitator _____: Refer to the rules poster and review.

Ask each family the following question: *So, is there anything going on right now that might get in the way of your family taking part in today's group?*

This session focuses on your plan to talk together. So, let's get started.

Note 1: Facilitators encourage and model appropriate conversation, sharing, and supervision of children. Facilitators try several methods to stimulate conversation including joining the family and modeling or use of conversation prompts. A facilitator might stop at the table of a family and offer encouragement, praise, and suggestions for managing different situations (behavior management, cueing, discipline). Work with families on interactions/behaviors occurring “in the moment”. Remember to be sensitive to and empowering of the parent(s).

Note 2: One facilitator should take on the role of process monitor making sure that the session runs smoothly and proceeds in a timely fashion. The process facilitator should encourage families to start finishing their dinner and cleaning up their tables after about 20 minutes to make sure that this activity is finished within 30 minutes and the group is ready to begin the next activity on time.

Activity 2: Gears



15
Minutes



Goals:

- To illustrate family systems theory.
- To educate about trauma and its effects.



Materials:

Gear sets (1 for each family)



Handouts:

Gears



Instructions:

Lead Facilitator: *We hope you enjoyed your dinner. It is now time to begin our activities for tonight. If you will look at that schedule now, I will tell you a little bit about tonight's group. Proceed with introducing each activity briefly.*

Co-Facilitator _____: *Hand out gear sets. On your table is a game that involves gears. We want you to work together to build something with the gears. Build something so that when you turn the handle all the gears work together. This activity should last about 10 minutes. Use the Gears worksheet to help the families make the connection between the gears and their family.*

Now, I want you to take out one of the gears. Now turn the handle and see what happens. Do all the gears turn? Take out another gear. Do all the gears turn? Now put the gear back. Now add a gear some place and see what happens. Do all the

gears turn?

Your family works something like the gears. How do you think your family is like the gears? Continue to ask questions to help families make comparisons and understand the symbolism of the gears and the impact of trauma on families. When something happens, no matter if it is something good or bad, it affects everyone. Something really bad, a trauma, could happen to any one member of the family sending ripples throughout the family. This is when something difficult experienced by only one family member creates distress in other family members. “Family trauma” also happens when trauma or stress is experienced directly by the whole family. A family who has experienced really hard things together responds as a unit even though not everyone in the family will have the same reaction.

Also, reactions to bad or stressful things that happen change over time. The way you or your family responds right after the event or after finding out about what happened may not be the same as the way you or your family responds after some time has passed. Whole families can develop trauma-related symptoms and these symptoms can last for a year or longer. Even after that, distress symptoms may reoccur or get worse when your family is under a lot of stress or when things in the family are changing. Families, who are dealing with multiple stresses or always thinking that something bad might happen may have a hard time knowing what they are reacting to and have a harder time adjusting.

Some of you may have had to remove a lot of gears before they stopped turning and might not remember how to put all the pieces back together now, just like in your family, it may not be possible to put things back together just as they were before the trauma. But healing is possible! I bet you could find a new and maybe even more interesting way to put the gears back together. Through this work you are doing with your family in this group and outside of this group, you can find new ways to connect and work together that may look different than before but may work even better.

Lead Facilitator: *It is now time to break into smaller groups. Remember, each facilitator will take a different group, only tonight each family is going to be a small group.*

Facilitators should join their assigned family at this time. Facilitators move one family at a time to their designated areas.

Note 1: Facilitators who are not talking should spread around the room, monitoring families’ reactions and level of participation. A facilitator might stop at the table of a family and offer encouragement, praise, and suggestions for managing different situations (behavior management, cueing, discipline). Work with families on interactions/behaviors occurring “in the moment”. Remember to be sensitive to and empowering of the parent(s).

Activity 3: Family Narrative

55
Minutes**Goals:**

- To carry out the family's narrative process.

**Materials:**

Phones for recording
Paper Pen/markers/crayons
Toys

**Handouts:****Instructions:**

Family Facilitator: Avoidance Check-in

Today we will continue with your narrative work. Remember all the things that you have learned about talking together as a family, about sharing feelings, and about dealing with scared and anxious feelings. You can use all these skills as you continue to tell your story today.

Narrative breakout sessions continue according to the specific plan for each family.

Facilitators should monitor the level of family members' stress and anxiety closely.

Facilitators should cue family members to use SIT skills if needed during the narrative.

Young children in the family may want to draw as the family talks. Having some toys available for them to play quietly is also helpful.

After about 40 minutes the facilitator should assess where the family is in their narrative work. If the family is close to the end of their planned work, the facilitator should do nothing. If the family is nowhere near the end, the facilitator should help the family reach a stopping point and regain emotional balance before ending the session. Remember, it is not important that the family finish during this session. It is important that the session ends with the family able to rejoin the group, continue to participate in the closing activities, and to leave the group to go home in a healthy manner.

Wow, what an incredible story you are sharing with each other. Even though it is sometimes hard to talk about bad things that happen, you did a great job. You listened, heard each other, and learned something important about how you as a family experience hard things that happen. Facilitators should describe the family's process and reflect on what the family learned, not content but the process of telling the family story.

Note 1: Facilitators should not become part of the family conversation but might want to gently encourage families to elaborate, to get everyone's point of view, to talk about how they felt at the time, etc.

Note 2: Each family will process their narrative at different rates. Some families may need

only 3 sessions while others may need more. Be sensitive to the pace of the family more so than the structure of the group.

Activity 4: SIT Practice



10
Minutes



Goals:

- To shift the energy from the narrative work to closing group.
- To practice letting go and returning to safe spaces in the family.



Materials:

As needed



Handouts:

As needed



Instructions:

Co-Facilitator _____: Lead a brief activity (calming or mindfulness or fun circle game) to transition from the narrative work to the close of group. You can do whatever activity that fits the families and shifts the energy while acknowledging that everyone just did hard work.

Activity 5: Closing



10
Minutes



Goals:

- To increase the sense of group cohesion.
- To practice planning and implementation of rituals and routine.
- To assure continuity from one session to the next.



Materials:

Chore charts and star stickers (1 pack for each family)



Handouts:

Using Your Coping Resources
Phone Tree/Contact Sheets
Family Rating Form
Participant Log
Clinician Rating Form

**Instructions:**

Lead Facilitator: *We want to thank everyone for taking part in tonight's group. It is now time to finish this session and at the end of every group, we do a few things to end the group and to get ready for the next group.*

Co-Facilitator _____: *Is there anything that we still need to do to finish tonight's activities?*

Talking about trauma is very difficult. Many times, when families start to share about bad things that have happened or talking about difficult issues, stress goes up. When stress levels go up, both children and adults can feel angry, irritable, sad, or can feel bad physically. We have worked a lot on things that you can do when this happens. Here is a sheet to help remind you of all the skills you have learned. You know that you can also always reach out to your therapist or one of group leaders if you are having trouble during the week.

I want to let each family know what a good job they did. Tell each family, or a family member, one thing that they did especially well.

Co-Facilitator _____: *Introduce and review the topic for next week. Next week we will continue with your narrative plan.*

Lead Facilitator: *We want to make sure that we stay in touch during the week, so let's continue to try the Buddy System or Phone Tree. Now, let's end by closing rituals. Cue families to acknowledge the end of group to other family members as well. Please complete your family rating form now and hand it in. Thanks.*

Facilitators complete participant log and clinician rating form.

**Homework to be Assigned:**

- Using Your Coping Resources