
Helping Children Who Witness Domestic Violence: A Guide for Parents (Student Manual)

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1997



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Author's Notes

Funded by the King County Women's Program

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Special thanks to: The King County Women's Program Becky Evans, Karen Ceasar, Marie Hassett, Karl Zahlis and the many others who helped

Purpose of the Class

- To understand the effects of domestic violence on children
- To learn ways to talk to and listen to them about their experience of domestic violence
- To understand how domestic violence affects you as a parent
- To work on safe nonviolent relationships with your child's father or mother
- To learn and practice new problem-solving techniques with children
- To find support and counseling for you and your children, if needed

During this class we will be talking about some things that can be difficult, sad, or upsetting. If you want referrals to places to get help or support for domestic violence related issues, please ask the instructor.

Rules

1. All information about class participants is **CONFIDENTIAL**. You are welcome to share your own experiences and knowledge from the class with friends and family members, but do not discuss your classmates' experiences or mention their names.
2. Speak respectfully to everyone you interact with in the program, including fellow classmates, instructors, and support staff.
3. Please give your full attention to whoever is talking. Do not interrupt people who are talking, or start private conversations with other participants.
4. Bring your workbook and a pen or pencil to each class.

We want this class to be as helpful to you as possible. Please ask questions, and let us know how we can make it more useful for you. If you have trouble understanding anything that's being taught, or have difficulty reading or writing, please let the instructor know.

Session 1:What is Domestic Violence?

The goals of this session are:

1. To teach the definition of domestic violence
2. To help participants understand the impact of domestic violence on parents

What is domestic violence?

Domestic Violence (DV) is a whole system of actions that one person uses to dominate and control another person. The controlling person maintains control by physical and sexual violence, and the ongoing threat of violence.

Who Commits DV?

The majority of domestic violence assaults are committed by men against women. Occasionally women assault their male partners, but in many cases, they do this in self-defense. Gay and lesbian people also assault their partners. DV happens in every neighborhood, in every social class, and in every religious, racial and ethnic group. It can happen to our friends, grandparents, neighbors, coworkers and ourselves.

Why Are People Violent to Their Partners?

People are violent to their partners because at some time in their lives, they have learned that being violent is the way to make your partner and children act the way you want them to. They believe that they have the right to be violent at home.

Men who batter are often supported in their violence by social norms that say that the man has to do whatever it takes to "be in charge," or "wear the pants." They may also be supported by family members, friends, police, courts, doctors, counselors, pastors, and others who choose to ignore the violence.

Myths and Misconceptions About DV

There are many "myths" about what causes domestic violence. Some of the myths about DV are that it is caused by:

- Stress
- Alcohol or drugs
- Problems in communication
- Something the victim did
- Jealousy
- Insecurity

The only thing that causes DV is the person who chooses to be violent.

Effects of Domestic Violence on the Victim

Lots of times we hear people say about a battered woman, "Why doesn't she just leave?" Think about what it is like to be a woman whose husband is doing everything on the Power and Control wheel.

- What would her days be like?
- How would this affect a woman's ability to be a Mom?

This is just a brief overview. We will come back to this in more detail later.

Homework

We have defined DV as a whole system of actions that one person uses to dominate and control another person. Most people have been in a situation where they have been controlled by another person or institution. Many people have experiences with bosses who are very controlling.

Think of a situation where you felt controlled by another person or situation and you were unable to leave the situation (a job, your parents' house when you were little, a relationship, school or other institution, etc.). It should be a situation where the person had more power than you did.

- What did the person or people do to control you?
- How did you feel? How did you think about the person or people who were controlling you?
- How did you think the person controlling you felt towards you?
- What kept you from leaving the situation sooner than you did?

Session 2: The Effects of Domestic Violence on Kids

The goals of this session are:

1. To help parents understand the effects of DV on their kids.
 2. To help them understand more about their children's feelings and experiences.
- How old were you?
 - How did you feel about your father?
 - How did you feel about your mother?
 - Who did you blame?
 - What did you want to do?

- How might you think men and women are supposed to act in relationships?
- What was it like to be an adult participating in this exercise?

Group Exercise: Impact of DV on Kids

s is a difficult topic, but it is the first step in trying to help our kids.

When children witness domestic violence in their home:

- How do they feel?
- What do they learn?
- How do they act?

Homework

Review the list of the effects of domestic violence on children. If you have had violence in your home, what are some of the effects you have seen in your children? Answer the questions on page 2-9 in the workbook.

- How do they feel about the violence?
- What have they learned from the violence?
- How do they act as a result of the violence?
- What I can do to help:

Session 3:How to Help Our Kids

The goals of this session are:

1. To introduce some ways to help children when they have witnessed DV.
2. To explain the impact of denial on children.
3. To understand children's emotional needs after they have witnessed DV

Helping Our Kids When They Have Witnessed DV

- Talk about it with them when they are ready
- Listen to them
- Talk about their feelings

- Show understanding
- Let them know it's not their fault
- Let them talk, if they want to
- Let them know you love them
- Let them know you will try to keep them safe/act in a way that is safe
- Let them know the violence is not okay
- Acknowledge it's hard/scary for them
- Accept that they may not be willing or able to talk about it right away
- Always act in a way that is non-threatening and non-violent with your kids
- Take them to counseling if they need it
- Set limits respectfully when your child is acting violent (to be discussed further in a later session.)
- Don't expect your child to respond immediately.

Impact of Denial on Kids

The advocate's story

I worked with Amy, a little girl who was six years old. Her Mom never said anything to her about the violence, or why they were staying in the shelter. In our groups, we have the kids draw pictures. Amy drew a picture of a man and a woman in a house. The man had his mouth wide open. She told me that it was Amy and her husband when she grew up. I asked her what her husband was doing. Why did he have his mouth wide open. She said, "He's yelling." I said, "Why is he yelling?" Amy said, "Cause he loves her." Here is a story from a 39-year-old man who has been arrested for domestic violence ten times.

Bill's story

My father used to beat on my step-mom all the time, right in front of me. No one ever talked about it. No one said anything. I got so used to it, I would just sit there and eat snacks, watch TV, like nothing was going on. I've never really beat on my wife like he did; I just slap her and push her around sometimes.

How Denial Affects Kids

- Child learns that the violence is normal

- Child is afraid to talk about the violence
- Child is confused, doesn't understand
- Blames her/himself
- Learns to deny and not to talk about their own feelings
- Makes them feel like they are crazy
- Makes them feel lonely, isolated from their friends
- Learns that it's not OK to ask about the violence or discuss it
- Gives children unrealistic beliefs about the causes of the violence

It's a lot scarier for kids when no one ever talks to them about the violence.

Obstacles to Talking to Our Kids About Domestic Violence

- What makes it hard to talk to kids about domestic violence?
- What can you do to overcome these obstacles?

Emotional Needs of Children Who Have DV in Their Families

Child's Emotion: Fear

- Fear of those they love in their own home, where they should feel most safe

Child needs to:

- Be able to talk to someone they trust about their feelings
- Learn ways to keep themselves safe and to know they have a plan for what to do when there is violence
- Have a feeling of control in the situation ("I will go over to my neighbors when it happens")

Child's Emotion: Anger

- Anger at the abuser, or at the survivor for not leaving the situation.

Child needs to:

- Know that it is normal and okay to feel angry about this
- Be able to talk about the feelings with someone they trust

- Express their anger in non-destructive ways

Child's Emotion: Mixture of anger and love

- Feeling torn between feelings of anger and love toward the abuser. Feeling guilty for both feelings

Child needs to:

- Learn that it's okay to feel both anger and love toward someone
- Know it is okay to love their parent even when they hate the behavior they see
- Know they are not bad if they love the abuser

Child's Emotion: Confusion about being able to love both parents

- Feeling they need take sides (e.g. "if I love Mom, I can't love Dad" and vice versa)

Child needs to:

- To know that it is okay to love both parents at the same time

Child's Emotion: Loss

- Loss of a healthy, safe family
- Loss of one parent if they leave (or the constant threat of this)
- Loss of comfort in the home.

Child needs to:

- Talk about feelings with someone they trust
- Develop a support system of extended family or friends outside the home

Child's Emotion: Guilt/Responsibility

- Guilt for causing the violence, or not stopping it somehow
- Responsible for preventing the violence, and taking care of Mom and the family.

Child needs to:

- Understand that the violence is not their fault, and that it is an adult problem for the adults to work out.

Child's Emotion: Feeling life is unpredictable (never knowing when a crisis will erupt)

- Feeling vulnerable on a daily basis, with no power or control about what will happen

Child needs to:

- Find areas in their lives where they can have control and make plans and decisions
- Create a safety plan with someone they trust
- Create some structure and stability wherever possible (creating daily routines that provide a sense of control)

Homework:

- What things do you want your children to know when you talk to them about the violence in your family?

Session 4: Talking to Children About Domestic Violence

The goals of this session are:

1. To teach parents what messages their kids need to hear.
2. To help them learn to listen and respond.

Kathy's Story

I had never talked to my daughter about it at all. But when we were staying in a shelter and she was in a kids' group and all the kids were drawing pictures, my daughter drew a picture of a hospital emergency room. She drew herself in the waiting room, crying and she drew me on a stretcher, bleeding. I was really surprised. I asked her what the picture was. She said, "You were hurt, I was sad. I was waiting for you, alone." I hugged her. I said, "I'm so sorry you had to see me get hurt. I had no idea you were so sad about it. It must have been very hard for you." I told her that I would try to make sure things were safe for us.

What Children Need to Hear About Domestic Violence from the Survivor

- It's not okay.
- It's not your fault.
- It must be scary for you.
- I will listen to you.
- You can tell me how you feel; it is important

- I'm sorry you had to see/hear it.
- You do not deserve to have this in your family.
- I will keep you safe.
- There is nothing you could have done to prevent/change it.
- We can talk about what to do to keep you safe if it happens again. (For example, staying in your room, going to neighbors, etc., which will be discussed in detail in safety session).
- I care about you. You are important.

Frank's Story

"I talked to my boys. I explained to them that yelling at their Mom and hitting her was wrong. I said, "I went to jail because I slapped your Mom. When you do wrong, this is what happens." Later I talked to them some more. I told them that it wasn't just getting locked up. I hurt their Mom, and scared her, and I scared them too. I told them they should never do to a woman what I did to their Mom. I think they understood."

- What messages did Frank give his sons?
- What else could he have said?
- How would he need to act in front of his children and with their Mom?
- What would the children learn if Frank admitted to his children that he was wrong and then hit their Mom again?
- What messages do you think children need to hear about domestic violence from the abusive person?

What Children Need to Hear About Domestic Violence from the Abuser

- My behavior was not okay, violence is not okay.
- I am responsible.
- It's not your fault.
- It's not your mother's fault.
- I am sorry you had to see/hear that.
- You must have been scared.

- I will listen to you
- It's okay if you are mad at me, scared of me. I would be, too.
- You shouldn't have to have this happen in your family.
- Your feelings are important.
- I am getting help so you can feel safer.

Think about the ways your children might respond when you talk to them about Domestic Violence. Then think about the feelings they could be having.

How my child might respond when I talk to him or her about domestic violence:	What feeling might he or she be having? List feelings next to each response:

Listening to Our Kids

Discuss and answer the following questions with your group:

- How do you know when someone is listening to you?
- How do you know when someone is not listening to you?

How to Listen and How Not to Listen

How to Listen

- Don't interrupt.
- Look at the person who is talking.
- Give them your full attention, if possible.
- Answer in a way that lets them know you are listening.
- Don't express an opinion or say that the other person is right or wrong.
- Let them know you understand their point of view.

- Being a good listener takes effort and practice. Try to hear what the person is saying, even if you don't agree.

How to Not Listen

- Don't look at the person speaking
- Interrupt him
- Correct him
- Give advice
- Tell her she is wrong
- Tell her not to feel what she is feeling
- Change the subject
- Ask a lot of questions

Listening to Our Kids

Tips for Listening For and Accepting Feelings

Learning to listen can be difficult. Here are some tips:

- Listen for the feeling you hear.
- Let them know you hear them. Say, "It seems like you feel _____."
- Don't say anything else. Allow some time for the child to respond.
- Don't tell your child what to do, how to feel better, or why he feels the way he does.

After your child has had time to respond, you can let her know you understand by saying things like

- That sounds frustrating, hard, etc.
- Sometimes I feel that way, too.
- I understand.
- I'm here for you if you want to talk about it now, or later.

Listening for and Accepting Feelings

Below are some examples of things kids say. For each example, we are going to think of two responses to the child: one that denies his or her feeling (not listening) and one that acknowledges his or her feeling (good listening).

Example: "I thought we were going to stay home and rent a movie! I don't want to go to Aunt Marie's house again. I HATE Aunt Marie!"

Denial of the feeling: "Don't talk like that about your Aunt Marie. You know you love her. Now get your shoes on!"

Acknowledgement of the feeling: "You sound really disappointed."

1. "I don't want to play with Eric ever again. He's stupid!" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

2. "Why do you always have to tell me what to do?" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

3. "I don't want you to go. Don't leave!" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

4. "I'm not going to go to math class anymore!" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

5. "Nina wrecked my picture. I'm gonna wreck hers!" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

6. "It's my room. Why should I clean it?" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

7. "You're mean! I hate you!" **Denial of the feeling:**
_____ **Acknowledgement of the feeling:**

Obstacles to Listening

- What gets in the way of listening to our kids?

Homework

This week, practice listening to your children. Try using some of the skills we learned this session, such as listening for feelings, not advising or giving opinions, and acknowledging their feelings. Pick a day and spend 10 minutes (or more) listening to your child.

- What did it feel like?

Session 5: Safety Planning for Victims/Survivors of Domestic Violence

The goals of this session are:

1. To help women name and understand the ways that batterers use children to maintain control
2. To help women plan for their own and their children's safety
3. To briefly review some legal issues related to DV

Kim's Story

When we were getting ready to go to school one morning, Anna got her shoes on before I was ready and ran out into the yard, opened the gate and ran around the outside of the car to wait for me. I was about 10 feet behind her. She ran about halfway across the street as though it was a game. No cars passed, and I managed to get hold of her. Karl had seen the whole thing from the window and was very angry with me. He grabbed Anna from me and put her in the living room. He ordered me in the house and right in front of Anna, he hit me very hard across the head at least two times and kicked me in the leg. He yelled at me about what I was doing and said he had seen the whole thing. He said that Anna could have been killed and that if anything happened to her while she was in my care, he would kill me." "Karl has called me stupid, dumb and slow so many times that Anna has learned the vocabulary, sometimes using it on her dolls, and at times on me. She has also called me a "nasty bitch," which she didn't learn from me.

Using Children as a Tactic of Control

- What are some ways your husband or partner has used the children against you?

Steps for Safety Planning When Violence Takes Place at Home

Identify a person or people who could help

- Focus on what your child thinks she could do to keep herself safe.
- Give her time to come up with her own solutions.

- Ask her who she thinks could help her, and whether she would feel comfortable asking that person.

Children should know that:

- The safety plan may not always work.
- It's not their fault if it fails.

Help your child to identify warning signs

First, think about what are the warning signs (if any) that you have when your partner is about to become abusive. Here are some examples:

- Mom and Dad are arguing
- Dad is raising his voice
- Dad and/or Mom is drunk/high
- Dad is namecalling or threatening
- Dad is slamming doors, stomping around

In talking to your child about his or her father, always stay focused on **behaviors**. You could say something like, "Sometimes your Dad acts in ways that are scary, and when he does, we need to do things to try to stay safe."

What kids can do to stay safe

- Go to their room
- Leave the house and go somewhere safe: a neighbor's house, a relative's house, or outside
- Stay out of the way
- Dial 911 if there is a phone where their Dad can't hear them
- Don't ever try to physically stop the violence

Tell your child that he or she **can't control** their Dad's behavior.

Safety Plan for _____

This page is for Moms and kids to talk about together, and for kids to fill out with their Mom's help if they need it.

- Who do I trust who can help me be safe when there is violence in our home? (Neighbor, relative)

- Name of Person: _____
- Phone numbers: _____
- What plan should I make with that person (Example: That person will call the police when I call to say there is a problem between my Mom and Dad, or will let me come to their house)
- Where is a safe place for me to go when my Dad is acting in scary ways? (examples: our neighbor's house, a relative's house, etc. (List names of people)
- If I can't leave, where is the safest place in the house for me to go? (Example, my bedroom, the basement, the bathroom)
- If I can call 911, what should I say?

Safety Planning For Yourself When Your Children Visit Their Dad

If you are afraid that your child's father may be abusive during visitation exchanges, try to arrange for supervised visitation. Ask a legal advocate at one of the programs for victims of domestic violence to tell you ways to do this.

- Have the visitation rules clearly written in the legal documents, and follow them yourself. They should include very specific details about location, time, days, and arrangements for the safe transfer of the child.
- Be consistent with your visitation/parenting plan. Don't be manipulated or threatened into changing it.
- Don't get into arguments with your child's father about visitation. If he wants to argue about it with you, hang up the phone, or leave the situation.
- If you don't have supervised visitation, arrange for him to pick up the kids at someone else's house. Ideally, this person knows your situation and understands the risk to you.
- Have as little contact with him as possible over the phone and in person.
- Try to make your child's experience as positive as possible, even though this can be extremely difficult. (We will talk more about this later).

Safety Planning for Your Children When They Visit Their Dad

Here are some things you can discuss with your children to help them plan for visitation with their Dad. This can be very difficult to talk about. If you don't feel that you can talk about it, you might ask for help from a family member you trust, or from an advocate in a domestic violence program.

- Information about how to respond if their father interrogates them about your activities.

- Information about the impact of drugs or alcohol on their Dad so that they have coping strategies for when he is intoxicated.
- A plan for calling you or another family member who can help. They should know how to use the phone, how to make a long distance or credit card call, and how to ask an operator for help in making a call.
- Understanding that they may feel torn between loyalty to you and loyalty to their Dad
- How to call 911 and what to say.
- If you have two or more children, you can talk to them about ways they can help to protect each other.

Orders for Protection

If you are separated from your children's father and you don't already have an order for protection (OP), you may want to consider getting one. If you don't have a protective order or a court-approved parenting plan, he can legally have access to the children at any time.

An OP is a legal document issued by the court that is designed to protect a person from future domestic violence and allows the court to award other things to DV victims (e.g., custody of their children, use of certain property, etc.).

If you need to restrict your children's father's access to the children, you will need an OP even if a no-contact order has already been issued. The no-contact order requires him to stay away from you, but doesn't prevent him from having contact with your children.

As the petitioner, you will not be charged for filing an order for protection. The court can provide the following protection in the order:

1. Give one parent custody and set a visitation schedule for the other parent's contact with the children;
2. Order the respondent from causing the petitioner any physical harm, bodily injury, assault, including sexual assault; and from molesting, harassing, threatening, or stalking the petitioner;
3. Order the respondent to stay away from the petitioner's residence, workplace, school, and the daycare or school of a child;
4. Restrain the respondent from coming near the petitioner and from any contact whatsoever, in person or through others, directly or indirectly;
5. Order the use/possession of essential personal effects or a vehicle; and
6. Order a party to undergo drug/alcohol treatment, batterer's treatment, or counseling.

The more complete and detailed information you have about the violence, the stronger the case you will have. You can prove that the violence took place by telling the court in your own words what happened, by submitting documents (witness declarations, police reports, medical records, conviction records or dockets, pictures of your bruises, pictures of the property damage, batterer's treatment reports, statements from counselors, evaluations, etc.), to verify your claims.

Orders may be issued for a fixed period or for one year. Orders restraining the respondent from contacting his minor children, however, may only last up to a year. A petitioner may apply for renewal of the order within three months before her order expires.

If you need additional information about orders for protection, please call the numbers listed in the resource section under Protection Orders. It is helpful to talk to an advocate before getting a protection order. An advocate can explain the process and let you know if you qualify.

Homework

Discuss safety planning with your children. Have one of your children fill out the Safety Plan on page 5-5. If this seems too difficult, think about what you might want to say to your children about it, and what the obstacles are to saying it.

Session 5: Accountability to Our Children For Men Who Batter

The goals of this session are:

1. To help men define responsible parenting
2. To look at the impact of DV on children
3. To help men be accountable to their children and others for the violence

Responsible Parenting

- What does it mean to be a responsible parent?
- What did you learn from your parent's about being a responsible parent?
- Think about any loud arguments or violence you saw or heard in your family when you were a child.
 - What did you see/hear?
 - What did you do?
 - How did you feel?

- How do you think this affected your relationship with your Dad or Step-Dad?
- With your Mom?
- With your children's Mom?

Jack's Story

The night I got arrested, I was really upset because I lost my job. I went out and had a few drinks and when I got home, my wife, Linda, was upset with me because I was late and everyone had been waiting for me to get home to have dinner. The kids were running around making a lot of noise, and I just wanted to be left alone. I shouted at the kids to be quiet but nobody was listening to me. I told Linda to shut up and get the kids under control. Then I grabbed her by the shoulders and started shaking her. I had done stuff like that before. She told me to leave or she would call the police. My son, who is 7, was shouting at me to stop. My 5-year old daughter was crying. I told Linda that if she called the police I'd make her really sorry. Then I left. I went out and had another drink. I came back and all the doors were locked and I had forgotten my keys. I banged on the door and she didn't open it, so I broke the kitchen window and climbed in. Linda screamed for help. We started arguing and I grabbed her by the neck and choked her. My daughter was holding my leg, trying to pull me off Linda. My son called the police. I shouted at him and he went and hid in the closet. Now, my son is scared of me. Every time I raise my hand to reach for something, he cowers, like I'm going to hit him. When I go to my daughter now, she runs away. One day about a month after the incident, I went into my son's room and he had his sister down on the floor and he was choking her. My daughter wasn't making a sound. I grabbed him, but I couldn't say anything. He was acting like me. Lately, he's also been getting into trouble at school for starting fights with other kids.

Table 1. Impact of My Violent Behavior on My Children

Child Saw/Heard	Child Felt	How Child Might Act as a Result	What Child Needs From Me

Roland's story

Roland and Tonya have been together for nine years. They have one son, Tim, who is seven. In their time together, Roland has hit, punched and threatened to kill Tonya.

The last time Roland hit Tonya, seven-year-old Tim tried to stop him, and Roland pushed Tim out of his way. Tim got bruises on his arms and legs and a scrape on his face. For Tonya, seeing Tim get hurt is too much. She leaves with Tim and goes to live with her sister in a different town. She files a No Contact Order (NCO) against Roland. Tim changes schools. He can't talk to any of his old friends because Tonya doesn't want Roland to find out where they live. She is afraid. Roland is very upset, and doesn't believe Tonya has the right to leave with their son. He calls Tim's school and asks Tim's favorite teacher where his son has gone. The teacher says he doesn't know, and Roland gets upset and hangs up on this teacher. Then Roland goes to Tonya's mother and pressures her to tell him where Tonya and Tim are living. Roland says, "Please tell me, I just want to see my son." Tonya's mother feels badly for him and tells him that Tonya is living with her sister. Roland goes to Tonya's sister's house. When the sister answers the door, Roland demands to see his son. The sister says that Tim isn't there, but Roland doesn't believe her. They get into an argument and Roland threatens Tonya's sister. In the meantime, Roland's parents want to see their grandson. Roland says that Tonya has been "acting crazy" and has disappeared with Tim.

Table 2. Accountability

Who in my children's life was affected?	How were they affected?	How can I be accountable or safe in future interactions?	Obstacles

Homework

- Think of four steps you can take to be accountable to your children. You can look back at Session 4 to review some of the messages as discussed.
- Think of some ways that your accountability can help your children.

Session 6: Parenting When You've Been a Victim of DV

The goals of this session are:

1. To help mothers understand the impact of domestic violence on themselves as parents
2. To help them to stop blaming themselves for the violence

3. To reestablish leadership with their children
4. To talk to their children about separation and visitation
5. To strengthen their support systems

Yolanda's Story

Yolanda and her husband Rafael have been together for 12 years. He has been physically and verbally abusive to her. Several times, he has pushed or slapped her in front of their son David, who is 10. She sees David getting into trouble in school and feels guilty about it. She feels that she is to blame for the problems in her family. Yolanda is expecting a visit from her aunt and uncle in a half hour. David left several of his toys and some clothes on the living room floor. She asks him to pick up his things and put them in his room. He ignores her. She asks him again. He says, "You do it! That's your job. I'm busy. Why are you bothering me?" She wants to tell him to cooperate with her, but she thinks about all the things he's been through, and thinks she shouldn't start a fight. He goes out the door to play with a friend. Yolanda shakes her head and picks up the toys. David is talking to her exactly the way his Dad does.

- How does domestic violence affect your role as a mom?
- How does domestic violence affect the way children act towards their mom?

Getting Rid of Self-Blame

- What are some examples of self-blaming thoughts?
- What are the feelings you have when you blame yourself?
- What are some more positive or realistic thoughts that you could say to yourself instead?

Self-Blame: How it Affects Your Parenting

1. Briefly describe the situation.
2. What were the self-blaming or negative thoughts you had?
3. What were your feelings?
4. How did these thoughts and feelings affect your behavior with your child?
5. What are some more positive or realistic thoughts you could say to yourself?
 - About the violence:

- About your rights to set limits with your child:
6. What limits would you have wanted to set with your child?

Establishing Leadership with Your Children

1. What are the most important rules in your home?
2. Write each rule in a positive way (telling the child what they can do).

For Moms Who Are Separated or Divorced

- We can help our kids by
- What are some things kids experience when their parents separate or divorce?
- Issues you can discuss with your child about visitation:
- Issues you should not discuss with your child:

Homework: Strengthening Your Support System

- What are some of the obstacles you have to asking for emotional support or practical help from other people?
- What are some things you would like support with? (Examples: job training, funding for school, women's support group, childcare)
- Who are some people or organizations who could support you?

Session 6: Respectful Parenting With Your Children's Mom

The goals of this session are:

1. To help men who have been abusive to define and practice respectful behaviors with their children's Mom
2. To understand and be accountable for the ways they have used their children to control their partners
3. To help them find ways to behave respectfully towards their children during visitation
4. To learn to handle parenting conflicts respectfully

Respectful Parenting

- What does it mean to have a respectful parenting relationship?
- What are some of the ways you show respect to your children's Mom?

Understanding the Use of Children as a Tactic of Control

- What are some other ways that men use their children against their children's mother?

Charles's Story

My wife, Gloria, never went past the eighth grade, and she can barely read or write. I would use that against her in different ways. Our son, Mike, is eleven, and has some trouble in school. When I got home from work at night, I would get a beer, put my feet up and watch TV. Whenever Mike would ask me for help with his homework, I'd tell him, "Leave me alone, I'm busy. Go ask your Mom." I would know how to help him, but then I'd make him go to his Mom and ask her for help with a math problem or something, and she'd tell him she couldn't help. Then he'd get all upset and come back to me for help. I would tell him that his Mom was stupid or that she didn't care how he did in school. If he complained to me about it, I would accuse him of being disrespectful and punish him in front of her.

Control Log

Think of a situation where you used the children as a way to control your partner.

1. Briefly describe the situation, and what you did (what you said, gestures you used, physical action, tone of voice, and facial expressions).
2. What did you want to have happen in this situation?
3. What beliefs do you have that supported your actions and intentions?
4. What feelings were you having?
5. How did your children experience the situation?
6. What was the impact of your action?
 - On you:
 - On your partner:
 - On your children:
7. How did your behavior affect your relationship with your children?

8. What could you have done differently?

(Adapted from the DAIP Manual.)

Some Guidelines for Visitation

Planning for safe visitation

If you are very angry at your children's Mom, or feel that you are at risk for being abusive to her, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** to plan ahead so that your children are not hurt or scared by your feelings or behavior.

- Arrange for supervised visitation, or ask a friend or family member who knows your children to pick the kids up and take them back to their Mom.
- Prepare for the visit by discussing your angry feelings with someone other than your children, for example, a counselor, a sponsor, or a close friend.
- Make a rule for yourself that you will **NOT** use your children as a way to hurt or control their Mom. Using them in this way will not help the children, or your relationship with them.

Use the following guidelines to keep your conversation with your children safe and appropriate.

Issues you can discuss with your child about visitation

- When and where you will see them next
- Plans for the next visit
- Anything positive about their mother as a parent (Example: Your Mom cares about you)
- Your child's feelings about the separation or divorce
- **Positive** interest in other relatives or family friends that your child sees (Example, "How's your grandma doing?")

Issues you should not discuss with your child

- Arrangements for child support
- Anger, resentment, frustration with their Mom
- Questions about who their Mom is seeing, where she lives, where she works, her phone number or address, anything she is doing that is **NOT** related to your child's regular activities
- Any feelings you have for their Mom outside the parenting relationship
- Your feelings for her new partner

Handling Parenting Conflicts

Example: *Our son Jason wants to stay up past his bedtime to watch TV. Rose lets him stay up, and I don't think it's right.*

1. What is your experience of the conflict? *Jason's Mom spoils him.*
2. What is her experience of the conflict? *She doesn't think it's a big deal. She thinks I'm too strict.*
3. What is the actual conflict? *We disagree on when Jason should go to bed.*
4. How do you think your children experience it? *Confusing.*
5. What usually happens when you argue about it? *We yell at each other.*
6. What are some of the negative thoughts you have about her? *If it were up to her, she would let Jason run wild.*
7. What is a more respectful or positive thought you could have about her? *She is a good mother. Some of her ideas about parenting are different from mine.*
8. What would be a good time and place to initiate a discussion about it with your Mom? *On Saturday afternoon, when Jason is at his friend's house and we are both relaxed.*
9. What agreement or compromise might work for both of you? *Jason could stay up late on Fridays and Saturdays, but needs to be in bed by 9:00 p.m. on school nights. In the summer, he could have an extra "late" night.*
10. Who is going to tell Jason about the new rule, and what will be said? *We will tell Jason about it together. We will let him know that we talked about it and decided together that it was important for him to get a good sleep on school nights, but fine if he wants to stay up later on other nights.*
11. What is your back-up plan if the new rule doesn't work out? *We will find a good time to talk about it again, when Jason isn't around.*

Guidelines for Handling Parenting Conflicts

1. Be sure you feel calm and safe before you bring it up at all. Take a time-out or some time to think about the problem, before you discuss it with your partner.
2. Talk about it when the children are not present or are not able to hear the conversation. Talk about it when you are both calm enough to make a good decision together.
3. Speak respectfully about your own position. DO NOT criticize, put-down, blame, or try to coerce your partner.

4. Listen carefully and respectfully to her. Make sure to listen to what she's saying, and acknowledge her position.
5. Try to hear her perspective, and don't think about who is "right" or "wrong."
6. Work together to negotiate an agreement or compromise.
7. Agree on what you are going to say to your children. If you and your partner live together, it's important that you both tell them the rule or agreement.
8. Work out a back-up plan: What are you going to do if your new rule or agreement doesn't work out?

Homework: Handling Parenting Conflicts

Think of a conflict you have now or have had in the past with your children's mother and answer the following questions.

1. What is your experience of the conflict?
2. What is your children's Mom's experience of the conflict?
3. How do you think your children experience it?
4. What is the actual conflict?
5. What usually happens when you argue about it?
6. What are some of the negative thoughts you have about her?
7. How might you change these to more positive thoughts?
8. What would be a good time and place to initiate a discussion about it with your child's Mom?
9. What agreement or compromise might work for both of you?
10. Who is going to tell your child or children about the new rule, and what will be said?
11. What is your back-up plan if the new rule doesn't work out?

Session 7: Respectful Parenting

The goals of this session are:

1. To help parents to broaden their definition of "discipline" beyond punishment or reward
2. To introduce a model for respectful parenting

Discipline as Guidance

The true definition of discipline is to teach or to guide.

- What are the qualities of a really good teacher?
- How does this help you to learn?
- What are the qualities of a really bad teacher?
- How does this keep you from learning?

Three Styles of Parenting

Mutual Respect Based on mutual cooperation:

- Both parent and child are respected.
- Parent communicates limits respectfully.
- Parent follows through consistently with limits set.
- Parent values child's ideas and feelings.
- Child is involved in solving problems.
- Negotiation and fairness are part of discipline.
- Parent communicates assertively

Punitive Based on power over child:

- Child is not respected
- Parent uses power over child
- Parent uses threats and punishment to control
- Parent does not consider child's ideas and feelings
- No negotiation or flexibility
- Parent communicates aggressively

Permissive Based on parent's desire to avoid conflict:

- Parent is not respected

- Limits not clear or consistent
- Parent doesn't follow through on limits set
- Child not given responsibilities for self
- Parent "gives in"
- Child pampered
- Parent communicates passively

Now we're going to look at a situation where a child has failed to do his chores. Let's look at the different ways his Mom could respond.

It's Saturday morning. Twelve-year-old Ben has plans to play basketball with his friends after breakfast. His Saturday morning chores are to clean his room and wash the breakfast dishes. The family rule is that Ben has to do his chores before he can go out. When his Mom comes back from grocery shopping, she meets Ben going out the door to play basketball. She sees dirty dishes in the sink.

1. Mom says: "You get back in this house right now and do those dishes. Can't I get any help around here? You are useless."
 - What style of parenting is the Mom using?
 - How would Ben feel?
2. Mom says: "I was hoping you would do your chores first. But go on, I'll do them so you won't be late for your game."
 - What style of parenting is the Mom using?
 - How would Ben feel?
3. Mom says: "I see dirty dishes in the sink. We had an agreement that you would do your chores before playing basketball. If you want to go play basketball, you'll have to finish your chores first." What style of parenting is the Mom using?
 - How would Ben feel?

Let's look at another example.

Katie and her Dad are out at the mall. It's almost dinner time, and they are planning to get chicken for dinner. Katie sees an ice cream stand and says, "I want ice cream!" Her Dad tells her, "No, you have to wait until after dinner." She starts whining loudly, and saying over and over again, "I WANT ICE CREAM! NOW!"

There are a few different ways that parents might respond to Katie. Let's look at them.

1. Dad tells Katie again that she can't have ice cream until after dinner. She continues to demand it. Dad says, "You better quit whining or you won't get any ice cream EVER!" Katie says, "I want some ice cream NOW!" Dad raises his voice and says, "Did you hear what I said? If you don't quit whining you're going to get it!" Katie starts to cry. What style of parenting is the Dad using?
 - How would Katie feel?
2. Dad sighs and says, "Oh, all right!" He takes Katie into the ice cream stand and buys her a cone. What style of parenting is the Dad using?
 - How would Katie feel?
3. Dad says, "I know you really want some ice cream now. But we need to eat dinner first." Katie says, "WHY? I want ice cream NOW." Dad says, "Ice cream tastes really good, but we need to eat dinner first. We can get ice cream after dinner." Katie keeps whining. Dad takes her to get chicken for dinner.
 - What style of parenting is the Dad using?
 - How would Katie feel?

Respectful Communication

Most of us don't think too much about how we communicate, unless we are required to for our work, etc. Let's look more closely at different ways of communicating. Learning respectful communication is helpful not only in our relationships with our kids, but in all aspects of our lives. We are now going to talk about four different styles of communication. Most people tend to use each of these styles at times.

Assertive Style

In assertive communication, the person stands up for their personal rights, and expresses their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs directly, honestly, and **respectfully**.

The assertive communicator does not dominate, humiliate, or degrade the other person.

Goal: To honestly state your feelings, and show respect for the other person's position. **Messages:** Both of our feelings and needs are important. I am telling you what I need, and I'm also willing to listen to your needs.

Aggressive Style

In aggressive communication, the person expresses their feelings in a way that violates the rights of another person. The aggressive communicator uses humiliation, sarcasm, insults, or threats to get their point across.

Goal: To dominate the situation and win at the other person's expense. **Messages:** I'm right and you're wrong. Your feelings are not important. I don't need to listen to what you have to say. My view is the only one that matters.

Passive-Aggressive Style

A person communicating in a passive-aggressive style uses more hidden forms of aggression to express their feelings. The strategy is to give the other person a message without actually coming out and saying it directly.

Goal: To dominate the situation and win at the other person's expense

Passive Style

A person communicating in a passive or non-assertive style does not say what they are feeling. The passive person gives in to other people's requests, demands, or feelings and does not acknowledge their own feelings or say what they want. When the person does express feelings, it is usually in an apologetic or timid way, so that it's easy for other people to ignore them.

Goal: To play it safe, not rock the boat, and avoid conflict at all costs **Messages:** I don't count; what I need is not important; you don't have to take my feelings into account.

Note: A person who has been abused by her husband or partner may have to be passive in her style of communication in order to try to stay safe. Adapted from Arthur J. Lange and Patricia Kubowski.

Homework

- Think of a situation with your child where you had either a punitive or permissive style of parenting. How could you have responded in a more respectful way?

Session 8: Handling Anger as a Parent

The goals of this session are:

1. To clarify the difference between anger and violence
2. To help parents handle their anger towards their children in non-violent ways

The Difference Between Anger and Abuse/Violence

Anger is a normal emotion. It does not have to be expressed abusively.

Abuse is behavior or words that are hurtful or intentionally disrespectful to another person. In earlier classes we talked about different forms of abuse.

Children who grow up with domestic violence need to learn that a person can be angry without being abusive. Otherwise, when the child becomes angry he or she may respond one of two ways:

- Act violently or aggressively whenever he or she is angry
- Never express the anger at all because he or she is afraid of what will happen.

In order to help our kids express anger in healthy ways, we need to learn how to understand our own anger and express it nonviolently.

Taking Out Anger at the other Parent on the Kids

Sometimes, when a parent is angry at their child's Mom or Dad, they take it out on the child. This happens a lot in families where there has been domestic violence. It's important to understand how you may confuse anger at your child's other parent with anger at your child.

Keith's Story

Just after my wife and I had separated, my daughter Tina was visiting me. I was pretty depressed about our marriage ending, and I'd lost my job, too. Tina is 9. She came over and we got all her toys and started playing. Then she pulled out all my magazines and spread them out on the floor. She was trying on my shirts and piling them up on the floor. I asked her to clean up before we had lunch. She didn't. Just before it was time to bring her back to her Grandma's, I asked her again to help me clean up. She was watching TV, and she just wouldn't get up. When I told her to hurry because it was time to go she said, "Leave me alone. I'm tired." I went over to her and got in her face. I yelled at her and told her "You're lazy, just like your mother." She started crying. Afterwards, I felt really bad about it.

Discussion questions:

- How did Keith feel towards Tina?
- How do you think he felt towards Tina's Mom?
- How did his feelings for Tina's Mom affect the way he acted toward Tina?
- Was he abusive?
- Remember that Keith has hit Tina's Mom in the past. How would Tina feel when Keith yelled at her?
- How could Keith have used respectful parenting skills to get Tina to clean up?

Denise's Story

Saturday morning is the one day when my kids' Dad, David, is usually around to help out. The rest of the week, he's working. One Saturday, I was looking forward to having a little time to myself. And also I know the kids like to see him. At breakfast, he said he was going to help his friend work on his car. It would probably take him most of the day. Well, I didn't say anything to him, because I was in no mood to start a fight. So he left. I poured a glass of juice for my son, Andre, who's 3. I told him to be careful. He was taking it out to the living room and he spilled it all over my carpet. I yelled at him, smacked him, and put him in his room. I surprised myself that day. Usually, I don't get that upset when one of my kids spills something.

Discussion questions:

- How did Denise feel toward Andre?
- How do you think she felt about David?
- How did her feelings for David affect the way she acted with Andre?
- Was she abusive?
- How could Denise have used respectful parenting skills to tell Andre she was upset?
- How would the fact that David has been abusive to her make it more difficult for her to separate her anger at Andre from her anger at David?

Separating Anger At Your Partner From Anger at Your Child

1. Ask yourself, "What am I really angry about?"
2. Decide who you need to talk to about your anger. When there has been violence in your relationship, it may not be possible or appropriate to talk to your partner or spouse about your anger towards them. However, it is very important not to take out your bad feelings on your child.
3. If you decide you are angry at your husband, wife, or partner, and NOT your child, try to find someone else to talk to, for example, a close friend or family member, or a counselor. Also, you can try to find something else to do to deal with your anger. In a few minutes we will talk about taking Time-Out.

Sometimes we are angry at our partners and our children. Before we talk to our children about it, we should carefully sort out what we need to tell them.

Small Group Exercise

- What was the situation?

- What were you angry about?
- What did you say/do to your child?
- How do you think your child felt?
- How did you feel afterwards?
- Who else could you have talked to?
- What else could you have done?

Beliefs and thoughts that support respectful parenting

All children misbehave sometimes. By learning to recognize the things inside of us that make us angry, we can better control our anger, and be more respectful in our discipline of our kids.

In order to be more respectful to our kids, it helps to look at two things:

- The beliefs we have about how parents should act and how kids should act
- The way we describe our kids' behavior to ourselves in our thoughts.

Beliefs that support disrespectful parenting

Some of the beliefs we have about parenting can influence us to be disrespectful to our children. Here are some examples:

- Parents should be able to control their kids.
- Children should always obey their parents.
- Children should never talk back.
- A parent whose child misbehaves in public is a bad parent.
- Good parents always keep their children neat and clean.
- When kids misbehave, they're just trying to "get" their parents.
- Kids should know better than to misbehave.
- Children are responsible for their parents' feelings.
- Bad kids deserve what they get.
- Children should be quiet and just listen.

Which of these beliefs do you have?

Negative Thoughts

Negative thoughts make us feel bad about our kids, and bad about ourselves as parents. These feelings often turn into anger. Positive thoughts help us have a better/more realistic attitude and feel calmer.

Our own negative thoughts about our kids cause us to get angry, frustrated, indignant, and enraged, and give us justification to be punitive to our kids. Negative thoughts about our kids include thinking about how "bad" they are, how "ungrateful" they are, etc.

Examples of Negative Thoughts About Our Kids

- He's doing this deliberately to make me mad.
- He's spoiled.
- She's so selfish.
- I should be able to control him.
- She is really asking for it.
- He's not going to get away with this.

We can learn to control our feelings and behavior better by

1. Recognizing our negative thoughts
2. Deliberately stopping them
3. Replacing the negative thoughts with thoughts that help us to feel calmer. We call these self-calming thoughts.

Karen's Story

Karen is at the check-out line at the grocery store with her 3-year-old daughter, Jessica. Karen and Jessica are both tired and hungry. Jessica picks up a candy bar and demands that Karen buy it for her. Karen says, "No, we're not buying that." Jessica asks for it a few more times. Then she starts crying and yelling, "I want it. I want CANDY. Get it for me, Mommy. I want CANDY!" Everyone else at the check-out lines is watching Karen and Jessica. Karen pays for her groceries, yanks Jessica by the arm, pulls her out to the car and swats her on the butt. She says, "You be quiet right now, or you're really going to get a spanking." She puts her roughly into the car seat. Jessica cries all the way home.

Beliefs that support respectful parenting

- My child is able to make good decisions.
- I believe that in order for children to respect their parents, parents have to respect their children.
- I believe that both parents and children have rights.
- It's OK for both parents and children to make mistakes.

Self-Calming Thoughts

Self-calming thoughts help us to cool down when we're angry at our kids, or at others. They help us to be more respectful in how we communicate. Some examples of self-calming thoughts are:

- I can be calm and talk quietly.
- He's only three; it's normal for 3-year-old kids to be selfish.
- She's tired and hungry right now.
- He has a right to his own feelings.
- I don't need to deal with this now, I can talk about it after we've all had some rest.
- She isn't bothering me deliberately, she just really wants my attention.
- It's normal for teenagers to forget things.

Note: When we have these thoughts, they do not mean that we ignore the rules we have set for our children, or give in to them. Self-calming thoughts help us to feel less angry at our children and allow us to handle the situation in a more positive way.

Time-Out for Parents

It is very difficult to be respectful with our kids when we are extremely angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, or irritated. Time-Out for yourself is a tool you can use to calm down and communicate respectfully with your kids.

Red Flags

Your body, feelings and thoughts give you some warning that you are getting upset. To stay respectful toward your kids, and make good decisions, it helps to pay attention to your warning signs, and then take a Time Out. A Time Out is a short break taken from a difficult or dangerous situation. Time-Out gives you some time to think through the situation. Everybody has their own set of red flags, but most people experience at least some of those listed below.

Negative thoughts: Examples: "She's doing this deliberately. She's not going to get away with this. She's a spoiled brat. I'm not going to take this

Difficult Feelings: Feeling overwhelmed, powerless, frustrated, anxious, hurt, angry, outraged, destructive.

Body cues: Tight muscles in neck, back or jaw, "nervous" stomach, feeling hot, shaking, feeling short of breath, frowning, narrowing eyes.

When you recognize any of the red flags listed above, it's time to take a Time-Out. If you are using any of the behaviors listed below, you are already being abusive. Once you start with these things, it's **essential** to take a Time-Out.

Abusive actions: Pacing, pointing your finger in someone's face, shouting, name calling, putting the child down, using sarcasm, threatening, getting in their face.

In the homework for this session, you'll find a place to list your Red Flags. You can do it now as we discuss it in class, or do it for homework later.

Time-Out

Time Out is a simple technique for getting out of a situation that might otherwise result in abuse. It should be used anytime you are not calm enough to talk respectfully to the other person. If you use it regularly, it will prevent you from being abusive.

To use a Time Out, you need to be **aware** of yourself and be **willing** to walk away in the middle of a conflict.

The first step is for you to understand what a Time-Out is, and what it isn't.

Time-Out Is:

- The first step towards working out any problem with your children, your partner, or other people
- A way to develop safety and trust
- A chance for you to get away from a difficult situation so you can think it through, and so that you can better solve the problem when you come back
- A short break that you decide you need to take. This is a Time-Out for you; it is not a discipline technique to use with your child.

Time Out Is Not:

- A way to punish your child.

- At time to walk out angrily saying blaming things, like: "I'm leaving", "I can't take it", or anything that makes the child feel bad.
- Abandoning/isolating your child.

Time Out will be used differently for different ages. If there is not another adult available for supervision, young children need to be in a safe area, withing hearing distance and only left for 3-5 minutes. If your child is safe and involved in an activity you can take longer. You can separate from older children for longer periods depending upon their age, personality, and ability to be alone.

Using Time-Out

Time-Out is a simple tool, and if you use it right, it works. Here's how to do it:

1. Pay attention to the situation. As soon as you feel upset, you need to take the Time-Out.
2. Tell your child that you're taking a Time-Out. Tell them that you need a couple of minutes for yourself, and let them know exactly where you'll be. (Example: I need a Time-Out. I'll be in the kitchen for a few minutes.)
3. Ask yourself, "What am I really upset about? What would be the best way to handle it with my child?"
4. Think positive thoughts to remind yourself that you are the one who controls your thoughts, feelings, and actions. (Example: "Sometimes two-year-olds have tantrums. I need to calm down and handle this situation.")
5. Decide how much time you need to cool down. You may need as little as five minutes for your minor irritations and frustrations, or as much as an hour when you feel very upset. Make sure your child feels safe and is safe being in a room alone.

6. Return to the situation when you feel calm and safe.

After a Time-Out

Before you come back into the situation, decide what you're going to do. Here are some choices:

1. **Let it go** While you are cooling down, you may realize that you can drop whatever you were frustrated, irritated or upset about. Maybe you misunderstood the situation, and now that you are calm, you see things more clearly and you realize that you are no longer irritated or frustrated. Then you can let it go.
2. **Put it on hold** You may recognize that the issue is important for you and your child to discuss, but you can decide to do this at a later time. Taking some time to think about an issue can help you to see it more clearly. Putting it on hold also gives you more time to be calm so you can communicate to your child in a way that is respectful.

3. **Discuss it** When you are feeling calm you may decide you are ready to talk about the situation with your child. You must be ready to listen to the other person, and to communicate respectfully. Remember, you can always take another time-out.

Adapted from Dr. Anne Ganley, Seattle Veterans Administration.

Using the Time-Out/Cool Down Log

The Time-Out Log is a way for you to record how you are using Time-Out, what you are doing to cool down, and what decisions you make after you cool down.

1. **Description of situation:** Write down two or three sentences or phrases about how you became upset.
2. **Negative thoughts:** What thoughts were you having that caused you to feel upset?
3. **Upset level:** From 1-10, what was your Upset Level? An upset level of 1 might be how you feel in slow-moving traffic. An upset level of 7 or above might be how you feel when your child ignores a request you made or says something disrespectful to you.
4. **Difficult feelings:** What were the difficult feelings you were having, for example, irritated, frustrated, threatened, disrespected or scared.
5. **Left at what point:** What was going on when you left? What were your cues that you needed to leave the situation?
6. **Minutes for cool down:** How long did you take?
7. **Place:** Where did you go to cool down?
8. **Self-calming actions:** What did you do to cool down?
9. **Self-calming thoughts:** What self-calming thoughts did you use to replace the negative thoughts?
10. **Your decision after the cool-down:** Did you let it go, put it on hold, or talk with your child about it?

Homework:

Identify Your Red Flags

List the red flags that come up when you get very upset. Remember, the focus of this is you and your behaviors (not your partner, children, boss, or neighbor, etc.) Look this list over at least once a week. When you see these red flags come up, it's time to take a Time Out.

- Negative thoughts:

- Difficult feelings:
- Body cues:

Session 9: Conflict Prevention

The goals of this session are:

1. To teach parents new techniques for handling their children's anger
2. To help them to communicate in ways that prevent conflict.

Responding to Our Kids When They Are Angry

Note: Don't use this with your partner! Use it with your child.

Try taking these steps when your kids are angry:

1. Get control of your own emotions.
2. Acknowledge the child's feeling.
3. Let her know that it's not OK to be disrespectful to other people.
4. Teach your child how to talk respectfully when she's angry (being able to do this yourself is an important first step).
5. If she continues to act disrespectfully, separate from your child (one of you has to leave the area).

Any time you aren't able to help your child stop acting disrespectfully by talking to her, use one of these techniques.

Separation

If the conflict is between you and your child, send him to another room, or go to another room yourself. At this time, you should stop all interaction with your child until he calms down.

Let him know that you can't be with him when he is being disrespectful, and that you are going to another room. If the conflict is between your child and another child, then the children need to separate. The child who is acting disrespectfully needs to understand that the separation is a consequence of his behavior.

When using separation, it is important for the parent to be calm and respectful to the child, and to speak simply and clearly, without criticizing or blaming the child. For example, "When you are hitting and yelling at me, I can't be with you. I'm going to go in the other room until I hear that you are calm."

Diversion

Diversion is another technique that works well with young children. Try diverting the child's attention away from the source of her anger and giving her something else to focus on. For example, suppose that your child is angry because her brother got to go to the park and she didn't. After you acknowledge her feeling, you could say, "Let's go for a walk," or "Let's bake some cookies," or "Let's paint a picture." Sometimes this works well to help your child calm down.

Alma, Paige, and Lisa

Alma has two daughters, Lisa, who is five, and Paige, who is seven. Lisa took Paige's new box of crayons without asking. She used them all, and broke several of them. Paige opens the box of crayons, sees that they are used and broken and starts screaming, slapping her sister, and grabbing her hair. Lisa starts screaming. Alma goes over to the girls to separate them, and Paige starts screaming, "She ruined my crayons! I hate her!" Alma tries to calm her down. Both of Alma's daughters are upset. She needs to acknowledge both their feelings, and set limits with both of them. Because Paige is hitting, Alma needs to talk to her first.

Talking to Paige:

- **Acknowledge Paige's feeling:** "I know you're really angry at Lisa for messing up your crayons."
- **Let her know it's not OK to be disrespectful to other people:** "It's not OK to hit her."
- **Teach your child how to talk respectfully when she's angry:** "You can tell Lisa, 'I'm really mad that you wrecked my crayons.'"

Talking to Lisa:

- **Acknowledge Lisa's feeling:** "It hurts when someone hits you."
- **Let her know it's not OK to be disrespectful to other people:** "You need to ask Paige's permission before you use her crayons."
- **Teach your child how to talk respectfully when she's angry:** "You can tell Paige, 'I don't like it when you hit me.'"

After Alma talks to both of them, Lisa kicks Paige in the ankle. Paige shoves her. Both are calling each other names.

- **If your kids continue to act disrespectfully, separate them.**

Alma could again acknowledge their feelings: "I can see that you two are still angry with each other. You are hurting each other and you need to be separate until you calm down. Paige, you need to go in the kitchen and Lisa, you need to go in the living room. When you can be respectful with each other you can be together again."

Trina and Jerome

Trina just got home from work and is starting to get dinner ready. Her 6-year-old son, Jerome, wipes his feet outside the front door, but they are still covered in mud when he comes in. He walks into the living room, leaving muddy footprints all over the beige carpet. Trina is very upset. She recently cleaned the carpet. Trina says, "Jerome! You got the carpet all muddy again. Look at the mess you made. How many times have I told you to wipe your feet before you come in. You NEVER listen to me!" Jerome says, "Mom, I DID wipe my feet." Trina says, "Get outside and wipe your feet right now!" He says, "NO! I wiped them." She says, "You did not. Just look at the mess you made. Now get out there." He says, "I told you, I already did it." He starts walking away towards his room. Trina says, "You wipe those feet right now, or I'm going to give you a spanking you won't forget." Jerome goes outside rubs one foot over the doormat, and kicks the door. Trina grabs Jerome, pulls him inside and yells, "You're not going to get away with this!" She spanks him and puts him in his room. She says, "Now don't come out until I say you can." She closes his door. Jerome is kicking things, screaming loudly, and throwing his toys around the room. Trina quickly goes to clean the carpet before her husband comes home. She knows he will be upset if Jerome is still screaming when he gets home.

Communication that Leads to Cooperation

Give information Describe the problem specifically. (Example: Your muddy shoes are getting the carpet dirty.)

DO:

- Be clear.
- State the facts of the problem.
- Use as few words as possible.
- Speak in a calm voice.

DON'T:

- Blame.
- Judge.
- Criticize.
- Ask questions.
- Say anything about the child's personality.

- Talk about the past.
- Lecture.
- Command or threaten.
- Label your child as "bad," "disobedient," "lazy," etc.
- Use negative language like "You can't."

Describe the problem clearly and confidently so your child knows what to do with the information. They can feel your confidence, and will act on it.

Group Exercise

Let's look at some examples of how to invite cooperation from our children.

1. Your son leaves his coat on the floor

- Negative/critical response: "Why can't you ever pick up after yourself?"
- Giving information: "I see your coat on the floor."
- If the child doesn't respond, describing a solution: "Your coat needs to go on the hook in the closet."

2. Your daughter is throwing her ball in the house.

- Negative/critical response: "I've told you a million times not to throw the ball in the house. What's your problem?"
- Giving information: "Throwing the ball in the house might break something."
- Describing a solution: "You can roll the ball on the floor, or throw it outside."

Practice Giving Information and Describing a Solution

Below are descriptions of six different situations. For each situation, decide first what the problem is. Then fill in the information you would give, and the solution you would describe to your child.

1. Your six-year old interrupts you while you are on the phone.

- What is the problem? (You can't concentrate on the conversation)
- What information can you give your child: (I can't talk on the phone when you're talking to me.)

- If your child doesn't respond, what is a solution? (I need you to go play for five minutes while I finish talking on the phone.)
2. Your nine-year-old left homework papers all over the kitchen table.
 - What is the problem?
 - What information can you give?
 - If your child doesn't respond, what is a solution?
 3. Your 12-year-old left his bike in the middle of the driveway.
 - What is the problem?
 - What information can you give?
 - If your child doesn't respond, what is a solution?
 4. Your 4-year-old has ketchup all over her fingers and is walking towards the living room.
 - What is the problem?
 - What information can you give?
 - If your child doesn't respond, what is a solution?
 5. Your 14-year-old has been on the phone for two hours and you need to make a call.
 - What is the problem?
 - What information can you give?
 - If your child doesn't respond, what is a solution?

If your child isn't used to you communicating this way, she might not respond at first, but continue trying. If your child doesn't respond, you may need to use other problem-solving techniques.

Homework

Practice giving information.

- What was the problem?
- How did you give information?
- What was the solution you described?

- How did your child respond?

Session 10: Setting Limits Respectfully

The goal of this session is:

1. To teach parents how to use consequences and problem-solving to set limits with children in a respectful way.

Logical Consequences

Logical consequences teach a child that there are many generally-accepted social rules that they will probably be expected to follow. When the child breaks such a rule, a specific consequence follows. That consequence should:

- Be directly related to the problem that the behavior has caused
- Involve the child in solving the problem.

For example, if a child spills his milk, the consequence is that he needs to help clean it up. Logical consequences are respectful forms of limit-setting. They help children learn:

- That their behavior is their own responsibility
- About making their own decisions
- About the consequences of their behavior, allowing them to make decisions based on the knowledge of these consequences, rather than fear of punishment

As children grow up, they are better able to make good choices when they understand consequences. Children who are forced to comply out of fear may be more likely to break the law when they are teens and adults because they have learned that the only reason to follow rules is that they will be punished if they don't. Their thinking is, "I can break the rules as long as I don't get caught."

Teaching logical consequences is **especially** important to children who have witnessed domestic violence. Because men who batter often teach their children that they must obey or they will get yelled at, threatened or hit, these children get a very strong message that other people are responsible for their actions. When you first start using logical consequences, your kids may at first have difficulty understanding them. Be patient! **You are teaching them lessons that can help them throughout their lives.**

How Logical Consequences Differ from Punishment

Logical consequences are different from punishment in several ways.

- **Punishment uses the parent's power over the child. Logical consequences teach children the effect of their behavior on others, and let them take responsibility for changing their behavior.****Punishment:** "You turn that music down, or I'll take your stereo away" **Logical consequence:** "I know you are enjoying your music, but it's so loud, it's really bothering me and the neighbors. So you can either turn it down, or turn it off and do something else."
- **Punishment is often arbitrary, and rarely related to the situation.****Punishment:** "If you two don't stop fighting, you won't get any ice cream after dinner." **Logical consequences:** "You two can play together without fighting, or separate and play in different rooms. You decide."
- **Punishment is personal and critical of the child. Logical consequences are not personal, they are not judgmental, and do not imply that the child is a bad person.****Punishment:** "Stop that whining! You're acting like a baby." **Logical consequences:** "I can't answer you when you talk that way because I don't understand you. When you talk in a normal voice I will be able to answer you."
- **Punishment often threatens the child with disrespect or loss of love. Logical consequences are said clearly and calmly, with good will.****Punishment:** "You're not going with me to the store because you were so bad today. I'm not taking a spoiled brat with me." **Logical consequences:** "You can come with me to the store if you stay with me and help me shop. Otherwise, you can stay at home with Aunt Dee. You decide."
- **Punishment demands that the child obey. Logical consequences permit the child to make a choice.****Punishment:** "You be quiet or you'll spend the rest of the night in your room." **Logical consequence:** "You can settle down and eat your dinner, or you can leave the table until you're ready to join us." (This will also have a natural consequence of hunger for the child if she decides to leave the table).
- **Punishment is imposed by the parent. Logical consequences allow the child to be involved in problem-solving and in deciding on consequences.****Punishment:** "You dented the car? You're not going to drive it again. And you're grounded for two months." **Logical Consequence:** "You need to work out a plan with me for helping to get that dent fixed. Think about it, and let me know your ideas."

How to Be Sure You Are Using Consequences, NOT Punishment

- **Communicate calmly and directly.** Take a Time-Out if you need to so that you can be sure to speak calmly. A loud voice, warnings, threats, blaming, or a hostile attitude will turn a consequence into punishment.
- **Encourage the child to make responsible decisions.** The purpose of consequences is to help the child to learn, not to force her to submit to you.
- **Be both firm and kind when communicating consequences.** Firmness means establishing a consequence and staying with it. Kindness means talking to your children respectfully and calmly without putting them down.

- **Give information and describe a solution.** The skills we learned in Session 9 can be the first steps of communicating consequences.

Practice Using Logical Consequences

The following are some situations that happen with kids. Let's think of some logical consequences. Then state how you could say them to your children.

1. Your three-year old child draws all over the wall with crayons.
 - What would you say?
2. Your four- and five-year-old keep fighting over a toy after you have tried to get them to share it.
3. Your eight-year-old is yelling at you and calling you names.
4. Your 11-year-old throws a ball through the kitchen window, breaking it.
5. Your seven-year-old hits his four-year-old brother.
6. Think of a situation with your own child where you could use logical consequences. Describe the situation and how you would communicate a consequence to them.

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving with your child is a way to deal with a recurring problem situation you and your child are having.

Problem-solving with children helps them in a number of ways because they learn:

- The process of how to solve problems with another person
- How to negotiate with another person
- That their opinions and feelings are important
- That they can think of ideas to solve problems
- That they can take responsibility for finding solutions and following through with them

When children help to figure out a solution to a problem, they are much more likely to want to cooperate because they helped create the solution. They have a sense of pride and accomplishment when they are able to think of solutions and then act on them.

Problem-solving works best with school-aged children and teens, but even a pre-schooler can be involved with problem-solving if you keep it simple and short.

The process of problem-solving is a skill your kids will benefit from throughout their lives. The more you do it, the easier it will become.

Some important tips:

1. Don't try to problem-solve when you or your child is still angry or upset.
2. If you or your child becomes upset or angry during problem-solving, take a time out and try it again when everyone is calm.
3. Listen to each other without interrupting.
4. In a family where there is domestic violence, problem solving between the children and both parents together is not likely to succeed and may not be safe. When one person has used violence, the other person may not have an equal voice in the problem-solving process. Each parent should problem-solve individually with the child.

Problem Solving with your Child: Ten Steps

First, plan a meeting with your child to problem solve a conflict. Make it a time that is quiet, without interruptions and when you are both calm. Do not do it in the middle of the conflict.

Table 3. Ten Steps for Problem Solving with Child

Steps	Example
Step 1: Describe the problem Use "I" messages telling your feelings and needs. Don't accuse, blame, or criticize. Stick to the situation and how it affects you . Be specific	Parent: <i>"I feel frustrated in the morning when it's time to go and shoes aren't on and backpacks aren't ready by 8:30. We need to be able to leave by 8:30 or we're late for school and work. I feel pressured."</i>
Step 2 Ask child for his/her feelings or thoughts about it.	Parent: <i>"Can you tell me how it is for you?"</i>
Step 3: Listen Listen quietly without interrupting, asking questions, commenting, or advising. Keep it to "Oh, mmm, I see."	Child: <i>"I hate it when you rush me. And I don't like it when you turn off the TV during my favorite show. We always have to leave just before it's over and I miss the end."</i>
Step 4: Reflect back what you hear from your child Summarize his/her feelings, wishes, wants etc. without advising, criticizing, or judging.	Parent: <i>"You really like that show."</i> Child: <i>"Yeah, Shining Time Station is my favorite."</i> Parent: <i>"You feel frustrated when you have to miss the end of it."</i> Child: <i>"Yeah, I never get to see the end."</i>
Step 5: Summarize the problem including both people's needs/wishes Again, avoid judging, criticizing, blaming.	Parent: <i>" It sounds like the problem is that you would like to be able to watch all of your favorite show, which ends at 8:30, and I need us to be ready to go out the door by 8:30."</i>

Steps	Example
When we show respect for a child's feelings and wishes, they feel more willing to cooperate.	
Step 6: Invite your child to problem-solve	Parent: <i>"Let's see if we can think of any ideas for how to work this out. Let's just brainstorm ideas and I'll write them down."</i>
Step 7: Write down all ideas on paper Don't discount any or make comments at this time.	Child: <i>"You could drive J. to daycare after I go to school so we could leave a little later."</i> Parent: <i>"Okay, I'll write that down. We could videotape your show and you could watch it after school."</i> Child: <i>"I could get all ready with shoes on and backpack by the door before the show starts. Then I can be ready to go right out the door when the show ends."</i>
Step 8: Read each idea and take turns commenting on them.	Parent: <i>"I can't take J. to daycare last because then I'll be late for work. And that's not okay."</i> Child: <i>"I don't want to videotape it. I want to watch it in the morning."</i> Parent: <i>"I like your idea of being ready before the show."</i> Child: <i>"Okay."</i>
Step 9: Make a plan together for how the solution will work. Include details and what each person needs to do.	Parent: <i>"Let's talk about how that would work. What do you need to do to be ready before the show?"</i>
Step 10: Write the Plan on paper and put it on a wall or someplace visible each day.	Child makes a "morning map" with all of the things he/she needs to do each morning before TV goes on.
If the "Plan" starts to fail, meet again to problem-solve. You may want to include consequences for not following through on your part of the plan. Example: no TV until completely ready for school.	

Session 11: Understanding Children's Development

The goals of this session are:

To help parents:

- Understand children's development
- Have age-appropriate expectations for their children
- Apply parenting skills that fit their children's developmental level

How Children Develop Their Sense of Self

- What are some of the factors that influence a child's sense of who he or she is?

Secure Attachment Relationships

A child's early relationship with his parents (attachment) establishes his ability to form relationships with other people throughout his life, including friends, family members, spouses, and his own children.

A child's relationship with her parents begins at birth. This needs to happen for practical reasons. An infant needs to engage their parent for their own survival, for their protection, and their ability to explore their environment.

A child who has a secure, reliable relationship with her parent is comfortable in exploring her environment, and responding flexibly to changes in the environment. This child can be relatively easily comforted by her parent.

"Secure" attachment develops from

- Trust
- Consistency in responding to the child
- Encouragement
- Nurturing
- Activities that your child can enjoy and succeed at
- Opportunity to have a relationship with the same adult(s)

What are some ways we can help our children to develop trust?

Learning from Important Role Models

As most parents probably notice, children imitate the behaviors of their parents, and of other people who are important to them. Children are more likely to imitate the behaviors of people they view as like them. For example, boys are more likely to imitate their fathers, and girls are more likely to imitate their mothers.

Children learn the behaviors they observe, and are more likely to imitate these behaviors when they are rewarded for it. Imitation starts at an early age. Researchers (and parents) found that children can imitate behaviors beginning at age 12 to 21 days (for example, sticking out their tongues). Infants can imitate adults sounds by 12 weeks old.

- What behaviors do we want our children to learn and imitate?

- How can we teach our children these behaviors?
- What behaviors do we NOT want our children to learn and imitate?

Developing Self-Esteem/Self-Competence

Self-esteem is our sense of self-worth. It is our perception of how capable and valuable we are.

- Where do we get our sense of self-esteem?
- How does violence in a family affect the self-esteem of family members?
- What are some ways that we can help our kids develop self-esteem?

Self-Competence

Self-competence is a product of how we make judgments about our own abilities. It affects how we think, how we perform a task, what we choose to do, and how successful we will be at a particular task.

Children develop a strong sense of self-competence when

- They are able to experience repeated success at tasks.
- They get approval from other people who are important to them
- They are able to watch other people perform tasks successfully.
- They are encouraged to perform tasks independently.

Children develop a poor sense of self-competence when

- They don't get encouragement or praise for mastering tasks
- They lack positive role models
- They don't have the opportunity to master tasks (e.g. the parent takes over the task from the child instead of letting the child work it through)

Children internalize the way their parents and teachers talk to them and make those messages part of the way they talk to themselves.

For example, a boy is trying to put together a puzzle and his father says, "That's it! Keep going. That puzzle is pretty hard, but I know you can do it." If his father encourages him to work through difficult tasks on a regular basis, that boy may learn to talk himself through difficult tasks in the same way.

A girl is trying to braid her own hair and her mother says, "I've shown you a hundred times. You just can't do things right. Get out of the way, let me do it!" If her mother interrupts her efforts with a put-down, and takes over the task, that girl may talk to herself the same way, and become easily discouraged when performing a difficult task.

Let's look at some ways that we can help our children develop self-esteem.

Ways to Help Children Develop Self-Esteem

1. **Encourage your children:** Notice your children's positive qualities and let them know that you appreciate these.
2. **Set clear limits:** Set limits that are reasonable and appropriate to your children's ages, to help them feel valued and secure.
3. **Listen carefully:** Pay attention to what your children say, and let them know you hear what they are saying.
4. **Be affectionate:** Hug, kiss, pat, and smile at your children. Tell them you care for them.
5. **Allow them to solve problems:** Encourage your children to solve problems and make some decisions for themselves.
6. **Communicate respectfully:** Share your feelings, expectations and needs with your children in a way that is respectful.
7. **Promote independence:** Allow your children to play independently in a safe environment.
8. **Spend time with your kids:** Reading together, talking and listening, or playing together helps children feel cared for.
9. **Arrange for new activities in which your child can succeed:** Set up new activities for your children that they enjoy, like playing sports on a team, taking music lessons, etc., so that your children learn new skills and gain confidence in themselves.
10. **Be a positive, non-violent role model for your children:** Maintaining safe, reliable interaction with your children and their other parent can help them develop self-esteem.
11. **Let your children know they are capable:** Allow your children to have responsibilities and let them know you have confidence in them.
12. **Let your children know they are worthy of love just for who they are, not related to their behavior:** Tell them you like them, enjoy them, appreciate them, etc., without relating it to their behavior.

Table 4. Developmental Norms and Expectations for Kids

Child's Age	Behavior	Child's Ability	Solution
2 years	Spilling milk while drinking it	Limited physical coordination and awareness	Serve milk in a cup with a cover
5 years	Begins to clean room and doesn't finish	Limited ability to stay on task without adult supervision	(1) Simplify chore to a few tasks, or (2) stay in room and to guide child
14 years	Coming home later than agreed on	Priority is to spend time with friends, develop independence	Talk with child to clarify rules and problem-solve together

Homework: Fill in the blank spaces using situations with your own children.

When to get counseling for your child

In Session 2 we discussed the effects of domestic violence on children. If you notice any of these reactions over a long period of time, or if they are extreme, it may be necessary to seek counseling.

Behaviors that indicate counseling:

- Withdraws
- Bullies, threatens or intimidates others
- Initiates physical fights
- Has used a weapon
- Has been physically cruel to people
- Has been physically cruel to animals
- Has stolen while confronting a victim
- Has forced someone into sexual activity
- Has set fires
- Has deliberately destroyed others' property

- Has broken into someone else's house
- Has run away from home at least twice
- Intentionally hurts her/himself
- Has frequent nightmares for prolonged period
- Shows sudden change in behavior/personality
- Changes eating/sleeping patterns
- Shows lack of interest in friends/school/etc.

Session 12: Strengthening Relationships With Our Children

The goals of this session are:

1. To help parents support their children's sense of competence and self-worth through encouragement
2. To help parents strengthen their relationships with their children
3. To summarize and review class materials

Encouragement

Encouragement is recognizing our children's positive behavior and special qualities, and letting them know we appreciate these.

There are two kinds of encouragement:

- Encouragement for behavior
- Encouragement of the person.

Encouragement for Behavior

Here are some ways to encourage your child's behavior. You can do one or several of these at a time.

- **Notice your child's effort** Talk about your child's effort, the time she spent, the energy she put into doing something, or her ability to stay focused on the activity. For example, "You played quietly with your Legos for quite a while!" or "It looks like you put a lot of effort into organizing your toys!" When you are encouraging behavior, you are not judging whether your child built a

stable structure with his Legos, or organized her toys in a way that looks good to you. You are simply encouraging your child's effort.

- **Describe what you see without making a judgment** Avoid words like "Good, the best, excellent." Describe what you see: "I see that you made your bed!" or "I see that you're sharing with your brother."
- **Help your children to recognize and express their own feelings of accomplishment.** When you think your child really feels pleased or proud of an activity, you can acknowledge that feeling. For example, "You must feel great about getting on the swim team!" or "I bet you're really proud of that report card!" This helps children to feel good about themselves, and make positive evaluations of their achievements. Don't assume that your child will always feel proud of the same things you're proud of.
- **Talk about the specific behavior you are encouraging in your child.** Avoid global expressions like, "You were so good in the store." Instead say, "I really like the way you walked next to me in the store, and helped me pick out groceries." or rather than saying, "You were nice to your brother today," be specific: "You shared your Playdough with your brother. I think he really liked that."
- **Recognize your child's efforts and improvements in behavior.** Examples: "You tried hard on that math problem before you asked for my help." or "I notice you tried to pick up all the clothes from under your bed this time."
- **Separate the children's worth from their work.** Example: Your five-year-old picks up all her toys. Instead of saying "You're such a good girl," talk about the specific behavior: "You picked up all your toys!"
- **Avoid comparing one child to another.**
- **Offer encouragement with honest feelings. Don't say it if you don't mean it.**

Encouragement of the Person

This kind of encouragement is given spontaneously. It is not based on whether our children are behaving well, or doing what we want. It is just pure appreciation for who they are. We should try to do this at least one time every day. What are examples of encouraging or appreciating your children for who they are rather than what they do?

Examples:

- I like you.
- It's good to see you.
- Hugs and smiles

- What are other ways?

Building a Positive Relationship with Our Children

Relationship building means spending time with your child when there is no "need" to. This time is for enjoying each other's company. Some parents find that their child's problem behaviors decrease when they spend more "fun" time with the child. A lot of children misbehave simply because they want positive attention from their parents, and they want to know that they are important.

Here are some suggestions for relationship building:

- Schedule one-on-one time, or "special time", alone with each of your children. This is a time for you and the child to do something you enjoy together, without the other parent, or brothers or sisters, or any other family members. It may be just talking, or playing together, or going for a walk, etc.
- Special time should not be used for a reward, or withdrawn to discipline the child. If your child acts out during your special time together, you can use the separation technique discussed earlier, for example, "I can't be with you when you're yelling. We'll have our time together later."
- Arrange special time even if you have visitation with your child and only see him once or twice a week. Put some time aside from your normal activities together, and really talk to and listen to your child.
- Be consistent and follow through with special time. Children really look forward to it, and will be disappointed if you cancel.

Emotional Needs of Children Who Have DV in Their Families

1. **Dealing with fear:** Feeling fear of those they love, in their home, where they should feel most safe **Child needs to:**
 - To be able to talk to someone they trust about being afraid
 - To learn ways to keep themselves safe and to know they have a plan for what to do when there is violence
 - To have a feeling of control in the situation ("I will go over to my neighbors when it happens.")
 - Plan:
2. **Dealing with anger:** Feeling angry at the abusive person, or at the survivor for not leaving the situation **Child needs to:**
 - To know that it is normal and okay to feel angry about this
 - To be able to talk about being angry with someone they trust

- To express their anger in non-destructive ways
 - Plan:
3. **Dealing with mixture of anger and love:** Feeling torn between feelings of anger and love toward the abusive person. Feeling guilty for both feelings **Child needs to:**
- To learn that it's okay to feel both anger and love toward someone
 - To know it is okay to love their parent even when they don't like the behavior they see
 - To know they are not bad if they love the abusive person
 - Plan:
4. **Confusion about being able to love both parents:** Feeling they need to choose one parent over the other, or the need to take sides. Thinking, "If I love Mom, I can't love Dad" and vice versa. **Child needs to:**
- To know that it is okay to love both parents at the same time
 - Plan:
5. **Dealing with loss:** Loss of a healthy, safe family; loss of one parent if they leave, or the constant threat of this; loss of comfort in the home **Child needs to:**
- To talk with someone they trust about feeling sad or worried, and about missing the other parent
 - To develop a support system of extended family or friends outside the home
 - Plan:
6. **Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility:** Fears of having caused the violence, or not stopping it in some way. Feeling that they have to prevent the violence, take care of Mom, and take care of the family. **Child needs to:**
- To understand the violence is not their fault, and that it is an adult problem for the adults to work out
 - Plan:
7. **Feeling life is unpredictable and never knowing when a crisis will erupt:** Feeling vulnerable on a daily basis, with no power or control about what will happen. **Child needs to:**
- To find areas where they can have control and make plans and decisions
 - To be able to safety plan with someone they trust

- To create some structure and stability wherever possible
- Plan:

Helping Kids Who Witness DV: Review

1. How do you think your kids have been affected by domestic violence?
2. What are some ways you are helping or will help them to recover from these effects?
3. What are some of your strengths as a parent?
4. What are some ways you can build on these strengths (for example: get counseling, find ways to speak respectfully about your child's other parent, work on relationship-building with my child, etc.)
5. List one problem behavior for each of your children. Next to it, list one parenting skill you can use to deal with that behavior.
6. What are the three most helpful things you learned in this class?