Strengthening Family Coping Resources:
A Guide for Home Visitors
Acknowledgements

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Introduction

STRENGTHENING FAMILY COPING RESOURCES – HOME VISITORS (SFCR-HV)

SFCR-HV is an adaptation of SFCR, a trauma-focused, multi-family, skill-building intervention. SFCR is designed for families living in traumatic contexts. Since most families living in traumatic contexts contend with on-going stressors and threats, SFCR is designed to increase coping resources in children, adult caregivers, and in the family system to prevent relapse and re-exposure. Specifically, SFCR builds the coping resources necessary to help families boost their sense of safety, function with stability, regulate their emotions and behaviors, and improve communication about and understanding of the traumas they have experienced. SFCR relies on the core components of empirically supported trauma treatments plus constructive coping resources to provide a behavioral- and skills-based framework for strengthening family processes.

In the new adapted format, SFCR-HV provides an exceptional opportunity for helping parents place structure and process around their own family practices, beliefs, values, and cultural contexts and improve their protective function. As the parents learn new coping skills they are encouraged to promote positive change in their family’s daily life and home environment. The parents are encouraged to believe that they have the ability to use their new skills to create “positive chain reactions” with effects that could be seen across generations.

STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The sessions in this guide are arranged under five conceptual headings: Family, Traditions, Routine, Safety and Connections (see Table of Contents). The sessions do not need to be offered in any particular order but can be used by the home visitor based on a parent’s current needs.

Using the Guide and Supporting Materials

This guide consists of session outlines along with supporting handouts and materials. There are 20 sessions. The description of each session indicates the objective of the session, discussion guide, questions to help guide discussion, reflections, tips for practice, and a list of supporting handouts and materials.

The home visitor should use handouts to guide discussion or to help parents focus their thoughts. Make sure to ask the parents questions that acknowledge the parent as the expert about their own child. “How does this work in your family?” “What strategies have you tried? Which ones worked best for you and your family?”

Before offering Tips for Practice, ask parents what ideas/strategies they might like to try first. They may have some great ideas of their own! Home visitors can then ask, “Would you like some other tips that might be helpful?” If parents indicate “yes”, provide them with the Tips for Practice. After reviewing the tips, ask, “Which of these tips would you like to try with your family?” “From what you know of your child, how do you think she/he might respond to this new strategy?” If the circumstances and situation
are appropriate, encourage the parent to demonstrate the tip they are interested in trying, now. Provide coaching and support during the demonstration. While the Tips for Practice may include recommendations related to the number of times parents should practice the strategies at home, always ask parents, “How often do you think you can commit to using this tip?” Write the parent’s answer at the top of the Tips for Practice page, or the Activity Handout page before you leave it with them.

The home visitor should end each session with a hopeful message and a request that parents take with them what they learned in the session and make the skills they learned here part of their family routine, by practicing it in their home. Let the parents know you will follow-up on this at the next visit.
FAMILY
Family First

OBJECTIVE: Begin to set children and immediate family as a high priority.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start with a discussion of priorities. Together, define what a priority is. A simple dictionary definition is, “A thing that is regarded as more important than another.”

Discuss healthy and unhealthy priorities by talking about:
- the importance of setting children and families as a high priority.
- how their children and family would know, or feel, they were the top priority.
- some of the joys and burdens that come along with taking care of children and families.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:
1. What is a priority?
2. Have there been times when your priorities were not healthy? What were your priorities then?
3. If you set your children and family as a top priority, what can you do to let them know they are important?
4. What are some of your priorities?
5. What barriers might you face trying to make your family a high priority at this point in your life? What strategies can help you overcome those barriers?

ACTIVITY: Have the parent make a list of their priorities. Next, make a list of some of the obstacles that get in the way of keeping children and families as a high priority. Discuss strategies that parents can use to make sure that their children and family stay a top priority.

End the discussion by asking for one strategy that the parent plans to use to keep their children and family a high priority. This can be written on the Tips for Practice handout.
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around setting family as a priority:

1. Make a commitment to spend 5 minutes each day this week with one of your children. Turn off your cell phone, TV, and gaming devices during that time and just enjoy being together.
2. Do something extra for one of your children this week. Next week you can do something special for someone else and spread the love.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Parents who were exposed to adverse childhood events may have an increased understanding of their children’s experiences and the need for sensitivity and support. However, some parents are triggered by their children’s needs and find being a sensitive and supportive parent hard to manage.
- Sometimes things (men, drugs, alcohol, running the streets, partying) become priorities even if we don’t want them to be.
- Parents should express their commitment by maintaining shared time and experiences, investing in the family as a unit, and maintaining that commitment to the family despite obstacles.
- Planning, problem-solving and follow-through are needed to maintain this commitment.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Paper and pen/pencil
- Tips for Practice
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around setting family as a priority:

☐ Make a commitment to spend 5 minutes each day this week with one of your children. Turn off your cell phone, TV, gaming devices during that time and just enjoy being together.

☐ Do something extra for one of your children this week. Next week you can do something special for someone else and spread the love.

☐ (Write your own tip)

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Life Choices

OBJECTIVE: Make and take control of your life choices.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by giving the Life Choices handout. Use this handout to lead a discussion about the choices that we make in life, both good and bad. To encourage participation, you might ask the parent to tell what their life plans were at each stage of development (child, teenager, and young adult).

Talk about some of the life choices that the parent has made over their lives. Talk about good choices and not so good (or bad) choices. Provide extra support if the parent is triggered by this part of the discussion.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:
1. Ask the questions in the three boxes in the Life Choices handout.
2. If you could go back and do it all over again, what would you do differently?
3. What would you tell your children to help them learn from your good and bad choices?

ACTIVITY: Hand out Path to my Future. Have the parent choose a goal for their future. Have them think about the steps that they need to take to achieve their goal, the challenges that they might have to overcome (ladders), and the things that might happen to knock them off the path (chutes) to reaching their goal. Have the parent talk about a future goal and their plan to achieve it.

End by talking about how the parent can support their children in setting some goals and working toward making them happen. This can be written on the Tips for Practice handout.
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around life choices:

1. Talk during family meals about different choices one can make in life regarding hopes and dreams.
2. Collect inspirational quotes and put them in a scrapbook or on the refrigerator. Read them together and talk about how they can inspire your family to make good choices.
3. Talk together about family members, or friends, who have “made it.” What choices did they make along the way to get where they wanted to be?
4. Take the first step toward the goal that you picked for your Path to My Future.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

• As young children, our play is about our hopes and dreams.
• As teenagers, we have big ideas about what want our future to be like and what we want to be. Parents can help their children realize these early dreams and aspirations.
• Parent can help their children make positive, healthier choices that may be different than the ones they made.
• We make life choices throughout our lives. You are never too young or too old to make life choices, set new goals, and try your best to make them happen.
• After this session, we hope that you walk away with some tools to help yourself and the your children make good choices about their future (regardless of their life struggles).

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

• Paper and pen/pencil
• Life Choices
• Path to my Future (hand out a blank one and one filled out as an example)
• Tips for Practice
Life Choices

We all make choices about what we want our life to be like. Often our ideas about our future begin in childhood.

As a child, can you remember what you said when an adult asked you: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Those were your 1st life plans! You may have spent hours playing and pretending about these things.

As we grow up, our ideas about what we want our life to be become like scripts written for a play. We go over these scripts many times as we daydream about our future.

As a teenager, can you remember what you wished your life would be like as an adult? Were you going to finish high school? Go to a trade school or college? Were you going to work? Have a career? Were you going to get married? Have children? Did you imagine having a big or small family? Did you imagine living in the city or the country? Did you imagine living in an apartment or in a house?

One of the hardest things about life is making our scripts come true. Some people do not think that anything they do will make their life dreams come true. They just let life happen to them. Other people think that if they make plans, they can work to make their dreams come true. These people make decisions or choices that match their dreams. For example, they ask themselves – If I skip school again, where will I be tomorrow? If I have sex with this person and we have a baby, what will happen to me then?

As a young adult, do you remember making choices about how you wanted to live your life or did you just let things happen? If you could go back and do it all over again, what would you do differently?
Path to My Future Example

Step 1:
Take entrance exam and enroll in class

Step 2:
Attend classes regularly

Step 3:
Go to tutoring for math

Step 4:
Take GED exam

- Fail the exam the first time.
- Get sick and miss some classes.
- Have a hard time with math.

Get a GED

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Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around life choices and your family’s future:

- Talk during family meals, or during other opportunities the family is together, about different choices one can make in life regarding hopes and dreams.

- Collect inspirational quotes and put them in a scrapbook or on the refrigerator. Read them together and talk about how they can inspire your family to make good choices.

- Talk together about family members, or friends and neighbors, who have “made it.” What choices did they make along the way to get where they wanted to be?

- (Write your own tip)

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Family Life Cycle

OBJECTIVE: Normalize family life cycles.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by having an open discussion of the family life cycle. Hand out *The More Things Change Directions* and use it as a guide. Additional topics you could cover in the discussion include:

- normative family change, transitions, and loss.
- the idea that family rituals, traditions, and routines are important in marking these transitions.
  - Have parent discuss the traditions and rituals that families use in this way. Examples include: weddings, birth and naming ceremonies, graduations, and funerals.

Present the idea that major family life events usually alter the normative family life cycle. Discuss the difficulties presented by major family life events that occur which can directly affect the family life cycle. Examples include: often unexpected, untimely and out of order, more difficult to cope with, more difficult to find meaning in, etc. These include: chronic illness, loss of employment, incarceration, mental health issues, substance abuse, accident, death of a loved one, etc.

Make a list of things that might happen in a family to disrupt the life cycle (e.g. incarceration, drug use, relationships, mental illness, death of a family member, etc.). Talk about which things on this list they have control of and which they have little or no control of. Assure parents that all families have disruptions in the family life cycle – this is typical.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What do you think the term “family life cycle” means?
2. What is the family life cycle of most families?
3. What are some things that can happen to disrupt the family life cycle?
4. Which of these things do you have some control over?
ACTIVITY: Hand out the *Family Timeline* documents. The parent can list important events and dates on the handout. After going over the example, have the parent add dates to the *My Family Timeline* that indicate when important things happened to their family (for example, family started, babies born, family members left the family, new family members joined, the family moved, etc.). The parent can use stickers or magazine pictures to illustrate events along the line.

Have the parent think about their timeline and identify things that have disrupted their family life cycle.

- Talk about major family life events that have affected their families.
- Talk about how these major life events changed their families.

Have the parent think about their children’s perspective of their family life experiences. What meaning might the child make of the family’s life experiences? How can parents help create and celebrate more positive family life experiences?

End the session by having the parent tell a story about their family in the future if they took control of some of the things that have disrupted their family life cycle. Go over the *Tips for Practice* handout.

**TIPS FOR PRACTICE:**
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around the family life cycle:

1. Tell your children some stories about your family history.
2. Talk to your children about the future of your family and how you would like it to be.

**IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:**
- There is a normal cycle that most families go through.
- In many families, something happens to disrupt this normal cycle.
- We have control over some of the things (not all of them!) that happen to disrupt our family life cycle.
- By completing this session, we hope that the parent will be positively motivated to purposely change the direction of the way some things are headed in their families. By looking back at their past, they may be able to make the future more stable and predictable for future generations of their families.
HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Pen/Pencil
- The More Things Change
- Family Timeline Example
- My Family Timeline (printed on 11x14 paper)
  - Paper, pens, stickers or magazines
- Tips for Practice
The More Things Change Directions

1. Present the *Family Life Cycle* and talk about normative family change, transitions, and loss.

2. Introduce the idea that family rituals, traditions, and routines are important in marking these transitions.

3. Have parent discuss the traditions and rituals that families use in this way. Examples include: weddings, birth and naming ceremonies, graduations, and funerals.

4. Present the idea that major family life events almost always alter the normative family life cycle.

5. Discuss the difficulties presented by unplanned major family life events that occur, which can directly affect the family life cycle. Examples include: often unexpected, untimely and out of order events, more difficult to cope with, more difficult to find meaning in, etc. Such as: chronic illness, loss of employment, incarceration, substance abuse, accident, death of a loved one, etc.)

6. Talk about major family life events that have affected their families.

7. Talk about how these major life events changed their families.
The More Things Change

Families change. They have beginning, middle, and an end.

This is called the *Family Life Cycle*.

- A family begins when a couple comes together or a baby is born. Other children may be born into the family. Families with young children face a lot of challenges.

- Children grow up and go through different stages. Families need to change with each of these new stages.

- Children reach adulthood and leave home.

- Adult children form relationships and have children of their own. Parents become grandparents.

- Parents become older and die.
Almost always, something happens to disturb this cycle.

- Adults leave the family through conflict or divorce.
- New adults, like new partners, come into the family.
- A parent becomes ill or disabled and cannot care for the children.
- A family member dies before reaching old age.
- A child leaves or is removed from the home before adulthood.
- Family members may struggle with mental health issues and/or substance abuse issues.
Family Timeline Example

1990
Caregivers
married

1999
Grandpa Marcus
died

2004
Family moved
to Baltimore City

1988
Caregivers
moved into their own
apartment

1993
Mia was born

2000
Little Marcus
was born

2007
Mia started
high school

Future...

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My Family Timeline
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around your family life cycle:

☐ Tell your children some stories about your family history.

☐ Talk to your children about the future of your family and how you would like it to be.

☐ (Write your own tip)

________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Family Traditions and Routines

OBJECTIVE: Identify and carry on positive family traditions.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by developing an understanding of family traditions and routines. Use *Introduction to Family Rituals and Routines* to guide a discussion. Ask parent to think about the way things were done in their families when they were growing up.

Have parent make a list of memories or tell stories about special events, birthdays, holidays, bedtime, etc. Use these memories and stories to talk about the important characteristics of traditions, rituals and routines.

Although some parents may have trouble thinking of positive traditions from their childhood, encourage them to try. Some parents may have difficulty with this activity if they grew up under stressful, abusive, or unhappy circumstances. Do not push the parent to share more than they are comfortable sharing. Acknowledge that sometimes family memories can be painful.

End with a hopeful message that *new family traditions can be started at any time*. New family traditions can create lasting positive memories for their children to pass on to the next generation. Have the parent write a potential new tradition on the *Tips for Practice* handout.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. Ask the questions in *Introduction to Family Rituals and Routines* handout.

2. What are some traditions and routines that you remember your family doing while you were growing up?

3. How can families strengthen their traditions and rituals?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around family traditions and routines:

1. Make a list of traditions that you feel are important to your family.
2. Plan a meal with your family and do one thing to make it special (make a special dish, dress up).
3. Tell your children a story about a special family tradition that you remember.
4. Start a new tradition.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Families pass down traditions and routines from one generation to the next. All families have routines and traditions.
- Family routines and traditions change as time goes by. Some families stop doing certain traditions.
- Some families make their traditions and routines so important that no matter what happens they continue to carry them out.
- We can look back at the family we grew up in and think about what brought us together. We can decide how we want to bring our family together now to celebrate together, to work together to carry out our daily tasks, and to get through tough times as a family.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Paper and pen/pencil
- Introduction to Family Rituals and Routines
- Tips for Practice
Why focus on families?

Families are necessary. Families are a way we break down large groups into small ones to organize society. Families are important in the emotional and social lives of adults. Families play a major role in the growth and development of all children.

Four main functions support this important role:

- Families try to provide for the basic needs of all of its members, including food, shelter, protection from dangers, affection.
- Families create a "home," give people a group to belong to, and a sense of who they are.
- Families help pass traditions and parenting practices between generations.
- Families provide ways for relating to the larger community.

How do families accomplish these functions?

Family rituals, traditions, and routines help families carrying out the functions of the family.
What are family traditions and routines?

Family traditions and routines involve family celebrations such as birthdays and holidays, traditions special to individual families, and everyday routines such as dinnertime. What are some traditions and routines that you know, related to:

- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Weddings
- Funerals
- Trips/Vacations
- Picnics/Barbecues
- Sports
- Church
- Reunions
- Family Meetings
- Recreation/Leisure Activities
- Dinnertime
- Bed Time
- Chores
- Family Education

What makes an event a tradition or routine?

- Doing it regularly over time
- Doing it in similar ways each time
- Family members who feel it is important and special

Why are family traditions and routines important?

Family traditions and routines help:

- to explain who does what in the family,
- to show who is in and who is outside the family,
- to define rules of day-to-day family life,
- to support the family, and
- to declare who the family is.
What do we know about family traditions and routines?

- All families, no matter what size, age, race, nationality, income level, etc., have traditions and routines.
- Family traditions and routines are often passed down from generation to generation.
- Family traditions and routines almost always change over time.
- Some family traditions and routines disappear altogether.
- Some families make traditions and routines so important that no matter what else happens they continue to carry them out.

How can families strengthen their traditions and routines?

**Planning**

- Early planning by parents about what kind of family they want to have, what things they want to do as a family, and what is important to their family.
- Setting high expectations.
- Trying hard to follow through on these plans.

**Tradition Integrity**

- Number of traditions.
- Richness of traditions.
- How involved, or simple, the traditions and routines are.
- How long the family has been carrying out the traditions.
- Positive feeling about and meaning of family traditions.
Daily Routines

- Making a habit of “bigger” routines (that can also become traditions in some families), such as dinner times, by making time for them regularly, no matter what else is happening.

- Carrying out every day smaller habits or chores such as observing regular bed times for children, getting children to school, developing leisure time hobbies, and a wide range of likely activities that characterize the day-to-day life of most families with children.

Making It Special

- Helps the family support their beliefs and values through living them daily.

- Helps the family celebrate good things that happen and get through bad things that happen.

Roles

- Family members know and agree what their part or job is when it comes to carrying out the duties that need to be done in the family on a regular basis or during special occasions. These are family wishes regarding who will do what when. In some families this might mean that one person may be carrying most of the load for these activities while in other families everyone shares the responsibility.

- Can tell who is in charge.

- Everyone knows which jobs are shared responsibilities.

Support

- People outside the immediate family who are often included in the traditions and routines of the family.

- People outside the immediate family who help when things go wrong.
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around family traditions and routines:

- Make a list of traditions that you feel are important to your family.
- Plan a meal with your family and do one thing to make it special (make a special dish, dress up).
- Tell your children a story about a special family tradition that you remember.
- Start a new tradition.
- (Write your own tip)

Notes:
Our Family Values

OBJECTIVE: Adopt family values.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start with a discussion about family values. Hand out *Our Family Values* and use it to guide the discussion. Have the parent make a list of some values that families think are important. As they make this list, have them make their own list of values that are priorities for their own family. Talk about the difference between survival values and ideal values.

Discuss these family values, making sure to focus on how they express their values or live their values in their own families. As an example:

- Some families value education. They live this value by making sure that their children attend school every day ready to learn, by having books around the house and reading together, or by having a rule that homework is done before the TV is turned on.

ACTIVITY: Have the parent think about a way that they can start a family tradition or routine that supports their shared values. They can use the *Family Values and Family Life* handout to think about how they could develop a practice around an important family value that they would like to make more important for their family.

End by having the parent share ideas about how they plan to practice an important value with their family. This can be written on the *Tips for Practice* handout.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What are family values?
2. What are some of your family values?
3. How did this become a family value?
4. How does this value guide your family?
5. How do you let your children know this is an important value?
6. How can you make this value more important in your family’s daily life?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around deciding on and communicating your family’s values:

1. Talk with your children about the values that you think are important.
2. Start to practice your family values.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Family values guide our family actions.
- We communicate how important a value is to us in how we live our lives. Children learn the values of their parents by having these values guide their daily family life.
- Sometimes our survival values are not the same as our ideal values and we have to make difficult choices.
- Even if a parent did not grow up with positive family values, they can learn to put them in place as they raise their own children.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Paper and pen/pencil
- Our Family Values
- Family Values and Family Life
- Tips for Practice
Our Family Values

What are family values:

- Family values are what we believe in.
- Family values are what we think is important.
- Family values are shared.
- Family values are practiced, or demonstrated, regularly.
- Family values guide our family actions.

Here are some values that some families think are important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Time</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Education</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List some other things that a family values.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

List things that your family values in the order that you value them:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Family Values and Family Life

Plan a family routine/activity to strengthen one of your important family values.

One of our important family values is ____________________________________________

We will show our belief in this value by carrying out the following family routine/activity:
________________________________________________________

Who will take part?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

When will we do it? ____________________________________________

What will we do? ____________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

Who will do what to get ready?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>What?</th>
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</table>
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around your family values:

☐ Talk with your children about values that you think are important.

☐ Start to practice family values.

☐ (Write your own tip)

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Notes:
TRADITIONS
Relative Interview

OBJECTIVE: Share family heritage with your children.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start with an open discussion about the ways that we know or learn about our family history. Who knows things about our family history like “how we got our name,” “where the recipe for our favorite food came from,” etc.?

Introduce the idea of a “Relative” interview. Have the parent identify whom they would like to interview to learn about their family history. Have them decide when they will do this interview and whether it will be over the phone or in person.

ACTIVITY: Handout the “Relative” Interview and do a mock interview with the parent. This mock interview can be either about the family they grew up in or about what they would say if one of their children were interviewing them. End by discussing if anything surprising came up while they were being interviewed and how the process made them feel about their family.

End this session by discussing other ways to learn more about one’s family history. This can be written on the Tips for Practice handout.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. Is there someone in your family, or a close friend, who has known your family for a very long time, and knows a lot about your family history?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around getting to know our family history:

1. Phone, talk to or write a letter to someone who knew your family when you were growing up and ask them some of the questions on the interview.
2. Have one of your children interview you about when you were growing up or when they were growing up.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Our family history is an important part of who we are.
- Sharing information about our family history with our “relatives” is a good way to connect.
- We can decide to do things like the family we grew up in or to do things differently, but we have to know about our family history to make those choices.
- Connections with family are important and are made stronger by our shared history.
- By the end of the session, the parent should be ready to reach out to a “relative” to learn about their family history, traditions, and heritage.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Pen/pencil
- “Relative” Interview
- Tips for Practice
Instructions for Your “Relative” Interview

Pick someone or several people to talk with who can tell you about your family.

A “relative” can be anyone who has known your family for a long time.

As a family you may pick one person to interview or, if you want, several people. Parents, adolescents, and/or older children can do the interview. Each person can pick a “relative” to talk with.

Choose a time during the week when you can spend some time talking with your “relative”.

You can talk with your “relative” in person or over the telephone.

You can take some notes during your conversation or you can just remember what they tell you.

If you want, and have the equipment, you can make an audio or video tape of your conversation. If it’s a phone call, be sure to let the other person know that you’re recording the conversation.

If you have some questions that are not part of the interview, just add them in as you talk.

Completing this interview might be triggering, but doing it can get us to think about what’s important for the health of future generations. If some of the questions and answers make you sad and unhappy about your childhood, you can think about how to change or make it different for your children.
“Relative” Interview

Relative Interviewed: ________________________________________________________________
Interviewer: ________________________________________________________________
Date: ____________________________

What is your full name?
__________________________________________________________

What was your family name when you were growing up?
__________________________________________________________

How did you get your name?
__________________________________________________________

Were you named after someone?
__________________________________________________________

Did you ever have a nickname?
__________________________________________________________

What was your family like when you were growing up?
__________________________________________________________

Who raised you?
__________________________________________________________
Who else lived with you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What was your home like?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Who kept pictures of you when you were growing up?

________________________________________________________________________

Do you remember any special stories your mother, father, or grandparents told you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you have chores to do around your house when you were growing up?

________________________________________________________________________

Did you and your family sit down at the table together for meals? ____________

Who fixed the meal?

________________________________________________________________________
Did you say a blessing?

What were your favorite foods?

At bedtime, what did you do?

Did you have a regular time you had to go to sleep?

Do you remember a favorite bedtime story, poem, or song?

What birthday do you remember most from when you were growing up?

What made it special?

Did your family celebrate special occasions with a special meal?

What occasions?
What did you like to have to eat for your special dinner?

______________________________________________________________

Did you eat at home or go out to a restaurant?

______________________________________________________________

What was your favorite holiday? ________________________________

What did your family celebrate?

______________________________________________________________

What did your family do together for fun?

______________________________________________________________

What was your favorite family activity?

______________________________________________________________

Did your family take trips or vacations? ________________

Where did you go?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
Did you go to the same place often? ____________

What was your favorite trip or vacation?

__________________________________________

Who went with you?

__________________________________________

Did your family visit with relatives? __________

How did your family spend time with relatives?

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

How often did you see relatives?

__________________________________________

Did they come to your house or did you go to visit them?

__________________________________________

Did you have any family reunions? ____________

Was your family religious? ____________

What religion did you practice? ________________________________
Did you go to a place of worship often? ____________

Did you observe religious practices at home? ________________

Did you celebrate religious holidays? ________________

Were there family members that you always heard memorable stories about? _____________________________

Who were they?
____________________________
____________________________

Did you see/do you have any pictures of these relatives? ________________

Who was/is the best story-teller in your family?

____________________________

Can you summarize where your family has been, and where you think it is going?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
**Tips for Practice**

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around knowing your family history:

- Call up, talk to or write a letter to someone who knew your family when you were growing up and ask them some of the questions on the interview.

- Have one of your children interview you about when you were growing up or when they were growing up.

- *(Write your own tip)*

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Notes:
Ritual Family Tree

OBJECTIVE: Discover your unique family traditions and pass them on to your children.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by defining family traditions and rituals.

Have the parent list some of their family traditions. Briefly discuss these traditions and rituals. The Ritual Family Tree handout can be used to help the parent make their own lists.

ACTIVITY: Have the parent make a ritual family tree. On a sheet of paper, they should trace the rituals, traditions, and routines that are special to their family. The parent should decide how they want to depict their family ritual tree based on design, color, cutout leaves, flowers, fruits, etc. to depict areas of growth on their tree, routines that have died, etc.

After the ritual family trees are finished, the parent should think about how they can take care of their tree by paying attention to their rituals, keeping their rituals special, helping their rituals grow, planning for new traditions/rituals or adding back old or lost ones, and changing current traditions to make them more meaningful. They can take some notes about how to take care of their ritual trees on the handout Care of our Ritual Family Tree.

End by sharing their plans to nurture their family tree. This can be written on the Tips for Practice handout.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What traditions do my family practice? What makes them special? Have they changed over time?

2. Where did our traditions come from?

3. How can I make sure that these traditions continue in my family? What new traditions can my family start?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around our heritage of traditions:

1. Talk with your family about where your traditions came from.
2. Talk together with your family about starting some new traditions.
3. Do one thing to help your family ritual tree grow.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Family traditions are often passed down from one generation to the next.
- Family traditions and rituals are special because they happen about the same way time after time, year after year.
- We can stop traditions and rituals that are no longer special to our family and we can start new ones.
- This session is about making a commitment to uphold and further develop their family ritual heritage. A parent should leave the session having thought about how to nurture their ritual family tree by observing, watering, fertilizing, new plantings, and pruning. These are things that will help their family’s ritual life flourish.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Pen/pencil
- Ritual Family Tree
- Care of our Ritual Family Tree
- Large paper or poster board for each participant
  - Paper, markers, colored pencils, construction paper, glue
- Tips for Practice
Consider the following areas:

Holidays

Daily Routines

Vacation

Leisure

Reunions

Anniversaries

Religion and Religious Practices

Foods

Legends

Celebrations

Other

Sharing your heritage

Discuss a particular ritual or tradition that is special to your family. What makes it special? Has it changed over time? How can you make sure that this ritual continues in your family?

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Care of Our Ritual Family Tree

Observing (paying attention to our rituals)

Watering (keeping our rituals healthy)

Fertilizing (helping our rituals grow)

New Plantings (planning for new rituals/routines, adding back old or lost traditions)

Pruning (changing present rituals/routines to make them better)
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around family traditions:

☐ Talk with your family about where your traditions came from.

☐ Talk together with your family about starting some new traditions.

☐ Do one thing to help your family ritual tree grow.

☐ (Write your own tip)

Notes:
Telling Family Stories

OBJECTIVE: Tell family stories to create a sense of belonging.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by sharing the Ananse myth about how stories came to the world (from A Story, A Story handout). Follow this with a guided discussion about family stories.

The parent can tell some stories from their own families. Try to help them tell positive family stories even if it may be difficult for them to think of one. These stories can be about family traditions or heroes.

End by having the parent answer the question: “If you were your family’s hero, what story would you like to hear your children tell about you?” Discuss other ways you could share family stories. This can be written on the Tips for Practice handout.

TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around sharing family stories:

1. Look at family photo albums with your children. Talk about who is in the pictures, what was going on when the picture was taken, and how you were feeling at that time. With older children, it would be fun to share baby pictures and listen to what your children remember from when those pictures were taken.

2. During a meal or at bedtime, tell your children a story either of your childhood or adulthood. These are great times to be close and to share personal stories with each other.

3. Tell your child the story of his/her birth; how you felt when was she was born, if she looked around the room or kept her eyes closed, how you snuggled her close, how family members reacted when meeting the baby, etc.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. All families tell stories. Why do you think they do that?
2. What kind of stories do families tell?
3. Who is the storyteller in your family?
4. What are some of your favorite family stories?
5. What family stories have you passed along to your children?
IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Family stories are one of the ways that we pass information about who we are from one generation to the next.
- Family stories provide an oral history of our family. Family stories give our families an identity.
- Family stories let each family member tell about their own experience and then combine these separate experiences into one story.
- Family stories tell about our past, help us to understand our present, and provide some direction for our future.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- A Story, A Story
- Tips for Practice
This is a story about Ananse, the Spider Man.

Once there were no stories on earth...all the stories belonged to the Sky God.

Ananse wanted to buy the Sky God’s stories.

The Sky God told Ananse the price of his stories...Osebo (the leopard), Mmboro (the hornet) and Mmoatia (the fairy). Ananse agreed to the price but the Sky God laughed and wondered how the weak old Ananse who was so small, so small could pay the price.

Ananse found Osebo (the leopard) and tricked Osebo into playing a binding, binding game. Ananse tied the leopard by his foot, by his foot, by his foot, by his foot. He said now you are ready to meet the Sky God.

Next Ananse went to find Mmboro, the hornets who sting like fire. He held a banana leaf over his head like an umbrella. Then he poured water from the calabash over his head and said, “it’s raining, raining, raining so you should fly into my calabash so the rain will not tatter your wings.” The hornets thanked him as they flew into the calabash. Ananse quickly stopped up the mouth of the gourd and hung it on the tree next to Osebo.

Next Ananse carved a little wooden doll holding a bowl and covered it with sticky stuff. Then he filled the bowl with yummy food. He was waiting for Mmoatia, the fairy who men never see. Mmoatia asked the doll baby if they could eat the yummy food. But the doll didn’t answer her. Mmoatia put her hand on the sticky doll and got stuck. Then Anase came out of hiding and said “now you are ready to meet the Sky God.”

Anase spun a web up to the sky and set Osebo, Mmboro and Mmoatia down at the feet of the Sky God.

The Sky God then called his people together and said, “from this day and going on forever, my stories belong to Ananse and shall be called Spider Stories.

So, Ananse took the golden box of stories back to earth. When he opened the box, all the stories scattered to the corners of the world, including this one.

......I hope you liked this story!
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around sharing family stories:

- Look at family photo albums with your children. Talk about who is in the pictures, what was going on when the picture was taken, and how you were feeling at that time. With older children, it would be fun to share baby pictures and listen to what your children remember from when those pictures were taken.

- During a meal or at bedtime, tell your children a story either of your childhood or adulthood. These are great times to be close and to share personal stories with each other.

- Tell your child the story of his/her birth; how you felt when she was born, if she looked around the room or kept her eyes closed, how you snuggled her close, how family members reacted when meeting the baby, etc.

- (Write your own tip)

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Things to Celebrate!

OBJECTIVE: Plan and carry out successful family celebrations

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by having the parent make a list of the things (big and small) that their family has to celebrate. The parent can take some notes on the handout *Things to Celebrate*.

ACTIVITY: Review the list and have the parent pick one thing on the list that they want to plan and carry out an actual celebration for. Make some plans for celebrating or expressing gratitude. The parent can decide when they will have this celebration, who will take part, etc. They can write down their plans on the handout *Planning to Celebrate*.

Part of any celebration is making it special. There are many ways to make any event special. Hand out *Making It Special*. Have the parent think about what they are going to celebrate and look over the list of ways to make it special. Pick some ways that they would like to use. They don’t have to pick any of the ones that are on the list; they can use their own ideas, too.

Even when something is well planned, things can still go wrong. Spend a few minutes problem solving so that the parent can think about what might go wrong and how they would fix it.

End by discussing other ways to celebrate with your family. This can be written on the *Tips for Practice* handout.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What are some things going on in your family right now that you could celebrate? How would you celebrate?

2. How could you make your celebration special?

3. What could go wrong that would spoil your celebration plans?

4. What can you do to make sure that you carry through with your plans to celebrate?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around celebrating with your family:

1. Find something small to celebrate with your family and do it this week. Plan to do something special to mark the celebration. Remember celebrating does not have to cost any money!
2. Include your family in decisions regarding any type of celebration, whether it is a birthday party, wedding, graduation party, or holidays. Let your children pick something as simple as what color will be used as the theme for the celebration.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- It is important to celebrate together.
- Celebrate the big and small good things that happen. Celebrate daily moments to larger traditions.
- A celebration does not have to cost a lot.
- Even if something comes up, it is important to go ahead with the celebration.
- Planning a special event for our family or a family member shows that you think a lot about them. Taking the time to plan and make all of the arrangements, even if you have little to work with, will make the celebration mean even more. Think of the positive memories you will make!

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
- Pen/pencil
- Things to Celebrate
- Celebration Planner
- Tips for Practice
Things to Celebrate

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
4. ________________________________
5. ________________________________
Moments to Celebrate Planner

What will be celebrated?

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

When?
Date:______________________________________________________________
Time:______________________________________________________________

Who will be invited?

__________________________  __________________________
__________________________  __________________________
__________________________  __________________________
__________________________  __________________________

How will be celebrate?

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

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Suggestions for Making It Special

**Food**
- Family Favorite
- One Favorite Dish for each family member
- A New Recipe
- A Special Dish not Served Everyday

**Decoration**
- Setting the Table
- Family Ornaments
- Candles
- Handmade Items
- Balloons
- Banners/Signs
- Streamers
- Flowers

**Dress**
- Dressed Up
- Casual
- Costumes
- Formal

**Activities**
- Singing/Music
- Prayers
- Talking
- Silence
- Holding Hands
- Family Circle
- Games
- Telling Stories
- Dancing
- Exchanging Gifts
- Exchanging Cards
- Saying Blessings
- Toasts

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Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around celebrating with your family:

☑ Find something small to celebrate with your family and do it this week. Plan to do something special to mark the celebration. Remember celebrating does not have to cost any money!

☑ Include your family in decisions regarding any type of celebration, whether it is a birthday party, wedding, graduation party, or holidays. Let your children pick something as simple as what color will be used as the theme for the celebration.

☑ (Write your own tip)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Dear Diary

OBJECTIVE: Keep a diary to discover the routines that work best for you.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by defining routines.

ACTIVITY: Have the parent list things that they do every day. They can list the things they do to start their day and things they do to start their children’s day. Move through the day listing routines that are both personal and routines that involve the children. Have the parent talk about the best part of the day and the hardest part of the day. Have them share about how they feel at different times during the day.

End by asking the parent to keep a diary for several days over the next week. Give them each a copy of Daily Diary to use. They might learn some things about how their routines are working or not working. They may have some new ideas about how to make their routines work better for their family. They might also ask their children to keep a diary for several days to see how they could help their children develop better routines and habits. Have parent fill out Tips for Practice.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What do you do to start your day? How does that make you feel? (ask again about lunch time, afternoon, dinner time, evening and bedtime)
2. What do your children do to start their day? How do you help them? How does that make you feel? (ask again about lunch time, afternoon, dinner time, evening and bedtime)
3. What is the best part of the day for you? What is the worst part of the day for you?
4. How can you help your children develop good routines and habits?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around knowing your daily routine:

1. Keep a diary over the next week. Find out what routines you have in place that support your family. Find out which of your routines are working for you and your family.
2. Have your children keep a diary over the next week. Help them identify routines that are working and routines that not working so well.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
- Parents have their own routines, but they also have to establish routines for their children.
- If parents take care of themselves and accomplish their own routines, they will have the time and energy to help structure their children’s daily routines.
- How we feel during the day affects whether we can accomplish our routines. Sticking to our routines helps us feel better.
- The parent can reflect on how their personal routines are important and must get done in order for them to make sure that the routines for the whole family and for each child get done.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
- Paper and Pen/pencil
- Daily Diary
- Tips for Practice
For the next several days, please write down what you do at different times during the day. Describe what you did, when you did it, who you did it with, where you did it and any other details you can think of. Be sure to write down how you felt at those times. The diary forms are just to get you started, if you feel like writing more, feel free do to so.
Dear Diary,

We started the day by ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...
The best part of the day was ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...
Dear Diary,

We started the day by ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...
The best part of the day was ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...
Dear Diary,

We started the day by ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...
The best part of the day was ...

It made me feel ...

It made me feel ...
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around your daily practices:

☐ Keep a diary over the next week. Find out what routines you have in place that support your family. Find out which of your routines are working for you and your family.

☐ Have your children keep a diary over the next week. Help them identify routines that are working and routines that not working so well.

☐ (Write your own tip)
  _____________________________________________________________
  _____________________________________________________________
  _____________________________________________________________

Notes:
Developing Daily Routines

OBJECTIVE: Identify the importance of daily routines.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by defining routines.

Hand out *Daily Routines* and discuss why we need routines by talking about how routines support healthy individual and family functioning.

Hand out *Common Problems* and discuss some of the reasons why routines don’t stick/last. Brainstorm some other reasons together and write them down.

Discuss ways to make a routine successful.

Talk about daily family routines that are working and not working for the parent.

ACTIVITY: Use the *Developing Routines* handout to lead the next activity. Have the parent pick a family routine that is not working and develop a new one based on what they have just learned about making routines successful.

End with the parent sharing their new family routines. Share ideas about what could go wrong and possible changes that could make the routine work. Have parent fill out *Tips for Practice*.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:
1. What is a daily routine?
2. Why do you think having routines is important?
3. What routines are working (things get done!)? What makes those routines work?
4. What routines are not working so well?
**TIPS FOR PRACTICE:**
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around making routines work at your house:

1. Using the tips that you learned today, make some changes in one of your daily routines that is not working very well.
2. Bedtime routines are so important for children of all ages. Talk together about how you get ready for bed at night. Using the tips that you learned today, develop a bedtime routine that will work for your family. You might think about having a regular bedtime and about saying goodnight to each other every night.

**IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:**
- Routines don’t just happen and they don’t always work. They take some planning to get started.
- Know the steps it takes to get the task done.
- When developing a routine for your family, KEEP IT SIMPLE. Try doing the routine the same way every day.
- Don’t give up on a routine when it does not go smoothly the first time. Give it time to work. Change steps in a routine that are not working.
- Have someone in charge of making sure the routine gets done.
- This session is about deliberate practice of daily routines. The parent should leave having thought about how to plan, problem-solve, and follow-through on daily tasks. This session stresses taking control of the things that a family can take control of in their daily family life.

**HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):**
- Pen/pencil
- Daily Routines
- Common Problems
- Developing Routines
- Tips for Practice
Daily Routines

Routines are things we do the same way, every day, day after day. Usually these routine behaviors are focused on getting something done. Routines are "short hand" ways to get things done as smoothly as possible. A lot of the time we do these routines without even thinking about them, so they become habits. But, like habits, there can be routines that work well and routines that do not work so well.

A successful routine can:

- Give order to daily activities and help organize our days.
- Give us a sense of predictability so we can know what is supposed to happen from day to day.
- Help us get several things done without having to plan and think about each one.
- Be a way family members can work together -- Even young family members can be a part of a routine.
- Give us structure and help build self-control.
- Give families a sense of identity: this is the way we do things.

Developing Routines

Routines do not just happen. Usually we have to develop them over time. They take some planning at first, but then, if they work, they keep going on and on. To make a daily routine work, we break the activity down into smaller steps. Each of these smaller steps can be described as to how it is done, who does it, when it is done and where it is done. Then when all the steps are put together, a workable routine is developed.
Some things to think about when developing a routine are:

- How many steps are involved?
- Is there an order or sequence for the steps?
- How much time is needed to do all the steps?
- Is there an organizing action or cue that starts the routine off?
- Is someone in charge of making sure that the activity gets done?

Routines are important, but there are times when we cannot follow our routines. Sometimes we can plan for those times when we cannot rely on routines. By thinking about what can prevent our routines from happening, we can look for ways to change the routine, so the job still gets done. The worksheet will help you work through some of these steps. It is also important to remember that some of the things that prevent us from following our routines may be preventable and that keeping our routines may be more important than the activity that makes us change the routine. This is something that needs to be decided from time to time.
Common Problems with Routines

- Not enough time to do everything.
- Steps are not organized in a certain order.
- Steps are done in a different order every time.
- No one is in charge.
- There are too many steps.
- Each step has to be done in exactly the same way every time.

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Kiser 2008
Developing Routines

Routines are the things we do the same way every day, day after day. Routines can be developed by breaking certain activities down into steps and deciding what, when, who, and where each activity is done.

Pick a time of day when something happens on a regular basis. Getting going in the morning, eating supper, getting ready for bed are examples. Break this activity down into the small steps it takes to get the job done. Then write out the when, who, where of each step. Be very specific as you fill in each box.

ROUTINE: _______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>5.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Routines are great ways to help us organize our days, but sometimes things just do not go the way we plan. Things happen that throw our routines right out the window. We cannot prevent those things from happening from time to time, but we can prepare ourselves for when they do. Use the space below to think about things that would force you to change the routine you developed on the chart above. Now write down ways you could change the steps to help keep the routine working as much as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT COULD HAPPEN</th>
<th>HOW STEP COULD CHANGE</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around daily routines:

- Using the tips that you learned today, make some changes in one of your daily routines that is not working very well.

- Bedtime routines are so important for children of all ages. Talk together about how you get ready for bed at night. Using the tips that you learned today, develop a bedtime routine that will work for your family. You might think about having a regular bedtime and about saying goodnight to each other every night.

- (Write your own tip)

____________________________
____________________________

Notes:
Whose Job Is It Anyway?

OBJECTIVE: Discover the importance of including each family member in household tasks.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by making a list all of the tasks that must get done in a family. Talk about who does each task in the family now.

ACTIVITY: Hand out *Family Job Chart*. This is a useful tool to help everyone in the family take part in making sure that the things that need to get done get done. Although the *Family Job Chart* is best completed by everyone in the family talking about it together, parents sometimes need to assign jobs. Have the parent think about how jobs could be shared and how they can make sure that everyone in the family has a task. Fill in the chart with some ideas.

After the *Family Job Chart* is completed, discuss ways for the parent to introduce the idea at home. Family members may want to take on different tasks than the ones assigned, but everyone should be expected to take part. After the family agrees on a plan, place the *Family Job Chart* on the refrigerator. Give family members stars or checks for completing their task.

End by having the parent fill out *Tips for Practice*.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:
1. What jobs must get done in your home?
2. What jobs do you do every day or every week to make your home run smoothly? What jobs do other family members do?
3. Does everyone in the family help out?
4. How can you encourage everyone in your family to work together to get things done?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around sharing work at your house:

1. Get everyone together and talk about all the jobs that have to get done.
2. Work together to complete a Family Job Chart making sure that everyone’s name is on the list at least once.
3. Give family members credit when they do their jobs!

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
- Running a household is hard work; there are many tasks that need to be done regularly for things to run smoothly.
- Sometimes the parent feel like doing these tasks is their job. They feel that they have to do everything. Feeling this way doesn’t feel good.
- It is important to share tasks in a family and for everyone to contribute. From the youngest to the oldest members of the family, everyone should have a job.
- Sometimes it is not easy to get everyone to pitch in. It is important to give family members choices about what jobs they do, to give them lots of praise and reinforcement for doing their jobs, and to give them some slack if they cannot always do their jobs right.
- Setting the expectation that everyone will help out and that everyone will try to get their jobs done is the key.
- Working together as a family to get things done builds close family bonds. Everyone feels good about being an important, contributing part of the family.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
- Pen/pencil
- Family Job Chart
- Tips for Practice
## Family Job Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>I Can Do It!</th>
<th>I Did It!</th>
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</table>
**Tips for Practice**

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around sharing chores:

- Get everyone together and talk about all the jobs that have to get done.

- Work together to complete a Family Job Chart making sure that everyone’s name is on the list at least once.

- Give family members credit when they do their jobs!

- (Write your own tip)
  
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________

**Notes:**
Let’s Eat

OBJECTIVE: Discuss the importance of shared family meals.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by asking how often the parent shares a meal with their families.

Follow this with a discussion about why it is important to eat meals together. Hand out *Sharing a Meal Together* to help guide the discussion.

Share tips for making eating meals together a positive experience. This can be about family mealtimes that take place around important events (for example, Sundays, holidays, reunions), mealtime rules, and ways to make their meals special (for example, favorite foods, dressing up).

**ACTIVITY:** Have the parent plan a mealtime routine that they can use with their families. Use the handout *Let’s Eat Together* to lead this activity.

End by having the parent fill out *Tips for Practice*.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. How often do you eat breakfast together as family? How often do you eat lunch together as family? How often do you eat dinner together as family?
2. Why do you think that eating meals together is important?
3. How can you make eating together a positive experience for your family? Do you have some memories of special meals as you were growing up?
4. What gets in the way of your family sharing meals together?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around sharing meals together:
   1. Plan to share a meal with your family at least two times this week.
   2. Play a conversation game with your family at dinner. Use the conversation prompts from Conversation Prompts handout or write down some simple questions on scraps of paper. Have each person chose one and ask the question written on it. Questions might be about what the person did that day, what they have planned for the next day, or something about them personally.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
   • Eating together as often as possible is important. Invite everyone to join in the mealtime.
   • What you talk about during the meal matters so use the time to make plans, share about the day’s experiences, and tell stories.
   • Make eating together important by turning off cell phones, TVs, video games.
   • Make eating together enjoyable.
   • Parents share their thoughts, feelings and experiences about eating meals together with their families. They learn about how to make shared mealtimes an important part of their family routine.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
   • Paper and Pen/pencil
   • Sharing a Meal Together
   • Planning a Mealtime Routine for my Family Conversation Prompts (print on business cards or cut down to size)
     o Single hole punch
     o Ring binders
   • Tips for Practice
Sharing a Meal Together

Eating meals together is GREAT for your family.

Tips for making mealtimes a big success...

Do’s

- Eat together as many times as you can during the week
- Encourage everyone to join in
- Catch up with each other, talk about the day and plan for tomorrow, tell stories
- Relax together and have a good time
- Have a plan for meals and some rules about what is expected during the meal

Don’ts

- Don’t let things get in the way of your mealtime – turn off the tv, put away your phones
- Don’t fuss with each other - leave conflicts for solving after the meal

Kiser © 2012
Let’s Eat Together

Pick a meal that you would like your family to eat together regularly.

Choose a day of the week that you will share a meal together:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
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</table>

Circle a mealtime that you share together:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

Plan your meal.

Break this activity down into the small steps it takes to get the job done. Then write out the when, who, where of each step. Be very specific as you fill in each box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Our family rules for making this meal a positive experience:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Making it happen...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO CHANGE YOUR PLANS?</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Kiser © 2012
Talk about what you did today?  

Talk about what the weather is going to be like tomorrow?

If you could be any kind of animal, what animal would you be?  

Tell about something interesting you did today.

Tell some news about someone in the family.  

Talk about a dream you had recently.

Give someone a compliment.  

Imitate your favorite TV character.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tell about some news you heard.</th>
<th>Tell about someone you have just met.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell about your favorite teacher?</td>
<td>What is your favorite subject in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your favorite sport?</td>
<td>Tell about someone you admire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell something funny that happened to you today.</td>
<td>What did you do today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell about someone you saw today.</td>
<td>How was school today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have much homework?</td>
<td>Do you have any special plans for the week?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Talk about something that is bothering you.

Talk about something that you are happy about.

Talk about something you are sad about.

Tell about one of your good friends.

What is your favorite food?

If you had three wishes, what would you wish for.

What would you like to be when you grow up?

Tell something special that you did this week.

Tell about what you did after school today.

What sports are you playing?
Have you heard any good jokes lately?  
What should we do tonight?

Talk about something you are mad about.  
Talk about your favorite TV show.

Have you seen any good movies lately?  
Have you read any good books lately?

What are you learning about in school?  
Tell one new thing you learned today.

Say something nice to someone at the table.  
Talk about something that you are looking forward to.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell about something you are grateful for today.</td>
<td>Name two things that make you happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about what you like to do when you have nothing to do.</td>
<td>What is your favorite dinner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about something that you haven’t done, but would like to try.</td>
<td>Tell a story about one of your grandparents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you helped anyone lately?</td>
<td>List ten things that you like about your family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List ten things that you do not like about your family.</td>
<td>Complain about your chores.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tell about a dream you had recently.

Tell about the best present you ever got.

Tell about the best present you ever gave to someone.

List ten things that would make life easier.

Talk about something that is worrying you.

Share a good memory from your past.

Share a bad memory from your past.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Tell about something you really worked hard for and then got.

Talk about something that scares you.
Tell about something that you pray for.  Who can you talk to when you need help?

How do you decide what is right and wrong?  List three things that are most important in your life.

Talk about something you would never do.  Do you like making plans or just letting things happen?

Name three things that make you laugh.  Try to make the person next to you laugh.

When you got up this morning, what did you look forward to doing?  Do you believe in God?
Tips for Practice
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around sharing meals together:

☐ Plan to share a meal with your family at least two times this week.

☐ Play a conversation game with your family at dinner. Use the conversation prompts from this session or write down some simple questions on scraps of paper. Have each person choose one and ask the question written on it. Questions might be about what the person did that day, what they have planned for the next day, or something about them personally.

☐ (Write your own tip)

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Things Get In the Way

OBJECTIVE: Plan a family activity and problem-solve possible obstacles.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Open by talking about shared family time.

Together, share some personal experiences about how things get in the way of your plans. Talk about feelings of disappointment, frustration, anger, and anxiety. Once the parent has identified their own feelings, talk about how their children feel when things get in the way. Review together the Things Get in the Way handout.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What kinds of activities do you plan to do with your children?
2. Sometimes we make great plans, but things can get in the way. What gets in the way of your plans? (make a list)
3. How do you feel when things get in the way of your family plans? (make a list)
4. How are your children affected when they expect something to happen and then something gets in the way?
5. Are there things that we can do as parents to help things go as planned?
6. When something goes wrong, do you think you can FLIP the Problem and find a way to carry out your plans?

ACTIVITY 1: Introduce a problem-solving strategy that parents might use to deal with things that come up and disrupt their plans. Use the FLIP the Problem handout to teach this strategy. Use one of the parent’s experiences about a time when something got in the way to list possible solutions and to decide which solution is best.

ACTIVITY 2: Have the parent plan an activity to carry out during the next week using the handout Carry It Out this Week. Ask them to think about what might get in the way and how they can flip the problem and make sure to carry out their plans.

End by having the parent fill out Tips for Practice.
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some activities that you and your family can use at home so that the events you plan and anticipate really do happen! Sit down with your family and plan a family activity such as taking a walk or playing at a park. Use the work that you completed here to plan out the details of the activity, in addition to brainstorming around what might get in the way. Lastly, think about potential solutions to those things that may get in the way.

1. Before you go to bed each night, list one thing that got in the way and prevented you from getting something done. Think about how you could stop it from getting in the way again.
2. If a problem comes up during the week, remember to FLIP it!

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
- We all get upset when our plans are disrupted. Children especially need to count on things going according to plans most of the time. This makes them feel safe and taken care of.
- Keep plans simple and have back up plans.
- Use your problem-solving skills to help think about what might get in the way and how you can handle it.
- In this session, we focus on gaining control over daily life by planning and problem-solving. We want families to believe in themselves and their ability to follow through on what they have planned.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
- Paper and Pen/pencil
- Things Get in the Way
- FLIP the Problem
- Carry It Out this Week
- Tips for Practice
Things get in the way...a handout for parents

We all have things that get in the way of our plans.

- When we have children and other everyday jobs, it can be hard to carry out planned activities.
- Day-to-day tasks like getting the kids to school, eating dinner, or getting to bed can be hard when things get in the way.
- Special family plans, such as family dinners or visits to relatives, can also fall apart when things get in the way.

HOW DO WE FEEL WHEN THINGS GET IN THE WAY OF OUR FAMILY PLANS?

OUR CHILDREN FEEL THESE THINGS TOO!!

One important thing parents can do is to carry out plans. Why is this so important??

- We teach children steadiness, regularity, strength, and predictability.
- Steadiness, regularity, strength, and predictability are very important when the outside world is always changing, dangerous or explosive.
- When family life is steady and children know what to expect, they learn to TRUST their parents and others.
- By overcoming the “things that get in the way” and carrying out family plans, we show our children that we are trustworthy and responsible.
- We teach them to be the same.

Kiser 2008
FLIP the Problem

F: Figure out what the problem is and what you want...

L: List all possible solutions...

I: Identify the best solution...

P: Plan when and where to use this strategy...

*Adapted from Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Prevention of Relapse of Depression
### Carry It Out this Week!

**Family Activity:**

**When (Date and Time):**

**Where:**

**What do we need to carry out the activity?**

(1) 

(2) 

(3) 

(4) 

(5) 

**What might get in the way?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What might get in the way?</th>
<th>How will we deal with this?</th>
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Kiser 2008
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around what gets in the way:

☐ Sit down with your family and plan out a family activity such as taking a walk or playing at a park. Use worksheets that you completed to plan out the details of the activity, in addition to brainstorming around what might get in the way. Lastly, think about potential solutions to those things that may get in the way.

☐ Before you go to bed each night list one thing that got in the way and prevented you from getting something done. Think about how you could stop it from getting in the way again.

☐ If a problem comes up during the week, remember to FLIP it!

☐ (Write your own tip)

________________________________________________________________________
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Notes:
Stress and Family Relaxation

OBJECTIVE: Identify stress and practice relaxation skills.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by talking about stress using the Stress handout.

Talk about times that the parent spends with their children and when that becomes stressful. Talk about what reactions the parent has when they are stressed while with their children.

Talk about relaxation being a way to deal with stress using the Relaxation handout.

ACTIVITY: Go over relaxation techniques in the Six Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Stress handout. Try out two of them. Next, read though the Relaxation Tips handout.

Help the parent set up a routine to practice relaxation with their children. Ask them to pick a time and a relaxation practice that they can do every day or even twice a day. Hand out the Family Relaxation Routine Weekly Log and ask the parent to keep track of when they practice relaxation with their family.

End by having the parent fill out Tips for Practice.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What happens to your body when you feel stress?

2. What happens to your bodies when you feel relaxed?

3. What things do you do now to help you relax? What things do your children do to relax?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around practicing relaxation:

1. Practice your relaxation and make a record of it on your log.
2. Make a list of things you and your family can do to reduce tension and relax. Put the list up on the refrigerator. When things start to heat up, pick one thing from the list and try it.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- We all feel stress, young and old. We feel it many times a day. It is our body’s reaction to danger and it is automatic.
- When we are relaxed, our body reacts in the opposite way to when we are stressed. Use your relaxation skills regularly, to help avoid getting tense and frazzled.
- Remember relaxing can be hard at first. Stick with it and everyone in the family will handle stress better.
- Family time can be tense especially when everyone comes home after a hectic day. We can practice relaxation with our children. When we know how to relax together, our family time can be more peaceful and less stressful.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):

- Pen/pencil
- Stress
- Relaxation
- Six Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Stress
- Family Relaxation Routine Weekly Log
- Tips for Practice
We all feel stress. We feel it many times a day. It is an automatic reaction.

Cave man experienced the stress response when he went into a cave and encountered a bear. Cave man would either fight the bear or head for the hills.

The stress response is our body’s reaction to danger. Under stress, our body reacts by:

- Tensing our muscles for action
- Increasing our heart rate and breathing rate
- Raising our blood pressure
- Alerting our mind
- Providing quick energy

Because of this response, we are ready to face threats.

Dealing with mild stress every day is not usually a problem. But when bad things happen a lot or when we do not feel safe, stress can build up. Built up stress can make us sick both physically and emotionally.

Adapted from Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Project, Department of Psychiatry, University of Queensland. In collaboration with Protect All Children Today (PACT). Funded by NH&MRC. Authored by Peter Marrington
Relaxation

Relaxation is a way to help us deal with stress. When we are relaxed, our body reacts in the opposite way to when it is stressed.

When relaxed, our body reacts by:
- relaxing our muscles
- slowing our heart rate and breathing rate
- dropping our blood pressure
- slowing down our thinking
- resting and saving energy

Relaxation can happen in many ways. Think about ways you help yourself relax:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Some ways of relaxing are healthy and some are not so healthy.

Some healthy ways of relaxing are: breathing techniques, muscle release exercises, massage, meditations, and yoga. Hobbies or personal interests, are also relaxing, like knitting or fishing. Different techniques work for different people.

Relaxing can also be learned.

Adapted from Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Project, Department of Psychiatry, University of Queensland. In collaboration with Protect All Children Today (PACT). Funded by NH&MRC. Authored by Peter Marrington
Six Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Stress

Published: September, 2016

We all face stressful situations throughout our lives, ranging from minor annoyances like traffic jams to more serious worries, such as a loved one's grave illness. No matter what the cause, stress floods your body with hormones. Your heart pounds, your breathing speeds up, and your muscles tense.

This so-called "stress response" is a normal reaction to threatening situations, honed in our prehistory to help us survive threats like an animal attack or a flood. Today, we rarely face these physical dangers, but challenging situations in daily life can set off the stress response. We can't avoid all sources of stress in our lives, nor would we want to. But we can develop healthier ways of responding to them.

One way is to invoke the "relaxation response," through a technique first developed in the 1970s at Harvard Medical School by cardiologist Dr. Herbert Benson, editor of the Harvard Medical School Special Health Report Stress Management: Approaches for preventing and reducing stress. The relaxation response is the opposite of the stress response. It's a state of profound rest that can be elicited in many ways. With regular practice, you create a well of calm to dip into as the need arises.

Following are six relaxation techniques that can help you evoke the relaxation response and reduce stress.

1. Breath focus. In this simple, powerful technique, you take long, slow, deep breaths (also known as abdominal or belly breathing). As you breathe, you gently disengage your mind from distracting thoughts and sensations. Breath focus can be especially helpful for people with eating disorders to help them focus on their bodies in a more positive way. However, this technique may not be appropriate for those with health problems that make breathing difficult, such as respiratory ailments or heart failure.

2. Body scan. This technique blends breath focus with progressive muscle relaxation. After a few minutes of deep breathing, you focus on one part of the body or group of muscles at a time and mentally releasing any physical tension you feel there. A body scan can help boost your awareness of the mind-body connection. If you have had a recent surgery that affects your body image or other difficulties with body image, this technique may be less helpful for you.

3. Guided imagery. For this technique, you conjure up soothing scenes, places, or experiences in your mind to help you relax and focus. You can find free apps and online recordings of calming scenes—just make sure to choose imagery you find soothing and that has personal significance. Guided imagery may help you reinforce a positive vision of yourself, but it can be difficult for those who have intrusive thoughts or find it hard to conjure up mental images.
4. **Mindfulness meditation.** This practice involves sitting comfortably, focusing on your breathing, and bringing your mind’s attention to the present moment without drifting into concerns about the past or the future. This form of meditation has enjoyed increasing popularity in recent years. Research suggests it may be helpful for people with anxiety, depression, and pain.

5. **Yoga, tai chi, and qigong.** These three ancient arts combine rhythmic breathing with a series of postures or flowing movements. The physical aspects of these practices offer a mental focus that can help distract you from racing thoughts. They can also enhance your flexibility and balance. But if you are not normally active, have health problems, or a painful or disabling condition, these relaxation techniques might be too challenging. Check with your doctor before starting them.

6. **Repetitive prayer.** For this technique, you silently repeat a short prayer or phrase from a prayer while practicing breath focus. This method may be especially appealing if religion or spirituality is meaningful to you.

Rather than choosing just one technique, experts recommend sampling several to see which one works best for you. Try to practice for at least 20 minutes a day, although even just a few minutes can help. But the longer and the more often you practice these relaxation techniques, the greater the benefits and the more you can reduce stress.

– By Julie Corliss
Executive Editor, Harvard Heart Letter

*Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School, 2016*
Relaxation Tips

Practice relaxing **every day** or even twice a day.

Set up a routine for relaxing. Practice relaxing in the same place and at the same time every day.

Find a quiet place to relax in.

Don’t just use your relaxation skills when you are really upset or stressed out.

Relaxing can be hard at first. Stick with it.
## Family Relaxation Routine Weekly Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>How It Worked</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Still Stressed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>🐄 🐄 🐄 🐄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Saturday</td>
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Kiser 2008
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around relaxation:

- Practice your relaxation and make a record of it on your log.
- Make a list of things you and your family can do to reduce tension and relax. Put the list up on the refrigerator. When things start to heat up, pick one thing from the list and try it.
- (Write your own tip)

Notes:
Your Child and Feeling Scared

OBJECTIVE: Identify why your child feels scared and how to help them feel safe.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by talking about how parents (even animals and insects) are supposed to protect their young.

Hand out *Your Child and Feeling Scared*. Have a guided discussion about times when, places where, and people whom they think make their children feel scared. Talk about how they know when their children feel scared. Ask the parent to make a list of how they might notice that their children are feeling scared. Parents will talk about the importance of keeping a watchful eye on their children so that they can know when their children need help.

Hand out *Your Child and Feeling Safe*. Have a discussion of things that the parent can do to help their children feel safe physically and emotionally. This list will include many things that the parent is already doing.

ACTIVITY: The parent should pick a situation when they think their children feel scared. They can list some ways that would help their children feel safer. The parent can list the steps they would take on the *Developing a Safety Routine* handout. Go over the plan together once the parent is done.

End by having the parent fill out *Tips for Practice*.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. Are there places where your children are scared? Are there certain times during the day that your children are scared? Are there people who your children fear?
2. How do you know when your children are feeling scared? What are the signs that your children are scared?
3. What things are you doing now to help your children feel safe?
4. If you think about a specific time when your children feel scared, what things did you do to help them feel safe? Since that time, are there other strategies that you’ve thought of that might be effective?
**TIPS FOR PRACTICE:**
Here are some activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around increasing your family’s sense of safety:

1. Discuss with your children times when you, or they, have not felt safe. Describe the physical sensations associated with feeling unsafe – fast heartbeat, sweating hands, shaking, etc. Then describe what it feels like when you are safe – a sense of calm, weight being lifted off, etc.
2. Talk to your children about different places they feel safe and different people they feel safe with.
3. Watch your children’s cues when they are in a situation where they feel unsure or uncomfortable. Remember these cues to ensure you can help your children in their future times of need.
4. Come up with a home safety plan. Discuss with your children what to do in times of trouble, where your family will go, who will help them, etc.

**IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:**

- Children need to feel safe to learn, to develop healthy relationships, and to grow up healthy. Being scared a lot causes too much stress and can lead to physical and mental health issues.
- Parents (adults) are key to keeping their children safe.
- After this session, the parent will be able to pinpoint some signs that their children are feeling scared and they will have some ideas about what to do to help their children feel safer. They will leave with a plan to help their children feel safe.

**HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):**

- Paper and Pen/pencil
- Your Child and Feeling Scared
- Your Child and Feeling Safe
- Developing a Safety Routine
- Tips for Practice
Your Child and Feeling Scared

Name 3 places where your child might feel scared:

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Name 3 times of the day when your child might feel scared:

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Name 3 things or people that your child might be scared of:

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Kiser 2008
Watch your child closely in these situations. Put a checkmark by each of the things that you see your child doing:

1. Stops playing

2. Smiles or laughs

3. Hides face

4. Looks sad

5. Is sweaty

6. Whines or cries

7. Looks scared

8. Is shaky

9. Gets angry

10. Pretends

11. Looks for adult

12. Can’t pay attention

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Your Child and Feeling Safe

Things I do now to help my child feel safe ...

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Other things I can do to help my child feel safe ...

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Kiser 2008
Developing a Safety Routine

Pick a time of day or a place when you or someone in your family does not feel safe. Think of a routine that you could put in place to increase your family’s sense of safety.

Break this activity down into the small steps it takes to reach the goal of feeling safer. Be as specific as you can by deciding who will do each step and when they will do it.

EXAMPLE

Situation: Child comes home from school and older sibling is not there. She left a note saying she’s visiting a friend until dinner time. Parents are working.

Step 1: Child calls mom to let her know child is alone at home.

Step 2: Mom calls Auntie to let her know child alone in house and to expect child at Auntie’s home shortly. Auntie caring for two young children at home.

Step 3: Child walks three blocks to Auntie’s house.

Step 4: Auntie welcomes child and cares for child till mom/dad picks child up, after work

Now you try!

Situation: ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Steps to feeling safer:

Step 1: ____________________________

Step 2: ____________________________

Step 3: ____________________________

Step 4: ____________________________
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around helping your family feel safer:

☐ Discuss with your children times when you or they have not felt safe. Describe the physical sensations associated with feeling unsafe – fast heartbeat, sweating hands, shaking, etc. Then describe what it feels like when you are safe – a sense of calm, weight being lifted off, etc.

☐ Talk to your children about different places they feel safe and different people they feel safe with.

☐ Watch your children’s cues when they are in a situation where they feel unsure or uncomfortable. Remember these cues to ensure you can help your children in their future times of need.

☐ Come up with a home safety plan. Discuss with your children what to do in times of trouble, where your family will go, who will help them, etc.

☐ (Write your own tip)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Notes:
Setting Limits

OBJECTIVE: Set and communicate family limits and rules to help your child feel safe.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Hand out Setting Limits and start with a guided discussion about the importance of clear expectations and limits for family safety. Talk about how limits lead to predictability and knowing what to expect. Also, talk about guilt and problems keeping high expectations when the parent is feeling bad about things that have happened to their children. Talk about setting limits even if they believe that your children do not look to you to set the rules.

Have the parent make a list of limits that are important for families. Some examples might be “no violence,” “no alcohol or drugs in the house,” “a curfew for when everyone has to be in the house,” or “rules about where the kids can go and who they can hang around with.” Have the parent decide on some limits that they feel are critical for their own family.

Talk about tips for setting limits. Use Setting Limits as a discussion guide.

ACTIVITY: Hand out the Setting Limits for Our Family and have the parent write the three most important limits for their family inside the fence. On the other side of the handout, have the parent list behaviors that fall outside the limit and the consequences for those behaviors. Next, have the parent share ideas about how they plan to communicate to their families the three limits that they feel are critical.

End by having the parent fill out Tips for Practice.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. What are limits?
2. Why is it important for families to have limits? How do you set limits for your family?
3. How do you let your children help with deciding what the limits are?
4. How do clearly communicate what the limits are to everyone in the family?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around setting limits to improve safety:

1. Have a family meeting and list important limits that keep your family safe. See if your family's list matched the list you made during your session. Decide on three important limits for your family to follow.
2. Be an example to your family by making sure that your actions and behaviors stay within the limits.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
- Limits help all families know what they can and can’t do. They help keep everyone in the family safe.
- Limits can be hard to set with older children (even adult children), but they are still necessary. For limits to work, they must be consistent.
- It is important for everyone in family, including the parents to follow the limits.
- By working together as a unit to set limits, everyone in the family will know what to expect. This will make everyone feel safer.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
- Paper and Pen/pencil
- Setting Limits
- Setting Limits for Our Family
- Tips for Practice
Setting Limits

What are limits?

- Limits are rules or goals about how we think people should act.
- Limits come from our beliefs about who we are, who other people are, and how we want to behave around each other.
- Limits define what we should do and what we should not do.

Families create limits by deciding what is important to each family member. In families with young children, this is decided mainly by the parents. As children grow up and develop their own ideas, family limits may change to include things that are important to all family members. With teenagers it is probably more important to discuss family limits and rules than to simply enforce them.

Tips for Setting Limits

- Set firm, but realist limits
- Only focus on a few limits
- Focus on limits that will help keep your family safe

Kiser © 2006
Setting Limits for Our Family

Write your three most important family limits inside the fence.

1.

2.

3.

Kiser © 2006
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Behaviors Outside the Limit</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around setting limits:

☐ Have a family meeting and list important limits that keep your family safe. See if your family’s list matched the list you made during your session. Decide on three important limits for your family to follow.

☐ Be an example to your family by making sure that your actions and behaviors stay within the limits.

☐ (Write your own tip)

______________________________________________________________________________________________

Notes:
People Help

OBJECTIVE: Realize that social networks are important coping resources.

SESSION OUTLINE:

ACTIVITY: Start by having the parent talk about people who are important to them using the Sociogram. Have the parent write the first names of everyone who they think belongs in each circle. Do the first group together. Have the parent write the first names of everyone in their immediate family in the “immediate family” circle. Define their immediate family as their children and their partner, if they have one. They can also include other people who they think of as part of their inner most circle. Next move to their extended family. Extended family includes those people who they consider family, like their parents, sisters and brothers, aunt and uncles, and maybe others like Godparents or really close family friends. Some people fill up their circles with names easily while others have just a few names in each circle. Make sure that the parent know that we all have different needs for support.

Handout People Help and have the parent think about a recent time when their family was under stress. Have them use their sociogram to identify people who helped them out during this stressful time. Have them talk about what kinds of support people provided to their family. Ask them to think of additional resources that they could have used and/or wish were available to them. This may be hard for some parent if they feel people have betrayed them in the past or that they have burned out their supports when they were having serious problems.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. Who is included in your support network?
2. How do they provide support to your family?
3. Do your children get the support that they need? Who provides them with support? In times of stress, who does your family turn to?
End discussion by having the parent share a time when they provided support to another family.

End session by having the parent fill out Tips for Practice.

TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around seeking support:

1. Work with your children to create a list of important people to call in times of need. This list can include family, friends, churches, community organizations, teachers, police, etc. Discuss with your children how these people will be able to help your family in times of need. Hang the list near the phone for easy access.
2. Choose one person that you included in your support system and call to thank her/him for being there for you.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
• Having support from others is important for our mental health.
• Having support for our families is also important. We can’t do everything by ourselves.
• We all need people we can turn to when we need help. It is okay to ask for help when we need it.
• It is also important to help others when they need it.
• The parent becomes aware (on both cognitive and emotional levels) of their existing support network, including its strengths and weaknesses. Through participating in this session, they think about ways to improve the quality of their families’ social network through building existing supports and/or adding additional supports.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
• Pen/pencil
• Sociogram
• People Help
• Tips for Practice

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK, CONT.:

4. Who do you provide support for?
IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING RESOURCES:

- Identify a stressful event your family had to cope with during the past month or year.

- How did family members help each other cope?

- Did anyone from outside of your family help at that time?

- Was their support helpful?

- Do you wish other supports were available at the time to help you cope?

- Is there anything else you wish had been different about your supports and your coping at that time?

- Have you helped anyone else with their crisis recently? Are you a source of support to others?
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around building a support system:

☐ Work with your children to create a list of important people to call in times of need. This list can include family, friends, churches, community organizations, teachers, police, etc. Discuss with your children how these people will be able to help your family in times of need. Hang the list near the phone for easy access.

☐ Choose one person that you included in your support system and call to thank her/him for being there for you.

☐ (Write your own tip)

Notes:
Spiritual Support

OBJECTIVE: Increase awareness of spirituality and identify spiritual support.

SESSION OUTLINE:
Start by discussing what spirituality means. This can be an open discussion or you can start with a definition like “personal beliefs or values that give us a sense of being close to nature and the universe and that help us find meaning in things that happen. Maybe for you, spirituality includes a higher power or force that gives you strength and helps to guide you.” Find out what spirituality means to the parent participating.

Have the parent focus on their own spiritual resources at first. Hand out Your Spiritual Resources and use it to guide a short discussion. Hand out Sources of Spiritual Support and review the list of spiritual supports. Have the parent talk about one or two supports that are an important part of their spiritual practice.

Next, discuss how the parent shares their spiritual beliefs and practices with their families. End this discussion by having the parent share ideas about how they would enrich their use of spiritual supports with their children or families.

End session by having the parent fill out Tips for Practice.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:
1. What is spirituality?
2. What are some of the ways that you practice your spirituality?
3. How do you share your spiritual supports with your family?
4. What sources of spiritual support would you like to share with your family?
TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around your family’s spirituality:

1. With some paper or even a journal, write down different experiences, inspirational quotes or anything else you can think of that you would like to share with your children. When you feel the time is right, share this and create a dialogue around these special writings.
2. Introduce your children to different songs, hymns, or other musical selections that spiritually move you. You can share these with your children no matter what age they are.
3. If you belong to an organized religion, explain to your children what is happening when you are at your place of worship. Explain who the people are, what they do, and how these have been or can be sources of help for your family.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:
• Everyone has different ideas about what spirituality means.
• Spiritual supports often provide strength in times of trouble.
• Children learn about spirituality and about how to use spiritual supports by watching their parents or by practicing them as a family.
• For many people, spiritual supports are a source of strength when bad things happen. When families share strong spiritual supports and parents live by example, children grow up with these supports available to them and are better able to cope when bad things happen.

HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
• Paper and Pen/pencil
• Your Spiritual Resources
• Sources of Spiritual Support
• Tips for Practice
Your Spiritual Resources

When you are discouraged or feeling down, what keeps you going?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Where have you found strength in the past?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you believe in a power greater than yourself? Who or what is it?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How much control do you believe you have over what happens to you in your life?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you have a personal way to meet your spiritual needs? (for example, prayer, scripture, etc.)

________________________________________________________________________
What difference has spirituality made in how you have lived your life?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

What are your special creative abilities?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Look over your answers, then write a couple of thoughts, insights, or ideas that occur to you about your answers. What do you notice?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

(Adapted from the workbook, Working with Groups on Spiritual Themes)
Sources of Spiritual Support

Examine the following list of sources of support for you. Look at the sources that existed in the past, are used in the present and those you would like to use in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PAST</th>
<th>PRESENT</th>
<th>WOULD LIKE TO USE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worship services</td>
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<td>Visit with clergy</td>
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<td>Talk with friends</td>
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<td>Prayer</td>
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<td>Meditation</td>
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<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>Scripture</td>
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<td>Other books</td>
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<td>Rosary</td>
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<td>Sacraments</td>
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<td>Helping Others</td>
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<td>Fellowship</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<td>Visiting Nature</td>
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<td>Movement/Dance</td>
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<td>Sharing a Meal</td>
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<td>Other people</td>
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<td>Other symbols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other rituals</td>
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</table>

Look over your responses and write your thoughts, comments and questions about what you notice.

(Adapted from the workbook, Working with Groups on Spiritual Themes)
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around spiritual supports:

- With some paper or even a journal, write down different experiences, inspirational quotes or anything else you can think of that you would like to share with your children. When you feel the time is right, share this and create a dialogue around these special writings.

- Introduce your children to different songs, hymns, or other musical selections that spiritually move you. You can share these with your children no matter what age they are.

- If you belong to an organized religion, explain to your children what is happening when you are at your place of worship. Explain who the people are, what they do and how these have been or can be sources of help for your family.

- (Write your own tip)

  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________

Notes:
Laughter is Important!

OBJECTIVE: Discover the importance of positive emotions and laughter for healthy families.

SESSION OUTLINE:

Hand out *Laughing through Life*. Talk about how laughter and a sense of humor develop in children. They can share fun things that their children have done or said at different ages.

You and the parent should brainstorm ways to create fun and laughter with families. After, give *Laughter Tips for Parents/Caregivers* handout. End discussion with another activity that will create laughter.

End session by having the parent fill out *Tips for Practice*.

TIPS FOR PRACTICE:
Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can practice and enjoy at home to reinforce the concepts discussed around having fun times together:

1. Find a silly game and play it with your family.
2. Tell your children some funny stories about things they did when they were little.
3. Tell your children some funny jokes or good riddles.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN THE SESSION:

- Laughter starts during infancy.
- Encouraging fun family activities is important.
- Parents learn about stepping back from all of the negative things in their lives and taking time for fun and laughter with their children.
- *Children will be more relaxed and have better relationships with parents who take a second to make laughter a part of their family.*

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

1. How is laughter important to a family?
2. How can parents be role models for their children about humor and laughter? How does humor and laughter change as we grow up?
3. Do you remember some funny things that your children did as they were growing up?
4. How can parents help their family laugh together?
HANDOUTS (and other materials needed):
- Pen/pencil
- Laughter is Important!
- Tips for Parents/Caregivers
- Laughing Through Life
- Tips for Practice
Laughing Through Life

**Babies**
- Can understand humor!
- Begin laughing at 3-4 months old.

**Toddlers and Preschoolers**
- Love to play ‘peek-a-boo’.
- Will try to make others laugh.
- Think it is funny when pictures and sounds don’t match.

**School-Age Kids**
- Love to tell jokes.
- Think physical comedy is funny.
Teenagers

- Love to tell jokes.
- Might make fun of anything ‘abnormal’.

Adults

- Often laugh at the funny things their kids do!
Laughter Tips for Parents/Caregivers:

1. Remember to be a role-model.
2. Don’t laugh at a mean joke.
3. Have a sense of humor.
4. Encourage family fun time.
Tips for Practice

Here are some ideas for activities that you and your family can enjoy at home to practice what we discussed around laughing and having fun with your family:

- Find a silly game and play it with your family.
- Tell your children some funny stories about things they did when they were little.
- Tell your children some funny jokes or good riddles.
- (Write your own tip)

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Notes: