

CHILDREN IN CHANGE

*A group curriculum for kids ages 8-14 who
are experiencing family change*

A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS, SOCIAL WORKERS,
CLERGY AND YOUTH LEADERS

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Family Life Education



DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Mae Hill and Ann Carlson,
pioneers of this work at Family & Children's Service.

They dared to be taught by children.

They saw the children's ability to change and heal
in the midst of difficult life situations.

Special thanks to Eleanor Monson, age 8, for her art work.

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Bringing people together to make change happen

Family & Children's Service has been bringing people together to make change happen for more than 125 years. It is one of the oldest nonprofit human service organizations in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our mission is *building strong families, vital communities, and capable children*. We do this in three ways:

- helping people **solve** problems (e.g., mental health concerns, school failure, prostitution);
- helping people **prevent** problems (by teaching life skills like parenting and conflict resolution); and
- helping people **change** community conditions to support families raising children (through public policy and community advocacy).

Family & Children's Service has been involved in the work of family life education for decades. We offer a range of educational programs designed to help children, youth, and adults build upon their existing assets and to develop new skills and resources to reach their highest potential and to become positive contributors to their communities. These programs are offered in schools, community centers, and other public venues.

Due to the recognized success of these programs and the resulting high demand, Family & Children's Service is now pleased to make our curricula available to other agencies, community organizations, schools, and businesses that will use the material to help build stronger individuals, families, and communities. For **more information**, please contact the Family Life Education Department at Family & Children's Service by calling 612-729-0340 or visit our website at www.everyfamilymatters.org.

ABOUT FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Since 1969, Family & Children's Service, through our Family Life Education program, has helped people develop life skills by providing family life education to clients of diverse ages and cultures. We provide educational and experiential programs for youth in classrooms, small group work with youth and adults in diverse settings, leadership and mentorship opportunities, and individual and group work with families in community settings.

Children in Change®

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CHILDREN IN CHANGE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HISTORY OF THE CURRICULUM

The *Children in Change* (CIC) curriculum has long roots in the Minneapolis, Minnesota community. In 1968 the Minneapolis Public Schools and Hennepin County Minnesota Department of Family Services developed a *Children in Change* program designed for use in a classroom setting. In 1979, Minneapolis Family & Children's Service was asked to assume responsibility for the program. An expanded outline was developed in 1985 by Ann Carlson and Mae Hill. The program originally focused on supporting children who are coping with parents' separation, divorce and death. Over time, and as a result of changes in our society, it became evident that there were other family changes occurring for children in addition to divorce and death. These changes include (but are not limited to) having a parent in jail, a family member's military service, a parent with a drug or alcohol problem, remarriage, immigration, frequent moves, homelessness, natural disasters, mental illness, foster home placement, and illness.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The *Children in Change* curriculum uses an educational and support group model with children who have experienced significant changes in their families. Although the changes may be different for each group member, the intent of the CIC curriculum is that all participants in the group will be able to share safely their experiences with their families. The following are a list of program objectives for the group:

- Sharing openly in a safe environment about family changes
- Encouraging and recognizing the expression of feelings
- Learning to offer support to one another
- Establishing that children are not to blame for adult situations
- Helping children identify the trustworthy adults in their lives
- Aiding children in coping with change in healthy ways
- Acknowledging and teaching about feelings of grief and loss

There are always a wide variety of family changes represented in a multi-change group. Despite the different changes experienced by children, there will be strong commonalities as well. For example, a child whose parents are divorcing and a child who is living in a new foster home often experience similar feelings (anger, loss of control, fear of the unknown, etc.) and have similar questions about their future.

The *Children in Change* curriculum is useful because parents vary in their ability to listen and offer support to their children. Some parents can offer only minimal support because of the pain and energy they are using to deal with their own loss. Other parents may be able to adequately support their children through their family's changes, but children may still feel isolated among their peers, as though they are "the only ones" experiencing these kinds of changes.

DESIGN AND FRAMEWORK OF LESSON PLANS

The twelve-week *Children in Change* curriculum is specifically designed for small groups (six to eight participants) of elementary and middle school-aged children. The group should convene weekly in a confidential space with the same group members and adult facilitators attending each session. The curriculum is designed to be used in consecutive order because, as the lessons progress, group members will build upon the trust built together through previous sessions. However, some sessions can be eliminated, combined, or moved around to customize the curriculum for the specific needs and goals of the group.

Each session includes objectives for that particular lesson, a list of supplies needed for the various activities, a description of tasks to be done prior to the start of the meeting, daily skills used, background notes to the leader, a warm-up activity at the start of each meeting, an explanation of the various learning activities, and a closing activity.

KEY POINTS TO KNOW ABOUT FAMILY CHANGE:

- The decisions resulting in family changes are not made by children. Therefore, children and youth often feel powerless in the face of such overwhelming changes in their lives.
- Oftentimes, the adult family members neglect to include how the family changes are directly affecting their children. In other words, children may not have an opportunity or ability to express their feelings about the family change at home.
- There are fewer community resources to help children deal with family changes than there are resources to assist adults in dealing with the same changes.
- Children usually have fewer skills for dealing with changes than do adults.

KEY GOALS OF CHILDREN IN CHANGE CURRICULUM:

- Establish trust within the group.
- Define what a family is, and create opportunities for participants to share about their families.
- Explore feelings and normalize a range of feelings that relate to family changes and transitions.
- Develop positive and realistic problem-solving skills.
- Explore anger and how individual families express their anger.
- Discover the dreams that participants have for their families, and the personal goals that group members have for themselves.
- Learn about the grief and loss process.
- Learn about positive decision making and safe choices.

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE GROUPS

A unique aspect of the *Children in Change* curriculum is its specific design for small groups of willing participants, and its blend of education and support. The group usually includes children of similar ages, because that way, group members are more willing to share, feel less isolated, learn more from one another, and are better able to empower each other.

As is true with most curricula, lesson plans can be modified or changed in order to best meet the needs of a particular group. Following is a list of overall helpful hints that can greatly increase the success of a group:

➤ **GROUP COMPOSITION IS CRUCIAL**

- Be thoughtful about whom you invite to be a part of the group. Participants should be no more than one or two years apart in age or grade.
- Although it is normal for children and youth to feel apprehensive about the group in the beginning, they need to be willing to do *some* sharing about their families. “Interview” the kids individually prior to the start of the group and ask whether they’d be interested in participating, and are willing to talk about their experiences.
- If you have an older group (middle school aged or higher), do not mix kids who have lost their parents/siblings to death with those experiencing other family changes. Older kids are developmentally able to decipher the differences between the permanent loss of a loved one associated with death, in contrast with the ambiguous loss experienced through other family changes (such as divorce).

➤ **KEEP THE GROUP SMALL.** The ideal group size for CIC is between six and eight participants, with one or two adult facilitators.

➤ **KEEP THE SAME PARTICIPANTS.** In order to build trust and group cohesion, it’s important to maintain the same participants throughout all the sessions.

➤ **CONSISTENCY.** Each session is designed to build upon the previous lesson’s skills. Therefore, it is important to meet consistently (it’s recommended to meet once a week) in the same confidential space with the same group members and adult facilitator(s).

➤ **BE FLEXIBLE.** Even though you have a thought-out plan for every session, allow the kids the opportunity to take the group where it needs to go. For example, if the group members are really involved in a discussion related to the topic at hand, let them keep going and adjust the curriculum accordingly.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY.** The most important guideline of a *Children in Change* group is that what is said among the group members must remain among the group members. Emphasize this rule before and after every group. If the children do not feel trust in a group such as this, it will not be a worthwhile or positive experience. It is also important to let the children know that you, as an adult, will not be telling their parents what they share in group.
- **FACILITATOR'S PARTICIPATION.** As a healthy and positive adult facilitator, it is essential to have strong boundaries with the group members, but it is also appropriate to participate as well. Role model the expression of feelings and be willing to share some things about your own family, but do not use the group for your own support.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The 🚫 symbol located in various lesson plans indicates that a particular activity would be best suited for group members in the fifth grade or older, and should be substituted for the other described activity intended for younger participants.

-IMPORTANT INFORMATION-

PLEASE READ!

Every group is different based on the participants, the leader's facilitation style, and general group dynamics. Therefore, you will need to use your own discretion as to whether a group should do a specific activity. If you do not think a group is ready to do a certain activity (or that it might be inappropriate at the time), wait to do it at a later date or skip it altogether.

SOMETIMES THINGS GET INTENSE OR CHALLENGING DURING THE GROUP PROCESS. SOME HELPFUL TIPS:

- Always take time to *close the group* at the end of each session. Because the Learning Activities involve increasingly difficult and/or emotional topics as the sessions progress, it is important that group members leave each session feeling like there is proper closure.
- If a participant is having difficulty working through feelings (i.e. crying, withdrawn, angry, etc.) at any time throughout the group sessions, give them time following the session to talk or just sit alone. In other words, avoid immediately dismissing anyone who is feeling extremely vulnerable or emotional.
- Consider working with a co-facilitator. If two leaders are paying attention to group dynamics, that enhances the potential for a successful group experience. Co-facilitation also creates the opportunity for adults to reflect upon and discuss the experience once the group session has ended.

NOTES ABOUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:

- We suggest that you obtain parent/guardian permission for all children participating in a *Children in Change* group. (There is an example of a general *Children in Change* permission slip on the following page.)
- Every family is different. Parents may be eager to have their child involved in such a group and want to be an added support for them. Other parents may be reluctant for their child to participate in the group for a variety of reasons. It is important to be aware of each family's circumstances when setting up the group.
- It is important that the facilitator maintain individual and group confidentiality. It is appropriate to inform a parent about how a child is progressing in the group and/or what topics are being covered, but it is not appropriate to disclose what any specific child talks about in the group.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We will be offering a *Children in Change* Group and would like to include your child. This program is an educational and support group designed to help young people better understand their feelings related to recent, significant changes in their lives. These changes can include, but are not limited to: divorce, separation, the death of a relative, a move to a new home or school, homelessness, a family member being in jail, a new baby, or substance abuse.

The group provides an outlet for discussion and interpretation of the emotions that children experience with change, and provides instruction in coping strategies. The goal of the group is to help children learn how to deal with those feelings in a healthy, manageable way.

The curriculum we will use to facilitate the group is Family & Children’s Service’s *Children in Change* curriculum, and will be facilitated by _____. The group will meet once a week for ____ consecutive weeks.

In order for your child to participate in the *Children in Change* Group, we need your written permission. Please sign and return the attached permission slip as soon as possible. If you have any questions, you can reach the facilitator at _____.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



I give permission to have my child participate in the *Children in Change* Group.

Child's Name: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

WELCOME WEEK

SESSION ONE

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Begin to establish trust in the group.
- ⇒ Create group rules and guidelines.
- ⇒ Identify different types of family changes.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Blank 8 1/2" x 11" paper for each group member, folded in thirds
- Markers, pencils/pens
- Newsprint for group rules
- Newsprint for "Change Pictionary"
- "Pick-A-Question" ★ (page 13)- if the participants are grade 5 and above
- A folder for each participant (optional)

BEFORE THE MEETING



Read through the lesson and collect necessary supplies. Make sure that the activities you have chosen are age appropriate for your group. Secure a quiet, confidential space for the group to meet.

If you have an older group (grade 5 and above), use Closing Activity B instead of A. If you are doing the "Pick-A-Question" activity, cut the questions into slips prior to the start of the session.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

This is the first group session in a sequence of 12 meetings. The primary purpose of this lesson is to build group cohesion and lay the groundwork for future meetings.

For this type of family change group, it is important for trust to be established prior to the participants sharing personal information about their families. Although some group members may volunteer this personal information right away, keep the conversation general and be careful not to ask group members about what family changes they have personally experienced.

MEETING WARM-UP



10 min.

A. NAME-TENT INTRODUCTIONS

Distribute to each person a blank, 8 1/2" X 11" piece of paper, folded length-wise in thirds, to form a "name-tent." Using the markers, ask group members to write and decorate their first names on the front of their tents. Also on their name-tents, they should draw two pictures of something about themselves to share with the group.

Go around the circle and have each person talk about the drawings on their name-tent. Stand the name-tents up on the table so that everyone can see them. Collect the name-tents after the session for use in the following sessions.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



15 min.

A. CHANGE Pictionary

Using a piece of newsprint or a chalkboard, draw pictures of different types of family changes and have the group members guess what the change may be. If you have a co-facilitator, have them create a list of family changes as the participants guess. Hold on to this list, because it will be used in later sessions.

The following is a list of family changes and examples of how to draw the family change:

- Divorce/Separation (draw 2 stick figures with a broken heart in the middle)
- Illness/Disease (draw a stick figure lying on a bed wearing a sad face)
- Death (draw a grave and/or tombstone)
- Family member in jail (draw a stick figure standing behind bars)
- Excessive alcohol/drug abuse (draw a bottle and a glass next to it)
- New baby (draw a stick figure holding a baby in a blanket)
- Moving (draw 2 houses, one with a sold sign on it)
- Remarriage or parent has new boy/girlfriend (draw 2 stick figures with a heart between them. Add kids for step-families)
- Homelessness (draw a picture of a house with an X through it)

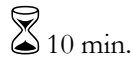
OTHER CHANGES TO INCLUDE ON LIST VERBALLY (BUT ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO DRAW):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| - Living with other relatives | - Adoption |
| - Mental illness | - Foster home |
| - Lesbian/gay parent ("coming out") | - Family violence |

Be sure to add other family changes which you know participants in the group have or are experiencing.

OPTION: Whisper the change to a member of the group and have them draw it on the board for others to guess.

B. GROUP RULES

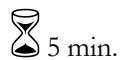


Have the group brainstorm rules for how they want to treat one another in group. Write the rules on a sheet of newsprint and then have all group members sign the paper as their commitment to these rules. Be sure that the rules are posted each week during meetings.

Be sure the following guidelines are included:

- **No put-downs or name calling**
- **Appropriate laughter** – Explain the difference between laughing *with* someone versus laughing *at* someone. Also, we sometimes laugh as a reaction when we're uncomfortable or surprised. Explain this to the participants.
- **What is said here, stays here (Confidentiality)** – Give examples. Be sure to add that the adults must break this confidentiality if they feel that a child is being hurt physically or sexually, or if there is a concern that a child is going to hurt himself.

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. CHANGE GAME- best for younger participants

One at a time and taking turns, have a participant stand up in front of the group and slowly turn around to be inspected by the other group members. Then that person will leave the room and alter one thing about their appearance. For example, they could untie a shoelace, roll up a pant leg or take off a piece of jewelry. Then they return to the room and the other group members try to guess what they changed. After successfully guessing, a new group member takes a turn.

-OR-

B. PICK A QUESTION 🎯 – best for older participants

Using the “Pick-A-Question” handout, have group members take turns picking a slip with a question on it and answer it aloud to the group.

HELPFUL HINT



Keep a folder for each participant. Everything that group members complete in the group throughout the sessions should be compiled in their individual folders and handed back to them during the last meeting. The leaders can write progress notes in the folders as well.

**PICK-A-QUESTION
(CLOSING ACTIVITY FOR OLDER GROUP PARTICIPANTS)**

Cut the following questions into slips prior to the start of the group meeting.

How have your friendships changed as you have grown older?
If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?
What is a positive change you have experienced?
What is something you never want to change about yourself?
Name a time when you have made the decision to change something.
If you could change one thing about your relationship with your parent(s), what would it be?
Have you ever had a “change of heart”? What happened?
Have you ever had a “change of address”? (In other words, have you ever moved? How many times?)
Do you usually change your mind about things?
How much change are you carrying in your pocket right now? 😊
Do you <u>exchange</u> notes in school with your friends? If so, how often?

FAMILY FORMS

SESSION TWO

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Continue to build trust and group cohesion.
- ⇒ Explore different forms of family.
- ⇒ Participants will define what family means to them.
- ⇒ Participants will draw pictures of their families

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- The rules/guidelines established during the previous session
- The list of family changes created during the first session
- Drawing paper for each group member
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- A book about families to read aloud (for younger participants)

-OR-

- Note cards and pencils ✎ (for group members in grade 5 and older)

BEFORE THE MEETING



If you have a younger group, the closing activity in this session requires reading aloud a book to the group members about different types of families. (Most of the books are accessible at public libraries.) Prior to the start of the meeting, the facilitator will need to acquire the book.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

This session will focus primarily on families, and how each group member defines family for themselves.

The participants will be given an opportunity to draw a picture of the people they live with and other close family members. (During session three the participants will have the opportunity to show their pictures to other group members and talk/share about their families.)

MEETING WARM-UP



A. NAME-TENT GUESS

Before passing out the name-tents from the last session, challenge the group members to remember everyone's names, and what they drew on their name-tents, during the previous session. Then hand out the name-tents.

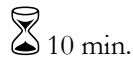
If there are any new group members, be sure they are given an opportunity to create a name-tent as well.



B. RULES REVIEW

Ask group members to review the group rules that were developed during the last session. Post the rules for everyone to see.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES




A. MYTHS ABOUT FAMILY

Ask the group, **“What is a family?”** Allow the participants to give their input and definitions of what they think is a family. **Challenge them to think of family in broad terms, such as people who love each other.** Do this by asking them the following questions about family:

- Can a family be a single mom raising her two daughters? (Yes!)
- Can a family be an uncle and aunt raising their nephew? (Yes!)
- Do all family members have to live together in order to be a family? (No! Family members may live in different places, even in different parts of the country or world.)
- Do there need to be children in order to be a family? (No!)
- Can you have more than one family? (Yes! This is common in the case of divorce, remarriage or living in a foster home.)
- Can a family member still be a family member after they have died? (Yes!)
- Can a family be a single man and his dog? (Yes!)
- Can a family have two moms or two dads? (Yes! This is common in the case of remarriage or having gay/lesbian parents.)

Say to the group,

“There are many different forms of family. Just within our group we make up very different kinds of family. Today, we’re going to draw pictures of our own families.”

 15 min.


B. FAMILY PORTRAITS

Distribute a piece of large drawing paper and crayons/markers to each group member. Ask them to draw a picture of the people they live with, as well as close family members who do not live with them. It is important that they include everyone they live with because that has a great effect on how they feel about things at home.

If group members have more than one family, encourage them to include both (they may want two pieces of paper for this). They can also draw close family members who have died or who are in jail.

When the participants finish drawing their families, collect the pictures. (Most of the next session will be spent showing each other their pictures and talking about their family changes.)

CLOSING ACTIVITY

 10 min.

A. STORY TIME- best for younger participants

There are some excellent children's books written about families and the many different forms of families. Close the session by reading a book aloud. The following are a list of suggestions which relate to various family issues:

The Family Book By Todd Parr (describes many different types of families)

All Kinds of Families by Norma Simon (general description of different types of families)

Families are Different by Nina Pellegrini (addresses adoption and other forms of family)

Love is a Family by Roma Downey (a single parent raising her daughter)

Totally Uncool by Janice Levy (adjusting to a new step-parent)

From Far Away by Robert Munsch (adjusting to living in a new country)

Dinosaurs Divorce by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown (divorce)

I don't want to go to Justin's House Anymore by Heather Klassen (physical abuse by a parent)

-OR-

B. WORD LINK - best for older participants

Hand a blank note card and a pencil to each group member. Instruct them to write 5-7 words that best describe their family. Encourage them to be creative and honest. Ask for volunteers to read their words aloud (but only if they're comfortable).

Example: fragile, loving, confused, frustrating, angering, safe

Place their descriptions in their individual folders.

HELPFUL HINTS



An option is to begin the ritual of reading a book about families aloud to the group members at the beginning, middle, or end of every session.

PEOPLE I LIVE WITH

SESSION THREE

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Share their family drawings from the previous session with other group members.
- ⇒ Identify the personal family changes they've experienced.
- ⇒ Will be introduced to a variety of feelings.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- The family portraits that participants drew during the previous session
- The list of family changes created during the first session
- One copy of "Sorting Questions" (page 22)
- A set of True/False cards for each participant (page 23)

BEFORE THE MEETING



Prior to the start of the meeting, be sure to have available the family portraits from the second lesson and the list of family changes from the first session.

Using the True/False cards (page 23), make copies and cut enough cards for each person to have one set.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

This session will focus primarily on the participants sharing about their families, and on identifying family changes that they have experienced or are going to experience. As the participants share about their families, they will identify the changes that they have experienced using the *Family Change List* created during session one. However, the group members may not be emotionally ready to share their family changes yet. If this is the case, it is important not to pressure them to share their personal information until they feel ready.

MEETING WARM-UP



A. HAND GAME

While sitting around a table, ask everyone to place their hands flat on the table. Now instruct them to lift their left hand and place it over the right hand of the person sitting to their immediate left. Their palms should lay flat on the table.

GAME:

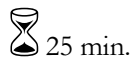
One person begins by tapping on the table with either hand once. Then the person to their right does the same. The tapping should go in order of how the hands are situated around the circle. Also, if anyone double-taps on the table, the direction reverses.

If anyone lifts their hand out of order, that person loses their hand (they need to pull the hand out of the circle). Once they lose both hands they are out of the game.

The final two players (or hands) remaining in the game are the winners.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

A. SHOW AND TELL



Return the Family Portraits from last session to the group members who created them.

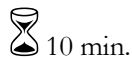
Say to the participants,

“At the last group meeting, we drew pictures of our families. Now we are going to share our pictures and tell the group about our families. After each person is finished sharing, the other group members can ask you questions about your family. But please know that you can always say, ‘I don’t want to answer that,’ if somebody asks you a question that’s too personal and makes you feel uncomfortable.”

After the person has told the group about their family and questions have been asked and answered, refer the participant to the list of family changes and ask them to identify the family changes they have experienced.

NOTE: Prior to the start of this activity, the facilitator should review group rules with participants, emphasizing the importance of active listening, confidentiality, and appropriate laughter.

B. SORTING QUESTIONS



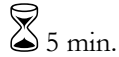
Distribute a True/False card to each group member. Pausing between each one, slowly read the statements from the “Sorting Questions” handout (page 22). After reading each statement, instruct the group members to either hold up their “True” card or their “False” card, depending upon whether they agree with the statement or not. If the statement does not relate to them at all, they should not hold up either card.

Some of the Sorting Questions statements are personal and could be difficult for the participants to answer. Depending upon how trust is progressing within the group, you may want to adapt the statements or do this activity during a later session.

Emphasize to the group that there are no right or wrong answers and encourage them to think for themselves. There should also be no talking or laughing during this activity. Explain that laughter can be interpreted as a put-down during this activity because none of the statements read is funny.

HINT: The adult facilitators can participate in this activity, but it is suggested that they show their true or false card several seconds after the kids so the kids do not necessarily think the adults have the “correct” answer.

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. MOVE IT!









Stand in a circle. Have each person come up with a physical movement and a noise and show it to the group (examples: turning around and saying “Whaaaa!,” or doing a jumping jack and saying “Yippee!”). After the person makes their movement and noise, the rest of the group copies that person. After everyone has made their movement and noise for the group, see if anyone can remember all of the group members’ movements and corresponding noises without help.

SORTING QUESTIONS

Slowly read the following statements aloud, one at a time. Pause between each statement so participants are able to put up a “True” or a “False” card depending upon whether the participant agrees with the statement or not. There is no right or wrong answer and this should be a quiet activity. NO LAUGHING ALOUD!

1. My family is different from others.
2. Sometimes I think if I were a better kid my family could all live together.
3. Kids sometimes tease me about my family.
4. Parents can still love their children even if they don't live with them.
5. It's okay to talk about good and bad things that happen at home.
6. I have to take care of my brothers/sisters because my mom isn't around a lot.
7. I worry about who's going to take care of me.
8. I know at least two people I trust and can talk to about my problems.
9. Living with one parent or other relatives is hard.
10. I wish my father lived with me.
11. I wish my mother lived with me.
12. Someone important to me is very sick.
13. Someone important to me has died.
14. Kids can make adults change what they do.
15. I wish I could spend more time with my mother.
16. I wish I could spend more time with my father.
17. Someone close to me is in jail.
18. I can't visit someone important to me.
19. I sometimes feel that it's my fault that our family has problems.
20. Someone I love drinks too much alcohol or uses drugs.
21. I'm tired of going to new schools.
22. Losing my housing or living in a shelter is hard.
23. I have lost a lot of friends from moving so much.
24. I can think of good things about my family.
25. I can think of one really good thing about me.

Prior to the session, make enough copies for each participant to have a True and a False card. Cut the copies into individual cards for group members to hold up during the Sorting Questions activity.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

SESSION FOUR

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Continue to identify personal changes they have experienced.
- ⇒ Use a personal timeline to reflect on significant changes/experiences in their lives.
- ⇒ Explore the ways that change can be positive.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Plastic cup
- Copies of “Autograph Game” (page 28)
- Pencils
- A large sheet of drawing paper (11” x 17”) for each person.
- Markers, colored pencils and/or crayons
- Copy of “Timeline Key” (page 29)

BEFORE THE MEETING



After reading through the lesson, make copies of the “Autograph Game” handout (page 28) for each group member.

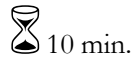
Because the facilitator will be telling the participants what they should draw during the “Family Timeline” activity, they will not likely have the opportunity to do their own timeline. Therefore, the facilitator may wish to do one prior to the start of the meeting to show as an example.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

The focus of this session is to better understand the life journey that group members have experienced by creating a timeline of their lives that identifies significant life changes. If the group members are younger than ten years old, they will be asked to draw a picture of a significant family event instead.

The lead facilitator of the timeline activity will be telling the participants what they should draw throughout the activity, as they go along so they will not likely have the opportunity to do their own timeline. Therefore, the facilitator may wish to do their own timeline prior to start of the meeting.

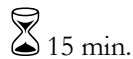
MEETING WARM-UP



A. HOW FULL IS YOUR CUP TODAY?

Place an empty plastic cup in the middle of the table. Explain to the group that each member is going to check-in today by identifying a place on the cup that shows how their day or week is going. The farther down on the cup they point, the worse their day; similarly, the higher on the cup they point, the better their day. After the person indicates where on the cup they are feeling, ask the person to explain why.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



A. AUTOGRAPH GAME

Distribute a copy of the “Autograph Game” and a pencil to each group member. Together, read through all of the boxes and ask if there are questions about what any of the boxes mean. Explain the game.

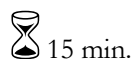
Everyone mingles, asking other group members one-on-one whether they have experienced what is written in a particular box. When the participants find someone who has had the same experience, they can sign their name in that particular box. No one can sign your sheet more than once. You may also sign your own paper once. The object is to get as many signatures on your paper as there are members of the group (including yourself!).

NOTE: Explain to group members that it is important that they ask each other the questions rather than just handing them your paper, because the point is to better understand each other’s family changes.

After everyone has signatures from all of the group members, have them return to their seat. Read through statements in the boxes again, and after each one, ask members to raise their hands if they have experienced that particular change (not who has signed their paper).

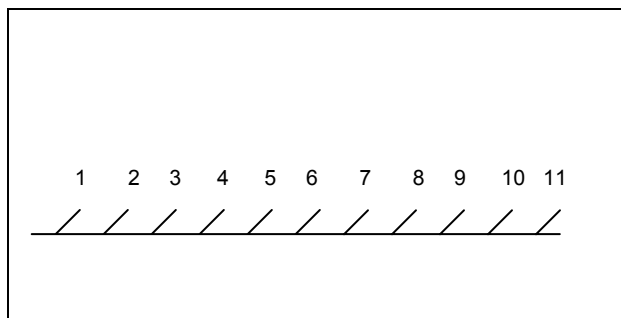
Say to the group,

“As you can see from this game, there are things we have in common and there are things that we have experienced that make us unique. The point of this game is for you to see that you’re not alone in your family changes or in your feelings.”



B. FAMILY TIMELINE 🕒

Pass out a large piece of drawing paper (11” x 17”) and a pencil to each participant. Tell them that they will be drawing a timeline about their lives. Begin by instructing them to turn their paper horizontally. Then ask them to draw a horizontal line across the paper. Next, ask them to make little slashes through the long line for each year that they have lived. An example of an eleven-year-old’s timeline follows:



Using the Timeline Key on page 29, read off the symbols and significant events, one by one, and give the participants time to draw the symbol in the appropriate place on the timeline, if they have experienced that event. For example, “Draw a bell above each age when you went to a new school.”

When the participants are finished with their timelines, allow an opportunity for group members to share their timelines with the group.

FOR YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS:

The Timeline activity is most appropriate for fifth through eighth graders. If you have a younger group, ask them to draw a picture of one significant life event that happened to them, and then share it with the group. There is an example included. (Ellie drew a picture of how she felt following her cousin’s death from cancer.)

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. GOOD CHANGE?

Say to the group:

“As you can see from your timeline, each of you has gone through quite a few significant changes in your short life. Many of these are changes you have little control over. For example, you aren’t the one that decides whether or not your parents are together, or where and when you’ll be moving. This can be very difficult. However, you still have some power within the changes that affect you.”

Ask the group:

- ⇒ What do you have some control over within your family changes? In other words, how can you make something good out of a change that you did not want? (Examples: making new friends after a move, writing a parent a letter while they are in jail)
- ⇒ How can change be fun?
- ⇒ Why is change sometimes a good thing?
- ⇒ What has been a positive change in your life?

HELPFUL HINT



If you are keeping folders on each of the group members, put their life timelines or pictures in their individual folders, as well as a copy of the Timeline Key, so that later on, they will know what the symbols mean.

AUTOGRAPH GAME!

The object of the game is to try to have every group member sign one of your boxes (but no more than one). Someone can only sign their name in the box if they have experienced what it states in the box. If they have not experienced it, then ask the person about another box. You may also sign your own paper once.

Your parents are separated or divorced	You live with one parent and visit the other	You have a new baby born into your family
This is a new school for you this year	You don't get to see your mom or your dad very much	One of your pets has died
You have to do chores	Your parents still fight sometimes	You have lived in a foster home
Someone in your family is dying or has died	You sometimes feel angry or sad about your family's changes	Someone you love has been in jail or is now in jail



TIMELINE KEY

<u><i>SIGNIFICANT EVENT</i></u>	<u><i>SYMBOL TO DRAW</i></u>
Preschool or first school	Blocks
New baby born	Baby in a blanket
Someone important left home	Waving hand
Parents separated and/or divorced	Broken heart
Moved	House
Witnessed family violence	Sad face
Family member went to jail	Three bars
Went to live with other relatives	Three stick figures
Lived in a foster home	Triangle
Got a new pet	Food dish
Someone close to me went to treatment	Bottle/pills crossed out
Went to a new school	Bell
Family member got out of jail	Key
Someone important to me died	Tombstone
Received an award or when I felt proud about something	Star
Joined a team, club or organization	Happy face
Parent(s) remarried or parent has new boy/girlfriend	Heart

INTRODUCTION TO FEELINGS

SESSION FIVE

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Explore different feelings associated with their family change.
- ⇒ Identify feelings based on facial expressions and body posture.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- A variety of magazines (at least one per group member)
- Collage supplies- scissors, glue sticks, markers, and large blank paper for each person
- “How do you think they feel?” (page 33)
- “Suggestions of how they might feel” (page 34)

BEFORE THE MEETING



Gather a diverse collection of magazines and supplies for the collages before the group meeting begins.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

In this session group members will be introduced to a variety of feelings. The participants will have an opportunity to discern and explore different feelings based on facial expressions and body positioning.

The discussion around feelings will remain relatively general, and in the following session, group members will be asked to identify specific feelings related to their family change(s).

It is important to note that the topic of feelings should be incorporated into all of the sessions and is not simply isolated to two group sessions. Having participants be able to recognize and identify feelings related to their family changes is vitally important throughout the course of the meetings. In fact, prior to the fifth session, feelings may have already been addressed at length. Please encourage group members to share their feelings at any point.

MEETING WARM-UP

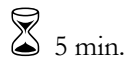


A. TODAY I FEEL

Say to the group,

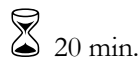
“Today we’ll be taking a look at feelings. We’re going to start off by telling one another two feelings that we’ve had today. However, in our activity today, nobody can use the same feeling more than once. In other words, we will have to come up with many different feelings, perhaps some with similar meanings. For example, if you’re angry and somebody has already used that word to describe their day, you could use similar feelings like mad, furious, enraged, or frustrated.”

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



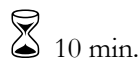
A. WHAT’S IT LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

Using the cartoon illustrations of various facial expressions on page 33, ask the group members to match a feeling with the facial expression demonstrated by the cartoon character. There is no wrong or right answer, but another attachment (*Suggestions of How They Might Feel*) offers an idea of what each facial expression could represent.



B. CREATING A COLLAGE

Distribute magazines and collage supplies to the group. Instruct them to find and cut out pictures of different emotions they see represented by various images. Have them create a collage by gluing the pictures onto a large piece of paper, and writing the emotion they see expressed. Encourage participants to explore and use a wide range of emotions.



C. SHOW IT OFF!

After the participants have finished their collages and have cleaned up their space, give them an opportunity to show their collages to the whole group.

Collect the collages and place them in their individual folders. These collages will be referred to again during the next session.

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. ANOTHER STORY- Best for younger participants

Read the book, **Today I Feel Silly: And Other Moods That Make My Day** by **Jamie Lee Curtis** and **Illustrator, Laura Cornell** (Harper Collins Juvenile Books). This book normalizes the many feelings we experience in any given day, in both a fun and realistic manner.

Other books dealing with feelings/emotions:

What Are YOU So Grumpy About? by Tom Lichtenheld. (Little Brown & Co., 2003).

I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem

by Jamie Lee Curtis, Laura Cornell (Illustrator); (Harper Collins, 2002)

When Sophie Gets Angry- Really, Really Angry... by Molly Garrett Bang; (Scholastic Trade, 1999)

The Brand New Kid by Katie Couric, Marjorie Priceman (Illustrator); (Doubleday, 2000)

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst, Ray Cruz (Illustrator); (Aladdin, 1987)

-OR-

FOR OLDER PARTICIPANTS

SAYING HOW YOU FEEL ☺

Close the session by asking the group members to share their feelings with someone who is important to them.

Other follow-up questions:

- ⇒ How did it feel before you told them?
- ⇒ How did you feel afterwards?
- ⇒ Why do you think it can be difficult to tell someone how you feel?

HOW DO YOU THINK THEY FEEL?



hammas

The original thirty drawings of these faces were created by an unknown artist or cartoonist.

SUGGESTIONS OF HOW THEY MIGHT FEEL



-suspicious



-angry



-relieved



-anxious



-shocked



-exhausted



-confused



-ecstatic



-confident



-lovestruck



-hysterical



-bored



-sad



-hopeful



-lonely



-mischievous



-disgusted



-frightened



-enraged



-ashamed



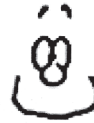
-smug



-depressed



-overwhelmed



-happy



-embarrassed



-jealous



-bored



-surprised



-cautious



-guilty

The original thirty drawings of these faces were created by an unknown artist or cartoonist.

MY CHANGE, MY FEELINGS

SESSION SIX

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Continue to explore different feelings.
- ⇒ Ask group members to identify specific feelings associated with their primary family changes.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Feelings Cube (page 38)
- Feelings Cards (page 39-41)

BEFORE THE MEETING



Put together the Feelings Cube (page 38) prior to the start of the session. (Cut along the dark lines, fold along the lighter lines and tape the edges together.)

NOTE: You may also use a square box and just write a different feeling on each side of the cube.

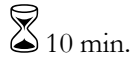
Also, you'll need to cut out the Feelings Cards (page 39-41) for participants to use during Learning Activities A and B.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

This session focuses heavily on feelings. Participants will begin by exploring the meaning of different feelings, and identify times when they have experienced them. In Learning Activity B, the participants will next identify specific feelings they have or have had that relate to their family change(s).

Because participants are being asked to share their feelings and experiences, **the risk level increases**. Keep this in mind while the session is taking place, and be sure to remind the group members of the very important group guideline of confidentiality.

MEETING WARM-UP



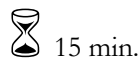
A. FEELINGS CUBE

Take turns rolling the feelings cube. Whichever feeling lands on top, ask the group member to answer one of the statements that you'll read aloud to them. (Fill in the blank with the feeling they rolled).

- When I feel _____, the best thing to do is...
- When you're _____, who is a person you would share this feeling with?
- What makes you feel _____?
- What do you feel _____ about the most?
- When was the last time you felt _____? Tell us about what happened.
- How do you look when you're _____? (Show us!)
- Something my family does that makes me _____ is...
- What would you say to a friend who was feeling _____?
- When you're _____, what do you do?
- Something good to do when I'm feeling _____ is...

OPTION: After the group member rolls the cube, ask them to tell a time when they have experienced that emotion.

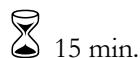
LEARNING ACTIVITIES



A. ACT OUT A FEELING

Using the Feelings Cards, place the cards face down on the table so that no one can read them. Pull out the card that reads, "OTHER" (that card will be used for Learning Activity B and put it aside.) Have a volunteer pick one of the cards without showing anybody what it says. That person should then act out the feeling while the rest of the group tries to guess what feeling they are acting out. They can talk, as long as they do not say the actual feeling displayed on the card. Encourage them to use real life examples from times when they've actually felt the emotion.

Do this activity until everyone has had a turn. (There may be cards that are not acted out by the participants.)



B. FEELINGS PICK

Now set the Feelings Cards face up on the table and include the "OTHER" card. Ask them if they understand the meaning of all of the different feelings. Then instruct group members, one at a time, to choose two or three feelings that they have experienced related to their family change(s). Ask them to explain why they chose the cards they did.

(Example: “I picked worried because I don’t know who’s going to take care of me since my mom left home.”)

Be sure the group members focus on their feelings about their family or family change(s).

Participants should return their cards immediately after they’ve shared so the next person can choose the same cards if they wish.

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. MORE CUBE FUN!

Using the Feelings Cube from the warm-up activity, ask group members to again take turns rolling the cube. Whichever feeling lands on top, have the participant tell the group members something fun or good they can do when they experience that particular feeling. For example, Jacob rolls the cube and it lands on angry. Jacob says to the group, “A fun thing to do when I’m angry is to take recycled paper and rip it into small pieces.”

Happy

Sad

Angry

Lonely

Jealous

Worried

FEELINGS CARDS

Sad	Hurt
Happy	Jealous
Worried	Hopeful
Disappointed	Peaceful

Overwhelmed	Unimportant (or ignored)
Embarrassed	Angry
Scared	Confused
Lonely	Safe

Shy	Proud
Excited	Loved
Relieved	Guilty
Unsafe	OTHER (my feeling isn't on any cards)

HOW OUR FAMILIES EXPRESS THEIR ANGER

SESSION SEVEN

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Discuss the normality of anger amidst family changes.
- ⇒ Think about and share how participants' family members show their anger.
- ⇒ Identify healthy ways to express anger.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Two blank note cards per person
- Pencils
- Copies of "Me and My Anger" (page 46)
- A package of large marshmallows
- Toothpicks
- Markers
- A piece of flipchart paper

BEFORE THE MEETING



Gather the necessary supplies. Be sure to have at least two marshmallows per person (and one more for each of them to eat as a treat!).

Make copies of the handout, "Me and My Anger."

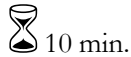
NOTES TO THE LEADER

After spending the past two sessions focusing on feelings related to participants' family changes, today's session will focus on one feeling in particular: anger.

The focus on anger is important because it is such a common feeling children/youth experience because of their family situations. Often, children are particularly angry because they feel they have no control over what is going on around them, and have little opportunity to express how this makes them feel. If their anger is not channeled in healthy ways, it can lead to problems including fighting, poor grades, destructive friendships, isolation, depression, or volatile "blow-ups."

The purpose of this session is to validate their feelings of anger and help them identify positive ways to manage and control their anger.

MEETING WARM-UP



A. HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ME? 🎯 (for group members in grade 5 or older)

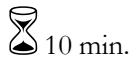
Distribute a note card and pencil to each person. Instruct them to write their name in the corner of the card and to privately write something about themselves that they do not think other people in the group know about them. Then collect the cards and hand another blank note card to each person. One at a time, read aloud what was written on the note cards without saying who wrote what statement. After each statement is read, the group members should try to guess who matches that particular fact about themselves, and write their guess on the note card. Then go through the statements again and tell the group what statement goes with each person. The most correct guesses is the winner!

-OR-

ADAPTATION FOR YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS

As group members enter the room, have them whisper to you one thing about themselves that they do not think other people in the group know about them. Write what they said down, but do not let anyone see it. After everyone has privately told you one thing about themselves, read through the statements out of order, and have group members try to guess which statement matches which group member. The most correct guesses is the winner!

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



A. FAMILY ANGER


Say to the group,

“Today we’re going to focus on one particular feeling: anger. Feeling angry at your family members or at your family situation is very normal when you’re experiencing some big changes at home that you have little or no control over. However, if we do not acknowledge or recognize the angry feelings, we can end up feeling pretty bad and make some unhealthy decisions.”

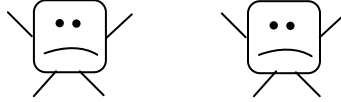
Distribute the “Me and My Anger” handout to each group member. Read through the questions together and ask them to answer the questions individually. After they have completed the handout, take turns having them read their answers aloud to the group. (They do not need to read every answer they have written if it is too personal.)

OPTION: If the group is very young or has trouble reading and/or writing, go through the handout verbally, or ask them to draw pictures in the boxes instead of writing.

B. MARSHMALLOW PLAY

 15 min.

Distribute two marshmallows, four toothpicks, and markers to each person. With the marshmallows, ask them to create themselves and someone else in their family with whom they are particularly angry. Example of “marshmallow people”:




While participants are creating their marshmallow people, have them think about something relating to their family that makes them angry. Then, when they’ve finished making their marshmallow people, instruct them to each role play their situation for the group. Example: Carlos is angry because his father left his brothers and him last year, and his dad rarely calls or sees them now. With his marshmallows, Carlos says to his dad, “I’m mad at you because you never call or come and see us. Why did you leave?” (Carlos can then make up an answer for his father or simply express his anger to him.)

Offer a (clean) marshmallow for each of the participants to eat after they have shared their role play with the group.

Say to the group:

“You may not be able to tell the person you’re angry with why you’re angry. But expressing your anger through your marshmallow people is a way of getting your feelings out, even if the real person never hears you. You have a right to feel angry, even toward someone you love very much.”

C. DON’T BOTTLE THAT ANGER!

 5 min.

Using a sheet of flipchart paper, ask the group members to come up with some healthy ways to deal with their feelings of family anger. Examples:

- Talk it out with a safe person
- Call a friend
- Write a letter to the person you are angry with (even if you do not give the letter to the person, it can feel good to write it)
- Try to understand what the other person may be feeling
- Take slow and steady breaths while counting to 20
- Journal about it or draw a picture
- Ask yourself if this is really worth getting angry about
- Walk away from the situation until you cool down
- Go outdoors and play for a while

CLOSING ACTIVITY



5 min.

ANGRY FACES

As you prepare to leave, ask everyone, one at a time, to make their angriest face. Compare the differences and similarities between the various facial expressions. (Example: “Almost everyone’s lips were tight, but Heather was the only one who crossed her arms.”)

HELPFUL HINT



Put their “Me and My Anger” handouts in their individual folders.

Something else you can do is make copies of the list of healthy ways to handle anger that the group created during the closing activity, and put a copy in each of their folders so that participants take it with them later.

ME AND MY ANGER

Today I got angry when...

Something happening in my family that I'm really angry about is...

Some of the ways that I usually show my anger is by...

Some of the ways that my family members usually show their anger is by...

Feeling angry can be hard sometimes because...

THE WORRY BURDEN

SESSION EIGHT

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Discuss how normal it is to feel worry when experiencing significant changes. It is a common part of change.
- ⇒ Explore worries that the group members have about their family changes.
- ⇒ Identify positive ways of releasing or easing worry.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Clay/Play Doh
- A collection of shells or stones
- 2 spoons
- 2 tennis balls

BEFORE THE MEETING



Be sure to provide enough clay for each participant to create a symbol or object from it.

Before the meeting, collect shells and/or rocks for each group member to take with them.

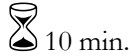
(NOTE: A bag of polished rocks can also be purchased from craft stores for a minimal cost.)

NOTES TO THE LEADER

Along with anger, another common feeling closely associated with difficult family changes is worry. Group members are often worried about family members who are going through something traumatic, or they feel worried about themselves and their unstable/uncertain future. In other words, children and youth experiencing significant changes in their lives can often carry an extra burden because they have little control over the decision-making process, but are usually directly affected by the decisions that are made for them.

This session will focus on worry, normalizing the feeling, and offering participants suggestions about healthy ways to ease worry.

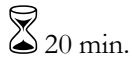
MEETING WARM-UP



A. ORCHIDS AND ONIONS

Ask one person at a time to tell the group a good thing (an orchid) and a bad thing (an onion) that has happened to them in the past week. It can also be something in the future that they are looking forward to or not looking forward to.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



A. WHAT'S YOUR WORRY?

Distribute a quantity of clay or Play Doh to each person and ask them to create something representing a worry that relates to their family change(s). Examples: someone could make a house out of his clay because he is worried about an upcoming move. Or a person could create a broken heart because she is worried about her parents' fighting and perhaps getting a divorce. Be sure to be clear that the worry should directly relate to their family change(s).

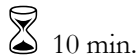
Once everyone has created a symbol, ask them to take turns showing other group members what they created and why they created that particular symbol.

After each person shares their worry, ask other participants in the group to offer suggestions as to what they could do to help ease their worry.

NOTE: If you have a group of younger participants, this activity may be too abstract. Young children may have difficulty identifying a symbol associated with their change and creating it out of clay. If this is the case, allow group members to quietly play with the clay while the adult leader(s) asks them direct questions about their worries. (A great discussion often ensues when kids are simultaneously focused on a sensory activity while talking.)

Say to the group,

“It’s very natural to feel worried when significant family changes are going on around you. You may be worried for yourself, or you may be worried for your family members. Perhaps both. It’s okay to feel worried, but it can also cause you a lot of stress if you do not get a break from your worry. In other words, it’s not healthy for anyone to worry all of the time.”



B. WORRY STONE

Place a variety of shells and/or interesting stones in the center of the table. Inform the group that these are “worry shells” or “worry stones” and that the purpose of the shell/stone is to remind everyone that it is okay to worry, but also that it is also okay to stop worrying and just have fun.

Encourage them to choose one shell/stone to take with them. Tell them to take some time each day to rub their shell/stone and worry about their change during the time that they are rubbing it. However, once they put their shell/stone away, they should let go of their worry and allow themselves to experience feelings of joy, relief, and fun.

As they choose a shell/stone one by one, ask them to tell the group one thing that they plan to do this week that will help ease their worry. Examples: "I'm going to write a letter to my dad who's in jail." Or, "I'm going to call a friend and talk about it instead of bottling it up." Or, "The next time I hear my parents fight, I'm going to go outside and ride my bike instead of listening to their fight and worrying about them."

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. HEAVY SPOONFULS

Form two teams into two relay lines. Give the first person in each line a spoon and a tennis ball. They have to speed walk to the other side of the room while balancing the ball on the spoon, and come back, handing off the spoon and ball to the next person. If the ball falls at any point, they have to return to the front of the line and start again. The first team to get everyone through the line wins.

HOPES AND DREAMS

SESSION NINE

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Offer an opportunity for group members to express their hopes and dreams that they have for themselves and/or their families.
- ⇒ Talk about how it feels when family members disappoint them.
- ⇒ Identify an important dream they have for themselves.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Small package of M&M's
- Drawing paper
- Markers/pencils
- Copies of "Dreams of my Own" (page 53)

BEFORE THE MEETING



Prior to the start of the group, purchase a small package of M&M's (or other small candy with a variety of colors) for the Warm-Up Activity. Also, make enough copies of the "Dreams of my Own" handout so that each person will have one.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

Experiencing significant family changes can often bring up feelings of hopelessness and discouragement in those directly affected by the changes. Therefore, it is important that the group members have an opportunity to express their hopes and dreams, despite going through a difficult time. Their hopes and dreams may be realistic or may not be; the important thing is that they are able to express them.

This session provides a safe format for group members to share dreams, goals, and hopes that they have for themselves and/or their families.

NOTE: This might be a difficult session for the participants if they have hopes that will likely not come to fruition. For example, it is very normal for kids to hope that their parents will get back together, but the likelihood of that happening may be slim. However, it is important that they are given an opportunity to state their wishes.

MEETING WARM-UP



10 min.

A. M&M SHARE

Pass out five M&M's to each group member. Ask them to say one thing about themselves for each piece of candy they eat.

Variation- Ask them to answer a particular get-to-know-you question depending upon the color of the M&M . Examples follow:

Green- What is something you would like to learn how to do?

Yellow- How did you celebrate your last birthday?

Brown- If you had two free tickets to Disney World, who would you take with you? Why?

Red- Who is a person you admire? Why?

Blue- What do you want to do when you grow up?

Orange- How do you show your friends that you care about them?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



20 min.

A. DRAW A HOPE

Using drawing paper and markers, ask the participants to draw a picture of a hope or dream that they have **related to their family change**.

Examples: Draw a picture of a parent being released from jail, or draw a picture of parents living together again.

If you have a group that prefers to write instead of draw, distribute the handout "Dreams of my own" (page 53) to each group member.

On the reverse side, ask them to draw a picture (or write) about a realistic goal/dream that they have for themselves. Examples: Draw a picture of a cap and gown to symbolize graduating from college, or draw a picture of a dog and doctor because you want to be a veterinarian when you grow up.

After they have drawn their pictures, ask them to show them to other group members and say why they chose to draw what they did. Collect the drawings and add them to their individual participant folders to take home at the final group meeting.

B. GROUP DISCUSSION:



10 min.

Say to the group,

“When things don’t turn out the way you want them to in your family, you may feel a lot of difficult feelings, including a sense of anger or hopelessness. However, it is important to still have special hopes and dreams for yourself. Although you have little or no control over what happens with your family change, you *can* control your own life decisions. In other words, you can still achieve personal goals even when your family is having a difficult time.”

Ask the group members to respond to the following questions:

- ⇒ When is a time you have felt disappointed about something in your family? How did you react?
- ⇒ Why do you think it is okay to still have hopes and dreams for your family, even when things may feel hopeless?
- ⇒ What can you do to help yourself feel better when what you hope for your family does not come true? Does the disappointment make it harder to hope again? Why or why not?

CLOSING ACTIVITY



5 min.

A. IF I WERE....

Read the following statements, and invite individual group members to answer.

If I were...

- An animal, I'd be...
- A racehorse, my name would be...
- A season, I'd be...
- A piece of furniture, I'd be...
- A time of day, I'd be...
- A movie star, I'd be...
- A movie, I'd be...
- A salesperson, I'd be selling...
- A natural disaster, I'd be...
- A superhero, I'd be...
- A teacher, I'd teach...
- A place to eat, I'd be...
- A kind of car, I'd be a...

DREAMS OF MY OWN

A special dream I have for myself is to:

I want this for myself because:

Someone who could help me accomplish my dream:

I will try to keep this dream alive by:

Some of my special talents and gifts include:

WORKING THROUGH GRIEF

SESSION TEN

(NOTE: THIS SESSION IS MOST SUITABLE FOR OLDER GROUP PARTICIPANTS)




LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Understand the natural grieving process associated with any significant loss.
- ⇒ Examine the grief cycle and have participants individually identify aspects of the grieving process that they have experienced and/or are experiencing.
- ⇒ Learn the warning signs of depression.
- ⇒ Identify healthy strategies for coping with loss and grief.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- A tennis ball or bean bag
- Copies of “Grief Loop”  (page 58) or copies of “Adapted Grief Loop” for younger participants (page 59)
- Copies of “Signs of possible depression”  (pages 60-61)
- “Real Life” Scenarios  (pages 62-63)
- A sheet of newsprint and a marker

BEFORE THE MEETING



Make copies of either Grief Loop depending upon the age of your participants (page 58 or page 59). Also make copies of “Signs of possible depression” (pages 60-61) for each group member.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

This session’s focus is to give participants information about grief, loss, and depression.

Although it is important for participants of all ages to understand general concepts of grief and loss, some of the session’s content related to depression is more suitable for older group members. **Please adapt and modify session content and materials to the developmental level of group members as you see fit.** For example, page 59 is an adapted version of the Grief Loop that can be used with younger participants.

Most people associate grief and loss with situations that are related to the death of a loved one. However, many people experience situations of loss and feelings of grief that may be due to a range of life experiences and situations.

The following are examples of significant family changes that can trigger feelings of loss and grief: a parent leaving home, divorce/separation, moving, changing schools, illness of a loved one, a parent in jail, a new baby brother or sister, living in a foster home, homelessness, etc. In other words, all of the family changes that group members identify as being significant can trigger feelings of grief and loss.

This session focuses on **normalizing the grieving process**. It will give participants information about the grief cycle, and group members will have an opportunity to identify their own experiences with various stages of the grieving process.

With older group members, time will be spent on recognizing and understanding depression. Also, participants will identify ways to cope with situations of loss and feelings of grief, including seeking out further help for dealing with depression.

MEETING WARM-UP

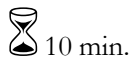


A. IT'S A TOSS UP

Provide a tennis ball or bean bag for the group. Begin by tossing the ball to someone in the group while asking the person a question about themselves. After the person answers the question, they should toss it to someone else (who has not yet received the ball) and ask that person a question about themselves. No one can ask the same question. This should be done until everyone has had an opportunity to answer and ask a question.

OPTION: Make it more challenging by adding the rule that no one can ask a question that can be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” Use open-ended questions that begin with words such as: who, what, where, and when.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

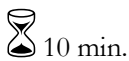


A. THE GRIEF LOOP

Distribute either the original or adapted Grief Loop (page 58 or 59) (depending upon age and developmental level of participants) to each person and read it aloud as a group. Discuss the handout, explaining the more complex concepts.

Emphasize the following points about the grief cycle:

- You may experience the stages of grief “out of order”.
- You could go through all of these stages in one day, or it could take you a month, or a year. Most people go through the Grief Loop over and over again. Also, significant dates or milestones may trigger your grief all over again.
- Unfortunately, no one can tell you when you will feel better. Everyone heals in their own time and in their own way.
- There is no right or wrong way to grieve.



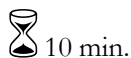
B. YOUR OWN CYCLE OF GRIEF

After you have explained the Grief Loop and group members understand the concepts, ask them to individually point to where they think they fall within the grief loop today. Ask them to share where they started, and what has changed, if anything, since the loss has occurred. (Remember, for some the timing of a loss could be quite vague, like a child who is grieving a parent that they have never met, or someone who has been diagnosed with a life-threatening or debilitating disease.)

After everyone has had a chance to identify and share where they are in their own process of grief, have a brief discussion.

Follow-up discussion questions:

- How do you express your grief? Do you tend to get angry easily? Cry? Have trouble eating or sleeping? Disconnect from people you care about?
- How do you think your family members express their grief?
- What stage(s) of grief can you relate to the most? The least?
- Are there feelings or stages that you feel you have experienced that are not on this Grief Loop? If so, explain.



C. SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DEPRESSION ☛

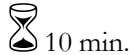
Say to the group,

“There is a big difference between feeling sad due to a particular situation and having depression. Usually when someone feels temporarily sad, it is for a short period of time (a number of hours or days, but not commonly more than two weeks). However, when someone is actually depressed, the sad feelings are usually more intense and last for at least two weeks with very little hope or relief.”

Distribute the “Signs of possible depression” handout. Read through the warning signs of depression and ask them to check individually the box next to the description if/when they have experienced that.

Next, read aloud the “Real Life Scenarios” (page 62-63) and ask participants the follow-up questions included there.

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. COPING WITH YOUR GRIEF

Using a blank sheet of newsprint, ask the group to identify some healthy and positive things they can do when they feel numb, sad, or angry about their family changes. Write down their suggestions as they say them aloud.

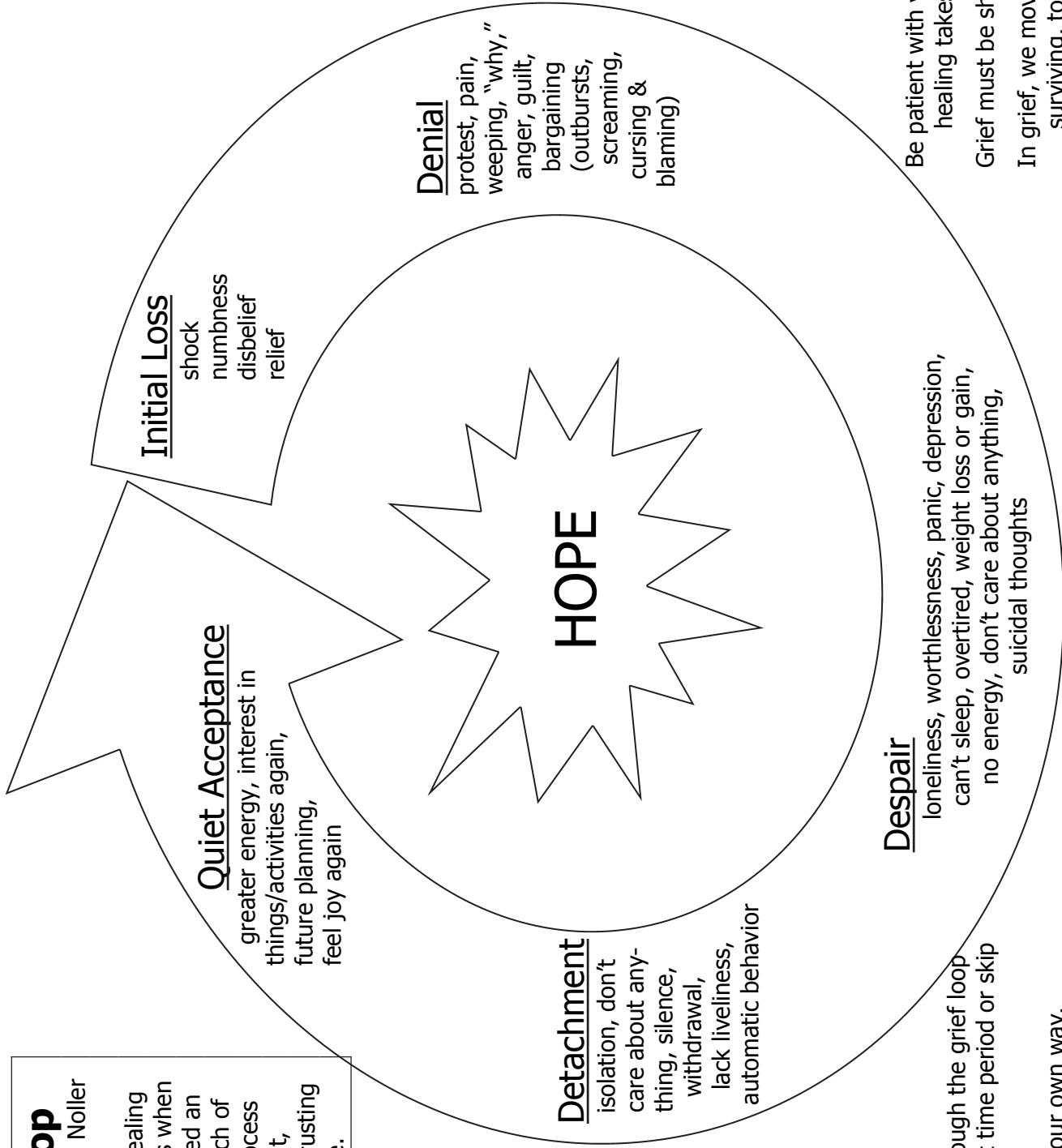
Examples of healthy coping methods:

- Call a friend
- Talk to a trusted adult
- Draw or write about your feelings
- Write a letter to the person for whom you are grieving (even if they have died or are gone)
- Share your feelings with a trustworthy person
- Cry
- Breathe deeply and say to yourself, “This difficult feeling will eventually pass. Things will get better.”
- Eat healthy foods
- Remember that what you are feeling is normal

Grief Loop

- Designed by Gail Noller

Grief is a natural healing process that begins when we have experienced an emotional loss. Each of us can help the process by being aware of it, understanding it, trusting it and giving it time.



Initial Loss

shock
numbness
disbelief
relief

Quiet Acceptance

greater energy, interest in things/activities again, future planning, feel joy again

Denial

protest, pain, weeping, "why," anger, guilt, bargaining (outbursts, screaming, cursing & blaming)

HOPE

Detachment

isolation, don't care about anything, silence, withdrawal, lack liveliness, automatic behavior

Despair

loneliness, worthlessness, panic, depression, can't sleep, overtired, weight loss or gain, no energy, don't care about anything, suicidal thoughts

Let the feelings out!

It is normal to go through the grief loop many times in a short time period or skip a step.

Each of us grieves in our own way.

Be patient with yourself— healing takes time

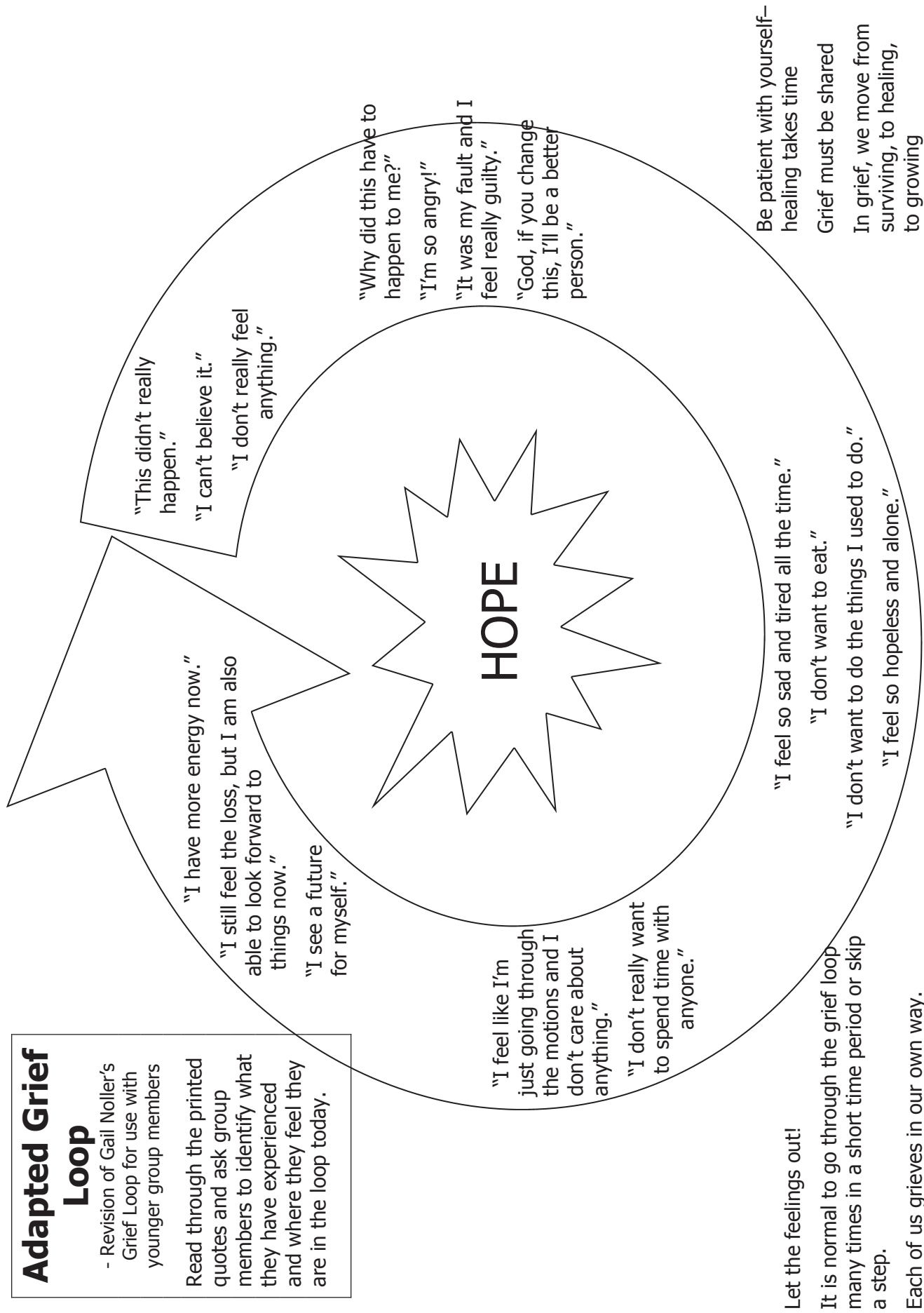
Grief must be shared

In grief, we move from surviving, to healing, to growing

Adapted Grief Loop

- Revision of Gail Noller's Grief Loop for use with younger group members

Read through the printed quotes and ask group members to identify what they have experienced and where they feel they are in the loop today.



Let the feelings out!

It is normal to go through the grief loop many times in a short time period or skip a step.

Each of us grieves in our own way.

Be patient with yourself— healing takes time

Grief must be shared

In grief, we move from surviving, to healing, to growing

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DEPRESSION ☆

The following is a list of general signs of depression. **This is NOT to be used to diagnose depression. That should only be done by a mental health professional in a private setting.**

Distribute the handout to each group member and have them check the boxes that apply.

Check all that apply	How long have you felt this way? Or, how often do you experience this?
FEELINGS	
Do you express the following:	
Sadness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emptiness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hopelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worthlessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of enjoyment of everyday pleasures	<input type="checkbox"/>
THINKING	
Are you having difficulty:	
Concentrating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing school work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining grades	<input type="checkbox"/>
PHYSICAL PROBLEMS	
Do you have an increased number of:	
Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stomachaches	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint or backaches	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of energy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeping problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weight or appetite changes (gain or loss)	<input type="checkbox"/>

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS		
Are you more:		
Restless	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Irritable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Not wanting to go to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wanting to be alone most of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Having difficulty getting along with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cutting classes or skipping school	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dropping out of sports, hobbies or activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Drinking or using drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you talk or think about:		
Suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Death	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other morbid subjects	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If a particular group member has a number of boxes checked on the list and the child or youth experiences the indicators often or for long periods of time, contact a parent and refer him or her to a mental health professional for further exploration. **THIS IS NOT A TOOL TO DIAGNOSE ANYONE WITH DEPRESSION AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.**

“REAL LIFE” SCENARIOS ☆

Read the following four scenarios aloud to the group. After you have read each one, ask the participants the follow-up questions.

SCENARIO ONE:

Renasha and her boyfriend, Sam, had been going out for most of the school year when they broke up almost two weeks ago. Since then, Renasha has felt sad and rejected. When she feels really bad, she calls two of her best friends and talks to them about how she feels and her friends do a great job of listening. Renasha has also decided to try out for the basketball team because of the extra time she has now that she's not spending time with Sam. Sometimes Renasha cries herself to sleep because she misses Sam. She continues to be angry with him, but she knows that one day she'll meet the right person.

- *What feelings do you think Renasha is feeling in this scenario?*
- *Who does Renasha have as a part of her support system?*
- *Does Renasha show signs of hope? If so, what are they?*
- *If Renasha were your friend, would you be concerned about her well-being? Why or why not?*

SCENARIO TWO:

Renasha and her boyfriend, Sam, had been going out for most of the school year when they broke up almost two weeks ago. Since then, Renasha has felt sad and rejected. Her friends have tried to reach out to Renasha, but she just doesn't feel like talking about it with anyone. Instead of it getting easier with time, her feelings are getting worse. She just feels empty and wants either to sleep all the time or watch television all night long, so she can take her mind off Sam. Renasha no longer cares about her classes or friends, and everyone seems to be irritating her. She just wants to be left alone.

- *What feelings do you think Renasha is feeling in this scenario?*
- *Who does Renasha have as a part of her support system?*
- *Does Renasha show signs of hope?*
- *If Renasha were your friend, would you be concerned about her well-being? Why or why not?*

SCENARIO THREE:

Justin's mom and dad are fighting a lot at home. They argue about money and responsibilities and blame each other for everything. His parents have always fought, but it seems to be getting worse since his dad has been drinking more. Justin's fed up and angry with his parents' fighting. Justin comes home from school and goes right to his room for the night. He ends up sleeping, listening to music, or watching television for hours. Friends call, but he doesn't want to talk to them because he doesn't want anyone to know how messed up things are at home. Oftentimes, Justin pulls out his homework and just stares at it, unable to concentrate on anything. At night, he has trouble sleeping and wonders if all of this pain is worth it.

- *What feelings do you think Justin is feeling in this scenario?*
- *Who does Justin have as a part of his support system?*
- *Does Justin show signs of hope?*
- *If Justin were your friend, would you be concerned about his well-being? Why or why not?*

SCENARIO FOUR:

Justin's mom and dad are fighting a lot at home. They argue about money and responsibilities and they blame each other for everything. His parents have always fought, but it seems to be getting worse since his dad has been drinking more. Justin's fed up and angry with his parents' fighting. He doesn't want to be around their fighting, so he starts hanging out with friends more after school. They drink a lot, and Justin tries it, but he doesn't like how it makes him feel, so he stops. Justin decides to go to the YWCA after school, and he starts working out. At night, he spends a lot of time in his room talking to friends – one in particular, who listens to him talk about his problems. He also likes to draw, and creates pictures when he's feeling really upset. Justin's art teacher just asked him to display his artwork in a community art gallery, and he agreed to do it.

- *What feelings do you think Justin is feeling in this scenario?*
- *Who does Justin have as a part of his support system?*
- *Does Justin show signs of hope? If so, what are they?*
- *If Justin were your friend, would you be concerned about his well-being? Why or why not?*

REACHING OUT

SESSION ELEVEN

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Identify supportive people they trust and can talk to beyond the other group members.
- ⇒ Discuss *trust* and be able to define for themselves how to trust others.
- ⇒ Be affirmed as trustworthy people.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- “If you could” (page 67)
- Copies of “Helping Hand” (page 68) or Copies of “Personal Protection Plan” 🌟 (page 69)
- Pencils
- Permanent markers and/or puffy paints
- A small hand mirror for each group member
- Copies of “Trust Affirmation” (page 70)

BEFORE THE MEETING



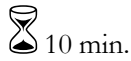
Make copies of the handouts, “Helping Hand” (page 68) or “Personal Protection Plan” 🌟 (page 69) for each group member.

Purchase a small, inexpensive mirror at a craft store for each group member for Learning Activity B.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

With the group coming to a close soon, it is important that the participants begin to identify supportive people and resources outside of the immediate group. This session will focus on looking outside the group for helpful, trusting people to talk to about their feelings and experiences. This also prepares them for the closure of the group, which may be difficult for some.

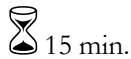
MEETING WARM-UP



A. IF YOU COULD

Referring to, “If you could” (page 67), ask each group member to pick a number between one and ten. Read aloud the “If you could” question from the number they chose and have them answer the question.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



A. HELPING HAND

Say to the group,

“Because our group will be ending soon and we’ll no longer be meeting as a group, it’s important that we think of people outside of our group that we can turn to for support when we need it. Who are people in your life that you trust and can talk to about your feelings?”

Distribute the “Helping Hand” (page 68) to each group member. Instruct them to trace their hand and to write the names of supportive people they can turn to inside the hand. There is no minimum or maximum number of people they should write. Participants can also decorate their hand using crayons or markers.

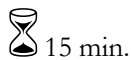
Encourage participants to diversify their list by thinking of supportive people at school, in the home and in the community – people such as coaches, neighbors, and adults, as well as friends their own age.

When they’re finished writing and decorating their Helping Hand, have participants take turns sharing with the other group members the people they turn to for support.

-OR-

PERSONAL PROTECTION PLAN 🌟 (Best for older participants)

Distribute the “My very own personal protection plan” (page 69) to each group member. Allow them several minutes to write out their answers to the questions before they share them aloud with the group.



B. WHO CAN I TRUST?

An important life skill for children and youth to learn is how to trust people. Unfortunately, this is oftentimes learned the hard way when someone they love breaks their trust or betrays them. If this happens a lot, eventually the child or youth may find it nearly impossible to trust anyone. It is important to address the issue of trust and help group members recognize ways to trust other people who want to support and help them.

Ask a volunteer to read the following statement aloud:

Trust is having faith. It is relying and believing in someone or something. It is having confidence that the right thing will come without trying to control it or make it happen. Sometimes it is hard to trust when life brings painful experiences. Trust is being sure, deep down, that there is some gift or learning in everything life brings.

- The Virtues Project

Distribute a small mirror to each group member. Using permanent markers or puffery paints, ask the group members to write the following words on the edge of their mirror. "I can trust myself to trust others."

Ask the group members to respond to the following questions:

- ⇒ Who are the people you trust?
- ⇒ How do you know you can trust them?
- ⇒ How do you show you are trustworthy to other people? Give examples.
- ⇒ After somebody breaks your trust, can they ever get it back? How? How forgiving are you to someone who has broken your trust?
- ⇒ Why is it so important to have people in your life that you trust?

CLOSING ACTIVITY



5 min.

A. TRUST AFFIRMATION

Distribute the "Trust Affirmation" (page 70) handout to each person. Ask them to look at themselves in their mirror and say the statement aloud as a group. Encourage them to take their mirror home and put it in a place that reminds them that they are trustworthy people and can trust others.

IF YOU COULD...

Ask group members to pick a number between one and ten. Then read them the related “If you could” question to answer aloud to the group.

1. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live?
2. If you could give yourself any new first name, what name would you choose?
3. If you could choose only one meal that you had to eat every day for the rest of your life, what would you eat?
4. If you could meet any famous person you wanted, who would you choose?
5. If you could design a school for animals, what would the school be like?
6. If you could drive, what kind of car would you want to drive?
7. If you could be in any movie, what movie would you choose to be in?
8. If you could play any sport professionally, what sport would you play?
9. If you could never have to eat one vegetable ever again for the rest of your life, what vegetable would it be?
10. If you could be the President of the United States for one week, what would you want to change about our world in that week?

HELPING HAND

**Trace your hand AND write
inside the hand the names of
people that you can turn to for support.**

My very own (just mine and nobody else's):

Personal Protection Plan

Things I can do when I feel afraid:

Safe people I can turn to when I'm scared:

Places I can go to feel safe:

Trust Affirmation:

*Copy this affirmation so that
each group member can have one.*

TRUST AFFIRMATION:

***♥ I believe that there is some good in everything
that happens.***

***♥ I can trust others unless I have a good
reason not to.***

♥ I will allow trust to chase away my fears.

***♥ I will look for the gift or lesson in
painful experiences.***

***♥ I am trustworthy. Today I will keep
my promises and be worthy of the trust
others place in me.***

- Virtues Project

FINAL CELEBRATION

SESSION TWELVE

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Participants will:

- ⇒ Evaluate the group experience from the prior twelve sessions.
- ⇒ Bring closure to the group and celebrate the group members' participation in the group.

SUPPLIES NEEDED



- Personalized Certificate of Participation for each group member (page 77)
- “Closing Cards” (page 75)
- Copies of “*Children in Change* Final Evaluation” (page 76)
- Pencils
- A snack food for the party
- Music for the party (optional)
- The participant folders with the group members' work from the twelve sessions.

BEFORE THE MEETING




Cut out the two “Closing Cards” (page 75) for the Warm-Up Activity. Make copies of the Final Evaluation (page 76). Lastly, prepare a Certificate of Participation (page 77) for each group member prior to the meeting. Purchase snack food for the final celebration.

NOTES TO THE LEADER

The focus of this final session is three-fold. First, the session will help group members recognize their progress throughout the twelve sessions. Second, participants will have an opportunity to evaluate their group experience and bring closure to the group. Finally, participants will have a small party to celebrate their group experience.

MEETING WARM-UP

 10 min.

Say to the group,


“Today is our final group session. But before we have our party, we are going to do some things to close our group.”

A. CLOSING CARDS

Using the “Closing Cards,” ask the group members to each answer both of the statements, “I liked it when we...” and “I learned...” Encourage them to think back to all of the twelve sessions.

HINT: To refresh their memories, you may want to review important things you did together/talked about in the twelve sessions. Some examples of activities: drew pictures of our families, talked about feelings, acted out feelings, did a marshmallow play, created a worry symbol from clay, talked about hopes and dreams, listened to one another, upheld confidentiality, shared, etc.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

 15 min.

A. FINAL EVALUATION

Distribute the “*Children in Change* Final Evaluation” handout to the participants. (They do not need to write their names on the paper.) Instruct them to complete the evaluation individually, being as truthful and thorough as possible. Once group members have finished their evaluation, ask them to share a portion of their evaluation with the group.

NOTE: If the participants do not have well-developed reading/writing skills, read the evaluation questions aloud and provide the necessary assistance to group members.

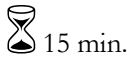
 5 min.

B. GROUP CLOSING

Ask each person to say one positive thing about their group experience.

Present each participant with a Certificate of Participation that states they have successfully completed the *Children in Change* group.

CLOSING ACTIVITY



A. PARTY TIME!

Have a *Children in Change* Party. Provide some treats and perhaps a little music for the party.

Hand out to participants their individual folders with their work from the various sessions. Be sure to offer to take care of any drawings or writing material that they do not want to bring home. (Some children or youth may be apprehensive about family members seeing what they wrote or drew, especially if it is negative.)

HINT: Something nice you can do as a facilitator prior to the start of this session is to write a special note to each group member. Let them know that you are glad they were in the group, and share something that shows each of them that they are special. You can put the notes into their folders.

CLOSING CARDS

Cut out these two cards for the Warm-up Activity. Ask the group members to take turns answering both of the statements, “I liked it when we...” and “I learned...” Encourage them to reflect about all of the twelve sessions together.

**“I liked it
when we...”**

“I learned...”

CHILDREN IN CHANGE

FINAL EVALUATION

Today is the last day of our group.

I feel _____ and _____ to see it end.

Thinking back to everything we did together, the two things I liked best were:

1. _____

2. _____

I had many different feelings during the group sessions.

Some of the feelings I had were:

Some important things I learned in this group were:

1. _____

2. _____

Something about my family change I still wonder about is:



CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

is recognized for participating in the
Children in Change Group

Group Leader

Group Leader

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Simmonds has been a front-line youth development professional for the past 15 years. Her experiences as a program director, family-life educator and curriculum developer have contributed to recent publication of a unique curriculum and resource for teachers, youth workers, social workers and other professionals. The *Children in Change* curriculum for third- to eighth-graders experiencing family change draws on her extensive background in group work, youth development and family life education practices.



Jennifer received her Bachelor's degree in Communications from St. Mary's College of California. She also has a Master's degree in Education-Youth Development Leadership from the University of Minnesota. The mother of two children, she lives with her partner in Minneapolis.

This is her second book of specially designed group activities for children and youth; her first book, *Seeing Red*, is an anger management and peace-making curriculum for youth that offers interactive activities to teach kids the key skills needed to get along with others and to deal with anger in healthy ways.

The author works as a family-life educator and curriculum development specialist at Family & Children's Service in Minneapolis. There she develops curricula, leads groups and makes community presentations on current youth and family life topics, including grief and loss, coping with significant family change, anger management and conflict resolution, parenting, social skills and issues facing gay, lesbian and bisexual youth. A major part of her work has been to lead and help facilitate education and support groups for both young people and parents. She is working on a third book, a curriculum model for developing education and support groups for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.

