

# Healthy Relationships Toolkit

Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships

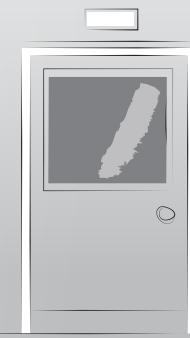
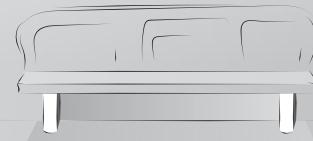
## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS 7TH GRADE

*Facilitator Guide*



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# Introduction

## Healthy Relationships Toolkit for Parents: Background

Parenting during the teen years can be challenging. Parents want to guide, protect, and nurture their children during this developmental period. Children seek more independence, but still need help dealing with the challenges and pressures of adolescence. Children today can easily obtain information about relationships, sex, alcohol, and drugs from a variety of sources. Parents know those sources of information may not provide the best or most accurate information. Parents may also feel as if they have less influence than peers in their children's lives as the children get older, but parents matter. Children want to get information about relationships, sex, and substances from their parents.

Although these topics—sex, relationships, and dating violence—are not easy to talk about, it is essential that parents learn to have conversations about these topics with their children. Overcoming discomfort and hesitation to discuss these topics with their children allows parents to provide their children with parental opinions and expectations. That way their children are not dependent upon the messages of others. Healthy Relationships Toolkit (HeaRT) for Parents offers information on the unique challenges and pressures teens face, as well as tips and strategies for positive parenting, communication, supervision, and conflict resolution.

HeaRT for Parents provides parents with an opportunity to learn:

- New parenting skills (or reinforce parenting skills they already know)
- How to protect their children from risks during adolescence
- How to promote healthy relationships in their children's lives

Every family is different and each of the tips and strategies we recommend may not work for everyone. However, the general principles should be helpful for most families. We want parents to walk away from the program understanding they are the experts for their families, and should take away from this training the approaches that will work best for them. Although this program was developed specifically for parents of 7th graders, the skills and information may help parents with children of other ages as well.

This program was developed based on research suggesting that a number of parenting practices and family factors (e.g., harsh parenting, low parental monitoring, negative parent-child interactions, witnessing violence in the home) can increase the risk of violence in adolescence. This program encourages parents to use positive parenting skills, communicate openly and effectively, appropriately monitor and supervise their children, and resolve conflicts constructively. Using lessons from this program, we hope parents will strengthen their parent-child relationship and, ultimately, prevent violence in adolescence. We also hope parents will be better prepared to teach their children what to expect in healthy relationships.

## Program Delivery: Nuts & Bolts

### Program Overview

HeaRT for Parents contains six sessions: three group sessions and three in-home sessions. Group sessions last 90 minutes and should be conducted every other week. In-home sessions should be completed during the weeks that groups do not meet. In-home sessions take approximately 60 minutes to complete, and provide parents with an opportunity to practice the skills discussed in group sessions.

The content of each of the six sessions is outlined below. Sessions should be conducted in the order they are presented because each session builds on the previous sessions. Sessions cover many topics and provide opportunities for the participants to learn and enhance skills.

### Session 1: Parenting Positively

- Introduction: HeaRT for Parents
- General ground rules and icebreaker activity
- Changes and pressures children face as they get older
- Positive parenting skills
- Parent-child communication skills

# Introduction

## Session 2: Let's Talk, Part 1 (In-Home)

- Use and practice the communication skills and concepts learned in Session 1 in everyday situations

## Session 3: Parenting By Example (Group)

- Review of Session 1 concepts and home session experiences
- Healthy versus unhealthy relationship behaviors
- Teen dating violence
- Parents as relationship models

## Session 4: Let's Talk, Part 2 (In-Home)

- Use and practice the communication skills learned in Session 1 with a difficult topic

## Session 5: Parenting Skillfully (Group)

- Review of Session 3 concepts and home session experiences
- Parental supervision
- Risky behaviors during the teen years
- Conflict resolution

## Session 6: Let's Talk, Part 3 (In-Home)

- Use and practice the communication skills learned in Session 1 with a difficult topic

## How to Use the Facilitator Guide

This facilitator guide provides detailed information on how to facilitate HeaRT for Parents. It includes information and tips to help enhance facilitation skills. It also includes session guides that describe the materials for each session, how much time should be spent on each activity, and how each activity should be conducted. Use the facilitator guide to deliver the three group sessions and to review the three at-home sessions of the HeaRT for Parents program. Reading this manual is not sufficient preparation to facilitate HeaRT for Parents. Before delivering HeaRT for Parents, you must complete the HeaRT Training for Facilitators [<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/heart-facilitators/>]. This training includes online education and in-person activities to complete with a HeaRT Coach. Your HeaRT Coach or Prevention Lead can provide you with access to this training.

Ideally, two facilitators should work together to facilitate each group. When possible, we strongly suggest having both a male and a female facilitator. This approach provides parents with both male and female perspectives about parenting and allows for a richer experience. However, it is okay if your organization is not able to provide two facilitators, or if both facilitators are either male or female. If there are two facilitators, you should equally share responsibilities for conducting the sessions, setting up the room, and preparing the materials needed for each session. Before each session, agree how to divide the responsibilities (e.g., who is going to lead which sections, and who will record participant responses). You and your co-facilitator should meet after each session to debrief and discuss what worked, what did not work, concerns raised during the session that you will address later, and strategies to improve facilitation in the next session.

Your role as a facilitator is essential to the success of HeaRT for Parents. Below, you will find information and tips to help ensure successful delivery of this crucial information.

Session guides with specific information to facilitate each session begin on page 13.

# Qualities of Effective Group Facilitators

## As facilitators guide groups, they:

- Appreciate and respect that families and those responsible for parenting are diverse (e.g., married and unmarried couples, single parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, and other relatives)
- Provide a supportive learning environment
- Value what parents bring to the group
- Handle sensitive issues and conflicts
- Are nonjudgmental
- Know the influence of their own values and attitudes

## Skilled communicators:

- Facilitate discussion
- Observe and listen
- Are approachable
- Speak clearly
- Use words that are easily understood by participants

## Facilitators display warmth as they:

- Establish warm relationships with group members
- Speak well of everyone
- Like and trust group members rather than fear them
- Build trust with participants

## Well organized facilitators:

- Have objectives and goals clearly outlined
- Have information well categorized, so they can retrieve it in response to questions
- Acknowledge what they do not know (i.e., the facilitator is not always the expert)
- Use time well

- Have working knowledge of multimedia devices (e.g., laptop, projector)
- Prepare in advance

## Enthusiastic facilitators:

- Are enthusiastic about the content of the program
- Are enthusiastic about people
- Are enthusiastic about the process

## Facilitators have the ability to conduct role-plays, which will:

- Model skills taught
- Allow participants to practice those skills

## Tips for Facilitators

Here are some tips that contribute to the successful facilitation of HeaRT for Parents:

### 1. A clear and thorough understanding of the themes and messages of HeaRT for Parents is extremely important.

While this program does not require that you read a lot of information to participants word-for-word, the topics, activities, and messages embedded in the materials throughout the manual are important. You should understand these points and emphasize them during sessions.

### 2. Be mindful that parents may have prior or current history with experiencing violence.

Creating a respectful and non-judgmental environment is essential. Start by having the group set ground rules. This creates trust and safety in the group. Some of the participants in the group may have experienced, witnessed, or perpetrated violence or abuse, either in their own personal relationships, their friends' relationships, or their family relationships. Disclosure and discussion of the information in this program may be distressing for some group members. Thus, it is important to be aware of signs that participants are becoming

uncomfortable or upset. If participants become uncomfortable or upset, you, as the facilitator, should recognize and normalize those feelings. If needed, speak with the participant(s) at the end of the group session.

### **3. Confidentiality of members of the group cannot be assured.**

Although we would like to make sure that the information provided by individuals in the groups remains confidential and private, this cannot be assured in a group setting. Confidentiality and privacy can only be kept to the degree that each group member chooses not to share with others. This risk should be clearly communicated to individuals participating in the groups.

### **4. Time management strategies are crucial to cover the necessary material in each session.**

Some participants may want to spend excessive amounts of time discussing certain issues. While group discussion is welcome and invited, it becomes a problem when it interferes with getting through all the material for a session. As a facilitator, you need to ensure that time is managed well as participants move through the program. Each activity in the program has a suggested time allotment listed at the beginning of the activity. A suggested time allotment is also included for each part of the session. You can find these time allotments in the Session Overview or at the beginning of each new part in the program.

Use these strategies to limit group discussion and get through all of the session's material:

- Establish appropriate expectations in the first session. Emphasize the importance of discussion and the need to review all of the material for each session while discussing ground rules in Session 1.
- Refer to the ground rules during discussion, stressing the importance of getting through all material for a session. When needed, tell participants that it is time to move on to the next topic. Start by acknowledging the positive aspects of the discussion (e.g.,

“this is a great discussion” or “those are some great points”) and then inform participants that to get through all the material, talks need to move forward (e.g., “We have some additional points to cover and we need to move on.”). Ask for a volunteer to be the group’s time keeper.

- Develop a “Parking Lot” list. Ask the group if they want to put the topic/issue on the “Parking Lot” list (e.g., on a sheet of easel paper labeled “Parking Lot” and attached to the wall). If there is time at the end of the session, the group can go back to the Parking Lot and agree to discuss the topics/issues listed. Have post-it notes and pens available for participants to use.
- Impose a 1-minute rule to reduce discussion time (or to limit the domination of discussions by one or two participants). When the 1-minute rule is in effect, each parent is limited to 1 minute to make their point or express their view. If there are problems with parents adhering to the time limitation, ask a volunteer timekeeper to keep track of the time and signal when the person’s 1 minute is up.
- If one parent is continually dominating the discussion by interrupting others, impose a rule of one comment per person. When this rule is in effect, no person can comment again until all members of the group have had the opportunity to comment.

### **5. Build on the existing skills, experiences, and knowledge of the participants. Don’t assume they are unskilled or inadequate.**

Each participant will come to the group with a different set of skills and experiences. Thus, it is important to focus on each participant’s individual strengths rather than their weaknesses. Try not to compare participants to each other.



## **6. Set up the room so that parents can see each other.**

Arrange seating that will facilitate easy conversation between you and the participants, such as a semicircle, a U-shaped table, or a single table. This also makes it easier to see each of the group members and identify when group members look confused or disinterested.

## **7. Do not act as the expert.**

Your role is to act as a guide and assist in the learning process. Although you should be well versed in parenting techniques and teen dating issues, some questions or situations raised by the participants might be new to you. In these cases, you may have to research information and respond to the participants in the next session. You could also ask other group members for ideas, opinions, and experiences related to the topic.

## **8. Some facilitator self-disclosure is good and can be helpful in building rapport.**

You may choose to share some personal information with participants. For example, sharing personal stories about your experiences with parenting may make participants more comfortable sharing their stories and improve group cohesion. However, adding information or messages to the program such as religious views or personal values is not appropriate, as it may alienate participants with differing views or practices.

## **9. Relax and have fun!**

One final tip is to have fun while implementing the material. If you are excited and enthusiastic about the material, it will be evident in your delivery. This will translate into enthusiasm and engagement by the participants.

## **Managing Role-Plays**

Role-plays allow participants an opportunity to practice the skills they learn in a session. The scenarios used in the role-plays are similar to situations participants may face at home with their children. You should be as involved during role-plays as you are in other parts of the session. When setting up role-play groups, avoid placing the same people together all the time. In some instances, you may need to model role-plays before asking participants to practice. This helps participants feel more comfortable before they try it themselves. Once participants start role-playing, you should circle through groups and provide positive and constructive guidance. For example, compliment participants for attempting to use new skills. Provide recommendations, if needed, about how participants can improve their skills. After the role-plays, bring the group back together, ask for examples of how they were able to use new skills, and discuss what worked and did not work.

## **Addressing Personal Problems**

Sometimes a participant may try to use the group to discuss personal problems. This type of discussion can dominate the group. Make sure the session does not become a personal therapy group by using the following approaches:

- Clarify expectations during the first session by talking about what the group “is not.”
- Use the Parking Lot. Participants can write their issues or questions on post-it notes and place them on the posted easel paper.
- Tell parents they can speak with facilitators during breaks or at the end of the session for additional information or assistance.
- When appropriate, provide a list of resources where parents can get information or assistance. Include this list in the parent handbook.
- When answering personal questions, be careful not to step outside of your area of expertise.
- When personal issues come up, in most cases other group members want to move on, direct the parent the Parking Lot or simply say something like,

“That seems really important to you. Why don’t you and I talk about that during the break?”

## Participant Retention

For participants to benefit fully from HeaRT for Parents, they will need to attend all of the group sessions and complete the in-home sessions. The following things can be done before and during the program to encourage completion of all sessions:

- **Make sure the right people are recruited and registered.** The ideal parents:
  - » Are genuinely interested in what will be covered during the sessions.
  - » Are concerned for their children’s well-being.
  - » Believe that the program will benefit their family.
  - » Have at least one child in middle school.
- **Be organized and prepared.** Sessions must be well organized and easy to follow so that participants understand what they are doing and learning. This will help them to actively participate in the sessions and anticipate what comes next. This requires that you plan sessions in advance and have the room and materials ready when participants arrive.
- **Deliver the sessions as designed.** If the program is delivered as planned, then meaningful content and session activity will increase retention. Participants will want to return if
  - » They feel they are gaining useful skills.
  - » They get positive and productive reinforcement.
  - » They can relate to their facilitator.
  - » The delivery of sessions is culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- **Make it easy for people to attend.**
  - » Create an atmosphere that makes people want to come back.
  - » When necessary and possible, make arrangements for child care or transportation.
  - » Consider light snacks or water for people who may come directly

from work.

- » Find out when community events are and try to schedule around them.

## What to Do When a Participant Misses a Session

If participants miss a session without notification, contact them after the session to let them know that they were missed and casually find out why they missed the session.

If participants plan to return, they will need to learn what they missed. Share any homework assignments, so they will be prepared for the next session, and encourage them to contact their “buddy” (assigned in Session 1) to find out what was discussed during the session. If at all possible, provide opportunities for your participants to make up a missed session in one of the following ways:

1. Give the participant the option of joining a different group, preferably led by the same facilitators. (The participant should return to their original group for the rest of their sessions.)
2. Meet one-on-one to review material covered in the missed session. This should occur after the missed session but before the next session. When conducting a one-on-one make-up session, be sure to cover all new material, such as video content, information, concepts, and homework assignments. Role-plays should be practiced together. Any handouts participants missed should be given to them at this time. You do not need to review question and answer sessions or icebreakers. On average, a one-on-one session make-up should take 30 minutes to an hour.
3. Add a make-up group session if several participants have missed a session. For instance, if a large number of participants miss Session 3, you may want to hold a make-up group session for those participants. Such a session could be held directly before the next session starts if you can accommodate it.

4. Conduct a make-up session over the phone. As a last resort, a make-up session can occur over the phone before participants continue on to the next session. When conducting a make-up session, be sure to cover all new material, including information, concepts, and homework assignments. If participants want to view the video or practice role-plays, this can be done at the next group session.

## Other Situations

If participants want to continue in the program but cannot do so with the current groups, place them on the waiting list for the next round of parent groups.

If participants are no longer interested in attending HeaRT for Parents sessions and do not plan to return, thank them for participating and provide information about future opportunities to participate in HeaRT for Parents or provide referrals that may better meet their needs. Whenever possible, find out why participants lost interest in participating and discuss it with your HeaRT Coach.

## Using the Session Guides

In the session guides that follow, each activity is presented in an easy-to-follow format for use during sessions. The format of the sessions takes into consideration the different learning styles and preferences of adults. HeaRT for Parents uses a mixture of information sharing, review, discussion, video, role-plays, and group exercises. It uses both verbal and visual (e.g., easel paper, slides) presentation techniques.

### Session Preparation

The first page of each session guide includes key materials to help you prepare for the session. Here is an outline of what is included:

1. The first section includes a summary of the **purpose of the session**, or the key goals you will want to achieve during that session.
2. The second section includes **key messages**, or the essential “take-home” points. It is important to reinforce these messages throughout the session.
3. The third section lists the **materials** you will use during the session and how to prepare them. It is important that you review each session closely prior to facilitation and prepare the necessary materials. Some materials (e.g., cut-out materials) need to be prepared well in advance of the session. Other materials could be prepared several minutes before the session (e.g., preparing easel paper).
4. Finally, the fourth section details the **time allotments** for each part of the session.

### Scripts

Each session guide includes scripts for you to say at certain points. These scripts include important messages to deliver during the session to achieve session goals and objectives. **They do not need to be read verbatim and can be adapted to reflect your style and the needs of participants.** You should, however, clearly convey the messages and instructions contained within the scripts. This is especially important the first few times you deliver a session. With practice, the phrasing used within the scripts will become more natural. Look for “SAY” or “ASK” in color, with lines before and after, to identify a script. An example of a script is below.

---

**SAY:** You each have a pie crust in front of you. You will divide the pie into pieces. Each piece of the pie will be an ingredient that you think is needed for great parenting and a good parent-child relationship. The things you consider more important for great parenting should be larger pieces of the pie. The pieces of the pie should be smaller for things you consider necessary, but less important for great parenting.

For example, maybe you think discipline is important, but you do not think it is as important as unconditional love. In this case, your love piece of the pie will be larger than your discipline piece.

---

Some of the script boxes are long. If needed, pause to check-in with participants, answer questions, and provide appropriate examples.

**Remember, you are encouraged to rephrase messages and questions in several different ways to communicate intended messages.**

#### Icons

We use icons throughout the facilitator guide to serve as cues for specific types of information:



The estimated time allotted for a portion of the session.



Tips and reminders for the facilitator. These are important additional instructions or reminders for you to note while conducting the session.



Slides can be used throughout the program to provide a visual display of important key messages or if you are implementing HeART virtually. You may choose to use some or all slides. The slide icon notes that there are slides available for your use and identifies the slide titles you may use.



Participants are referred to a page in their parent handbooks.



For some activities, we offer suggested adaptations you can make if you are hosting a session virtually instead of in-person.

#### Easel paper

Throughout the program, you are encouraged to write participant responses on easel paper. This helps participants who did not hear the response. Some individuals are also visual (as opposed to verbal) learners; writing information on easel paper ensures support for all learning styles.

#### Video



A video is included in Session 3 of this program. Make sure you set up the video for screening before the session begins. A link to the online video (located on CDC's YouTube.com channel) is provided in Session 3 of this guide, and in the Resources section of the HeART Program Facilitator Training. The video can be played online with internet access or downloaded to a computer or flash drive for offline viewing.

#### Slides

Provided Powerpoint slides are provided for use in Sessions 1, 3, and 5. You will need a computer and projector to present these slides to the group. If obtaining the equipment to present Powerpoint slides is a challenge in your setting, an alternative option is to print copies of the slides and hand them out during the session.

## Materials Common to Every Session

You should have materials for each session prepped and ready ahead of time. Materials unique to each session are outlined in the Materials Needed section. Materials common to every session include:

- Parent Handbooks [including a copy for facilitator(s)]
- Printed copy of the slides for reference (optional)

- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Masking tape (for posting easel paper)
- Post-it notes
- Blank easel paper pad
- Computer and projector

## Appendices

Additional resources are included in an appendix at the end of the facilitator guide to assist you in delivering HeaRT for Parents. The contents of the appendices include:

- Additional Information on Child Health Topics

## Parent Handbook

Bring a personal copy of the parent handbook with you to each session. Consider bringing an extra copy of the handbook to Sessions 3 and 5 as well, in case a parent forgets. The in-home sessions (Sessions 2, 4, and 6) included in the facilitator guide are identical to the in-home sessions in the parent handbook, and are for reference only. These sessions are included in the facilitator guide to assist you in explaining and preparing participants for the in-home sessions.

## Local Data and Resource Lists

Ask your HeaRT Coach for a list of state and local data on teen dating violence and adolescent sexual health and a handout with local resources for parents.

## Adaptation Guidance for Virtual Implementation

Virtual learning is increasingly common. It can save money, time, and make it easier for participants to attend. Your community may find it helpful or necessary to implement one or more of the HeaRT youth and parent programs in a virtual classroom rather than in person. The following guidance is provided to help you adapt the in-person programs for virtual implementation.

Although the potential impact of virtual implementation on program effectiveness is unknown, the adaptations suggested here were designed to maintain essential elements of the program without compromising fidelity or efficacy. These adaptations primarily provide alternate options for delivery of the original content. To learn more about adapting evidence-based programs, see: <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/adaptation-guidance/>.

## Tech Tips

There are many video conferencing platforms that can be used for virtual program implementation, and many people are now more familiar with their use after the shift of many workplaces and schools to online instruction. Popular platforms include Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting, and WebEx. Each platform has different features that can be useful when implementing HeaRT programs online. Here we highlight some features that might be available in your video conferencing software and other tips for implementing online.

**Screen Share** allows participants to see your screen and is usually the best way to share slides, images, or videos. Participants will see everything that you see.

**Polls** are useful for engaging participants in discussions and the material. Instead of asking participants to raise their hands, consider doing a quick poll and then seeing the results pop up on the screen for discussion.

**Breakout rooms** are available in some programs and allow you to divide the class into small groups for discussions or work on activities together.

With youth, you may want to have extra facilitators on hand to supervise each of the small groups.

**Videos** can be helpful ways to break up program content and engage participants. This may be especially useful for online implementation, which can be challenging to attend to continuously for some participants. HeaRT programs include video content in some sessions as part of the core content; all are available for viewing through YouTube. Facilitators may choose to supplement the sessions with additional short, appropriate video clips, like funny cat videos, to keep the group's attention and lighten the mood. Showing videos through video conferencing platforms can pose some technical challenges to be aware of. For example, when a video is displayed on the host's screen and shared, users may experience buffering or sound transmission issues. One solution can be posting a link to the video in the chat and allowing muted users to open and view the video on their own screen before returning to the group session.

**Whiteboards** are screens that allow the host and/or participants to type, draw, or insert images on the screen for everyone to see. They can be used in place of slides or a real-life whiteboard in a classroom to convey program content. They can also be used as a fun way for participants to share ideas and answers to discussion questions.

**Chat boxes** are screens that allow the host and/or participants to type, draw, or insert images on the screen for everyone to see. They can be used in place of slides or a real-life whiteboard in a classroom to convey program content. They can also be used as a fun way for participants to share ideas and answers to discussion questions.

## General Program Adaptations

### Virtual Implementation Tips

Below are some general tips for implementing online that can be applied across multiple sessions and programs. These specific options may or may not be available on your video conferencing platform; they are provided here as example approaches to adapt in-person activities for online use.

### Question of the Day & Icebreakers

Instead of using easel paper for Questions of the Day and Icebreaker discussions, have a PowerPoint slide with questions/icebreakers and try using the whiteboard, chat box, or poll functions.

### Parking Lot

Create a blank PowerPoint slide or Word document titled "Parking Lot" in a separate file. When issues arise that need to be "parked", pull up this slide or document on Screen Share and allow the participants to watch you add the item to this list. When there is extra time at the end of a session, pull this file up and let the group decide which item(s) to revisit with more discussion. This is also a good place to document questions that you cannot address during the session (e.g., you need to look up the answer or consult with your Coach). It will prompt you to return with a response during the next meeting.

### Group Agreements/Ground Rules

During the first session when creating Group Agreements, type the agreed-upon "rules" into a blank PowerPoint slide. After the first session, you can add some formatting or fun graphics. You can then pull this slide up as a quick reminder at the beginning of each session or just leave it shared on your screen while you wait for all of the participants to arrive so everyone will have a chance to review it.

### Handouts

Handouts and other print materials can be shared with participants in print form by mail before the program starts, by email for self-printing, and/or the facilitator can share their screen during the session to show the handout and ask students to use a notebook to record their answers or responses. Some handouts can also be replaced with PowerPoint slides that provide the prompts for discussion or self-reflection.

### Prizes

Some program sessions suggest providing participants with small prizes to incentivize participation or as rewards for completing activities. Instead of physical prizes, consider using the clapping feature (available on Zoom), awarding 'points' that can be exchanged for extra credit or a special privilege at the end of the program, or choosing a "HeaRT MVP of the Day"

to highlight at the end of every session for their contributions that day.

### **Easel Paper**

Easel paper is used regularly for in-person implementation. Instead, discussion or activity prompts can be displayed on a PowerPoint slide (see below) or using the whiteboard feature. In place of writing participants responses on easel paper to record them, consider having participants type them on to a whiteboard while you read them aloud to the group as they appear. You can then ask participants to elaborate on a few of the most relevant or interesting responses, making it easier to control the time spent on the activity (e.g., “I see that Alicia wrote this response. Would you mind telling us more about that, Alicia?”).

### **PowerPoint slides**

A set of editable PowerPoint slides are provided to make it easier to prepare to present some content using slides and the screen share feature in place of a chalkboard, easel paper, or physical whiteboard. HeaRT Coaches may wish to edit and prepare the final slides for use by facilitators to increase consistency and tailor the content to the desired mode of delivery for each session or activity.

### **Plan Ahead to Be Prepared**

Adapting to virtual implementation will require some extra planning before each session, as the specific guidance provided in the facilitator handbooks will not always apply. Be sure to spend some time looking through each session to be sure you know how students will access or view materials and prompts, how they will respond and share, and whether activities will need to be modified.



Suggested adaptations for selected activities are included throughout the facilitator manual indicated by the virtual implementation icon.

# Session 1: Parenting Positively

## Purpose of Session

1. Provide an understanding of the purpose and goals of the program.
2. Establish a comfortable, non-threatening learning and discussion environment that will encourage continued participation.
3. Provide general parenting and communication practices that foster and reinforce risk reduction among teenagers.

## Key Messages

1. Adolescence is a time of change in a child's life. It is important for parents to understand these changes and the ways they can impact their children's behaviors, preferences, and interactions.
2. Children face many pressures during adolescence. If they give in to those pressures, it may be harder for them to achieve their goals in life (e.g., education, occupation, relationships).
3. To help form positive parent-child relationships, parents should notice and praise good behavior, respect their children's opinions, make an effort to spend time with their child, openly communicate with their children, and appropriately supervise and implement rules

## Materials Needed

- Session 1 Powerpoint slides, computer, projector
- Parenting Pie worksheet
- Communication Blocker cards
- Easel paper prepared with questions/topics
- Copies of parent handbooks



## Preparation

- Arrange seating to facilitate easy conversation between facilitators and parents.
- Set up the computer and projector with Session 1 slides.
- Prepare copies of the parent handbook for distribution.
- Prepare easel paper with "Ground Rules" at the top.
- Prepare easel paper with the following bullets:
  - » How many children do you have?
  - » Share something positive about your child.
  - » Why did you choose to participate in HeaRT for Parents?
- Prepare easel paper with a copy of the Parenting Pie for session activity (copy provided on page 23).
- Prepare Communication Blocker cards for session activity (copies on page 24). Make copies of the cards, cut them out, and place them in a box. Place the box of Communication Blocker cards in the room where it is easily accessible.

## Session Overview

Today's session will cover the following topic areas:

Part 1: Opening (5 minutes).....	14
Part 2: Goals of HeaRT for Parents (5 minutes).....	14
Part 3: Overview of Sessions (5 minutes) .....	15
Part 4: General Ground Rules and Expectations (5 minutes).....	15
Part 5: Virtual Option – A Little About Me (10 minutes) .....	16
Part 6: Changes During Adolescence (10 minutes).....	16
Part 7: Interacting Positively with Your Child (20 minutes).....	18
Part 8: Communicating Effectively with Your Child (20 minutes).....	19
Part 9: Session Recap and Home Session Overview (10 minutes).....	22

## Part 1: Opening



1. Begin by welcoming parents and introducing yourself and the co-facilitator (if applicable).
2. Go around the room and ask each participant to state their first name.
3. Introduce HeaRT for Parents.

**SAY:** In the Healthy Relationships Toolkit Parent Program we will talk about all types of relationships, including those your child has with you, other family members, and friends. Over the next six weeks, you will learn strategies to help your relationship and communication with your child and reduce your child's risk of engaging in unhealthy relationships or becoming a person who experiences relationship violence. The information and skills provided will help you prepare your child to make good decisions about dating and have healthy relationships with others.

4. Ask participants to think about something positive about their children.

**SAY:** You are here today because you expressed interest in participating in the program, and you have a child in middle school. Later in the session, we are going to ask you to share something positive about your middle schooler. This can be anything—maybe they do well in school or have a talent, maybe they are good at sports or a great dancer. Maybe your child has a great personality. Perhaps they are sweet, honest, or respectful. You could also share a specific example of a time when your child did something that made you feel proud of him or her. Remember, it can be anything

positive. We will come back to this later, but please be thinking about this over the next few minutes.

5. Distribute parent handbooks and explain how they will be used.

**SAY:** These handbooks are yours to keep. They have information that we will cover in the session. There is also space for you to take your own notes. The handbooks include worksheets you will complete in the program. These handbooks will be used during each session, so please remember to bring them with you for each session.

## Part 2: Goals of HeaRT for Parents



1. Facilitate an overview and brief discussion of the goals of HeaRT for Parents.

**SAY:** HeaRT for Parents is a program designed to give parents and other caregivers of early adolescents—specifically 7th graders—the knowledge, comfort, skills, and confidence to build healthy relationships with their children

2. Read and discuss “Goals of the Healthy Relationships Toolkit for Parents” slides.



## Part 3: Overview of Sessions

1. Introduce the overview of the sessions.

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**SAY:** Now we are going to look at what we will discuss during each of the six sessions. Three of the sessions will be group sessions like this one. Three sessions will be done at home. The group and home sessions take place on alternate weeks, so next week will be a home session. In two weeks, we will have another group session. This will be followed by another home session and so on, until all six sessions are completed.

2. Read and discuss “Overview of Sessions” slides.



## Part 4: General Ground Rules and Expectations



1. Introduce the concept of ground rules and expectations to the group.

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**SAY:** We want to make sure that HeaRT for Parents is a safe environment where everyone feels respected. Some of the topics discussed in the group might be difficult or uncomfortable to discuss in a group setting. You may want to share personal or sensitive information. Whenever people come together as a group like this, it is important to have a common understanding of how the group will work. One way to do this is by setting “ground rules,” which everyone agrees to respect and follow. Since we are a group and will work together, let’s make the “ground rules” together. I will start off with a suggestion for a rule. For example, it is important that we get through all of the material for each session. Discussion

is important, but there may be times when I will have to limit the length of our discussions so we can cover all the material in the session. Is everyone okay with this being one of our rules?

If participants are okay with this rule, write the rule on easel paper prepared with “Ground Rules” at the top.

2. Facilitate a discussion on rules participants would like to implement for group behavior.

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**ASK:** What ground rules do you think we need to make sure everyone feels safe and respected and to make sure everyone benefits as much as possible from the group?

Write responses on easel paper prepared with “Ground Rules” at the top.

If the following ground rules are not included, ask the participants if they should be added:

- Respect each other’s privacy. Although we would like to make sure that the information provided by individuals in the group remains confidential and private, this cannot be assured in a group setting. Confidentiality and privacy can be kept to the degree that group members choose not to share with others. Thus, to protect each other’s privacy, we will not repeat any personal issues that are discussed in the group sessions.
- We have the right to our point of view. We will all respect each other, as well as our different points of view, and we will not be critical of each other. If you disagree with what is said, focus on the idea, not the person who said it.
- Everyone deserves to be heard. We will not interrupt others when they are speaking.
- We will strive to be supportive and encouraging of each other.



- There is no such thing as a stupid question or one “right” answer for any parenting question. Each family is unique, and each participant should be honored. Everyone is attending the group to find good ways of working within their families, but each family may have different solutions.
- Attendance at all sessions is important and expected.
- No use of cell phones during sessions. All cell phones will be placed on mute or vibrate to prevent interruptions.

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3. Let participants know that there is space on page 2 in their parent handbooks to write down the ground rules if they choose to do so.



Let participants know you will be posting these at the beginning of each session.

## Part 5: Icebreaker – A Little About Me



1. This icebreaker activity will provide participants an opportunity to get to know each other.  
Materials needed for this activity include the prepared easel paper with the icebreaker questions and statements.
2. Introduce the icebreaker activity. Have the easel paper with the three icebreaker questions posted.

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**SAY:** To allow everyone to get to know each other better and learn a little about each other’s family, I am going to ask that everyone in the room answer a few questions about themselves.

Direct each participant to the three questions/statements on the easel paper. Go around the room and have participants provide the answers.

- How many children do you have?
- Share something positive about your child.
- Why did you choose to participate in HeaRT for Parents?

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3. End the activity by thanking everyone for their participation.

## Part 6: Changes During Adolescence



1. Introduce the participants to changes that occur during adolescence.

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**SAY:** Parents often say that when their children become teenagers or start going through puberty, they feel like they do not know their children anymore. A child who was once very talkative, cheerful, and bubbly may suddenly become quiet and withdrawn. They may avoid talking to others in the house. Well-mannered children may start talking back to their parents or want nothing to do with their parents. Children’s difficult behavior may become even more difficult to control.

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2. Begin the discussion on the changes that occur during adolescence.

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**ASK:** What is happening during this period that causes so many changes in our children’s lives? Think about physical and emotional changes, as well as changes that occur in children’s social relationships.

Record responses on easel paper.

3. Read and discuss the “Changes During Adolescence” slides.



**SAY:** As children go through changes during adolescence, they will begin engaging in more adult-like behaviors, making decisions for themselves and getting involved in romantic relationships. They will also start having sexual feelings and discovering their sexual identity. They will face tough issues and many pressures that expose them to high risks or even danger. What are some of the pressures you think your child will face in adolescence?

Let participants know that space is provided on page 2 in the parent handbook for brainstorming.



Record responses on easel paper.

If not mentioned during the discussion, point out that children are faced with the following pressures:

- Dating and relationships
- Sex
- Smoking
- Violence (e.g., gangs)
- Drugs and alcohol
- Bullying (in person, online, texts)
- Pressure from the media (through movies, social media, magazines, TV, radio, music, billboards, and the internet) about how to look, how to interact with others, etc.

4. Facilitate a discussion on the outcomes associated with giving in to these pressures.

**ASK:** What happens if your children do not know how to handle these pressures? For example, what if they do not know how to say “no” to their friends about things they do not want to do?

Let participants know that space is provided on page 2 in the parent handbook for brainstorming.



Record responses on easel paper.

If not mentioned by participants, include the following in the discussion. You can draw arrows (on the easel paper) from the things mentioned earlier to these outcomes:

- Pregnancy, STDs, HIV
- Addiction to drugs/alcohol, cigarettes, or other substances
- Academic consequences (e.g., suspended/expelled, poor school performance)
- Legal consequences (e.g., lose license, go to jail/detention center)
- Unhealthy expectations for relationships (e.g., role of men vs. women, treatment of and by relationship partners)
- Mental health problems (e.g., low self-esteem, depression, social isolation, suicidal thoughts)

5. Summarize the discussion.

**SAY:** It is natural for parents to want the best for their children. We all want to see our children succeed and avoid the negative outcomes that can occur if children give in to the pressures they face as teenagers. A good relationship with your child is one way to help prevent these negative outcomes. For the rest of the session, the focus will be on strategies that can help parents have a good relationship with their child. You may do some of these things

already, while some may be brand new. It is possible that some things we will talk about today or in the future will work great with your children. Others may not. You are the expert on your child, so as we move through the sessions, try different skills to see what works best for you and your family.

## Part 7: Interacting Positively With Your Child



1. Shift to a discussion on the importance of establishing a positive parent-child relationship to link the previous activity (something positive about each child) with the content of the rest of the session.

Recall positive things participants said about their children and insert them in the summary below.

**SAY:** Based on the positive things you said about your children previously [insert specific examples from parents in your group] and the reasons you chose to attend this group, it sounds like we are all here because we want what is best for our children. As children enter puberty and become teenagers, it is common for parents to feel confused about what their children are thinking or how they are feeling. The ways you have previously interacted with or disciplined your child may no longer work. For example, a simple question like “how was your day?” used to get your child talking about her day at school. During the teenage years, your child simply says “fine.” Today we are going to discuss ways we can communicate with our children to get through these challenging times.

2. Introduce the concept of “effective parenting” to the participants.

**SAY:** To get our discussion on positive parenting started, think about this question—What qualities or skills do parents need to be great parents or to be effective in their role as parents? You do not have to provide answers yet. You will use your answers to complete our next activity. Then we will discuss as a group. Though some qualities and skills may be shared, each of you will likely have different ideas.

Participants will use their answers to this question to complete the Parenting Pie activity.

### Activity: Parenting Pie

3. The goal of this Parenting Pie activity is to get participants thinking about the things they consider essential to a parent-child relationship. You will need Supplement 1.1: Parent Pie Worksheet.
4. Instruct participants to turn to the “Parenting Pie” worksheet in the parent handbooks on page 3.
5. Instruct participants to complete the “Parenting Pie” by adding the ingredients they think are essential for a good parent-child relationship recipe.



**SAY:** You each have in front of you a pie. You will divide the pie into pieces. Each piece of the pie will be an ingredient you think is needed for great parenting and a good parent-child relationship. The things you consider more important for great parenting should be larger pieces of the pie. The things you consider necessary but less important should be smaller pieces of the pie.

For example, maybe you think discipline is important, but you do not think it is as important as unconditional love. In this case, your love piece of the pie will be larger than your discipline piece.

6. After participants have been allowed about 5 minutes to complete their pies, ask participants what they consider the most important ingredients for great parenting.

Write responses on easel paper.

7. Summarize the discussion.

**SAY:** Unlike recipes when we are cooking, the recipe for effective parenting will differ from one child or family to the next. It may even differ from day to day for one child or family.

8. Shift to a discussion of skills participants can use to establish and enhance a good parent-child relationship.

**SAY** Fortunately, there are some tried and true skills that we, as parents, can use in our interactions with our children, especially as they enter the teenage years. Many of you touched on these things during the Parenting Pie activity.

9. Read and discuss the six strategies that are helpful in enhancing parenting and establishing a positive parent-child relationship in the “Effective and Positive Parenting” slides.

Recall some of the things participants mentioned in the “Parenting Pie” activity when discussing these six strategies and relate back to them in the discussion.



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**SAY:** We are going to talk about each of these skills during this program. We think open and effective communication is particularly important as children get older, so you will notice that we spend a lot of time on communication. Communication will be the focus of the rest of this session.

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## Part 8: Communicating Effectively With Your Child



1. Introduce this section, which focuses on what it means to communicate openly and effectively with your child.

**SAY:** As children get older, good and effective communication requires more from us, as parents, than we needed in the past. We are now going to talk about some things that are important for us to keep in mind when we communicate with our children.

2. Review the tips for successful communication by using the “Tips for Successful Communication” slides.



Let parents know that these tips are summarized on page 4 of their handbook.



Discuss the first tip: Be aware of your body language.

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**SAY:** Body language is very important when we communicate with our children. Our body language includes the things we do with our body—our nonverbal messages. When we make eye contact with our children, we let them know we are interested in what they are saying. Nonverbal cues of inattention or impatience

(including crossing our arms, reading a magazine, watching TV, talking on the phone, tapping the feet, shaking a finger in someone's face, or walking away) tell our children we are not listening to, or not interested in, what they have to say. To show we are interested, we should face our children, keep our body open, avoid crossing our arms, and keep our hands still. What we say verbally should be consistent with what our body language says. If we truly want to listen to our children, we should make eye contact, use our bodies to show we are listening, and give them our undivided attention.

It is okay to acknowledge that eye contact may not always be possible or even appropriate. You can discuss difficult topics on a walk with your children or while driving in the car. In these instances, eye contact may not be possible. Instead, you can acknowledge you are listening to your children by saying "uh huh" or "yes" occasionally. You can also use the active listening skills below.

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**3.** Discuss the second tip: Actively listen.

**ASK:** Our children may have opinions that are different from ours. This is very normal during adolescence. Our children may also "try on" new opinions to see how we respond. I am sure each of us can think of times during our youth when we expressed opinions to our parents that were different from theirs. It is important to openly listen to our children's views and actively listen for words, meanings, and feelings our children are trying to communicate. To do this, we need to take turns talking. After listening, we should summarize the gist or point of what was said. We might say, "I think I heard you say...." Also, we should avoid giving too much advice or lecturing. Why do you think it is important for us to avoid giving too much advice or lecturing?

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize the following:

- Our children may not listen to us if we lecture or try to give too much advice.
- Our children may think we do not understand their point of view.

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**4.** Discuss the third tip: Ask open-ended questions.

**ASK** If you want additional information about something your child has said, ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with yes/no or other one-word answers like "fine." Open-ended questions often begin with "what," "why," and "how." Sometimes, they are not questions at all, just ways to get more details from your child. For example, you might say, "Tell me more about...." Open-ended questions give children an opportunity to express their opinions, elaborate on details, or share personal thoughts. What are some examples of open-ended questions?

If participants have difficulty, you can provide some examples:

- What do you think about...?
- Why is that important to you?
- How do you...?

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**5.** Discuss the fourth tip: Using "I" messages to describe how you feel.

**SAY:** One important part of communicating is expressing how a situation affects us without making accusations or placing blame on another person. Think about this. How many times do we say to our children, "You need to stop that behavior" or "Why are you watching TV when you haven't done your homework yet?"

If someone spoke to us like this all the time, how would we feel? When I feel like someone is criticizing or blaming me for something, I am instantly on alert and prepared to argue my case. Using “I” messages is one way to explain how a situation affects us without placing blame or criticizing the other person.

Children are more likely to cooperate if they feel they have some power over finding solutions to a problem, rather than feeling they are the problem.

Let us take a look at two different ways to express worry to a child: “You are never home on time” and “I really worry when you are not home on time.” How does the “I” statement sound different than the “you” statement? What about this pair: “You are rude—that was not a nice thing to say to me” and “I am hurt when we do not get along.” How would you feel if someone said these things to you?

Summarize this discussion by pointing out that “you” statements make people feel accused or blamed. They feel like they need to defend themselves.

## Activity: Communication Blockers

**Virtual Option** - You can still conduct the activity as designed and use the additional slides with the communication blocker as a replacement for the “cards.” You can also use breakout rooms to have smaller groups work through each communication blocker.



6. The goal of the Communication Blockers activity is to help participants understand how the way we say things enhances or limits communication.

Materials needed for this activity include Supplement 1.2: Cut-outs of the Communication Blocker Cards.



**TIP!** Laminate or use card stock when printing cut-outs so they can be reused for future groups.

7. Introduce the Communication Blockers activity.

**SAY:** Now we are going to use some of the skills we just discussed in an activity. These cards [show participants the cards in your hands] have statements a parent might make. As a group, you will decide whether the statement is a communication road block or a communication building block. The “road blocks” are statements that block or limit communication between you and your child. The “building blocks” are statements that encourage communication between you and your child. You can refer to page 4 of your handbooks for these definitions at any time.

8. Ask for a volunteer to choose a communication blocker card and read the card aloud to the group.
9. Ask the volunteer and the rest of the group to determine whether the statement on the card is a communication “road block” or “building block”.  
If the statement is a “road block,” ask participants how the statement could be rephrased to make it a communication building block.
10. Repeat this process (steps 3 and 4) until participants have read and discussed all the communication blocker cards.
11. Thank the participants for their participation and summarize the discussion on effective communication.

**SAY:** If you are not already using the communication skills

we discussed, it may take practice to get really good at using them. But, like any new skill, the more you practice, the better you get. Sometimes you might say things to your children that are communication blockers. If this happens, try to restate what you have said. Remember that good communication means you are showing your children that their thoughts, ideas, and feelings matter to you—it does not mean they always get their way. Aside from helping you have a healthy relationship with your children, good communication also helps solve daily struggles, which means less stress for you and your children.

## Part 9: Session Recap and Home Session Overview



1. Briefly recap what was covered in this session.

**SAY:** Today we talked about positive parenting strategies and tips for good parent-child communication.

2. Ask participants to share the most important or relevant thing they learned in this session.
3. Provide a brief description of what will happen in the next group session.

**SAY:** In the next group session, we will talk in more detail about the role of parents to help children form healthy relationships. We will also talk about unhealthy relationships and what parents

can do to keep their children from getting involved in unhealthy relationships.

4. Introduce the home session to participants.

**SAY:** Over the next week, you will complete a session at home. The home session will allow you to practice the skills and tips for good and effective communication we discussed today.

5. Direct participants to pages 5 through 12 in their parent handbooks and walk participants through the material for the home session.



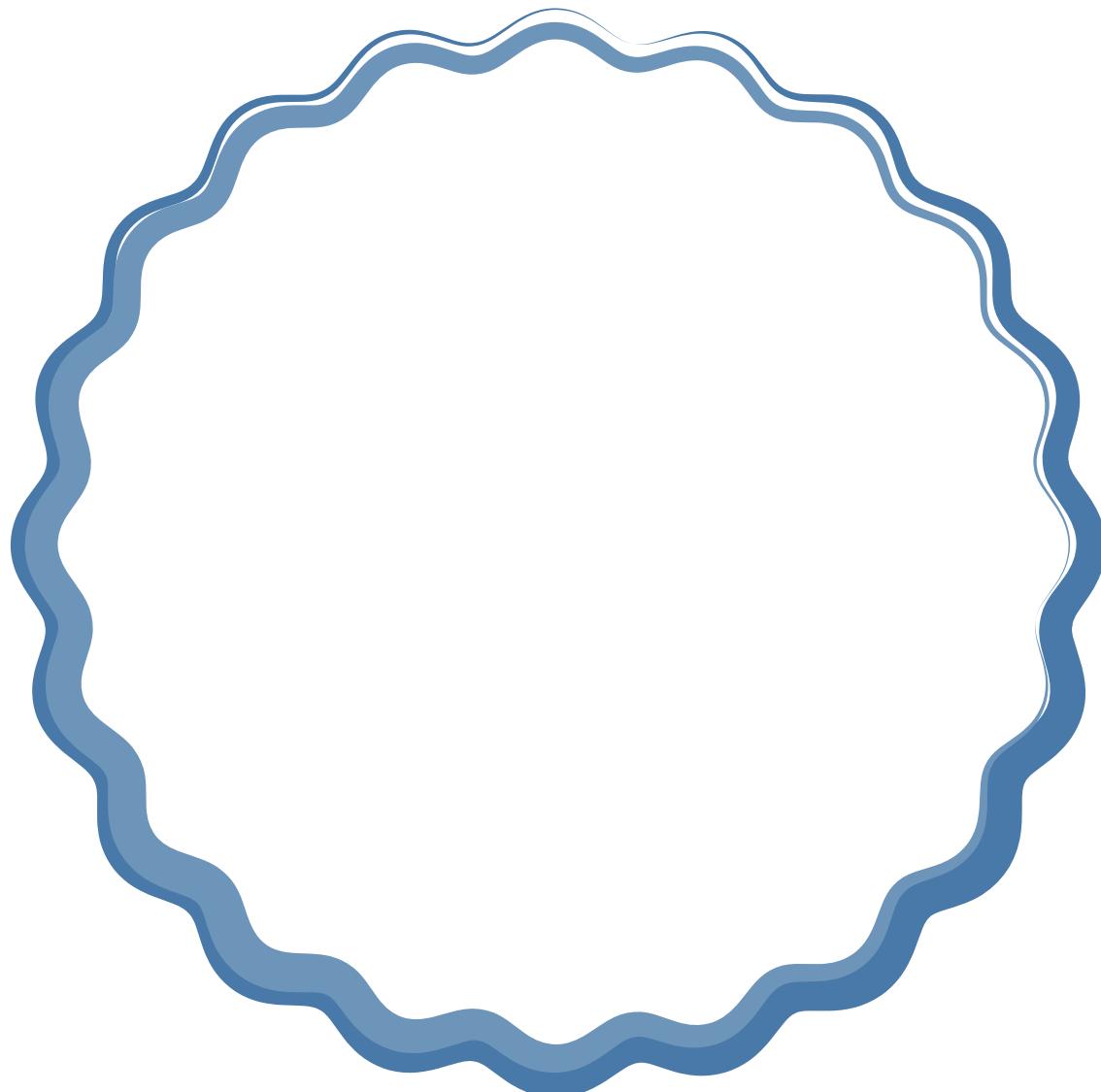
**SAY:** The information needed to complete the home session is included in your handbook on pages 5 through 12. Since this is the first in-home session, page 5 provides you with information about what to expect from the home sessions and tips for success. This home session contains two activities. Before each of the activities, there is an instruction page that goes over the goals, time needed, and instructions. At the end of each activity, there is a checklist to help you evaluate your use of the communication skills.

Allow participants to review Session 2 information in the parent handbook and ask any questions they may have before leaving the session.

6. Inform the participants that the next time the group meets, they will be asked to share their experiences with the home session. Remind them to bring their handbooks to the next group session.

## Supplement 1.1: Parenting Pie

In this activity, you will identify the ingredients you think are essential in the recipe for a good parent-child relationship.



## Supplement 1.2: Communication Blockers

**Instructions:** In this activity, parents will select a card, read it aloud to the group, and determine whether the comments are “road blocks” or “building blocks.” If a statement is a road block, ask parents how it can be rephrased into a building block.

Road Blocks	Building Blocks
<p><b>Look at what you did! The car is ruined! It is all your fault!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will not get any more information from your child about what happened with the car, especially if it was their fault because you are blaming and criticizing.</li></ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happened to the car?</li></ul>	<p><b>You sound very frustrated and disappointed. I am willing to listen if you want to talk about it.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The parent has left the door open for the child to talk more, but they are not forcing conversation.</li></ul>
<p><b>I should not have to tell you—you ought to see how important that is!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is an example of criticizing. Avoid saying “you ought to” or “you should”.</li></ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is very important and means a lot to me.</li></ul>	<p><b>It sounds like you had a rough day! Tell me more about it.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using open-ended statements or questions will elicit more information from the child.</li></ul>
<p><b>You cross your arms, tap your foot, and stand in front of your child, glaring at them.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The nonverbal communication here is being done in a critical manner and the message the parent is trying to get across is unclear and confusing.</li></ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When talking or listening to your child, it is best to maintain an open posture (e.g., open arms, body facing child, eye contact).</li><li>• If you are upset about something, verbally express that by saying, “I am very upset right now.”</li></ul>	<p><b>I love you and feel very sad when you say that!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use “I” messages to communicate how you feel to your child.</li></ul>

<b>Road Blocks</b>	<b>Building Blocks</b>
<p><b>If you do not study, you do not get to use the car this weekend.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although there is nothing wrong with the statement, the communication is not really clear. The child does not know exactly what or how much they need to study to get to use the car.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you study for your math test and get at least a B, you can use the car this weekend. I know you can do it!</li> </ul>	<p><b>What can I do to help you with this tough decision?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should not act like they have all of the answers. The parent acknowledges that this is a tough decision for the child.</li> </ul>
<p><b>You think your teacher is bad—let me tell you about my boss!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child wants you to listen. They do not want their problems minimized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It sounds like you are having a tough time. Tell me more about it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>You sound very angry with her. What happened?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using open-ended questions will elicit more information from the child.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Can you tell me what happened?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child can simply say “yes” or “no.” Leave off “can you” and it is a building block.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell me what is going on.</li> <li>Tell me what is bothering you.</li> <li>What happened?</li> </ul>	<p><b>I know I can trust you—you have good judgment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The parent is praising the child and allowing them to be independent in making the decision.</li> </ul>
<p><b>You think you have it bad; you do not know the half of it. When I was your age, I had to buy my own car and pay for everything myself.</b></p> <p>Avoid negating the child’s experiences – their experiences should matter and are no less irrelevant than yours.</p> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It sounds like you are having a tough time. Tell me more about it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>You sit next to your crying child, place your hand on their back, and then you say, “Why are you crying?”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using open-ended questions will elicit more information from the child. The nonverbal cues (sitting next to the child and putting a hand on their back) also lets the child know you care.</li> </ul>

<b>Road Blocks</b>	<b>Building Blocks</b>
<p><b>We will see about the concert on Saturday—I need to think about it.</b>  <b>You did not go where you were supposed to go the last time you went to a concert.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stick to the present issue. Children make mistakes and they do not need you constantly reminding them about the last mistake they made.</li> <li>• If you are going to mention past mistakes, limit them to situations for growth and problem solving. For example, you might say, “Last time you did... Please let me know what you will put in place this time to prevent it from happening again.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let me think about the concert on Saturday. I will let you know by Wednesday.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Why is that important to you?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using open-ended statements or questions will elicit more information from the child.</li> </ul>
<p><b>That is a really dumb way to think.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticizing the child is going to make them resent talking to you and avoid talking to you or sharing information with you in the future.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alternative Building Block:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That is interesting. Why do you think that?</li> </ul>	<p><b>I really wish I knew what to tell you.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are not supposed to know everything and it is ok to acknowledge to your child that you do not know what to say.</li> </ul>

**Look at what you did!  
The car is ruined!  
It's all your fault!**

**I should not have to tell  
you—you ought to see  
how important that is!**

**You think your teacher  
is bad—let me tell you  
about my boss!**

**We will see about the  
concert on Saturday—I  
need to think about it. You  
did not go where you were  
supposed to go the last time  
you went to a concert.**

**If you do not study, you  
do not get to use the  
car this weekend.**

**You cross your arms, tap  
your foot, and stand in  
front of your child, glaring  
at them.**

**I love you and feel very sad when you say that!**

**It sounds like you had a rough day! Tell me more about it.**

**You sound very frustrated and disappointed. I am willing to listen if you want to talk about it.**

**What can I do to help you with this tough decision?**

**I know I can trust you—you have good judgment.**

**You sound very angry with her. What happened?**

**Why is that important  
to you?**

**You sit next to your  
crying child, place your  
hand on their back and  
then you say, “Why are  
you crying?”**

**Can you tell me what  
happened?**

**I really wish I knew what  
to tell you.**

**You think you have it bad;  
you do not know the half of  
it. When I was your age, I  
had to buy my own car and  
pay for everything myself.**

**That is a really dumb  
way to think.**



# Session 2: Let's Talk, Part 1

## What Can I Expect In The Home Sessions?

HeaRT for Parents includes three home sessions. These sessions include information and activities to help parents and their children talk comfortably about issues that are relevant in their child's life. Some activities in the home sessions will require that the parent(s) and child identify times when they can get together and complete the activities. Parents will complete the other activities on their own.

## Tips For Successful Home Sessions

To get the most benefit from the home sessions where you and your child complete activities together, it is important to limit interruptions as much as possible. Below are some ideas for planning the home sessions so that interruptions are minimized. Read through these tips and decide what is going to work best for you and your child in planning the home sessions. You can also come up with your own ideas to make the home sessions more successful.

### Choose a time that is convenient for you and your child.

- The time should not conflict with other important things.
- The time should not come right before or after stressful events.

### Make sure you and your child understand when the session activities will occur.

- You can mark it on a calendar, write it on a chalkboard, post a reminder on the refrigerator, or put it in another place you will both see.

### Choose a place where there will be few interruptions.

- TV should be off.
- Home phones and cell phones should be allowed to go to voicemail or to an answering machine.
- No texting should be allowed.

Choose a place where you and your child can have private conversations.

- Other family members should not be around or allowed to disrupt the home session (unless there is an emergency).

Some activities will not require you to involve your child. In these instances, you can choose to do the activities at a time that is most convenient for you.

## Instructions

1. This home session contains two activities. In the first activity, you will practice using words of encouragement and praise at least once per day with your child. Examples of things you can say and do are included in the activity. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.
2. In the second activity, you are encouraged to practice your communication skills with your child. You will first generate a list of "everyday" topics you can use in talking with your child. You should practice using your communication skills each day but set aside one day where your child is aware that you are doing the activity so they can practice good communication skills too. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.



## Activity 1: Using Words of Encouragement and Praise

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent to practice using words of encouragement and praise with the child.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes total during the week (approximately 5-10 minutes each day)

**INTRODUCTION:** Children thrive on positive attention. Children need to feel loved and appreciated. Unfortunately, positive or appropriate behaviors often do not get the same amount of attention as negative or inappropriate behaviors. Parents are often quick to notice when things go wrong, but they may not be as quick to notice the good behaviors. When parents start praising and encouraging a child's good behaviors, they often find that the child starts paying more attention to them and will try harder to please. When providing encouragement and praise, the more specific parents can be, the better it will work because children will be more aware of exactly what they have done that the parent liked. Praise and encouragement tend to work better when specific behaviors are praised (e.g., great job on that math test), as opposed to some characteristic of the child (e.g., you are smart). Parents can also SHOW the child how they feel using small gestures such as a pat on the back or a thumbs up.

If parents do not use these skills already, they may be difficult to use at first, but like any skill, they get easier with practice.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** First, make a list of your child's behaviors that you want to see more often and that you want to praise or encourage. Then, when you see your child doing these things, praise them to let them know you liked what they did. You can use some of the examples provided in the table on the next page or you can come up with your own words of praise and encouragement. Ways to physically show your child you care are also provided in the examples. Try to use these skills at least once per day (and more often as it becomes easier for you).

These are the behaviors that I want to see more often from my child and are behaviors I can praise and encourage...



## Words of Encouragement and Praise

Listed below are some examples of words you can use to encourage and praise your child:

Good job!	Excellent!	Wonderful!	Terrific!	I am proud of you for _____!
Very nice!	That's the way!	You worked hard on that!	What a clever idea!	I like the way you _____!
I noticed that you _____!	Keep it up!	You showed a lot of responsibility when you _____!	You are the best!	I like the way you _____ without having to be reminded!
I am sure glad you are my child!	I love you!	Thank you for _____!	I appreciate _____!	Way to go!
I had fun _____ with you!	You are improving at _____ more and more!	You are great at that!	Incredible!	Remarkable!

## Ways to Physically Show Encouragement and Praise

Listed below are examples of ways you can physically praise and encourage your child:

Smile	Nod	High five	Clap	Hug
Signal or gesture to signify approval (e.g., thumbs up)	Pat on the shoulder, head, knee, back	Touch cheek	Laugh with (not at)	Kiss on cheek or forehead

**Assessment:** When the activity is completed each day, you can complete this Checklist and indicate what your child did that resulted in your encouragement and praise.

	Used Words of Encouragement & Praise	Physically Showed Encouragement & Praise	What did my child do that I praised?
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

## Activity 2: Starting a Conversation

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent and child to practice using good communication by talking about everyday stuff.

**TIME NEEDED:** 40 minutes total during the week (approximately 5–10 minutes each day)

**INTRODUCTION:** Children have many things going on in their lives. Their bodies are changing, they want to spend more time with friends, and their coursework at school is becoming more difficult, among other things. These are everyday topics that parents can discuss with their children on a regular basis; however, as children get older, parents find it more difficult to talk to their children and often stop asking questions. But, parents can use these topics to prompt a conversation with their children about what is happening in their lives. This opens the lines of communication so that when/if an important issue comes up, the child will be more likely to talk to the parent.

Although it may be difficult to do this at first, the goal should be to talk about everyday stuff **EVERY DAY**. The more you practice, the easier it gets. Being able to talk about the everyday stuff keeps your relationship strong and comfortable and will make it easier when you need to discuss more difficult topics. Even if you do not talk about everyday stuff already, it is never too late to start.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Make a list of topics you can use in starting a conversation with your child. Once you have a list of topics, your goal is to use them in at least one conversation with your child each day. Use the conversation as an opportunity to use good communication skills and actively listen to your child.

Before you start, let your child know that you are practicing some new skills to help you talk and listen to him or her better. Show your child the Communication Checklist. Talk them through each of the communication strategies—and help them understand what those skills look like in practice and how they can use those skills themselves. This is an opportunity to teach them what you learned in Session 1! Let them know that it is not necessary to use all of the skills all of the time—but that they can think about these strategies when they are talking with you and others.

At the end of at least one of the conversations, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists and give feedback to each other. If you are having difficulty getting your child to talk, if you want more details, or if you simply want to stimulate the conversation, you can ask open-ended questions by beginning sentences with “Why”, “What”, and “How”.

### Topics I can discuss with my child...

#### Examples:

*Why did \_\_\_\_\_?*

*What happened that has made you upset?*

*Tell me about your friend \_\_\_\_\_.*

**ASSESSMENT:** When the activity is completed, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists to see how you did. You may not use every skill in all of your conversations with your child. Some conversations may be shorter than others—that is ok. Just remember to use the skills when you have an opportunity.

**“I” messages** allow you to clearly express to your child how you feel. See the examples below on how to use “I” messages.

**A:** “You hurt my feelings. You know I did not want anyone to know about that.”

**B:** “I feel hurt that you told James what I told you because it was supposed to be private.”

**Statement A** is an example of a “You” statement. “You” statements tend to put people on the defensive.

**Statement B** is an example of an “I” statement. The speaker clearly expressed what they felt and accepted responsibility for the feeling.

## Communication Checklist

### Parent’s Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your child so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Structure of I Statements:

## Did I...

- Make eye contact?
- Keep my verbal and nonverbal messages consistent?
- Listen to what my child was saying?
- Summarize what was said?
- Ask open-ended question?
- Use “I” messages to describe how I feel?

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Communication Checklist

## Child's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your parent so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

## *Did I...*

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my facial expressions and body language consistent with what I was saying?
- Listen to what was said?
- Use “I” messages to describe how I feel?

## Notes:

## Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_

because

## Notes:

# Session 3: Parenting By Example

## Purpose of Session

1. Increase parents' understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors.
2. Educate parents about teen dating violence and how they can help prevent it.
3. Provide information to parents about their role as models for healthy relationships.

## Key Messages

1. Healthy dating relationships have a balance of power and a presence of trust, open and honest communication, respectful interaction styles, space to pursue interests, and appropriate boundaries. Unhealthy dating relationships may lack one or more of these characteristics.
2. Teen dating violence is a serious problem. Teens are at risk for experiencing dating violence, whatever their race, sex, or socioeconomic status.
3. Parents can help prevent teen dating violence by maintaining open communication, acting as positive relationship models, and educating their children about the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
4. Parents can teach their children appropriate relationship skills and expectations for relationships.

## Materials Needed

- Blank easel paper
- Session 3 Powerpoint slides, computer, projector
- Video
- Red, Yellow, and Green Light Cut-Outs

- Relationship Behavior Cards
- Teen Dating Violence Fact Cards
- Relationship Scenarios

## Preparation

- Arrange seating.
- Set up the computer and projector with Session 3 slides.
- Have the video cued on the projector or TV screen.
- Display the easel paper with recorded "Ground Rules".
- Prepare Red, Yellow, and Green Lights for session activity.
- Prepare Relationship Behavior Cards for session activity.
- Prepare Teen Dating Violence Fact Cards for session activity.
- Prepare Relationship Scenarios for session activity.
- Place the boxes of cards for each of the activities where they are easily accessible.

## Session Overview

Today's session will cover the following topic areas:

Part 1: Opening (10 minutes).....	40
Part 2: Review & Introduction (10 minutes) .....	40
Part 3: Relationship Behaviors (40 minutes).....	41
Part 4: Parents as Relationship Models (20 minutes).....	46
Part 5: Session Recap and Home Session Overview (10 minutes) .....	48

## Part 1: Opening



1. Welcome participants back.
2. Introduce icebreaker using the talking points below.

**SAY:** In the last session we had a chance to get to know a little about each other. Today, we are going to see what we remember about each other. I am going to ask each of you to remind us of your name and then the rest of us will see if we can remember your middle schooler's name and the positive thing you said about him or her in the last session. We will also share something positive that we like doing with our child.

3. Go around the group and ask people to give their first name. After the first participant gives their name, ask other participants if they remember the participant's middle schooler's name and the positive quality shared about the child in the first session.

Allow participants an opportunity to share something positive they enjoy doing with their children (e.g., cooking, sports, a hobby).

Repeat until everyone has shared.

4. Thank everyone for their participation.

## Part 2: Review & Introduction



1. Briefly review the ground rules.
2. Facilitate a review of Session 1.

**SAY:** In the last session we talked about how to enhance our parenting. What were some of the effective and positive parenting skills we discussed?

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize the following effective and positive parenting skills:

- Positive attention to good behavior
- Mutual respect
- One-on-one time
- Open communication—awareness of body language, active listening, asking open-ended questions, and using “I” messages
- Appropriate supervision and rules

3. Facilitate a review of the in-home session (Session 2).

**SAY:** During your home session, you practiced positive parenting by encouraging and praising your child. You also practiced your communication skills. How did the home activities go? How did you feel during the interactions? Any concerns or problems?

If participants mention problems with the home activities, problem-solve with them to determine what might be done differently next time. Other participants may have suggestions that will be helpful. Feel free to include them in the problem solving process.

4. Shift to a discussion on the content in today's session.



**SAY:** In the last session, we talked about positive parenting and communication skills. Today we will focus on communicating with our children about healthy relationships and helping children form healthy relationships. We will also talk about a specific type of unhealthy relationship that may occur during the teenage years and how we can prevent it from occurring, so our children can achieve their goals.

## Part 3: Relationship Behaviors



### Activity: Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors

**Virtual Option** - Instead of asking parents to tape up the relationship scenarios under the red, green, and yellow lights, consider this adaptation. Ask parents to grab some crayons and draw a red circle, green circle, and yellow circle on three pieces of paper to represent the lights. Read each of the behaviors using the provided slides. Then ask parents to hold them up on screen to indicate their “vote” and observe others’ before moving on to the next one. Discuss points of agreement and disagreement at the end of the activity.



1. The Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationship Behavior activity is designed to help parents understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors. It can be challenging to determine whether a behavior is healthy or unhealthy.
2. Materials needed for this activity include:
  - Tape (or other material for posting on the wall)
  - Supplement 3.1: Cut-outs of the Red, Yellow, and Green Lights

- Supplement 3.1: Cut-outs of the Relationship Behavior Cards

You can make a copy of the Red, Yellow, and Green Lights, cut them out, and tape them up onto a wall. Participants will place the relationship behavior cards underneath the appropriate light color.



**TIP!** Instead of copying and cutting out the traffic lights, you can draw a red, yellow, and green traffic light on three pieces of easel paper and have participants tape their behavior cards to the appropriate easel paper. You can also laminate cut-out cards to reuse each time.

3. Introduce the first activity of the session, Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors.

**SAY:** From the time our children can walk and talk, they watch us. As they get older, they begin to make friends. Throughout their childhood, and even when they start dating, our children lay the foundation for the types of relationships they will have later in life. We all want to make sure these are positive, healthy relationships.

In this activity, you will get two [see note below: number of cards may vary] relationship behavior cards. These behaviors will be examples of good or healthy behaviors, which are the Green Light behaviors (point to the green light), worrisome behaviors, which are the Yellow Light behaviors (point to the yellow light), or unhealthy behaviors, which are the Red Light behaviors (point to the red light).

These relationship behaviors can occur at different ages and stages of development, but for this activity, we are going to pretend that these are happening in our children’s relationships. You will read the behavior on your card. If it is a good/healthy (Green Light) behavior, you will put it here (point to the green light). If it is a worrisome (Yellow Light) behavior, you will put it here (point to the yellow light). If it is an unhealthy (Red Light) behavior, you will

put it here (point to the red light). Some of you may have behaviors that are hard to place in any of these positions, and other parents may disagree with where you have placed your behavior. That is ok and to be expected—you get to place the behavior wherever you think it belongs. We will talk about these when everyone has had a chance to put their cards where they think they belong.

You can refer to page 13 in your handbook for healthy vs unhealthy relationship characteristics.



Give each participant one to two Relationship Behavior cut-out cards. The number of cards given to each participant will depend on the size of the group.

Allow parents 2-3 minutes to decide where their cards belong.

Participants should use tape to place their cards by the green, yellow, or red lights.

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**4.** Facilitate a discussion about the activity.

**SAY:** Now that you have had a chance to place your behaviors by the green, yellow, and red lights, we will look at the behaviors and talk about why you posted these behaviors by the lights.

Choose 5-6 behaviors to highlight from each of the categories and ask parents to discuss whether they agree or disagree with the placement of the behavior.

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**ASK:** Did any of you find this activity challenging? Were any cards difficult to put in a category?

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**ASK:** Did the frequency (how often it occurs) or severity (how bad it is) of some of these behaviors determine where you placed them?

Allow for disagreement and dialogue; this exercise is meant to elicit different opinions.

---

**5.** Summarize the activity and discussion.

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**SAY:** Hopefully this activity has allowed us all to see that some behaviors in relationships are clearly healthy or unhealthy, but it is a bit more difficult to figure out where others belong. We sometimes have to consider how often a behavior occurs and how bad or severe it is to determine where it belongs.

We are now going to discuss general characteristics of healthy or unhealthy relationships. We will also spend time talking about one type of unhealthy relationship—teen dating violence.

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**6.** Shift to a discussion on healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors, using the “Characteristics of Healthy Relationships” and “Characteristics of Unhealthy Relationships” slides.



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**SAY:** As you look at the characteristics, hopefully you notice that most healthy relationships consist of these characteristics. Healthy dating relationships also require an equal distribution of power. One partner should not consistently tell the other partner what to do, wear, say, etc. Of course, parent-child relationships do not have an equal distribution of power—but the way that power

is exercised can change over time as the child becomes more responsible and independent. And as I mentioned in Session 1, it is important to give children of all ages power to make some of their own choices—such as what to eat for a snack or what to wear. This helps them feel control over their lives and they can learn from their own decisions.

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7. Shift into a discussion of how unhealthy relationship behaviors may cross a line to become unsafe and result in “teen dating violence.”

Use the “What is Teen Dating Violence?” slide to define teen dating violence.



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**SAY:** There is often a gray zone between when a relationship is unhealthy and when it starts to become unsafe, abusive or violent. Some unhealthy behaviors go so far over the line that they are not only unhealthy, but also unsafe. These are situations that may cause us physical, sexual, or emotional harm. Teen dating violence is a specific type of unhealthy relationship, where the unhealthy behaviors cross the line and are abusive or violent. These behaviors may occur regularly, over and over, but they do not necessarily have to occur more than once.

---

**SAY:** Teen dating violence is a type of intimate partner violence that has the potential to result in psychological harm, injury, or even death. It is defined as the use of physical, sexual, and/or emotional violence within a dating relationship. It also includes stalking.

Physical dating violence refers to instances when a partner is pinched, hit, shoved, or kicked. These acts involve inappropriate physical interactions between the dating partners.

Sexual dating violence involves the use of force or pressure to engage a partner in a sex act when they do not or cannot consent.

In emotional (psychological or verbal) violence a partner’s sense of self-worth or how they feel about themselves is threatened or harmed. Examples include name calling, shaming, bullying, embarrassing on purpose, or keeping one away from friends and family.

Stalking refers to a pattern of harassing or threatening acts that are unwanted and cause fear in the person experiencing the acts.

While we try to avoid using the terms “perpetrator” and “victim”, these are terms you might hear while discussing violence in your communities.

“Perpetrator” refers to the person using violence. “Victim” refers to the person experiencing violence.

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8. Use the “Teen Dating Violence” slide to further discuss teen dating violence.



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**SAY:** When we use the term “dating,” we mean any relationship that includes intimate or romantic behavior between two people. This could be a serious or exclusive relationship, in which two people are seeing only each other. It could also be casual, two people just starting to know each other and hang out. The term “date” includes formal dates that are planned in advance, as well as casual gatherings with a small group. The same goes for boyfriend, girlfriend, and dating partner—when we use these terms, we are doing so loosely. The terms boyfriend, girlfriend, and dating partner refer to relationships where two people are seeing each other, no matter how casual or serious.

Dating violence can occur among different-sex or same-sex couples. It can occur in person or electronically, such as through

text messaging or social media. Dating violence can be perpetrated by a former partner, after a couple has broken up.

**Note:** People can be both people who perpetrates and experiences violence of the same, or different, kinds of violence. Some unhealthy relationships are bi-directional in which both people perpetrate and experience violence or abusive behavior.

## Activity: How Does This Apply To Me?

**Virtual Option** - Use animated slides (which are setup to reveal each Q and A when you click) to go over the T/F statements. You can use a polling feature for parents to answer before going over the answer.



**9.** This activity, How Does This Apply to Me?, helps parents understand that teen dating violence can affect their children, even if their children are not “dating.” Teen dating violence has a greater likelihood of affecting children as they get older.

Materials needed for this activity include Supplement 3.2: Cut-outs of the cards containing the Teen Dating Violence Facts.

**10.** Introduce the activity, How Does This Apply to Me?

**SAY:** We have been talking about teen dating violence. Some of you may be thinking this does not apply to me or my child, because my child does not date. In this next activity, we are going to answer the question, “How does this apply to me?” We will see just how big of an issue teen dating violence is and how it affects the lives of children the same age or a little older than our children.

**11.** Explain how the activity will be conducted.

**SAY:** We have five true/false questions to discuss about teen dating violence. We need someone to volunteer to read the card. Then we, as a group, will decide if the statement is true or false.

Choose a volunteer to read the first card. Discuss. Repeat until all six cards have been read and discussed.

Use the teen dating violence facts in the table to assist in the discussion of the true/false statements.

**Teens who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are more likely to experience dating violence than those who identify as straight/heterosexual.**

**TRUE.** Teens who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are more likely to experience dating violence than those who identify as straight/heterosexual.<sup>1</sup>

**Boys are as likely as girls to be the victims of physical dating violence.**

**FALSE.** In a 2017 survey, almost 1 in 11 (9.1%) high school girls compared to 1 in 15 (6.5%) high school boys reported experiencing physical dating violence from a dating partner in the past 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

**Girls are more likely than boys to be the victims of serious physical and sexual violence.**

**TRUE.** Girls are more likely than boys to be the victims of serious physical and sexual violence.<sup>3</sup>

**Dating violence does not start until high school or college.**

**FALSE.** Among adults who experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner about 1 in 4 (27%) of women and in 5 men (21%) first experience some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.<sup>3</sup>

Witnessing violence in the home has no effect on whether children will be involved in dating violence, either as a person who experiences or perpetrates violence.

**FALSE.** Teens who see violence between their parents/guardians are more likely to be involved in dating violence, either as a person who experiences or perpetrates violence.<sup>4</sup>

**12.** Summarize the activity.

**SAY:** You can read more about the realities of teen dating violence on page 14 of your handbooks.

14

**13.** Continue discussion of teen dating violence.

**SAY:** A large percentage of 8th and 9th graders reportedly date, so if we want to stop teen dating violence before it starts, we need to talk with our children about this issue starting in the 6th and 7th grades.

Again, close to 1 in 12 high school students report experiencing physical dating violence.<sup>2</sup> This includes all teens, regardless of sex. Remember, everyone is at risk of experiencing and perpetrating teen dating violence. While boys are more likely to inflict injuries when perpetrating dating violence, any violence is still abusive. It is not part of a healthy relationship—it may even escalate and lead to injury later.

**14.** Shift to a discussion of what parents can do to prevent teen dating violence.

**SAY:** Open communication is key to making sure our children will come to us with questions or problems they have. Of course, it can be difficult to talk to our children about sensitive topics, such as teen dating violence, sex, or drugs. Many parents think that by not talking about these issues, their children will be less likely to think about them or perhaps not even be interested in the issues, but the reality is that if our children are not learning information about these topics from us, they are learning it somewhere else.

We, as parents, are in a great position to be relationship educators for our children—we have opportunities throughout our children's lives to share our expectations about relationships and life more generally.

**ASK:** Do you have any concerns about starting these conversations? Why do you think it is so important to do?

Acknowledge any discomfort parents express and note that a goal of this program is to help prepare them to talk about these issues effectively with their teens. Reinforce that parents are important influences on their kids and can serve as role models and educators.



**TIP!** **Break the Cycle** developed a free guide to help parents talk to their teens about dating violence and healthy relationships. The guide suggests 10 questions you can ask to start the conversation- and keep it going over time:

1. How are things going?
2. What are your friends' dating relationships like?
3. Have you seen any kind of abusive behavior between two people who are going out?

4. Why do you think one person would perpetrate violence to the other when dating?
5. Why might a person stay in an abusive relationship?
6. What makes a relationship healthy?
7. What can you do if you have a friend who is threatened—or a friend who is abusive?
8. What kind of messages about dating abuse and relationships do we see in the media?
9. If your teen is dating someone, ask “how is your relationship going?”
10. Where can you go to find help if you or your friend needs it?

**SAY:** It is important that we do all we can to prevent teen dating violence in our children’s lives. In the next activity, we will focus more specifically on our role as relationship educators and role models for our children.

## Part 4: Parents as Relationship Models



1. Begin a discussion on the role of parents to teach appropriate relationship skills and expectations.

**SAY:** One of the major ways children learn is by watching individuals or “models” in their lives and copying their behaviors. Children observe their parents and imitate parent behaviors. In other words, parents set an example for their children’s actions. This is particularly true for relationships—youth often display characteristics in relationships similar to their parents. Because of this, it is important to model healthy relationship behaviors.

Parents, at times, may have unhealthy relationships. We are not to blame, but we should recognize that the relationship is unhealthy. We should model and encourage healthy relationship behaviors for our children whenever possible. If you decide at any point that you need to seek help with your own relationships or those of your children, a list of potential resources is included in the appendix in your parent handbook. Also, if you ever feel unsafe completing the home activities, stop the activity. Contact one of the resources for help, if needed.

**Note:** Ask your Coach for a list of local resources you can provide to parents as well.

## Activity: Relationship Scenarios

2. This activity, Relationship Scenarios, helps parents understand how their relationships affect their children’s behavior. Materials needed for this activity include Supplement 3.3: Cut-outs of the Relationship Scenario cards.
3. Introduce the activity, Relationship Scenarios.

**SAY:** The group will read several scenarios, then determine whether the parents in the scenario are modeling healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviors. We will discuss what was ok and not ok (and why) about each scenario. We will determine how the parents could model healthier relationship behaviors for their children. Before we start this exercise, I should say that we might see ourselves in these scenarios. Please do not feel shocked if this happens. These are common scenarios. We might find ourselves in them from time to time.

Let’s take a look at scenario 1.

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**ASK:** What would a child learn by watching this behavior? What behaviors were ok (if any) and not ok (if any)? Why were these ok (or not ok)? If not ok, what do these parents need to do to model more healthy relationship behaviors?

Repeat this process for each of the scenarios—choose a volunteer to read the scenario out loud to the group.

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**TIP!** Complete scenarios 1 to 5. If you are running low on time, skip the rest, or choose one or two you like best from the remaining scenarios.

4. Thank everyone for their participation and summarize the activity.

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**SAY:** Our children grow up watching us. They learn how to interact with others, in part, by how they observe us interacting. When our children see us interacting in interdependent, healthy relationships, they learn love is respect. If they consistently see us make excuses for bad partners, blame ourselves, or fail to resolve conflicts constructively, they may model those behaviors. Children need examples of us standing up for ourselves appropriately and problem-solving, so they associate these actions with relationships. Being a healthy role model in the home is one of the best ways to educate our children about relationships.

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5. [Video: Children See, Children Do](#)



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**SAY:** Next, we're going to watch a short video that will help us understand the role parents play in the behavior of their children. Parents' choices in their relationships and interactions with others affect their children's interactions. This video shows that children look to their parents for behavioral models.

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6. Show the video.

**Note:** This video is used with the permission of the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

7. Facilitate a discussion of the video. Emphasize that parents are not to blame for all of the inappropriate behaviors of their children.

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**ASK:** What are your thoughts on the video? What in the video seems true to you? How about false? What positive things did you notice?

This video is a bit exaggerated, but it shows us how our children watch us. Fortunately, many of our children are making good choices. Where (or from whom) are they learning to make good decisions?

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize the following:

- They are likely learning this information from you. Remember, parents matter!
- Parents can help children make good decisions.
- Parents should be involved in their children's lives and encourage good overall health.

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**TIP!** If time permits, you can show the video two times. Parents often miss some of the elements that will come up in the discussion, so a second viewing is often helpful.

**ASK:** What are some things we can do to help our children have healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence?

Refer to previous easel paper and emphasize the following:

- Communicate openly and honestly.
  - » It is okay to say, "I do not know".
- Do not wait for your child to come to you—go to them.
  - » It is never too late to start talking.
- Ask your child questions.
- Be a good role model.
- Supervise your child's behavior (we will talk more about this in Session 5).

## Part 5: Session Recap



1. Summarize the session.

**ASK:** In today's session, we discussed healthy and unhealthy dating relationships. What were some healthy relationship characteristics? What about unhealthy relationship characteristics?

**SAY:** In healthy dating relationships, both partners have equal power. Trust, open and honest communication, respectful interaction styles, appropriate boundaries, and space to pursue individual interests or desires are all characteristics of healthy relationships.

In unhealthy dating relationships, power is unequal. Absence of trust, poor communication, disrespect between partners, disregarded of boundaries, and lack of space to pursue individual interests or desires are characteristics of unhealthy relationships.

**SAY:** We also talked about a specific type of unhealthy relationship that may affect your children—teen dating violence. Were any of you surprised by what you learned about teen dating violence?

In the last part of the session, we talked about the role of parents to help children form healthy relationships. Our children constantly watch our behaviors, so it is up to us to model behaviors we would like to see in our children.

In the next session, we will talk about our role as supervisors of our children's behavior and learn how to constructively resolve conflicts with our children.

2. Introduce the home session to participants.

**SAY:** In the next home session, we will practice our communication skills with our children on a more difficult topic to get comfortable talking with our children about anything that may arise in their lives. We will also look at the relationships our children have with others and try to determine if there are behaviors we

need to discuss with our children. The information needed to complete the home session is in your parent handbooks on pages 17 to 22.

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- 3. Walk participants through the pages of the material.

**SAY:** This home session contains two activities. Before each of the activities, there is an instruction page that goes over the goals, time needed, and instructions for completing the activity. At the end of the first activity, there is an assessment for you to complete. This gives you a chance to reflect on your use of good communication skills. The second activity gives you a chance to think about how your child is treating others and being treated by others in their relationships.

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- 4. Allow participants to review the handouts and ask any questions they have prior to leaving the group.

**ASK:** Are there any questions? In the next group session, we will share our experiences with the home session.

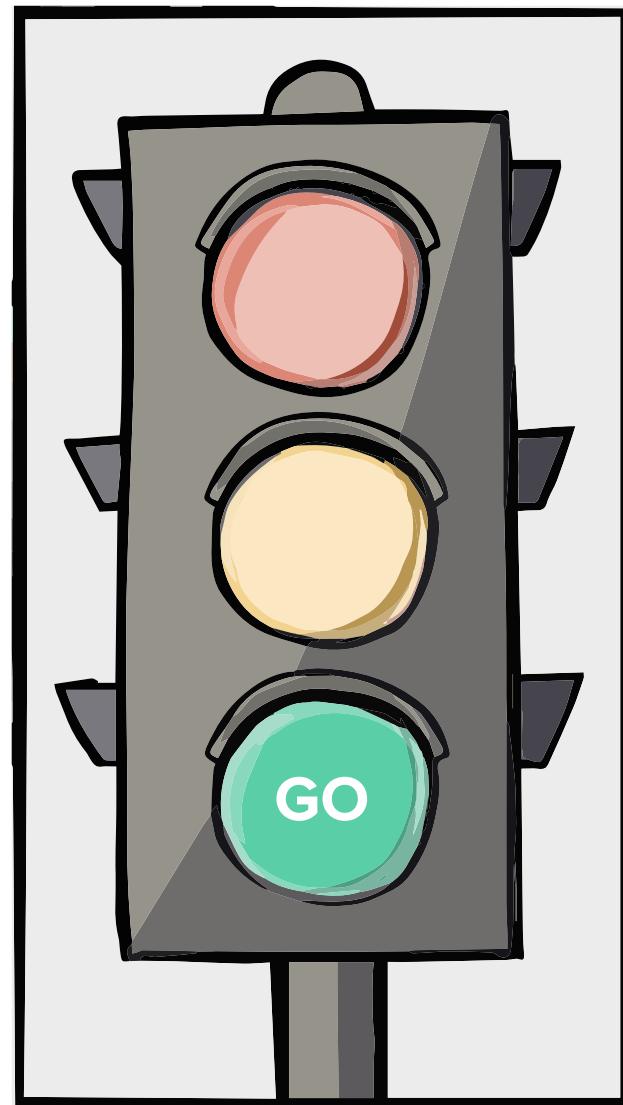
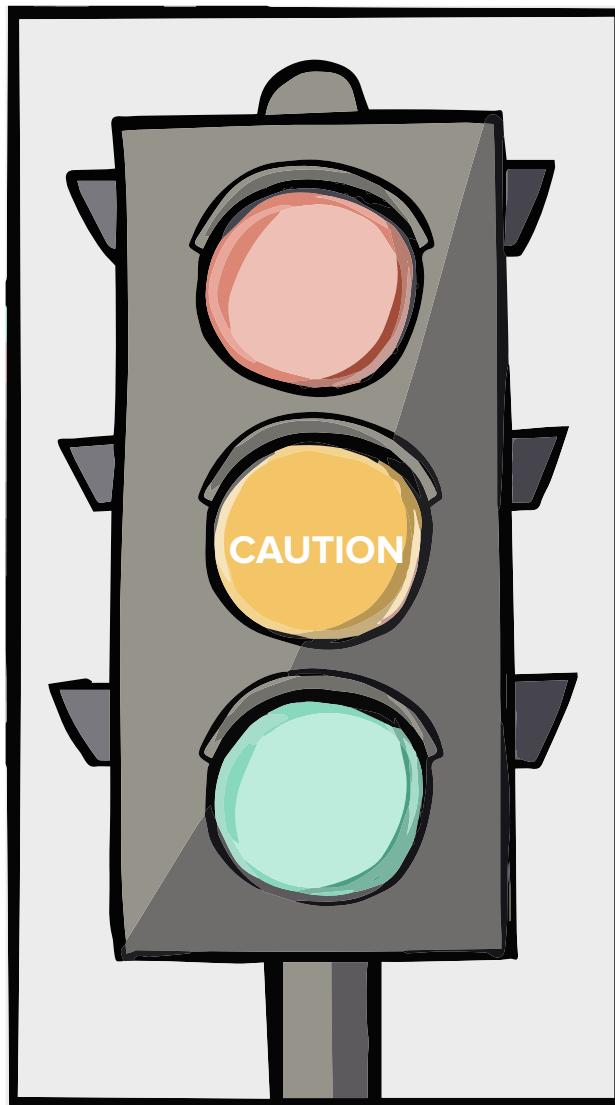
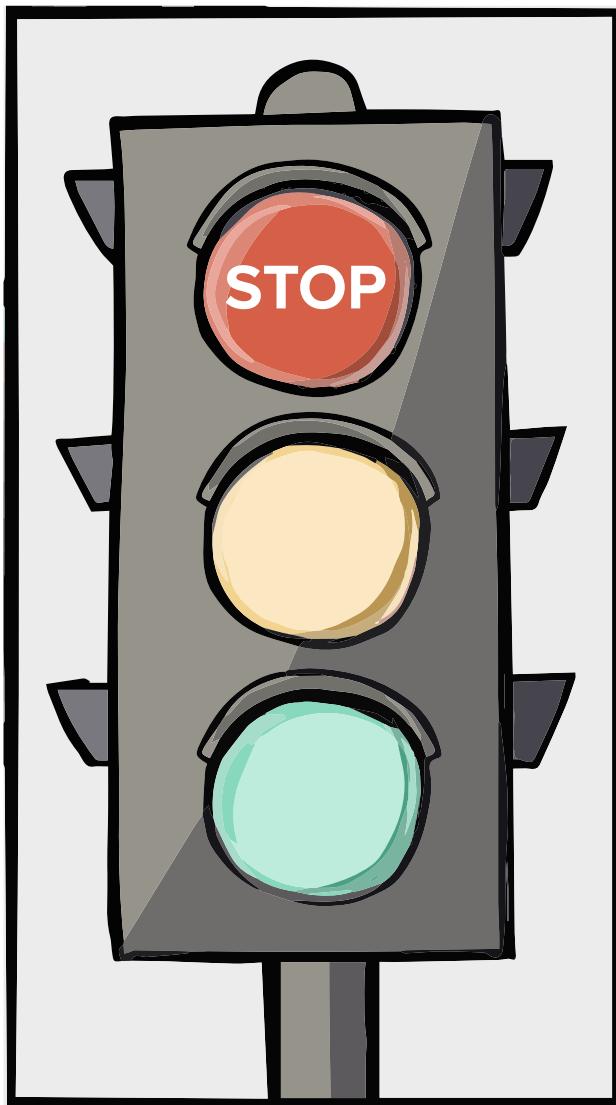
Remind parents to bring their parent handbooks to the next session, and remind them of the date and time you'll meet again.

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## Supplement 3.1: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships Activity

Green Light	Yellow Light	Red Light
Talk to each other	Embarrasses you	Criticizes you
Trust each other	Is annoying at times	Criticizes your friends
Support each other	Shows off	Feel unsafe
Feel happy around the person	Calls you on the phone often	Feel like they are a pain or nuisance
Share feelings	Is competitive	Have limited trust
Have freedom within the relationship	Makes plans and then breaks them	Tries to control and manipulate
Have more good times than bad	Tries to make you more like them	Makes you feel bad about yourself
Have fun together	Uses sarcasm	Does not make time for you
Do things together	Disagrees from time to time	Discourages you from being close to anyone else
Encourages other friendships	Is clingy	Tries to get you to do something sexual you do not want to do
	Is jealous	Slaps you when you disagree
		Threatens to out you as gay, lesbian, or bisexual to friends or family

**Note to facilitators:** Behaviors have been placed in categories here for your convenience BUT participants do not have to place them in these same categories and neither do you. Allow for open discussion and dialogue during the activity and if rationales seem appropriate, allow the cards to remain where participants place them. The red light behaviors here are those characteristic of unhealthy and/or unsafe relationships. The yellow light behaviors may be ok in some situations, but if they occur a lot, they may be red light behaviors. In fact, some yellow light behaviors may be normative or healthy (e.g., disagreeing from time to time) – the meaning of the behavior is in how it is received (i.e., how does the behavior make the person feel). The green light behaviors are the characteristics of healthy relationships discussed in the session.



**Talk to each other**

**Trust each other**

**Support  
each other**

**Feel happy  
around the  
person**

**Share feelings**

**Have freedom  
within the  
relationship**

**Have more good times than bad**

**Have fun together**

**Do things together**

**Encourage other friendships**

**Embarrasses you**

**Is annoying at times**

**Is clingy**

**Is jealous**

**Shows off**

**Calls on the phone often**

**Is competitive**

**Makes plans and then breaks them**

**Tries to make  
you more  
like them**

**Uses sarcasm**

**Disagrees  
from time  
to time**

**Have unequal  
power**

**Feel unsafe**

**Feel like they  
are a pain or  
a nuisance**

Does not make time for you

Tries to control or manipulate

Criticizes you

Have limited trust

Makes you feel bad about yourself

**Criticizes your friends**

**Tries to get you to do something sexual you don't want to do**

**Slaps you**

**Discourages you from being close to anyone**

**Threatens to out you as gay, lesbian, or bisexual to friends or family**

## Supplement 3.2: Teen Dating Facts

Teens who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are more likely to experience dating violence than those who identify as straight/heterosexual.

Whether you are a boy or a girl does not affect how likely you are to experience serious physical and sexual violence.

Dating violence does not start until high school or college.

Witnessing violence in the home has no effect on whether children will be involved in dating violence, either as a person who experiences or perpetrates violence.

## Supplement 3.3: Relationship Scenarios

In each of the scenarios below, identify whether the parents are modeling healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviors. Relate these to the healthy/unhealthy relationship behaviors discussed in the session.

**1.** Anthony and Carla have been married for 15 years and have two children. Within the last year, they have begun to bump heads on a number of different issues. They do not argue or raise their voices at each other in front of their children. Instead, they wait until the children go to bed, and they quietly address their conflicts. One day while Carla is preparing breakfast for the children, Anthony comes into the kitchen and says he is late for work and may miss a meeting. After Anthony goes out the door, Carla says under her breath, “If your boss ever realizes what a loser you are, he will fire you”.

**2.** Troy and Carrie have three small children. Over the course of their marriage, Troy has been increasingly concerned with knowing where Carrie is, who she is with, and what she is doing. Troy calls Carrie at least twice an hour and if he cannot reach her, he calls her friends or family to locate her. As a result, Carrie has few friends and does not go out of the house often.

**3.** Monique has been divorced for several years and recently started dating a man from the neighborhood named Sam. She has two children who live with her. One day while they are watching TV with the children, Monique receives a call from one of her friends from childhood, Jason. When she finishes her phone call, Sam demands to know who she was talking to and says that she must be cheating on him with Jason. When Monique explains that Jason is just her friend, Sam shoves her into the wall and leaves.

**4.** Jabar and Alex have been together for 23 years and have five children ranging in age from 8 to 18. Jabar and Alex both care for their children and alternate responsibility for various aspects of the household (or which children to assign such tasks to), such as taking the children to after school activities, doing laundry and dishes, taking out the garbage, etc.

5. Chris and Taylor are divorced and they have a pre-teen daughter, Shyla. Shyla often skips school, runs away, and has been caught shoplifting. Chris and Taylor often disagree about how to parent Shyla and have frequent arguments about this. Taylor regularly tells Shyla that if it were not for her, she and Chris would probably still be married.

6. Jack and Michele share custody of their children and alternate weeks in which they care for the children. One day when Jack drops off the children at Michele's apartment, he notices that there is a man sitting in the living room. Michelle introduces this man as her new boyfriend. Jack asks to talk to Michelle outside and says that he is concerned about having someone he does not know spend time around the children. Michelle calls her boyfriend outside and tells him that Jack thinks he should not be trusted around her kids and that maybe he will mistreat them. The two men scuffle and Jack leaves.

**7.** Tami and Jordan have three children. They make it a point not to fight in front of their children, but they often do not say anything to each other for days. The older child also often hears their parents arguing in their bedroom and notices that Tami and Jordan call each other bad names during their arguments.

**8.** Eva is a single mother of three teenage daughters. Over the last several years, Eva has had several partners who have lived in her home. Eva's daughters have seen these men hit their mother, and Eva always has an excuse for their behavior. In one instance, Eva said she provoked the man because she accused him of talking to another woman. In another instance, she said that the man was stressed because of his job and just was not himself. The girls heard the man tell their mother, "I love you so much; you just make me so angry sometimes." In yet another situation, Eva said that it was an accident and that the man did not really mean to hit her.

**9.** Jayda and Hines have lived together for six years and have a 6-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter. Jayda comes home from work one day and yells at Hines telling him that the concert he was supposed to get tickets for is now sold out. Hines is angry and yells back at Jayda. The children witness the argument. Later in the evening Hines apologizes to Jayda for forgetting and Jayda apologizes to Hines for getting angry.

**10.** Demetrius is a single father of three young children. The mother of his children has a substance use problem and rarely sees the children. Demetrius has a serious girlfriend but she does not like his children and the two have frequent arguments about what Demetrius should do regarding the behavior of his children. It is not uncommon for Demetrius' girlfriend to hit him and tell him that he is a horrible father and that he will never get another woman because of his three children.

## Relationship Scenarios Answer Key

Relationship Scenario	Key
<p>1. Anthony and Carla have been married for 15 years and have two children. Within the last year, they have begun to bump heads on a number of different issues. They do not argue or raise their voices at each other in front of their children. Instead, they wait until the children go to bed, and they quietly address their conflicts. One day while Carla is preparing breakfast for the children, Anthony comes into the kitchen and says he is late for work and may miss a meeting. After Anthony goes out the door, Carla says under her breath, “If your boss ever realizes what a loser you are, he will fire you”.</p>	<p><b>Healthy</b> – don’t argue or raise voices in front of children, address conflicts in private.</p> <p><b>Unhealthy</b> – partners are disrespectful of one another (talking badly about one partner under her breath)</p>
<p>2. Troy and Carrie have three small children. Over the course of their marriage, Troy has been increasingly concerned with knowing where Carrie is, who she is with, and what she is doing. Troy calls Carrie at least twice an hour and if he cannot reach her, he calls her friends or family to locate her. As a result, Carrie has few friends and does not go out of the house often.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – not enough space is allowed to pursue individual interests (emotional violence)</p>
<p>3. Monique has been divorced for several years and recently started dating a man from the neighborhood named Sam. She has two children who live with her. One day while they are watching TV with the children, Monique receives a call from one of her friends from childhood, Jason. When she finishes her phone call, Sam demands to know who she was talking to and says that she must be cheating on him with Jason. When Monique explains that Jason is just her friend, Sam shoves her into the wall and leaves.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – controlling behavior (demanding to know who was on the phone), absence of trust (says Monique must be cheating), physical dating violence (Sam pushes Monique into wall)</p>
<p>4. Jabar and Alex have been together for 23 years and have five children ranging in age from 8 to 18. Jabar and Alex both care for their children and alternate responsibility for various aspects of the household (or which children to assign such tasks to), such as taking the children to after-school activities, doing laundry and dishes, taking out the garbage, etc. They have weekly family meetings where they allow their children to express any concerns they have and resolve any conflicts that may have arisen over the previous week.</p>	<p><b>Healthy</b> – shared responsibility; partners are respectful of each other; equal power</p>
<p>5. Chris and Taylor are divorced and they have a pre-teen daughter, Shyla. Shyla often skips school, runs away, and has been caught shoplifting. Chris and Taylor often disagree about how to parent Shyla and have frequent arguments about this. Taylor regularly tells Shyla that if it were not for her, she and Chris would probably still be married.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – emotional violence (Taylor toward Shyla); as long as arguments about how to parent Shyla are not in front of Shyla, it is ok—parents will have arguments</p>

Relationship Scenario	Key
<p><b>6.</b> Jack and Michele share custody of their children and alternate weeks in which they care for the children. One day when Jack drops off the children at Michele's apartment, he notices that there is a man sitting in the living room. Michelle introduces this man as her new boyfriend. Jack asks to talk to Michelle outside and says that he is concerned about having someone he does not know spend time around the children. Michelle calls her boyfriend outside and tells him that Jack thinks he should not be trusted around her kids and that maybe he will mistreat them. The two men scuffle and Jack leaves.</p>	<p><b>Healthy</b> – Jack speaks to Michelle in private; no indication of unhealthy behaviors around the children</p> <p><b>Unhealthy</b> – boundaries overstepped/disregarded (Michelle seems to cause this scuffle)</p>
<p><b>7.</b> Tami and Jordan have three children. They make it a point not to fight in front of their children, but they often do not say anything to each other for days. The older child also often hears their parents arguing in their bedroom and notices that Tami and Jordan call each other bad names during their arguments.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – poor communication (parents not speaking to each other for days at a time is just as unhealthy as parents arguing in front of children); partners are disrespectful of each other</p>
<p><b>8.</b> Eva is a single mother of three teenage daughters. Over the last several years, Eva has had several partners who have lived in her home. Eva's daughters have seen these men hit their mother, and Eva always has an excuse for their behavior. In one instance, Eva said she provoked the man because she accused him of talking to another woman. In another instance, she said that the man was stressed because of his job and just was not himself. The girls heard the man tell their mother, "I love you so much; you just make me so angry sometimes." In yet another situation, Eva said that it was an accident and that the man did not really mean to hit her.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – witnessing physical dating violence &amp; mother making excuses for behavior; mother likely does not feel power in the relationship</p>
<p><b>9.</b> Jayda and Hines have lived together for six years and have a 6-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter. Jayda comes home from work one day and yells at Hines telling him that the concert he was supposed to get tickets for is now sold out. Hines is angry and yells back at Jayda. The children witness the argument. Later in the evening Hines apologizes to Jayda for forgetting and Jayda apologizes to Hines for getting angry.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – poor communication (parents yelling at each other)</p> <p><b>Healthy</b> – parents apologize to each other &amp; children witness conflict resolution</p>
<p><b>10.</b> Demetrius is a single father of three young children. The mother of his children has a substance use problem and rarely sees the children. Demetrius has a serious girlfriend but she does not like his children and the two have frequent arguments about what Demetrius should do regarding the behavior of his children. It is not uncommon for Demetrius' girlfriend to hit him and tell him that he is a horrible father and that he will never get another woman because of his three children.</p>	<p><b>Unhealthy</b> – physical dating violence (girlfriend hits Demetrius); partners are disrespectful (girlfriend is disrespectful of Demetrius); emotional violence (girlfriend telling Demetrius he is a horrible father)</p>

# Session 4: Let's Talk, Part 2

## Instructions

1. This home session contains two activities. In the first activity, you are encouraged to practice your communication skills with your child. You are encouraged to continue talking with your child about everyday stuff. This week you are also asked to engage in at least one conversation with your child about a more difficult topic, such as violence, sex, drugs, or other issues to which your child is exposed. More information about completing this activity can be found on the pages that follow.
2. In the second activity, you are encouraged to take a look at your child's relationships to determine whether there are clues that he or she is at risk of becoming a person who experiences or perpetrates an unhealthy relationship, such as teen dating violence. Even if your child is not involved in a dating relationship, you can look at their relationships with friends and others to get a clue about how they might act in dating relationships.  
More information about completing this activity can be found on the pages that follow.

## Activity 1: Starting a Difficult Conversation

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for you to practice using good communication skills and opening the lines of communication to talk about difficult topics.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** Children are exposed to sex, drugs, dating, violence, and other difficult things in their everyday lives. They see these things in the media all the time, whether in video games, on TV, in the lyrics of music, or in books. Although these topics are often difficult for parents to discuss with their children, parents should not rely on the media or other influences in the child's life to provide correct or appropriate information. Children want to hear about these topics from their parents, even if it may not feel that way. Parents can use situations that happen in the media or everyday life to prompt conversations with their child. These situations are called "teachable moments" and are not too personal because parents do not actually discuss events that are happening in their child's life. During these conversations, parents have an opportunity to share their expectations and thoughts on the issue with their children. This opens the lines of communication so that when/if this issue arises in the child's life, it will be easier for the child to talk to the parent about the issue.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Make a list of things your child likes to play, watch, listen to, or read. Choose one thing and play it, watch it, listen to it, or read it with your child. Pick an example of a tough issue, whether in a game, on a TV show, in a song, or in a book and talk about it with your child. Some examples are provided on the next page. If something has happened in the news recently, you can use it as a topic of discussion as well. Remember to actively listen to your child's opinions. At the end of the activity, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists and give feedback to each other on how you did. Although it may be difficult to do this at first, the goal should be to talk about difficult issues whenever they come up. The more you practice, the easier it gets. Being able to talk about these things at any time will increase the likelihood that when your child has a problem that is directly affecting them, they will come to you to help them solve it. Remember, it is never too late to start talking.

Things My Child Likes To Do...	Issues/Topics I Would Like To Discuss...
1. Play video games	1. Shooting, violence, and cursing in the games
2. Listen to rap music	2. Whether the lyrics disrespect others or call women names
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

The first time you talk about a difficult topic, it may be helpful for you to think about what you will say or ways you can start the conversation. Below are some examples you can use to start conversations about the topics you may discuss.

**EXAMPLES:**

- What do you think about the violence in this game? How do you think conflict should be handled?
- How do you think women should be treated?

I can start a conversation with my child by saying...

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**ASSESSMENT:** When the activity is completed, you and your child should complete the Communication Checklists to see how the conversation went. Remember, you do not have to use each skill in every conversation but try to use the skills as much as possible.

## Communication Checklist

### Parent's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your child so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Did I...

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my verbal and nonverbal messages consistent?
- Listen to what my child was saying?
- Summarize what was said?
- Ask open-ended questions?
- Use “I” messages to describe how I feel?

## Communication Checklist

### Child's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your parent so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### Did I...

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my facial expressions and body language consistent with what I was saying?
- Listen to what was said?
- Use “I” messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Activity 2: My Child's Relationships

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for you to take an objective look at your child's relationships to determine whether your child is at risk of experiencing or perpetrating dating violence.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** The relationships that our children form in childhood and as teenagers are laying the foundation for the types of relationships they will have later in life. We want to make sure that these are positive, healthy relationships. The way our children act in relationships with friends and family members may be an indication of how they will act toward dating partners. As we noted in Session 3, dating violence can be physical, sexual, or emotional, and includes stalking, and individuals can be a person who experiences violence, a person who perpetrates violence, or both. Unfortunately, many children have already experienced violence in their lives, and it can happen at a young age. Dating violence usually first happens when youth are around 12 years old, but it can begin earlier. In a recent survey, about 1 in 12 youth reported being a person who experienced physical violence in a dating relationship. It is important parents are aware of the signs and symptoms so that they can help prevent violence before it occurs and/or stop it from happening again. We know that once these behaviors occur, there is an increased chance they will happen in later relationships.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the checklist on the next page to determine whether your child is involved in any unhealthy relationship behaviors, either as a person who experiences violence or a person who perpetrates violence. To do this, you can observe the behaviors of your child or you can ask them questions if you are not sure about some of the answers. Even if your child is not dating, you can look at how they interact with their friends or others in their lives to determine whether they are at risk. In the table on the next page, you can use "friend" or "dating partner" depending on your child's relationship status.



## Signs My Child May Be Involved in Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors

	My child is doing this	This is happening to my child
Calling a friend/dating partner a name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making a friend/dating partner feel bad about themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being jealous of a friend/dating partner or angry if they spend time with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criticizing a friend's/dating partner's opinions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreading rumors about a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatening to share private information about a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Controlling friends/dating partners, telling them what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolating friends/dating partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignoring friend's/dating partner's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intimidating a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lying to a friend/dating partner to manipulate them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trying to make a friend/dating partner feel guilty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatening to hurt oneself to make a friend/dating partner feel guilty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging friends/dating partners to do things they do not feel comfortable doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Putting down other people (e.g., other friends, family) in a friend's/dating partner's life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humiliating friends/dating partners in private or in public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unfairly blaming a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurting a friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insulting a friend's/dating partner's beliefs or values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbally threatening friend/dating partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting violent with a friend/dating partner when angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatening to out a friend/partner to friends or family as gay, lesbian, or bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**ASSESSMENT:** The more boxes you check in this list, the more unhealthy relationship behaviors you are noticing in your child, which means that they may be establishing unhealthy relationship patterns. When the activity is completed, you may decide that you should talk with your child about these issues, especially if you think your child is being hurt, is hurting someone else, or is at risk of being hurt or hurting someone else. Seek professional help if you need it. You may also choose to see what resources are available in your community if you need them.

## Notes:

# Session 5: Parenting Skillfully

## Purpose of Session

1. Discuss the importance of parental supervision in preventing child engagement in risky behaviors.
2. Provide parents with strategies for supervising their children.
3. Provide parents with an understanding of the risks children face today, including risks associated with using technology.
4. Provide parents with skills and tips to resolve conflicts with their children.

## Key Messages

1. Parental supervision is essential to prevent children from engaging in risky behaviors with negative long-term consequences.
2. Parents should supervise their children's online activities as diligently as they supervise their in-person activities.
3. Conflict is inevitable, especially during teen years, but parents can use skills to more quickly resolve conflicts with their children.

## Materials Needed

- Blank easel paper
- Session 5 Powerpoint slides, computer, and projector
- Conflict Resolution Role-Plays
- Certificates of Completion

## Preparation

- Arrange seating.
- Set up the computer and projector with Session 5 slides.
- Display the easel paper with the "Ground Rules."
- Prepare Conflict Resolution Role-Plays (3 scenarios; found at the end of the session)—you will need one copy of each scenario for each small group of 3 (e.g., 6 copies for a group of 18).
- Prepare Certificates of Completion for each group member (example at the end of the session).

## Session Overview

Today's session will cover the following topic areas:

Part 1: Opening (5 minutes) .....	73
Part 2: Review & Introduction (10 minutes) .....	73
Part 3: Parental Supervision (25 minutes) .....	74
Part 4: Other Risks in Adolescence (10 minutes) .....	77
Part 5: Resolving Conflict (35 minutes) .....	79
Part 6: Session Recap and Home Session Overview (5 minutes).....	83



## Part 1: Question of the Day



1. Welcome participants back.
2. Go around the room and have participants state their name again for the group. Instead of just stating names, you can opt to make it fun—have the group try to remember the person's name or have everyone say something fun they did since the last session.

## Part 2: Review & Introduction



1. Briefly review the ground rules.
2. Facilitate a review of Session 3.

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**ASK:** In the last session, we discussed healthy and unhealthy relationships. What are some of the characteristics of each type of relationship?

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize the following characteristics:

- In healthy dating relationships, both partners have equal power, trust, open and honest communication, respectful interaction styles, appropriate boundaries, and space to pursue individual interests or desires.
- In unhealthy dating relationships, there is an unequal distribution of power, absence of trust, poor communication, disrespect between partners, disregarded boundaries, and lack of space to pursue individual interests or desires.

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3. Introduce a review of teen dating violence.

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**ASK:** In the last session, we also learned about a specific type of unhealthy relationship that may affect our children and their friends. This type of unhealthy relationship is called teen dating violence. Were any of you surprised by what you learned about teen dating violence?

Follow the lead of participants to review the facts on teen dating violence:

- Teen dating violence can include actual or threatened harm. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional (psychological/verbal), as well as stalking.
- Close to 1 in 12 high school students report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Boys are more likely than girls to inflict injuries when perpetrating dating violence.

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**ASK:** We also talked about the role of parents in modeling healthy relationships and preventing teen dating violence. What are some of the strategies parents can use?

If not mentioned, remind participants of the following:

- Communicate openly and honestly.
  - » It is okay to say, "I do not know".
- Do not wait for your child to come to you—go to them.
  - » It is never too late to start talking.
- Ask your child questions.
- Be a good role model.
- Supervise your child's behavior.

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4. Facilitate a review of the previous in-home session (Session 4).

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**ASK:** During your home session, you practiced your positive parenting and communication skills. How did it go? How did you feel during the interactions? Any concerns/problems?

Allow 3–4 participants time to respond.

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**ASK:** You also spent some time discussing a difficult or sensitive topic with your child. How did it go? How did you feel during the interactions? Any concerns/problems?

Allow 3–4 participants time to respond.

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**ASK:** You also looked at your child’s relationship behaviors to get an idea of your child’s relationship health. How did this activity go? Did anyone not know the answers at first? Did anyone talk to their child to find out the answer? Were any of you surprised at what you saw or proud of the influence you have had on your child?

Allow 3–4 participants time to respond.

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**TIP!** There will not be enough time for every participant to respond to each question. Try to get new participants to respond to each question.

## Part 3: Parental Supervision



1. Introduce the content of today’s session.

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**SAY:** Today’s session focuses on supervising our child’s behavior and resolving conflicts. During the teen years, many changes are happening for our children. It is a period of rapid growth, exploration, and risk taking. The exploration and risk taking provide opportunities for our children to test their skills and discover who they are. We need to give them the guidance they need to be healthy. We provide this guidance by supervising their activities.

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2. Facilitate a discussion of the term “parental supervision.” What does it mean? Why is supervision important? Use the “What is Parental Supervision?” slide.
3. Begin discussion on parental supervision.

---

**ASK:** Why do you think it is important for us to supervise our children’s activities?

Allow participants time to respond.

Write participant responses on easel paper.

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4. Summarize the discussion.

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**SAY:** Supervision promotes clear communication between you and your child. It shows that you care and strengthens your relationship with your child.

---

**5.** Shift into a discussion about independence and supervision.

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**ASK:** How do you, as parents, know how much independence to provide to your child and how much to supervise?

If not mentioned by participants, include the following points in the discussion:

- Supervision should start in early childhood and continue throughout the teen years, changing as children grow and mature.
- Independence is an earned privilege. Allow children to gain independence by demonstrating responsibility. Children may lose some independence (and have to earn it back) if they show they are not responsible.
  - » How the child thinks, behaves, and reacts should play a role in the amount of supervision.
  - » Children need more supervision when they fail to follow set rules (e.g., missed curfew = curfew becomes an hour earlier).
  - » Your child or children should be supervised and know your expectations for their behavior. Standards may be different for different children and families due to individual differences.
  - » Levels of supervision may vary depending on the type of relationship your child is in or the individuals with whom your child is spending time. The amount of supervision may change as relationships change or progress over time and as your child demonstrates responsible behavior.

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**6.** Read the “Why is Parental Supervision Important?” slide. Discuss parental supervision’s impact on risky adolescent behaviors and teen dating violence.



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**SAY:** Parental supervision is associated with decreases in risky adolescent behaviors. On the other hand, lack of supervision, along with several other parenting behaviors (such as inconsistent and harsh discipline), is associated with increased risk for teen dating violence.<sup>7-12</sup>

It is inevitable that our children will one day say, “Everybody else’s parents let them do \_\_\_\_\_. ” Don’t automatically assume this means your child has to have this independence—check it out with other parents. It is important for us to monitor and supervise our children’s behavior while making sure we are not overly restrictive.

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**7.** Shift into a discussion of how parents can supervise their children using the slide on “How Can I Supervise My Child?”



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**SAY:** This slide outlines four questions parents ask their children when they supervise them. These include, “Where will you be?” “Who will you be with?” “What will you be doing?” and “When will you be home?” The question “Who will you be with?” allows parents to make sure a responsible adult will be present, not just children.

Direct participants to page 23 in their parent handbooks for an in-depth list of ways to supervise their child’s activities.



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**ASK:** Supervision can be tricky, because we want to appropriately monitor our children’s activities while making sure we are not unnecessarily invading their privacy.

**What happens when there is too much supervision?**

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize that too much supervision:

- Can lead to problem behaviors, because the child may rebel in an attempt to get freedom from the parent.
- May limit children's opportunities to grow and develop their independence.
- May send the message to the child that they are not trusted, which can create challenges in the parent-child relationship and affect the child's self-esteem.

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**8.** Emphasize that parents should set and enforce consequences for untruthful answers to supervising questions.

**SAY:** Sometimes our children do things that compromise our ability to trust them. If our children tell us they are doing one thing, but they are not there or not doing what they told us they were doing, there should be consequences. This does not mean you cannot trust your child again, but you will want to continue to supervise your child's behavior and set and enforce consequences when your child is not where they are supposed to be. Keep in mind you are supervising your child's behavior simply by being present and asking a few simple questions before and after they go out, like the four listed earlier in a neutral, non-accusatory tone.

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**9.** Shift into a discussion of supervising children's electronic media use.

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**ASK:** How many of you have children with cell phones? How many have children who text or use social media? How many of you have computers or tablets at home, which can access the internet? Write participant responses on easel paper.

---

**ASK:** What are some of the advantages to children having access to technology?

Write participant responses on easel paper.

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize the following:

- Children can get information quickly for school or other purposes.
- Familiarity with technology is a necessity in today's world.
- Children can stay in touch with friends and peers.
- Parents can reach children when they need to.

---

**ASK:** What are some of the disadvantages to children having access to technology?

Write participant responses on easel paper.

If not mentioned by participants, emphasize the following from page 24 of the parent handbook:

- Exposure to online predators could result in in-person meetings that place a child in grave danger (e.g., rape), or result in online exchanges of photos or other personal information (e.g., home address, school) that endanger a child.

- Cyberbullying of a child on social media (e.g., Facebook), email, or through instant messaging.
- “Sexting” which involves sending or encouraging someone to send sexually explicit messages or photographs through messaging applications or in other ways (e.g., text message, Snapchat, WhatsApp); this is illegal and can get a child in a lot of trouble.

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**SAY:** Sometimes parents may feel like their children are smarter than they are when it comes to electronics and digital media, but this does not mean parents should let their children do whatever they want online.

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**ASK:** For those of you who raised your hands earlier, saying that your children have access to devices where they can go online, how do you supervise their activities?

Allow participants to express their personal ways of supervising their children's online activities.

Write participant responses on easel paper.

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**SAY:** Even if you are not currently supervising your child's online activities, it is helpful to talk to your children about technology to develop rules with them about safe and acceptable behavior.

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**10.** Direct participants to page 26 in the parent handbook for suggested rules for online safety.



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**SAY:** We should set restrictions on any electronic device a child uses that are appropriate for the child's age. Restrictions may include blocking certain websites, like social media sites, or media, such as videos. We should not invade our child's privacy; however, we should have our child's password on any electronics in case there is a question about safety or security with the child's activities. Parents may explain to the child that the password will only be used if there is a question or concern. Our children should know that there is always the potential that parents will be supervising their activities, whether online or in real life.

Direct participants to pages 24-26 in their parent handbook for other tips for internet and cell phone safety.



## Part 4: Other Risks in Adolescence



1. Facilitate a discussion on other risky or dangerous behaviors for children and teens.

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**ASK:** We have talked about teen dating violence and technology as potential risks our children face. What are some other risks our children face as they grow up?

Record participant responses on easel paper.

Ensure that participants generate topics that involve the following areas:

- Drugs and alcohol
- Curfew
- Sex
- Dating
- Gangs or violence

**NOTE:** Participants may bring up sexual identity and same-sex relationships while generating topics of concern for their children in this section. While these topics are important and relevant to the teenage years, they are not dangerous or risky, unless the child is engaging in risky activities associated with any relationship (e.g., sex without use of condoms). If participants express discomfort or difficulty talking to their children about these issues, remind them of the communication skills reviewed in Session 1, which are applicable to all types of situations, topics, and conversations.

2. Emphasize the parent's role in the prevention of risky behaviors.

---

**SAY:** This slide highlights some facts about teen risk behaviors in 9th through 12th grade. Although these children are several years older than your 7th graders, 9th grade is only a couple of years away. The prevention of these behaviors needs to start happening now. As parents, we are ideally positioned to prevent our children from engaging in these risky behaviors before they start.

---

3. Review statistics from the “Teen Risk Behaviors: The Facts” slide.
  - Over 1 in 5 high school students report drinking alcohol in the last 30 days
  - Almost 1 out of 5 students have tried cigarette smoking
  - 3 in 10 students report having sex
  - Nearly 2 in 5 high school students have tried electronic vapor (“vape”) products
  - Over 1 in 5 high school students report drinking alcohol or taking drugs the last time they had sex
  - Almost half of sexually active high school students report not using a condom the last time they had sex



**Note:** For the most recent statistics visit the [YRBS Explorer](#).

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**SAY:** We can see that cigarette/tobacco, alcohol, and drug use among 9th to 12th graders is particularly high. Over 1 in 5 high school students report drinking alcohol. Almost 1 out of 5 students have tried cigarette smoking and nearly 2 in 5 high school students have tried electronic vapor (“vape”) products.<sup>2</sup>

Allow participants to review the statistics and ask questions.

---

**SAY:** One of the things we should accept and value about risk taking is that it is an important part of growing up. Learning to drive is a risk, and sports can be risky. However, we need to teach our children the difference between risks with minor or short-term consequences, and risks with long-term consequences, particularly hidden consequences. For example, alcohol may taste and feel good at the time of consumption, but the long-term consequences may be huge. Let us talk about some additional risks our children face during the teen years.

Again, allow participants time to reflect and ask any questions they may have.

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4. Link the previous discussion about parental supervision and the importance of good communication with the information just presented on other risks.

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**ASK:** What strategies discussed earlier today or in previous sessions might help protect our children against some of these risks?

If not mentioned by participants, be sure to include the following:

- Parental supervision
  - » Where is your child?, Who is your child with? What will your child be doing? When will your child be back?
  - » Check-in with your child occasionally.
- Open and effective communication
  - » Talk to your child openly and honestly about all topics, including dating, sexual violence, and drugs/alcohol.
- Praise and encourage positive behaviors.
  - » Children like to please their parents so let them know (by praising them) when they have made decisions you approve of.
- Be a good role model
  - » If you or your child experience violence or have a serious issue that needs attention, get appropriate help.
  - » Model good relationships—treat others and be treated as you want your children to be treated.

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**SAY:** Given the high rates of these risky behaviors, it is important we, as parents, talk to our children about these topics early and often. Talking with our children allows us to communicate our thoughts and expectations regarding these behaviors.

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## Part 5: Resolving Conflict



1. Facilitate a discussion on conflict resolution.

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**ASK:** What causes conflict or disagreement between you and your children?

Write participant responses on easel paper.

Possible answers: chores, other responsibilities, curfews, allowances, homework, visitor rules.

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2. Facilitate a discussion with participants about how they handle conflict with their children.

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**SAY:** Let us think about how we handle conflict with our children. What are some ways parents can handle conflict?

Write participant responses on easel paper.

Possible answers: yelling, demanding that the child do as the parent has requested, spanking, grounding, removing privileges, walking away, allowing the child to do as they want, or talking about it.

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**SAY:** Conflict between parents and children will continue throughout life but will probably be worse during the teenage years. Parents can limit conflict during this period by using good communication skills when conflicts occur and understanding how to navigate give and take with their children. Sometimes, when a parent and child both believe they are right, they become more forceful, trying to prove it to the other. They may raise their voices or even use physical violence to get the result they want. If this strategy—raising voices or using physical violence—appears to work once, it is more likely to happen again. It may even become a pattern in the relationship.

---

3. Shift into a discussion on the 4-step plan to resolve conflicts.

Highlight the need for a plan to resolve conflicts.

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**SAY:** We need a plan to resolve conflicts and avoid arguments with our children and others in our lives. As parents, if we use good conflict resolution skills, we model healthy conflict resolution skills for our children.

We are now going to review one potential method of conflict resolution that may assist in improving your communication with your child and decrease the number of arguments. This plan consists of four steps. We will talk about each of the steps, then do some role plays to see how this really works in practice.

Before we begin, we need to understand what we are and are not willing to negotiate. If we conflict with our children about a non-negotiable topic, we should let our children know this. We should then avoid further discussion about the topic. When we engage our children in discussion, it appears we are willing to hear their point of view and change our mind or offer a different solution. As much as possible, we should try to keep an open mind and talk about the situation causing conflict. This can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes.

---

4. Engage participants in a discussion on negotiable versus non-negotiable rules.

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**SAY:** Non-negotiable rules are rules we are not willing to change, no matter how much the child begs and pleads. These vary from family to family, but often include making sure the child is safe or has good manners and respects other people. What are some examples of non-negotiable rules in your families?

Write participant responses on easel paper.

Possible answers you can provide if participants have a difficult time coming up with examples include:

- Safety: helmets worn on bikes at all times; violence and aggressive behavior are not tolerated.
- Respect: name calling, teasing, bullying, swearing, and destroying property are not tolerated.

---

**SAY:** Negotiable rules include things we want our children to do, but are willing to reconsider. These might include how our children style their hair, how much TV they watch, what they wear (within reason), what computer games they play, or what music they listen to. What are some examples of negotiable rules in your families?

Write participant responses on easel paper.

Point out that negotiable and non-negotiable rules depend on what is important to parents, what aspects of family life they value. These changes depending on circumstances and can shift as the child gets older and more mature.

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**SAY:** We can often avoid unnecessary power struggles with our kids by turning over decisions to them that are inconsequential or do not pose any serious risks to their health or safety. Minor risks are often ok—or sometimes even good—because it helps them to learn from their decisions by experiencing “natural consequences”. For example, they might be cold if they chose not to wear the coat you suggested. Next time, they’ll probably choose to wear a coat without your prompt! Obviously, you wouldn’t allow them to experience the natural consequences of real dangers or harmful behaviors—like not wearing a seat belt or never brushing their teeth.

---

5. Use the “Conflict Resolution” slides to facilitate a discussion

of the first step of the 4-step plan for resolving conflicts—define the issue or problem.



**SAY:** Now that we have talked about negotiable versus non-negotiable rules, let us move on to the first step in resolving conflicts—defining the issue or problem. At this point, both the parent and the child express their views about the problem using communication skills we discussed in Session 1. For example, we should use “I” messages to describe our view of the problem, and we should listen to our children’s views. We should ask open-ended questions to get additional information from our children and better understand their views. We should summarize what they have said to make sure we understand.

You can let participants know they can find the 4-step plan for resolving conflicts on page 27 of their handbooks.



6. Use the “Conflict Resolution” slides to facilitate a discussion of the second step of the 4-step plan for resolving conflicts - discuss possible solutions.



**SAY:** The second step in the plan to resolve conflicts is to discuss possible solutions. Both the parent and child suggest solutions and listen to each other’s solutions without interrupting or becoming defensive. It is natural to become defensive, angry, or frustrated, and tell our children they are wrong. However, if we do a good job listening to our children, our children are more likely to listen to us. Keep in mind that listening and trying to understand our children’s views do not mean we agree with those views.

7. Use the “Conflict Resolution” slides to facilitate a discussion of the

third step of the 4-step plan for resolving conflicts - choose and implement a solution.



**SAY:** The third step in resolving conflicts is to choose and implement a solution. In this step, both the parent and child evaluate the solutions suggested in step 2. Before evaluating the solutions, we should keep in mind what is and is not negotiable. Although it may be difficult, it is important for us to keep an open mind when looking at potential solutions. An open mind can make the difference between a positive and a negative outcome. This step in conflict resolution ends with the parent and child choosing an option on which they can both agree.

8. Use the “Conflict Resolution” slides to facilitate a discussion of the fourth step of the 4-step plan for resolving conflicts - evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.



**SAY:** The final step is to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution. After some time has passed, both the parent and child should evaluate how well the solution has worked. If the problem still exists, start the process again with Step 1.

9. Briefly demonstrate these skills using the following scenario and script. After each step, pause and mention what was accomplished.

**Parent:** Your child does not take the trash out until you ask them, even when the trash can lid no longer closes properly. You are frustrated with your child.

**Child:** You do not mind taking out the trash, but you rarely pay attention to it and sometimes need to be reminded. You do not see why your parent gets upset about it so often.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION SCRIPT

### Step 1: Define the Issue or Problem

**Parent:** (use of an “I” statement) I am angry that I have to provide constant reminders to take out the trash.

**Child:** (use of an “I” statement) I do not mind taking out the trash, but I do not always pay attention to it so I sometimes need to be reminded. I do not understand why it is such a big deal.

**Parent:** (summarizing what the child has said) It sounds like it may be difficult for you to see when it is time to take out the trash and you do not understand why I get angry about it.

**Child:** Yeah.

### Step 2: Discuss Possible Solutions

**Parent:** (focus on shared long-term goal) We are all part of this household, we work together. The question is how to best work together and what would be a fair way to get things done. What do you think would be helpful?

**Child:** (offers a solution) Since the garbage is picked up on Tuesdays, maybe I could take it out on Mondays.

**Parent:** (offers a solution) I would prefer that it is taken out whenever it is full.

**Child:** (offers a solution) You can let me know when it needs to be taken out, without yelling and screaming.

**Parents:** (offers a solution) You can check it every day immediately after you get home from school. If it is full, you can take it out. If not, you can wait until it is full.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION SCRIPT

### Step 3: Choose and Implement a Solution

**Parent:** (chooses solution) My preference is for you to just check it each day after school. This will provide a regular, consistent schedule for you to check it.

**Child:** (following up on parent’s choice for solution) Does this mean that you will not be telling me to take it out at other times?

**Parent:** (responding to child’s question) I may ask you to take it out at other times when it is full.

**Child:** (chooses solution) Then my preference is for you to just tell me without yelling or screaming when it needs to be taken out.

**Parent:** (chooses solution) I think it is important for you to check the garbage can each day to see if the trash needs to be taken out without me telling you. If there are other situations where the trash needs to be removed, I will ask you to take it out without yelling or screaming. Will this work for you?

**Child:** Yeah.

### Step 4: Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Solution

**Parent:** (plan for evaluating the solution) If you are able to do this for the next week, I will allow you to go to your friend’s house on Saturday.

**Child:** Sounds good to me.

**Parent:** If this does not work, then we will need to talk again about what needs to be done so that we are both happy living here!

**SAY:** This was one example of how the 4-step conflict resolution plan works for common conflicts. Now let us practice using these skills.

## Activity: Conflict Resolution

**Virtual Option** - You can use breakout rooms to conduct this activity online.



10. In this activity, Conflict Resolution, participants practice the 4-step conflict resolution plan.

You need to have the Cut-outs of Conflict Resolution Role-Plays (Supplement 5.1) for this activity. You will need one copy of each scenario for each group of three parents.

11. Introduce the role-play activity, Conflict Resolution.

**SAY:** Now that we have reviewed the 4 steps for resolving conflicts, you will have a chance to practice these skills with each other before actually going home and using them with your family. You will divide into groups of three people. One of you will play the child, another will play the parent, and the third will play the observer. I will give each group three scenarios, so each person will play each role one time. Each scenario should take 2-3 minutes. At the end of each role-play, the observer should give feedback to the person pretending to be the parent. This feedback should focus on the parent's use of the 4-step conflict resolution plan.

Pass out the three conflict resolution cards to each group.

Ask participants to begin their role-plays.

Walk around the room as the participants conduct the role-plays.

Observe. Provide feedback and praise.



**TIP!** Participants may find it easier to “script” what they will say. If they do this, they may not have time for all scenarios. Encourage them to follow the steps to resolve the conflict, but let them know that scripting is not necessary.

12. After approximately 10 minutes, ask the groups to wrap up their role-plays and feedback.
13. Facilitate a discussion about the role-plays and use of the 4-step conflict resolution plan.

**ASK:** Which was the hardest role—the parent, the child, or the observer? Why?

Which scenario was challenging for you? What was easiest about using the 4-step plan? What was most difficult?

## Part 6: Session Recap and Home Session Overview



1. Briefly recap what was covered in this session.

**SAY:** In today's session, we talked about the risks our children face, including sexual and physical dating violence, drugs, alcohol, and technology. We also discussed how we can help prevent these risks. One specific prevention strategy is parental supervision. We also went through a four-step plan for resolving conflict.

Are there any questions or concerns before we move to the home session materials?

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- 2. Introduce the next and final home session.

**SAY:** In the last home session, you will continue practicing your communication skills with your child. You will talk to your child about a difficult or sensitive topic that is happening in their lives. You will also complete an activity with your child about the myths and facts of risky adolescent behaviors. The final activity focuses on how you can prevent risky adolescent behaviors in your community.

---

- 3. Direct participants to pages 29 through 40 in the parent handbook (pages 88–99 in facilitator guide).



Walk participants through the material.

**SAY:** The information needed to complete the home session is on pages 29 through 40 in your parent handbook. This home session contains three activities. Before each activity, there is an instruction page that goes over the goals, time needed, and instructions for completing the activity. At the end of each activity there is an assessment for you to complete that gives you a chance to reflect on your use of skills learned in this program.

Allow participants to review the handbook and ask any question they may have prior to leaving the group.

---

**SAY:** This is our last group session. The HeART prevention model also includes a program for parents of 8th graders called “Families for Safe Dates.” We hope you will be interested in enrolling in that program as well. For that program all of the materials will be completed at home. Families for Safe Dates is a program that is designed for parents and their children to complete together to reduce the risk of teen dating violence.

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- 4. Present each participant with a certificate of completion of sessions 1 through 5.

A certificate template is included on page 86. Feel free to create your own if you prefer.

**SAY:** We want to personally thank each of you for taking the time to complete this program. We hope that you have gained skills you can use when interacting with your children to keep them safe and help them become successful in life. We are going to pass out certificates of completion. These certificates are tokens of our appreciation. They show you have worked hard to complete the program. They certify that you have successfully completed HeART for Parents and are familiar with the topics discussed in the groups. We are providing this certificate to you with the good faith that you will complete Session 6 at home with your child. This certificate of completion also serves as a contract, indicating you will do your best to encourage your children to develop healthy relationships!

Thank everyone for their participation in the program.

---



## Supplement 5.1: Conflict Resolution Role-Play

**Parent:** You've always had a rule that your child cannot be alone with a friend of the opposite sex in your house. Your child recently came out as bisexual, and you are considering changing the rule.

**Child:** Your best friend since 1st grade is the same sex as you. Now your parent wants to implement a new rule: you can't be alone together to play in the house since you told them you are bisexual.

**Parent:** Your child asked you if they could go out on a date with another kid from their school on Saturday, and you said no.

**Child:** Two of your best friends from school have already gone on dates to the movies. You wanted your parent to allow you to go on a date too, because you really like the person who asked you out.

**Parent:** Your child has been hanging out with several new friends you do not know. You have heard your child cursing when talking to them on the phone and making fun of another child from school. You want your child to be friends with whomever they want, but you are worried that the kids are a bad influence, so you have suggested that your child stay away from them.

**Child:** You have become friends with two 8th graders who are "popular" at school. You are really excited because you feel like other students in your grade think you are cool because you hang out with older kids but your parent says you cannot be friends with them.

# Healthy Relationships Toolkit *for Parents*

## CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

awarded to

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*This certificate certifies that the individual noted above has completed  
the Healthy Relationships Toolkit for Parents.*



---

Facilitator

---

Date



# Session 6: Let's Talk, Part 3

Congratulations on making it to the last session of HeaRT for Parents. This is the last home session for this program.

## Instructions:

1. This home session contains three activities. Activities 1 and 2 can be completed at the same time if you choose to do so. In the first activity, you are encouraged to continue to practice your communication skills with your child about everyday topics while also having at least one conversation about a difficult and potentially personal topic. You can choose a difficult topic that you know may be relevant to your child or you can use Activity 2 as an opportunity to ask your child questions about a number of different topics. You and your child will complete a communication checklist after completing the activity. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.
2. In the second activity, you will complete a myth versus fact activity with your child about a number of risky teenage behaviors. This activity will provide you with an opportunity to dispel any myths that your child (and maybe you) believes to be true. This activity also may allow you an opportunity to talk with your child about how these behaviors are affecting both of your lives. In your discussion with your child, you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts and expectations about these behaviors. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.
3. After completing this program, many parents feel like they want to do more to address issues affecting their children, their children's friends, and other teens in their community. The third activity provides some suggestions for activities you can do in your community. You can also generate your own ideas for things specific to your community. Even if you decide to focus on your own children, remember that talking to them about their experiences and helping them make good choices is key. More information about completing this activity is found on the pages that follow.

Thank you for your time and hard work in this program. We hope that the information you have received will be helpful for you in parenting your child. Remember that you are the expert on your child—some of the strategies and tips might work well for you and your family, while others will not work as well. Feel free to use what works best for you and your family.

## Activity 1: Starting a Difficult & Personal Conversation

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent to practice using good communication skills and opening the lines of communication to talk about difficult topics.

**TIME NEEDED:** 20 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** Children are exposed to sex, drugs, dating, violence, and risky behaviors in their lives on a daily basis. Even if they do not have these things happening to them directly, they have friends who are likely affected by them. In fact, dating violence usually first happens when youth are around 12 years old, but it can begin earlier. In a 2017 survey, 1 in 12 youth reported experiencing physical violence in a dating relationship. In addition, millions of adolescents each year become pregnant or contract a sexually transmitted infection. Unfortunately, exposure to some of these things can cause problems in children's lives and prevent them from reaching their goals in life. We know that conversations with children about difficult topics can delay their engagement in the activity. For example, if parent-child communication about sex occurs before the child has sex, the child is more likely to delay the first sexual experience and less likely to participate in risky sexual behaviors, like having sex without condoms.

**Instructions:** Make a list of difficult topics that you would like to discuss with your child. You do not have to provide your child with all of the information you would like for them to have related to a particular topic, but you can start a conversation that will continue in the weeks, months, and years to come. When you begin the conversation with your child, remember to actively listen to your child's opinions. At the end of the activity, you and your child can complete the Communication Checklists and give feedback to each other on how you did. Remember, the more you practice talking with your child, the easier it gets, and it increases the likelihood that your child will come to you with any problems they are having. Remember, it is never too late to start talking.

**These are topics I want to talk to my child about...**

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**I can start a conversation with my child by saying...**

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**Assessment:** When the activity is completed, you and your child should complete the Communication Checklists to see how the conversation went. Remember, you do not have to use each skill in every conversation but try to use the skills as much as possible.

## Communication Checklist

### Parent's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your child so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### *Did I...*

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my verbal and nonverbal messages consistent?
- Listen to what my child was saying?
- Summarize what was said?
- Ask open-ended questions?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

## Communication Checklist

### Child's Checklist

The checklist below can be used after each of the communication activities you complete with your parent so you can see if you have used good communication skills. The more boxes you check the better your communication.

### *Did I...*

- Take turns talking?
- Make eye contact?
- Keep my facial expressions and body language consistent with what I was saying?
- Listen to what was said?
- Use "I" messages to describe how I feel?

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

### Structure of I Statements:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Activity 2: Myth or Fact

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for the parent and child to have an opportunity to talk and dispel myths related to pressures that teens face.

**TIME NEEDED:** 30 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** As we said before, children are exposed to sex, drugs, dating, violence, and risky behaviors in their lives on a daily basis. Even if they do not have these things happening to them directly, they have friends who do. Parents have a special role to protect teens from the bad effects this risky behavior can have on their health. Parents have a chance on many occasions and over time to talk to their children about what they think and feel about these issues and what they expect. Chances are that by being open, honest, and respectful, parents will prevent their child from taking risks or make them more careful about risks so that the consequences are not as bad. Parents can help prevent their child from taking risks by listening and talking openly, by being respectful of the child's thoughts, and by paying attention and setting age appropriate limits.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Go through the Myth or Fact activity with your child. Use the questions as an opportunity to ask your child whether the issues have affected them directly or if they know people who have been affected. Remember, the more you practice talking with your child about these issues, the easier it gets, and it increases the likelihood that your child will come to you with any problems they are having. Remember, it is never too late to start talking.

As you have in the past, think about how you can use the questions in this activity to start a conversation with your child. On the next page are some examples you can use.

### EXAMPLES:

- It sounds like boys can experience teen dating violence.  
Why do you think this happens?
- Respect and trust in relationships is important. How do you show someone you trust and respect them?

I can start a conversation with my child by saying...

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**ASSESSMENT:** When the activity is completed, think about how your conversations went with your child. List below any issues you would like to follow-up on with your child at a later time.

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For each of the following questions, circle the answer you think is correct.

<b>Myth or Fact?</b>		
	MYTH	FACT
1. Dating violence cannot happen to my child.		
2. Teenage boys rarely experience dating violence.		
3. Parents/caregivers would know if their teen is experiencing abuse by a dating partner.		
4. Witnessing violence in the home increases a child's risk for experiencing or perpetrating teen dating violence.		
5. Teen dating violence happens in same-sex relationships as often as it happens in straight relationships.		
6. Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign of true love.		
7. Being insulted a few times by someone you are dating is not that big of a deal, as long as there is no physical violence.		
8. When dating abuse happens once, it is likely to happen again.		

## Myth or Fact?

<b>9.</b> Most people who experience sexual violence do not know the person/people who perpetrated the violence.	MYTH	FACT
<b>10.</b> Alcohol is not as harmful for my teen as other types of drugs or substances like marijuana or prescription pills.	MYTH	FACT
<b>11.</b> Sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies really do not occur that often among adolescents.	MYTH	FACT
<b>12.</b> Teens from families that have open communication about sex and its potential risks have more correct knowledge about sexuality and sexually transmitted infections, like HIV.	MYTH	FACT
<b>13.</b> Motor vehicle (car) crashes are the leading cause of death among teens.	MYTH	FACT
<b>14.</b> Suicide is common among teens.	MYTH	FACT
<b>15.</b> Cyberbullying typically happens by people you do not know.	MYTH	FACT

## Myth or Fact Answer Key

1. Dating violence cannot happen to my child.

**About 1 in 12 high school students say that they have experienced physical dating violence in the past year, and almost 1 in 9 say they have experienced sexual dating violence in the past year.**

MYTH

2. Teenage boys rarely experience dating violence.

**About equal numbers of boys and girls experience physical dating violence. However, girls experience higher rates of dating violence overall including physical and sexual dating violence.**

MYTH

3. Parents/caregivers would know if their teen is being abused by a dating partner.

**Most teens involved in dating abuse do not tell their parents. Only 33% of teens who experience dating violence ever tell anyone about the dating violence. Teens will go to great lengths to hide it because they feel embarrassed, ashamed, and afraid of losing their independence. Teens often say they are afraid their parents will overreact, be judgmental, or make them end a relationship they are not ready to end.**

MYTH

4. Witnessing violence in the home increases a child's risk for experiencing or perpetrating teen dating violence.

**When we are young, we learn a lot about how to communicate with others by watching our parents/guardians. Still, many teens who are involved in dating violence have never witnessed any violence between their parents. And, it is never an excuse. Everyone has the power to decide how to treat others.**

FACT

5. Teen dating violence happens in same-sex relationships as often as it happens in straight relationships.

**Anyone can experience abuse and violence in their relationships and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are no different.**

FACT

## Myth or Fact Answer Key

6. Jealousy and possessiveness are a sign of true love.

**Jealousy and possessiveness are warning signs of teen dating violence. Healthy relationships (where someone really cares about the other person) are characterized by trust and room to be oneself.**

MYTH

7. Being insulted a few times by someone you are dating is not that big of a deal, as long as there is no physical violence.

**Insulting someone shows disrespect which is a type of emotional violence. Many people who experience physical violence say that the person they were with used emotional violence before they used physical violence.**

MYTH

8. When dating abuse happens once, it is likely to happen again.

**Abuse usually occurs again in the relationship—it does not just go away.**

FACT

9. Most people who experience sexual violence do not know the person/people who perpetrated the violence.

**More than half of females and males who experience sexual violence know the person/people who perpetrated the violence.**

MYTH

10. Alcohol is not as harmful for my teen as other types of drugs or substances like marijuana or prescription pills.

**Drinking in early adolescence is one of the most important risk factors for a wide variety of problems during the transition to young adulthood. Young people who report drinking alcohol in the 7th grade are more likely to use hard drugs, have drug/alcohol problems (e.g., treatment, been arrested for drunk driving), and engage in violent or criminal behavior than those who do not report drinking in the 7th grade.**

MYTH

## Myth or Fact Answer Key

11. Sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies really do not occur that frequently among adolescents.

**Adolescents ages 15-24 account for nearly half of all new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) each year; young people acquired 11.9 million STIs in 2018. While the teenage pregnancy rate has declined almost continuously since the 1990s and fewer than 2% of teen girls became pregnant in 2019 , the vast majority of those pregnancies are unintended.**

MYTH

12. Teens from families that have open communication about sex and its potential risks have more correct knowledge about sexuality and sexually-transmitted infections, like HIV..

**Family communication about sex and its potential risks has been found to relate to more correct knowledge about sexuality and sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV, among adolescents.**

FACT

13. Motor vehicle (car) crashes are the leading cause of death among teens.

**Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for nearly 1 in 3 deaths in this age group.**

FACT

14. Suicide is common among teens.

**In 2021 suicide was the third leading cause of death among high school students ages 14-18 years. However, suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts among youth were higher. The 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that approximately 1 in 3 female high school students and almost 1 in 7 male high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.**

FACT

15. Cyberbullying typically happens by people you do not know.

**Nearly 3 out of 4 teens know who is cyberbullying them. Nearly 1 in 6 teens report that they have experienced some form of cyberbullying in the last year. Girls experience cyberbullying more often than boys, with the highest rates reported by girls in 10th grade. More U.S. high school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual report having been cyberbullied in the past year than their straight peers.**

MYTH

## Activity 3: Adult and Community Responsibility for Preventing Problem Behaviors in Adolescents

**GOAL:** The goal of this activity is for parents to understand what they can do to prevent teen dating violence.

**TIME NEEDED:** 10 minutes

**INTRODUCTION:** Although talking with your child about violence, sex, and drugs can be uncomfortable or tough at times, the good news is that you have a chance to share your thoughts and expectations. You also have a chance to prevent your child from participating in unhealthy behaviors. This activity focuses on ways to prevent unhealthy behaviors in your community and in the lives of your child's friends. As concerned and caring citizens, it is also our responsibility to do our best to promote healthy choices in our community.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Below is a list of things you can do to prevent teen dating violence and other risky behaviors that often occur during the teen years.

**Model healthy relationship behaviors** and take a stand when others do not do the same.

**Spread awareness** of how often these issues occur by talking with other parents, educators, friends, and neighbors.

**Pass out information at various venues** such as churches, community centers, libraries, or PTA meetings—just make sure the information you are passing out comes from a good and reliable source, such as one of the websites at the end of this handbook.

**Join groups that already exist in your community** whose goal is to decrease these problem behaviors, or volunteer your time during a busy period for the group. For example, February is teen dating violence awareness and prevention month and many rape and domestic violence centers plan activities for the month of February. You can volunteer your time to assist with teen dating violence prevention activities that occur in February.

**Host or participate in community events**, such as suicide prevention marches or fundraisers for groups focusing on issues relevant to youth.

**Organize or participate in informational courses for parents and teens**, such as HeaRT for Parents.

**Organize school- or community-wide pledges** where everyone takes the pledge and takes a stand against the issue. For example, if you want to decrease the rate of car accidents among teens in your community, you can try to get all teens in the community who drive to agree to no texting while driving or no cell phones while driving.

In the space below, make a list of things you can do to prevent unhealthy or risky adolescent behaviors from happening in your community.

As a member of my community, as a neighbor, and as a friend, these are things I can do to prevent unhealthy and risky behaviors for the adolescents in my community. These can be items listed above or things that will work in my community.



If you decide to do something on a large scale in your community, you can use the table below to help figure out your next steps to taking action.

**Issue:** (what issue do I want to address?)

**Target groups:** (who do I want to be the focus of my efforts/who do I want to reach?)

**Event description:** (what type of event will I plan?)

**Location of event:** (e.g., school, park, etc.)

**Date/time of event:**

**Marketing materials/plan:** (what will I do, what materials will I use to let people know about what I am doing?)

**Slogan:** (will I have a catchy phrase or some way for people to remember or recognize my activities?)

## Notes:

## Appendix A: Local Resources for Parents

## Possible Local Resources

- Alcohol and drug prevention and treatment programs
- Child care
- Cultural resources and services
- Education programs (include schools)
- Family counseling services
- Food bank
- Health services, clinics, and hospitals
- Job training
- Library
- Parks and recreation programs
- Pregnancy services
- Social services
- State child health insurance programs
- STD/HIV counseling, testing, and treatment services
- Transportation
- Violence prevention programs and shelters
- Youth programs

## Notes:

## Appendix B: References

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## Appendix C: Acknowledgments

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Beverly Fortson, PhD and Colby N. Lokey, MS in the Division of Violence Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were primarily responsible for the development of the program content, materials, and activities. Contributing authors in the Division of Violence Prevention at CDC included Sarah Bacon, PhD; Sarah Beth L. Barnett, MA; Sarah DeGue, PhD; Lindsay Gressard, MEd, MPH; Henrietta Kuoh, MPH; Lianne Estefan, PhD, MPH; Natasha Latzman, PhD; Vi Donna Le, MPH; Melissa Merrick, PhD; Dennis E. Reidy, PhD; Sarah Roby, MPH; Andra Tharp, PhD; Kevin Vagi, PhD; Linda Anne Valle, PhD; Paula Orlosky Williams, MA; Phillip Williams, MPH; and Alana Vivolo-Kantor, MPH.

The HeaRT for Parents (7th grade) program underwent (1) extensive internal and external review; (2) a pilot and a 5-year demonstration phase, and (3) program review and revisions based on the pilot and demonstration phase.

- (1)** Initial reviewers in the Division of Violence Prevention at CDC included Sarah Bacon, PhD; Sarah Beth L. Barnett, MA; Lindsay Gressard, MEd, MPH; Henrietta Kuoh, MPH; Natasha Latzman, PhD; Melissa Merrick, PhD; Dennis E. Reidy, PhD; Andra Tharp, PhD; Kevin Vagi, PhD; Linda Anne Valle, PhD; Paula Orlosky Williams, MA; Phillip Williams, MPH; and Alana Vivolo-Kantor, MPH. Reviewers from other divisions at CDC included Angelika Claussen, PhD; Shannon Michael, PhD; Kimberly Miller, PhD; Drewallyn Riley, MS; and Samantha Williams, PhD. External reviewers included Rose Colon, PhD, MPH, from Nova Southeastern University; Latronda Davis, MPH, from STAND, Inc.; and Lisa M. Ware, PhD, from Alliant International University.
- (2)** As part of cooperative agreements awarded to the Alameda County Public Health Department (CE002052), Baltimore City Health

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- (3)** The program was reviewed and revised by CDC between August 2016 and July 2019 in preparation for dissemination. Revisions focused on improving the ease and quality of implementation and increasing clarity for participants; core content was not changed. Revisions were led by Vi Donna Le, MPH. The Program Review Team in the Division of Violence Prevention also included Sarah DeGue, PhD, Jennifer Dills, MPH, Lianne Fuino Estefan, PhD MPH, Beverly Fortson, PhD, and Sarah Roby, MPH. We would also like to thank Mauro Sifuentes and Aimee Wood, experienced facilitators from the demonstration phase, for their very helpful input on revisions. Graphic re-design in 2018 was led by Jessica Anderson, MFA from the Division of Violence Prevention.
- (4)** The program was revised and updated by CDC in 2024, including changing the model name from Dating Matters to the Healthy Relationships Toolkit. Revisions also include updated statistics, more inclusive language and examples, and changes to improve ease of

implementation based on feedback from partner communities. The Program Review Team in the Division of Violence Prevention included Ashley Baumann MPH, Liris Stephanie Berra MPH, Sarah DeGue PhD, Brittany Jerry MPH, Vi Donna Le PhD MPH, Stephanie Murphy MPH, and Sarah J. Roby MPH. We would also like to thank Banyan Communications, Inc. for their contributions to project management and graphic design, and NORC at the University of Chicago for contributions to making content more representative for sexual minority youth.



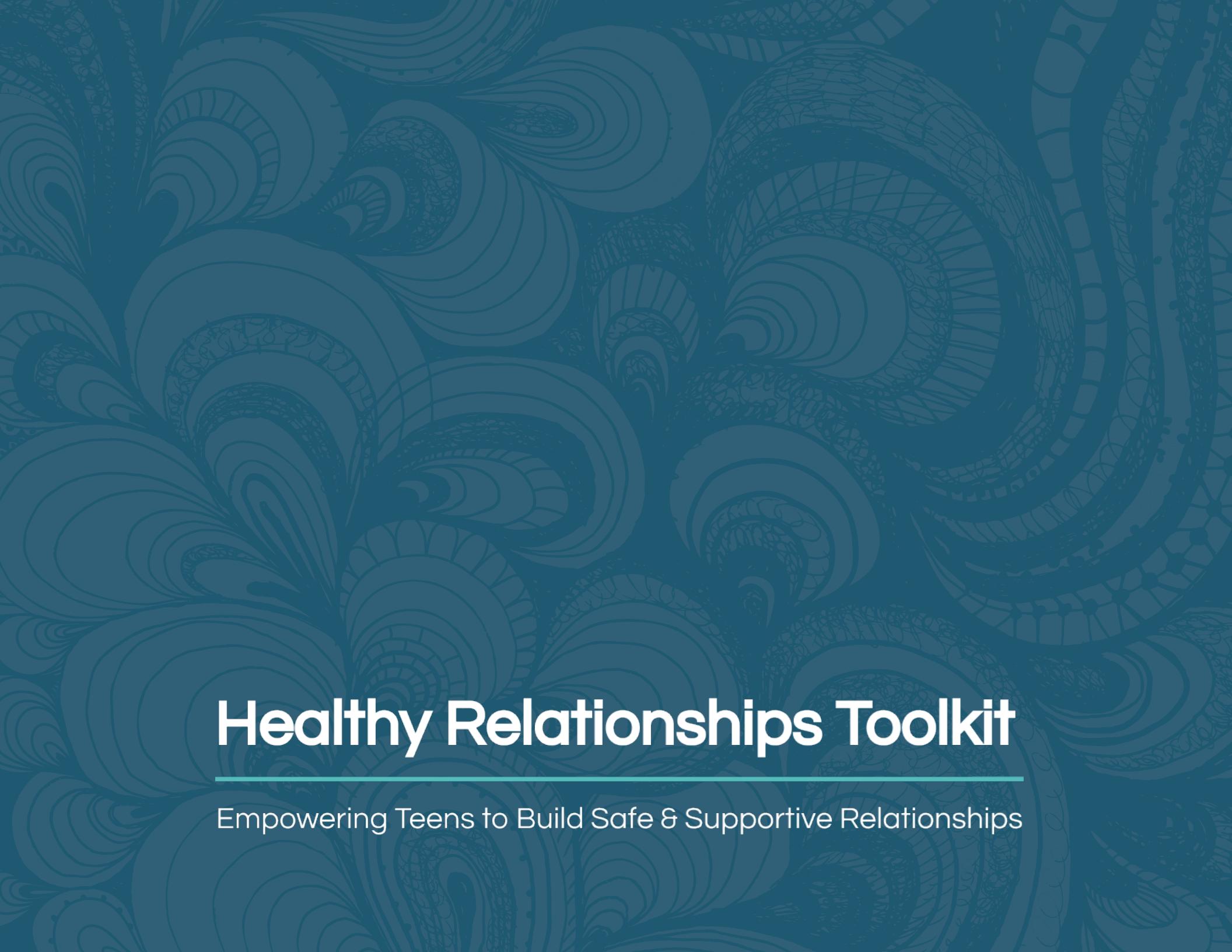
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**Note:**

The Healthy Relationships Toolkit: Empowering Teens to Build Safe and Supportive Relationships was previously referred to as Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships.





# Healthy Relationships Toolkit

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Empowering Teens to Build Safe & Supportive Relationships