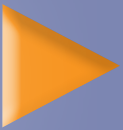


**TRANSITIONAL
LIFE SKILLS
FOR TEENS**

**TEENS ~
RELATIONSHIPS**

WITH PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS



**Facilitator Reproducible
Activities for Groups
and Individuals**

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Teens – Relationships with People. Places and Things

Facilitator Reproducible Activities for Groups and Individuals

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Purpose of the Book

Teens usually connect the word *relationships* with other people. *Teens ~ Relationships with People, Places and Things* broadens the scope of relationships:

Places – home, school, cyberspace, situations likely to have a positive or negative influence on teens, resources to meet their needs and *mental destinations*.

Things – technology, money, possessions, career considerations, and potentially addictive substances and activities.

as well as ...

People – those closest to teens during their formative years, plus their relationship with **Self**: their mind's eye image, self-efficacy versus self-sabotage, thought-driven feelings, external and internal messages, the power of words, *esteem-able* actions, mental and physical health.

This workbook covers the following teen connections:

- 1. Family / People at Home** – primary experiences that affect teens' views of how people live their lives.
- 2. Peers** – possibly the most influential people during adolescence.
- 3. Romantic Partners** – first love that awakens and intensifies emotions.
- 4. Places** – physical locations, the memories and impact.
- 5. Tangible Things** – money and materialism, and their degree of importance in teens' lives.
- 6. Intangible Things** – ideas, traits and influences that contribute to character.
- 7. Self** – a powerful relationship that affects all other alliances.

The activities in this workbook address real life relationships.

Ideally, teens ...

- Express thoughts and feelings, and gain insight.
- Share handouts at home which initiates communication.
- Engage in group activities and connect with peers.
- Share their work and build trust.
- Listen to disclosures and develop empathy.
- Discuss and debate, and develop open-mindedness.
- Recognize romantic issues and then choose caring partners.
- Identify powerful places, and appreciate and seek productive environments.
- Modify their place of mind and find peace of mind
- Prioritize possessions and evaluate their worth.
- Articulate intangibles and bring out and/or develop positive qualities.

Format of the Book

Introduction for Teen Participants motivates teens for the activities (page vi) and can be distributed prior to the first session to prepare teens for participation.

Cover Page for each chapter provides a quotation that can be used as an introduction to the chapter, and a brief description of each session, to assist facilitators in selecting topics. The cover page may be given to teens to interest them in upcoming activities.

Seven Chapters, four to eleven sessions per chapter.

Activities – A selection provides flexibility for the facilitator to choose those activities that meet participants' needs on various occasions. A timely topic may warrant a workshop, a series of sessions, or “stand alone” sessions. Facilitators are urged to “skip around” to find a format and subject that fits the situation for particular groups' or individuals' needs. Handouts can be used for individual introspection, interaction, artistic expression, games, music, poetry, drama, etc.

1. My Relationships with Family/People at Home

Ways to deal with secrets, conflict, control, etc., and how to build love, resilience and trust; how teens wish to be treated and their treatment of caregivers; skills to stop power struggles, ways to problem solve and compromise; develop insight into dynamics in many types of families: bonds that link, in whom to confide, forgiveness, etc.

2. My Relationships with Peers

Ways to minimize jealousy and enmeshment, expand social supports and strengthen personal development; fear of missing out; cliques; embarrassment; cookie cutter categorizations; inclusion, possible motives of people who exclude; invisible scars left by cruelty; ways to *leave marks* of hope and healing, etc.

3. My Relationships with Romantic Partners

Healthy and unhealthy romance, ways to recognize and stop dating violence and other abuse, relationship costs and benefits; ways to emerge stronger and wiser after a break up, respectfully initiate a break up, argue agreeably, understand jealousy, decide what love is and isn't; amusement ride analogies, etc.

4. My Relationships with Places

Positive and/or negative effects of one's most memorable home; places likely to foster optimal development or have detrimental effects; how attitudes toward school affect experiences; ways to work on solutions and not dwell on problems; explore how one's *place* of mind affects one's *peace* of mind, etc.

5. My Relationships with Tangible Things

Technology's social, emotional, educational and other uses and abuses; explore how money talks (or NOT); identify prized possessions, think about whether one owns or is owned by belongings; materialism; define objects with little monetary value but significant meaning, etc.

6. My Relationships with Intangible Things

Ways to make the most of time and life, freedoms and responsibilities; when to conform or not; pros and cons of competition and cooperation; the magnitude of small acts of kindness, compassion's benefits to others and oneself; beliefs; little things that are big, things that are broken, silent things that are loud, etc.

7. My Relationship with Myself

Learn about self-image and actualization; define ways to support not sabotage oneself; learn how thoughts affect feelings, how to filter out destructive thoughts and consider constructive criticism; acknowledge ways words can hurt or heal; define value of esteem-able actions; mental and physical health, etc.

In each session

- **Reproducible handout(s) for participants:** photocopy one copy for each participant.
- **Changes to reproducible handout:** white out or add text to your photocopy and reproduce.
- **For the Facilitator (found on the back of each handout) provides the following:**
 - I. Purpose: Goals for the teens.
 - II. General Comments: Brief background information.
 - III. Possible Activities: Ideas to introduce and present topics with answer keys or responses to elicit.
 - IV. Enrichment Activities: Additional learning opportunities, ways to close session and/or follow up.

Suggestions for Facilitators

Prepare quickly and easily – read handout(s) and facilitator information; decide which option to use if individual, team, or other formats are described; photocopy; follow directions to cut on broken lines, etc.

Teen and Facilitator Pages

Encourage introspection through

- Amusement park analogies
- Illustrations, diagrams, graphs, continuums and an alphabet acrostic
- Lists, sentence completions, fill in the blanks, matching exercises
- Posters, drawings, cartoons, collages, icons
- Quotations to analyze and personalize
- Scenarios in which teens decide what to do
- Self assessments
- Texts, blogs, poems, slogans
- Thought bubbles, visualization

Promote interaction through

- Brainstorming and board activities
- Discussion, debate, speeches
- Random acts of kindness for peers whose name is drawn, altruistic actions elsewhere
- Skits, role plays, pantomimes
- Teamwork, panel discussions
- Word and letter clue games, BINGO, quiz shows

Suggestions

Minimize mechanics – tell teens that unedited expression matters more than spelling or artistic ability.

Present one session from each chapter at subsequent meetings, to cover people, places, tangible and intangible things in a brief span of time, then present a second session from each chapter, etc. Varied interests and needs will be addressed, rather than several sessions on only one aspect of relationships.

Each chapter or a series of sessions may be a workshop.

Each session may stand alone.

Most sessions are adaptable for individual or group activities; allow at least fifty minutes for each session.

Confidentiality – remind teens:

What happens in group stays in group.

Disclose within one's comfort zone; no one is pushed to participate.

Use name codes, not actual names. (Ex: if a partner was abusive, use PWA for "partner was abusive.")

Exceptions to confidentiality – tell teens:

Some secrets are dangerous – if a teen discloses to a peer thoughts about harm to self, others, abuse, addiction or other serious issue, accompany the person as they tell a trusted adult, go to a hospital emergency department or call 911 or their local emergency services number.

If necessary, break confidentiality to save a life.

Encourage teens to talk privately after session if overwhelming emotions or issues surface; remind them that professional help and support groups are available.

Refer troubled teens for a professional evaluation if danger to self, others, abuse, addiction or other serious issues are suspected; call 911 or the local emergency services if danger is imminent.

Our gratitude to the following for their exceptional input –

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Introduction for Teen Participants

“Tug on anything at all and you’ll find it connected to everything else in the universe.”
~ John Muir

Think about your connections ...

You live with **you** 24/7.

You are linked with **family** or other people.

You are surrounded with **peers** at school.

You value **friends**.

You have, or may have in the future, **romantic partners**.

You enter **cyberspace**.

You experience physical **places**.

You have **money** and **possessions**.

You could be affected by **addictions**.

You will pursue a **career**.

You are connected to your **intangibles**:

- Beliefs
- Competitive tendencies
- Conformity and non-conformity
- Cooperative efforts
- Decisions
- Emotions
- Freedoms
- Ideas
- Time
- Other traits

Through the activities you will “tug on” the people, places and things in your life and ...

Learn about and like yourself.

Grow in any type of family.

Deal with peer issues.

Shape your friendships.

Handle having, losing, or leaving a partner.

Position yourself where you will thrive.

Place your mind where you will find peace.

Determine the worth of the material things that matter to you.

Visualize the person you want to be

Tune in to what your heart feels is driving you.

Contribute to your character.

Create opportunities to show you care.

You will improve your connections “to everything else in the universe.”

Teens – Relationships with People, Places and Things

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TEENS – Relationships with People, Places and Things

MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY/PEOPLE AT HOME

1

I know why families were created with all their imperfections. They humanize you. They are made to make you forget yourself occasionally, so that the beautiful balance of life is not destroyed.

~ ANAIS NIN

Ways I Wish to Be Treated page 13 ►

Teens compare how they wish parents/caregivers would treat them to how they actually are treated. Teens consider the benefits of treating caregivers as teens want to be treated and to warrant privileges.

Tug-of-War page 15 ►

Teens identify and are helped to find ways to stop power struggles as they work toward independence. Teens consider problem solving and compromising, and determine when to drop the rope.

FAMILY FEUDS page 17 ►

Teens explore dynamics in all types of families; how members compete and pull in opposite directions. Teens share their reactions to parental separation, stepfamily challenges, foster or group home placement.

Bonds That Link page 19 ►

Teens recognize bonds beyond biological relatives, which link family members or people who live together. Teens discover better ways to bond through communication, and have mutual respect and joy in each other's life.

Tell and Trust page 21 ►

Teens identify trusted adults in whom they can confide as well as the possibility of a friend breaching their trust. Teens analyze a quote that compares lies and secrets to a "cancer in the soul."

Fridge Magnet Forgiveness page 23 ►

Teens receive lines from short poems about forgiveness to put into rhyming order. Teens compose their own refrigerator magnet messages about family forgiveness.

Fam-Lingo Bingo page 25 ►

Teens express ideas about issues, attitudes and behaviors towards families. Teens discuss safety, secrets, addiction, conflict, control, emotional intimacy, resilience, respect, trust, etc.

Ways I Wish to Be Treated

I Wish My Caregiver Would...	How My Caregiver Treats Me	How I Treat My Caregiver
Love me no matter what.		
Realize that I am almost an adult.		
Spend more time with me.		
Encourage me.		
Listen to me.		
Accept the way I feel.		
Respect that I have the right to my own opinions.		
Trust me.		
Care about my health without nagging me.		
Care about my safety without overprotecting me.		
Give me feedback in a constructive way.		
Accept that my best is good enough.		
Allow me to pursue my own school and career goals.		
Make rules appropriate to my maturity level.		
Get to know my friends before forming opinions.		

Ways I Wish to Be Treated

FOR THE FACILITATOR

I. Purpose

To treat parents/caregivers as teens wish to be treated.

II. General Comments

Teens will realize that they often treat parents in the same way that they resent the manner in which their parents treat them.

III. Possible Activities

- a. Ask teens how they want to be treated by parents/caregivers (like young adults not kids, etc.).
- b. Distribute the *Ways I Wish to Be Treated* handout and ask for a few examples.
- c. Write examples on the board as teens dictate ideas.

Possibilities

I Wish My Caregiver Would...	How My Caregiver Treats Me	How I Treat My Caregiver
Love me no matter what.	<i>Ex:</i> They love me when I obey.	<i>Ex:</i> Love them even when they say “No.”
Respect that I have the right to my own opinions.	<i>Ex:</i> Sometimes they talk down to me.	<i>Ex:</i> Sometimes I talk disrespectfully to them.

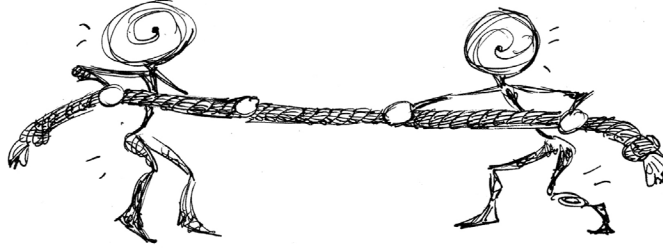
- d. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers; responses will be based on individual experiences.
- e. Allow time for completion.
- f. Encourage teens to share their responses and receive peer feedback.
- g. Emphasize that teens can:
 - Treat parents/caregivers as teens want to be treated.
 - Warrant privileges by acting responsibly.

IV. Enrichment Activities

- Write *I wish my teen would ...* on the board.
- Ask teens to brainstorm their parent/caregivers’ wish lists.
- Recruit a volunteer to list the group’s ideas on the board.
- Encourage teens to identify which wishes are reasonable.
- Ask participants to identify which wishes benefit the teens.
- Encourage teens to brainstorm:
 - Ways teens can change, or make the situation better.
 - Ways the caregivers can change, or make the situation better.

Tug-of-War

A tug-of-war is a struggle to win with both sides pulling at opposite ends of the rope.



1. In what situation do you and your parent / caregiver _____ get into a tug-of-war?
NAME CODE

2. Place an "X" on your location on the continuums below.

*The **issue** matters most.*

*My **power** matters most.*

*This person **cares about me**.*

*This person **does not care about me**.*

*I **trust** this person.*

*I **distrust** this person.*

3. If more "X's" are **closer to the left side** of this page, how can you **compromise**?

4. If more "X's" are **closer to the right side** of this page, how can you stop the **power struggle**?

5. Are you possibly **pulling against** someone who is **pulling for you**?

6. Explain. _____

Tug-of-War

FOR THE FACILITATOR

I. Purpose

To identify and stop power struggles.

II. General Comments

Teens may struggle against parents/caregivers to gain a greater sense of self, strength and independence.

Teens need help to recognize when a trusted and caring person is trying to assist them.

III. Possible Activities

- a. Before session coach two volunteers to pull on opposite ends of a notebook.
- b. At the start of session volunteers portray a tug-of-war with the notebook.
- c. Ask group members to guess what is going on (tug-of-war).
- d. Write *Power Struggle* on the board.
- e. Ask how it relates to tug-of-war (people try to grab control).
- f. Distribute the *Tug-of-War* handout and allow time for completion.
- g. Encourage teens to share responses and receive peer feedback.
- h. Encourage a discussion about ways to compromise.

i. Possibilities:

- Share views.
- Both people listen.
- Brainstorm options.
- Agree on mutually acceptable solutions.

- j. Encourage a discussion about ways to stop power struggles.

Possibilities:

- Work to solve the problem rather than to win.
- Realize you probably will not gain power over the person.
- Gain power over yourself through positive thoughts and actions.
- Be respectful even if you think it's undeserved.
- Ask a trusted adult for help to deal with the issue.
- Seek counseling if you experience abuse, anger, depression, etc.

- k. Write *When is it time to drop the rope?* on the board.

- l. Ask teens to brainstorm responses; a volunteer lists their ideas.

Possibilities:

- When both people relentlessly pull harder and harder against each other.
- When the issue isn't worth it.
- When the relationship means more than to have your own way.
- When letting go will give you peace.
- When continuing will cause you harm.
- When your needs can be met another way.

IV. Enrichment Activities

- a. Write on the board and ask teens to discuss:
 - *Don't push and pull to get your way, appeal to the person's generosity.* (Persuasively ask for what you want; the person may grant it).
- b. Write on the board and ask teens to discuss:
 - *Sometimes the bigger person backs down.* (Recognize when someone is unwilling to negotiate; find another way to stick to your beliefs).