

SESSION 3

COPING MECHANISMS

OVERVIEW:

To help group members develop a healthy approach in managing internal and external stress. This stress can be a result of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, family, school and/or social situations.

ICEBREAKERS:

- * Images Kindergarten - Parent
- * Creative Coping 4th grade - Parents

WORKSHEETS:

- * Defensive Behavior Kindergarten - Parent
- * Your Defenses 4th grade - Parent
- * Dear Friend 4th grade - Parent
- * Family Constellations Parent

STORIES:

- * The Waterfall 5th grade - Parent
- * Della The Dinosaur Talks to Mrs. Owl Kindergarten - 6th grade

GAMES:

- * TWALK



IMAGES



DIRECTIONS:

Cut the image list into strips(each strip will include one sentence).

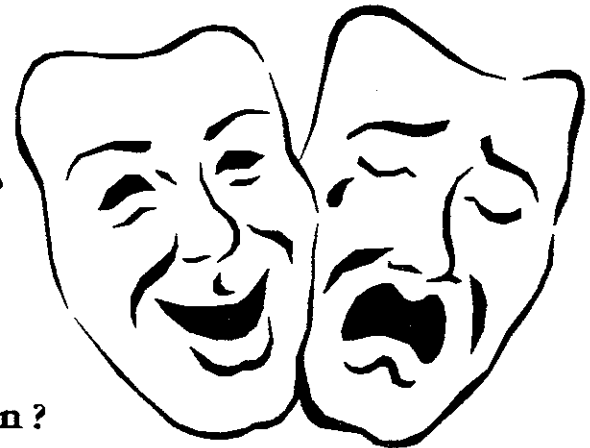
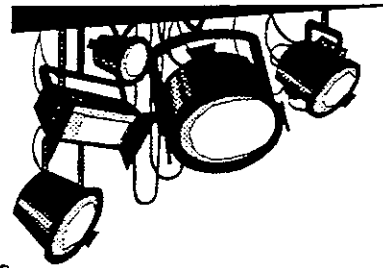
Each group member picks a question strip, without looking .

In a clock wise pattern, each member will respond to their chosen question.

This exercise challenges the group member's creativity and imagination. Creativity and imagination helps in coping with conflicts.

Kindergarten - Parent

- What color is the letter M ?
- What does happiness look like ?
- What does today look like ?
- What does Red taste like ?
- What does your self-image sound like ?
- What texture is the color green ?
- What color is the smell of you favorite perfume ?
- What does love look like ?
- What color is your favorite song ?
- What does winter sound like ?
- What does the number 6 feel like ?
- How old is the letter N ?
- How does the letter M feel ?
- What color is the fragrance of soap ?
- What does a cloud sound like ?
- What is the weight of your anger ?
- What is the color of your imagination ?
- What does your favorite book feel like ?




CREATIVE COPING

- ☒ This exercise asks the participants to think creatively as they attempt to solve a series of visual riddles.
- ☒ **MATERIALS NEEDED FOR TRAINER:** A blackboard or pad of newsprint, chalk or a black marker, and the Riddles List.
- ☒ **DIRECTIONS:** Allow 3 minutes to determine the meaning of each diagram. The group members may ask any questions they wish, but the facilitator can only answer yes or no.
- ☒ **OPTION:** Group members may work individually to solve riddles.

7th - Parents

1. **O**
Ph.D.
M.A.
B.S.

6. **T**
O
W
N

2. 

7. **R**
E
T
T
A
B

3. **LE**
VEL

8. **HE'S HIMSELF**

4. **J**
YOU U ME
S
T

9. **CRAZY**
YOU

5. **W**
O
R
H
T

10. **OATH**
UR

ANSWERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Three degrees below zero | 6. Downtown |
| 2. See-through blouse | 7. Batter up |
| 3. Split level | 8. He's beside himself |
| 4. Just between you & me | 9. Crazy over you |
| 5. Throw up | 10. You are under oath |

DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR



GOAL: Defensive behavior of family members occurs under high stress situations. Some of the defensive behavior patterns fall into the following categories. This exercise will help group members recognize defensive behaviors within themselves and significant others.

DIRECTIONS: Share the following examples of defensive behavior. Continue with the worksheet on the next page. Allow ten minutes to complete the worksheet. Each member will complete the seven statements and draw a face in each circle describing the behavior. Option: group members could work in groups of 2 or 3. Resume the group circle & share personal examples of defensive behaviors.

Kindergarten to Parent

FAMILY HERO:

- > Perfectionism, people pleasing, assuming parental roles.

FAMILY SCAPEGOAT:

- > Rebelliousness, dishonesty, breaking house rules, rejecting the family, illegal activities and substance abuse.

LOST CHILD:

- > Isolation, passivity, fantasizing and being indifferent.

FAMILY MASCOT:

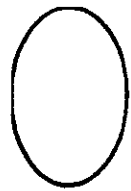
- > Inappropriate jokes, teasing and loud laughter; as a way of masking feelings.
- > Constantly seeking attention, with a short attention span.

DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORS INCLUDE FEELINGS OF: loneliness, low self-esteem, inadequacy, anxiety, fear

And Pro - GED/CELEBRATING 40

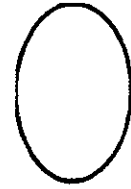


YOUR DEFENSES



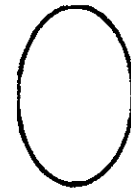
1. When I am mad, but I don't want anyone to know, I look like this and L...

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)



2. When I am scared, but I don't want anyone to know, I look like this and L...

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)



3. When I am sad, but I don't want anyone to know, I look like this and L...

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)



4. When I am being funny, but I don't want anyone to know why,

I look like this and L...

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)



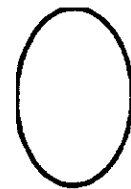
5. When I am worried, but I don't want anyone to know, I look like this and L...

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)



6. When my feelings are hurt, but I don't want them to show, I look like this.

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)



7. When I want praise or support, but I don't want anyone to know,

I look like this and L...

(write what you do or say, then draw a face in the circle)

DEAR FRIEND...

COPE: The definition of cope means to handle a problem in a healthy way. Coping with a problem won't always make it go away. Coping with a problem will make it easier to live with.

OBJECTIVE: To help students see healthy ways of coping with problems. The group interaction will help students find resources in dealing with problems.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Read the problem examples to the group (included in the next few pages).
2. Ask members how they would feel, if they were in this situation.
3. Have group members give suggestions on how they would cope with this situation.



4th - Parent

OPTION:

1. Hand out slips of paper.
2. Each member will anonymously write about a problem they are dealing with.
3. The facilitator presents the problems to the group.
4. The group responds as in above directions.

PROBLEM EXAMPLES

PROBLEM: Jason's dad does not live with Jason or his mom anymore. Since Jason's dad left, his mom seems too busy or too tired to pay much attention to Jason. She always worries about the bills and the housework. She appears sad or crabby much of the time. Jason feels abandoned by his dad and a burden to his mother. Jason refuses to pick up his room, do his homework or his chores. Jason and his mother yell at each other a lot. Jason feels hurt, angry and lonely. He feels as though his parents don't love him anymore.

- SUGGESTION:** It might help if Jason and his parents talk about their feelings. Jason's parents love him very much, but are preoccupied with their problems. If Jason cooperated by doing his responsibilities, his parents would probably give him more positive attention.

PROBLEM: Sarah's mom has a problem with drinking too much alcohol. Sarah's dad decided to get a divorce and take Sarah with him. Sarah's dad is very angry and says mean things about her mother all the time. Sarah feels she should defend her mother and ends up arguing with her father.

- SUGGESTION:** Sarah's dad is angry with her mother's behavior, due to her drinking. Her father has not learned about the addiction process. Because he doesn't understand, he has difficulty coping. Sarah loves both her parents. It would help if Sarah could explain her feelings to her father. She could also ask her father not to share his anger towards her mother.

PROBLEM: Almost every night Bobby hears his parents fighting. He can't go to sleep because he's afraid someone is going to get hurt. His stomach feels like it is in knots.

- SUGGESTION:** Kids are not responsible for their parents fights. Bobby might try turning on the T.V. or some music. If he has brothers or sisters, he may spend time with them. If he feels the argument is getting dangerous, he could go to a neighbors house and call the police if necessary.

PROBLEM: Mary is going home with a friend tonight. When Mary's friend's father came to pick them up from skating, she smelled alcohol on him. Mary is afraid to ride in the car.

- SUGGESTION:** Since this is a common problem, kids should discuss options with their parents. Parents can give their children relatives or friends numbers. No one should accept a ride from a person who has been drinking or using drugs.

PROBLEM: Greg is afraid to have friends over night because his fathers behavior changes after a few drinks. His dad says, "I enjoy a few drink at night in order to relax".

- SUGGESTION:** Greg might talk to his non-drinking parent or a friend who knows something about substance abuse. It may not change the situation, but it will help him to talk about his feeling.

PROBLEM: Nancy's family had so many problems that they seemed to forget about her. She feels neglected, lonely and worried. She sees her parents drink in order to handle the problems. Nancy decides that maybe she will try drinking.

- SUGGESTION:** Kids from families that use alcohol or other drugs to handle problems often experiment at an early age. Family history of addiction and early onset of experiment increases the risk for addiction at an early age.

PROBLEM: Amy's mom expects her to be perfect. Whenever Amy makes a mistake, like forgetting her books at school or burning the toast, her mom gets very angry. She says Amy is stupid and careless. Amy thinks she will never be good enough to please her mom. That makes Amy feel sad and frustrated and angry.

- SUGGESTION:** Some parents expect perfection because they want to look good to the outside world. Many times they are hiding from problems. The pressure makes them work harder at perfection. Amy may try finding someone to talk to, that she can trust.

PROBLEM: Mike didn't clean his room today. His mother came home after having a few drinks with some friends. She started yelling, which lead to hitting Mike across the face and back.

- SUGGESTION:** Some parents lose control, especially when they had a few drinks. **No child deserves to be hurt.** If you parent loses control, go to a neighbors or call the police. **If you are hit or abused, always tell a neighbor, teacher, etc.**

PROBLEM: You are touched in a way that you don't want to be touched. You know that it's a private area and you don't like it. You feel scared...

- SUGGESTION:** Your body belongs to you, no one has the right to touch without your permission. Tell someone as soon as possible: a school nurse, teacher, minister, counselor, neighbor, relative.

OVERVIEW

of Dear Friend



- Every family has problems. Learning to handle problems in a good way is called **coping**.
- When parents fight, don't get involved. **It's not your fault.**
- No one's perfect. **Be proud of your best results.**
- Ask for what you need, like attention from your parents.**
- If you are abused, tell someone.**
- No one has a right to touch you without permission, especially private parts.**
- Children with a family history of substance abuse and those students who begin experimenting with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs at an early age, are more likely to become addicted. Alcohol, tobacco and

FAMILY CONSTELLATIONS

PARENT HANDOUT: EXCELLENT INFORMATION TO HELP PARENTS UNDERSTAND AND COPE WITH THEIR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR. HANDOUT FOR PARENT DISCUSSION.

THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS WILL NOT APPLY TO ALL CHILDREN IN EVERY FAMILY. TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS, HOWEVER, CAN BE IDENTIFIED.

<u>ONLY CHILD</u>	<u>FIRST CHILD</u>	<u>SECOND CHILD</u>	<u>MIDDLE OF THREE</u>	<u>YOUNGEST CHILD</u>
<p>Pampered & spoiled.</p> <p>Feels incompetent because adults are more capable.</p> <p>Is center of attention: often enjoys position, May feel special.</p> <p>Self-centered.</p> <p>Relies on service from others rather than own efforts.</p> <p>Feels unfairly treated when doesn't get own way. May refuse to cooperate.</p> <p>Plays "divide & conquer" to get own way.</p> <p>May have poor peer relations as child but better relations as adult. 2</p> <p>Pleases others only when wants to.</p> <p>Creative. 3</p> <p>May have striving characteristics of oldest & inadequacy feelings & demands of youngest.</p>	<p>Is only child for period of time; used to being center of attention.</p> <p>Believes must gain & hold superiority over other children. Being right, controlling often important.</p> <p>May respond to birth of second child by feeling unloved & neglected. Strives to keep or regain parents attention through conformity. If this fails, chooses to misbehave.</p> <p>May develop competent, responsible behavior or become very discouraged.</p> <p>Sometimes strives to protect & help others.</p> <p>Strives to please.</p>	<p>Never has parent's undivided attention.</p> <p>Always has sibling ahead who's more advanced.</p> <p>Acts as if in race, trying to catch up or overtake first child. If child is "good", second may become "bad". Develops abilities first child doesn't exhibit. If first child is successful, may feel uncertain of self & abilities.</p> <p>May be rebel. Often doesn't like position.</p> <p>Feels "squeezed" if third child is born. May push down other siblings.</p>	<p>Has neither rights of oldest nor privileges of youngest. Feels life is unfair.</p> <p>Feels unloved, left out, "squeezed".</p> <p>Feels doesn't have place in family.</p> <p>Becomes discouraged & "problem child" or elevates self by pushing down other siblings.</p> <p>Is adaptable. Learns to deal with both oldest & youngest sibling.</p>	<p>Behaves like only child. Feels everyone bigger & more capable. Expects others to do things, make decisions, take responsibility.</p> <p>Feels smallest & weakest. May not be taken seriously.</p> <p>Becomes boss of family in getting service & own way.</p> <p>Develops feelings of inferiority or becomes "speeder" & overtakes older siblings.</p> <p>Remains "The Baby". Places others in service.</p> <p>If youngest of three, often allies with oldest child against middle child.</p>

NOTES: 1. The middle child of three is usually different from the middle child of a large family. The middle children of large families are often less competitive, as parents don't have as much time to give each child and so the children learn to cooperate to get what they want. 2. Only children usually want to be adults, and so don't relate to peers very well. When they become adults, they often believe they've finally "made it" and can now relate better to adults as peers. 3. During their formative years, only children live primarily in the world of adults. They must learn how to operate in the big people's world as well as how to entertain themselves. Thus they often become very creative in their endeavors.

SOURCE: PARENT EDUCATION LEADER'S MANUAL (CORAL SPRINGS, FL: CMTI PRESS, 1978)

THE WATERFALL

Close your eyes and relax. Pretend that you're walking on a beautiful path in the mountains. You're taking a hike down the mountains. It's October, and the sky is clear and a deep shade of blue. The air is cool, but the sun is warm. The leaves are changing colors. Look at the beautiful shades of red, orange and yellow. Imagine what the orange and yellow leaves look like as you look up and see them like lace against the sky.

You keep walking down the mountain path until you come upon a waterfall, a beautiful cascading waterfall, a stream tumbling down over huge boulders. You sit on a boulder near the waterfall and you empty your mind. You pay attention to the sound of the water as it rushes over the boulder and trickles down the stream. You imagine that the water is rushing over you and making you feel clean and refreshed.

As you sit quietly on the boulder, you drink in the warmth of the sun. You see leaves that have fallen into the stream. They float like tiny boats on the bubbling water. You decide to put all your worries, problems and frustrations on the leaves and to let them all float away.



So if you're worried because (*use appropriate examples specific to the children in you're, such as...*) you don't have your homework finished that's due today, let that worry float away on a leaf. Or, if you had a fight on the bus this morning, and you're afraid you might get suspended, put that worry on a leaf and let it float away. Or, if you feel angry over your mom's yelling at you because she didn't like the outfit you put on this morning, put that anger on a leaf and watch it float away.

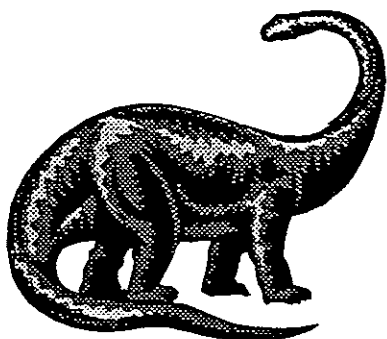
Put all your worries, problems, and frustrations on leaves and watch them all float away. Soon they're all gone. When you open your eyes, you're going to be able to work hard because all your problems have floated away. You can go back and solve these problems later.

DIRECTIONS: Read story to the group. Discuss the importance of time out, in order to cope with problems. Continue with handout of 15 facts on next page. Emphasize the three C's.

GOAL: To learn relaxation in order to decrease stress.

5th grade - parents.

1. People in families have many kinds of FEELINGS and all of these feelings are normal.
2. Some ways of showing feelings are HELPFUL; some ways of showing feelings are HARMFUL
3. Some people choose to use VIOLENT ways to express their anger. They may yell, blame, throw, break, push, shove, kick, slap, hit, punch, or kill.
4. It is NEVER okay to use violent ways to express ANGER.
5. People can choose to learn NONVIOLENT and HELPFUL ways to express their anger.
6. Parents usually LOVE their children, even when angry.
7. Children usually LOVE their parents, although they may feel HATE or ANGER for the parents.
8. The three C's are:
Children didn't CAUSE their parent's problem/s.
Children can't CONTROL how their parent's express anger.
Children can't CHANGE their parent's situation.
9. The four steps children can take are:
Find a SAFE place for themselves.
Ask a grown-up for HELP if their parents are out of control.
Learn to RECOGNIZE, ACCEPT and share feelings.
Learn NONVIOLENT ways to express feelings.
10. Feelings aren't good or bad, right or wrong; they just ARE.
11. Instead of swallowing feelings, it's better to RECOGNIZE them, ACCEPT them and SHARE them with someone you trust.
12. When children are angry about a problem they can change, they should USE their anger to give them the power to make changes in themselves.
13. When children are angry about a problem they can't change, they should:
ACCEPT what they can't change.
EXPRESS their anger so they can let it GO.
Do something GOOD for themselves.
14. Anger management is a way to COPE with anger.
15. The anger management steps are:
RECOGNIZE that you're angry.
ACCEPT your anger.
Practice some RELAXATION.
THINK about ways to express the anger.
CHOOSE the best way.
EXPRESS the anger in a helpful way.



DELLA THE DINOSAUR TALKS TO MRS. OWL

"How are you today Della?" Asked Mrs. Owl. "I'm feeling sad today!"

"You live with someone who acts out their anger, don't you, Della?" " Yes, I do."

"Well, you know," Mrs. Owl went on, " sometimes things might happen in your family that make you feel very uncomfortable. Very often, there will be nothing you can do about those things--they'll be problems you can't change or solve. But you can learn strategies to cope with those things. Do you know what a strategy is, Della?"

"Uh, uh," I said, shaking my head.

"A strategy is a way or plan for doing something," Mrs. Owl explained, "So, a coping strategy is a way or plan to handle a problem you can't change or solve."

"Oh, I get it," I said. "Well, at least I think I get it."

"I'll tell you what, Della," said Mrs. Owl. "I'll help you figure out some coping strategies. To begin, why don't you tell me about something that might happen in your home that would make you feel very uncomfortable?"

It only took me a second to think of something that happens in my house that makes me feel uncomfortable a lot. So I told Mrs. Owl, "Sometimes, my dad and mom have terrible fights. Sometimes, my dad slaps my mom. Whenever that happens, I try to get them to stop, but then they get angry at me."

"Okay, Della, when your parents are fighting, do you think there's any way you can get them to stop? Now, wait, Della. Before you answer, think of the three C's."



I did what Mrs. Owl asked. I stopped and thought of the three C's. Let's say the three C's together.

1. Children don't CAUSE their parents to use violence to express their anger.
2. Children can't CONTROL how their parents express anger
3. Children can't CHANGE their parents' use of violence to express anger.

After thinking for a minute, I answered Mrs. Owl. "No," I said, "I guess I can't stop my parents from fighting."

Then Mrs. Owl asked, "Could you change or solve the problems your parents are having?" I remembered the three C's again and answered, "No, children can't solve their parents' problems." "That's right!" Mrs. Owl hooted. "You can't solve your parents' problems. Who can solve your parents' problems, Della?"

"I guess only my parents can solve their problems," I answered. "That's also right," Mrs. Owl said. "Parents may need to ask for help, too. But they should ask another grown-up for help. Even though you can't take care of your parents, you can take care of yourself, can't you, Della?" "Yes, I can," I said with a smile.

"In deed, you can," said Mrs. Owl. "So let's you and I decide on some ways you can handle this problem you can't change or solve. Let's decide on some things you can do to take care of yourself."

And so we did. We decided on a coping strategy I could use when my parents fight. Here it is:

1. **I realize and accept that I can't make my parents stop fighting. It's not a little dinosaur's job and I wouldn't succeed anyway.**
2. **I'll call my uncle, Bart Brontosaurus. I can ask him to get help for my mom if I'm afraid that she'll get hurt.**
3. **I'll go to a safe place where I won't get hurt. I like to go to my bedroom and play "Dinosaur Detectives" with Danny.**
4. **Can you think of other Coping Strategies I could use when my parents fight?**

TAWK

Each member will pick a card, read it aloud and answer the question.

The goal of this exercise is to develop options for coping with problems. Encourage input from other group members. 4TH GRADE - PARENT

Below are cards taken from the TAWK game by Paul R. White (it is highly recommended that you purchase this game). Cut question below into small squares, resembling cards (each card will contain one question).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What do the words family illness mean? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is it O.K. to drink to feel better? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When is it O.K. to change decisions you have made? Are there steps to making a decision?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What do you wish you knew more about? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When is it O.K. to change decisions you have made? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do people make the decision to drink or use drugs?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does the word drunk mean? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Will people you love sometimes not tell you the truth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do people decide how much they drink or is that something that just happens?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Describe your family? (number of brothers & sisters, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the difference between telling a lie & telling the truth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are three things you would tell a little kid about kids, families & alcohol?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can parents stop loving children? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do you help others feel better? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What would you do if you thought you were in danger?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did you ever get blamed for something you didn't do? What was it & when? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did you ever pretend that something didn't really happen? What was it? 	

<p>➤ What decisions would you make if your Mom or Dad told you to keep a secret & you felt you should tell someone?</p>	<p>➤ Why would a parent lie to their children?</p>	
<p>➤ Do you ever avoid going home so you don't have to face a problem?</p>	<p>➤ How does it feel when people get along & don't fight?</p>	
<p>➤ Where are your feelings before you feel them? Where do feelings go after you have them?</p>	<p>➤ What is the best thing that could happen to someone?</p>	
<p>➤ Do you ever worry about your Mom & Dad separating or divorcing?</p>	<p>➤ How do you feel when people don't pay attention to you?</p>	
<p>➤ Do you feel better in some places more than others; at home, school, a friend's house, grandma's, etc.</p>	<p>➤ How can brothers & sisters help each other?</p>	