A Parenting Skills Workshop to Increase Parental Efficacy for Abused Women in a Transitional Housing Agency

By

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The procedures in this workshop are meant to be used by agency staff, as part of the broader services they provide, or under supervision of agency staff.
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the amazing people in my life who have helped me stay strong over the past four years, through my struggles and my accomplishments.

Thank you to my closest friends for always being there for me.
Thank you to my family for supporting me over the past four years.
Abstract

Women who are abused often have a low sense of parental efficacy and feel out of control in their parenting abilities. Some researchers suggest that this loss of parental confidence can be the result of the mother’s heightened sense of responsibility as well as the negative comments on parenting from an abusive partner. The present study set out to develop a method of addressing parenting skills and parental efficacy for mothers from domestic violence situations, with the goal of providing these mothers with parenting skills and social support to assist them with their parenting abilities and confidence.

An eight-session workshop format was chosen to achieve this goal. The final product created in this project was a participant workbook. The workshop that was developed during this project addressed such topics as: emotional communication, responsive parenting, discipline education, positive reinforcement, relaxation techniques, and self-care. The present project focused on the development and the implementation of the workshop. The workshop was implemented at a transitional housing facility for abused women and children over an eight-week period. Pre- and post- data were collected from two parental efficacy measures and one child problem behaviour measure. Ongoing feedback evaluation forms were collected from every session. Participants varied in pre- and post- intervention scores on both parental efficacy measures, and both participants showed a decrease from pre- and post- scores on the child problem behaviour measure. Overall, the workshop was effective in decreasing child problem behaviours and the participants gave positive feedback for all eight sessions. Further studies should be conducted with a larger group of participants to assess the effectiveness of this workshop in regards to increasing parental efficacy and to assess whether the decrease in child problem behaviours was due to the skills acquired in the workshop sessions.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Being a mother is a responsibility that requires a great amount of time and energy. Many mothers hold the responsibility of taking care of a child with high and unrealistic expectations. This can often lead mothers to critically analyze themselves as parents (Lapierre, 2010). The perception of responsibility is of particular importance when it comes to mothers who have been victims in domestic violence situations where children have also been present. Abusive relationships leave women vulnerable to feeling a loss of control in their parenting abilities and increases their sense of responsibility. In order for victims of domestic violence to feel in control of their parenting, they must be provided with the skills, tools, and support from practitioners (Lapierre, 2010). Abused mothers have a decreased sense of parental efficacy, which is defined as a parent’s belief in his or her abilities to effectively perform well as a parent. Few studies have been conducted with abused mothers in the area of parental efficacy through the implementation of parent skills training.

Parenting education groups and parenting skills training are effective methods to increase parental efficacy and decrease child problem behaviours (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001).

It is proposed that a workshop developed using the skills referenced in evidence-based parenting programs, will provide mothers in an agency for abused women with the parenting skills and tools that lead to increased parental efficacy. This increase in confidence, due to the developed parenting workshop, will allow women of past victimization to regain their sense of control and create realistic expectations in parenting their children. It is hypothesized that the positive parenting workshop, a single group study of eight female participants, within the context of one agency, will produce significant increases in parental efficacy.

The following thesis provides a review of literature as it relates to elements included in parenting skills training. Topics discussed include working with abused women, the effects of domestic violence on parenting, the importance of social supports, and support for parent skills training. Other topics that are thoroughly discussed in the literature are the elements included in the positive parenting workshop. These include: support for applied behaviour analysis, emotional communication, responsive parenting, discipline education, positive reinforcement, and relaxation techniques. Next, the method that is used for the positive parenting workshop is explained and includes the procedures used to deliver the workshop sessions, the description of participants, and facilitator characteristics. The final results of the thesis are presented in the results section and the appendices that include the session layouts, the pre and post measures, as well as the workbook contents. The last section is the discussion that includes the summary of the thesis, as well as any limitations and recommendations for future research.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Working With Mothers From Domestic Violence Situations

Mothers that have experienced domestic violence experience more stress in relation to parenting than non-victimized mothers. Trauma can cause impairment in certain areas of functioning for women and can lead to a decreased ability to parent effectively and positively (Jarvis, Gordon, & Novaco, 2005).

Women and children from domestic violence situations can develop a number of psychological disorders. Women who have been abused are more likely to rely on financial assistance and be unemployed compared to non-battered women (Chiodo, Leschied, Whitehead, & Hurley, 2003). Battered women are also more likely to have been abused as children and be less knowledgeable in the area of effective parenting practices. These factors can negatively affect a woman’s mental health. When working with abused women, areas of psychological functioning and other factors associated with the experience of abuse should be taken into consideration. Some psychological disorders to be aware of are: depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety disorders (Sheppard, 1997). These disorders can disturb a woman’s daily functioning and parenting abilities.

The mental state of a mother can impact a child’s mental health and behaviour. Higher levels of emotional and behavioural maladjustments are found in children who have a psychologically distressed parent (Hammen, 1992). The parent-child relationship is an important factor affecting recovery for both mother and child after a domestic violence situation. When a mother is not well psychologically, the child can suffer also or vice versa (Hammen, 1992). Therefore, it is important to strengthen the parent-child relationship in therapy.

The Effects of Domestic Violence on Parental Efficacy

The psychological effects of domestic violence can lead to great impairments in the area of parental functioning. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a common psychological disorder associated with domestic violence for both women and children (Chemetob & Carlson, 2004). PTSD is caused from experiencing a serious life-threatening or fear-evoking event. The symptoms associated with PTSD include avoiding stimuli associated with the event, re-experiencing the event psychologically, and psychological arousal such as inappropriate anger. Abuse can trigger re-experiencing and certain emotions in women and children. In a study conducted by Chemtob and Carlson (2004), PTSD in mothers was correlated with depression, dissociation, and anger. PTSD can lead to impairment in effective parenting due to the disabling symptoms and other associated factors (Chemtob & Carlson, 2004). It is important to be aware, when conducting a workshop or program, that this disorder is a reality to many women who have experienced violence. Any form of mental illness can decrease a mother’s sense of parental efficacy. Dysfunctional parenting is also a result of abuse.

Domestic violence was directly linked to dysfunctional parenting according to Levendosky, Leal, Bogat, Davidson, and Eye (2006). Their Spillover Hypothesis is a theory that explains the relationship between domestic violence and poor parenting. It proposes that there are two relationships, the marital relationship and the parent-child relationship, and hostility in one system can negatively influence the other. In this case, domestic violence in the marital relationship can have a negative impact on the parent-child
relationship. Domestic violence often leads to poor maternal mental health, which is one of the possible causes of poor parenting (Levendosky et al, 2006). Psychological distress makes mothers less emotionally available to their children and less involved in their children’s lives. This lack of emotional availability as well as poor parenting increases the child’s chances of engaging in externalizing behaviours such as aggression. In the study by Levendosky et al. (2006), infant externalizing behaviour was related to risk and protective factors such as social support, maternal mental health, maternal parenting, and domestic violence. Current domestic violence was related to the mother’s inability to respond affectionately to her child as well as a general disengagement in the parent-child relationship. A weakness in the Levendosky et al. (2006) study was that the child’s externalizing behaviours could have been caused from the child directly or indirectly witnessing abuse towards the mother. The child could learn to model the violent behaviour of a parent while witnessing violence. This exposure and other variables may be attributing to problem behaviours in addition to disengagement in the parent-child relationship.

In contrast, Lapierre (2009) states that a loss of parental efficacy may be caused by a mother’s increased sense of responsibility and her loss of control over parenting. When violence is used towards a woman in front of her children, it sends a message that the woman is not able to protect herself and, therefore, undermines her ability to parent. When a violent partner challenges a woman’s discipline techniques it leads her to question her own parenting abilities and she may also start to believe the undermining comments coming from her abuser. The study by Lapierre (2009) states that mothers in domestic violence circumstances take on increased sense of responsibility because her child is at greater risk and in greater need of protection. When violence occurs in front of children it reinforces the mother’s sense of responsibility and a decrease in parental efficacy. It is important for therapists of victims of spousal abuse to target parental efficacy as a therapy goal and to help decrease any unrealistic perspective of responsibility.

The Importance of Parental Supports

Levendosky et al (2006) stated that the role of social supports on a mother’s mental health has a positive effect. The greater the quality of social supports in a mother’s life, the more resilient she is to the effects that domestic violence has on her psychologically. Social supports are also a good indicator of a woman’s ability to get out of her violent situation quickly. Emotional support for mothers can prevent children from engaging in externalizing behaviours such as aggression, according to Bandy, Andrews, and Moore (2012). They found that emotional support for parents significantly improved the outcomes for their children even when their families were in disadvantaged circumstances. In cases where mothers had low education but good emotional support, children were more engaged in school than mothers without support. Emotional support was found to benefit a variety of areas in a child’s life including increased social competence, decreased depression symptoms, and increased engagement in education. Parental support for mothers can provide better social and behavioural outcomes for children and avoid negative developmental outcomes.

Group workshops and programs for mothers can provide women with emotional and social support from women experiencing similar situations (McGilloway et al, 2012). Crockenberg (1981) studied the effect of maternal responsiveness, social supports, and infant irritability on the development of infant-mother attachments. He found that social support
was the best predictor for a secure infant-mother attachment, especially in the case where there was an irritable infant. Social supports are particularly important under stressful conditions, such as in the case of spousal abuse, which make the infant-mother attachment vulnerable. Similarly, social support was found to be an important protective factor in the study that Stoddart (2011) conducted on families living in low-income communities.

Stoddart (2011) states that families with some form of social support generally improve their quality of life and well being, including the lives of their children. Social supports can include mental health support, friends and family, or peer groups. Pressures that mothers face within the community are diminished with increased contact with social supports and their confidence in being able to parent effectively is increased. This suggests that counseling groups and workshop groups directed towards women who have children and have experienced domestic violence can provide them with a form of social support in order to overcome the pressures they may feel from their community.

**Parenting Skills Training**

Rossman and Rea (2005) conducted a study with 104 mothers from violent and nonviolent families to examine information on parenting practices and child functioning. The study found that parental inconsistency was more present in families with violence and that this often led to poor child behaviour outcomes. These researchers report that mothers that have been victims of domestic violence often report having difficulties in their parenting, especially when it comes to discipline. Abuse from a spouse can cause women to be hesitant in disciplining their children, even if the particular discipline is not harming the child. Mothers begin to associate discipline with the abuse that they have experienced and the result is that discipline becomes inconsistent. The mothers of violent families were more permissive in their parenting styles. Parent skills training provides mothers with effective skills that may lead to more consistent parenting. Parenting training has also been shown to improve parent-child interactions. A study by Bohr, Halpert, Chan, Lishak, and Brightling (2010), examined the effectiveness of a parent group-training program on improving the parent-child relationship. The program decreased parental stress and increased parental confidence and mothers had also reported feeling closer to their child after the program was completed. There is good evidence that parent skills training can improve parent-child relationships and prevent child behaviour problems.

Negative parent-child relationships are predictive of child behaviour problems as well as having an effect on the development of psychopathology (Wiggins, Sofronoff, & Sanders, 2009). Parent Management Training (PMT), developed by Alan E. Kazdin (1985), is one of the well studied and evidence-based parenting programs in the field of child behaviour management. PMT uses principles of learning theory and behaviour modification, which are shown to be effective in treating problem behaviours in children (Feldman & Kazdin, 1995). Learning theory and behaviour modification are specific techniques used in the present study. Similarly, the Triple P Parenting program, developed by Mathew R. Sanders (1999), has resulted in better quality parent-child relationships and a decrease in behavioural and emotional problems in children (Wiggins, Sofronoff, & Sanders, 2009). It is suggested by Sanders (1999), Kazdin (1985), and Wiggins and Sofronoff (2009) that a program created using parental skills techniques is sufficient to reduce child problem behaviours and increase parental competence.
Parent training has been delivered in a variety of different ways including group training and self-administered reading material such as in the study conducted by Phaneuf and McIntyre (2011). The study used group-administered training, psychoeducation reading, and video feedback. Child behaviour problems showed significant decreases from pre- to post-intervention results due to the implementation of group training. Group parent training is time efficient and effective because, not only does it address all problems together, it also provides extra feedback and support from mother-to-mother interactions. Gavita and Joyce (2008) conducted a review on behavioural-based parenting programs that are meant to reduce child problem behaviours and decrease parental distress. Parenting programs were shown to be effective in reducing disruptive behaviour in children as well as improving parental distress after a three-year follow-up. Similarly, Forehand et al (2011) studied a group-based curriculum for parents with children that displayed disruptive behaviour. In the group curriculum condition, the parents reported lower levels of problem behaviours in their children as well as increased positive parenting behaviours at post-intervention.

The Helping Families Program provides techniques for parents to use for conduct problems and was reviewed by Day et al (2011). The program was found effective in teaching children the skills that they need. The program uses a modular approach that follows a particular sequence. The first topic is establishing a good parent-child relationship is the key to changing the child’s behaviour. The Helping Families Program uses a parent workbook and a practitioner’s manual throughout the program. Evidence-based strategies such as social learning and positive reinforcement are used in most parent skills training programs and have been shown to be effective. O’Brien and Daley (2011) reviewed self-help parenting interventions that used evidence-based interventions such as social learning and behaviour modification. These programs are often administered in groups with a set number of sessions and contact with the therapist occurs solely in the group sessions. Self-help parenting programs were found to be effective in decreasing child problem behaviours in post-intervention and in longer term (O’Brien & Daley, 2011). Self-help parenting programs are effective because they provide the parents with the skills to apply to their children without the direct assistance from outside sources. The Incredible Years Programme was developed to improve parenting skills and was researched by Hutchings, Bywater, Williams, Lane, and Shakespeare (2011) for its positive outcomes. Hutchings et al (2011) found that child behaviour problems as well as parental depression and parenting skills improved. Parenting programs, such as The Incredible Years Programme, are highly effective in reducing child problem behaviours as seen in multiple research studies and literature reviews.

Elements Included in the Parenting Workshop

The current thesis is a workshop developed by the author following the study of evidence-based approaches and techniques used in a variety of parenting skill programs. Support is provided for parenting skill techniques that were included in the workshop sessions. Components included in the workshop and workbook contents are: applied behaviour analysis, emotional communication, responsive parenting, discipline education, positive reinforcement, and relaxation techniques.
Applied Behaviour Analysis

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a theory of behaviourism and an approach that is used to understand and modify behaviours (Cooper, 2001). ABA involves identifying the cause of behaviour, identifying the behaviour’s characteristics, and identifying the behaviours consequences. The importance of including ABA education in the parenting skills training is so that parents are able to understand their child’s current problem behaviours and why they may be occurring so frequently. It is a method that has been used in classrooms, in clinics, and by parents, to control and change maladaptive behaviours in children (Cooper, 2001). Parents who understand behaviour are more capable of modifying behaviour and identifying problems in the future.

ABA is most commonly used for programs designed for children with autism but they are applicable to children with and without autism (Jaffe, 2010). A case study conducted by Jaffe (2010) involved using ABA to teach an adolescent male that had been diagnosed with autism how to greet people in public. Socializing with other people is usually difficult for people with autism because it is hard for them to use appropriate social skills. Jaffe used verbal prompts (“say hello”) in order to prompt the greeting behaviour in the adolescent with autism. Once this was accomplished with verbal prompts, the researcher could fade out the verbal prompting so that greeting would occur more frequently without prompts. ABA was shown to be effective for teaching an adolescent with autism how to greet peers in public and in school. This can be applied to children with and without autism for a variety of communicative and maladaptive behaviours.

Parents have reported positive outcomes using Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) approaches with their children at home (Cooper, 2001). Dillenburger (2004) conducted an examination of parent’s perceptions on using ABA programs at home and how effective the outcomes were. Twenty-Two questionnaires were given to two groups of parents: one group had just taken an introductory ABA program and the other group had been taking ABA education for more than two years. Both groups reported positive outcomes for their families and their child’s functioning. The first group that had taken the introductory course stated that the education had caused immediate positive effects on behaviour in their families including skill development and child independence. The overall perception of ABA programs from both groups was that ABA programs had an important impact on their children’s lives. Negatives were reported from individual parents including the time and effort it takes to implement an ABA program in the home. This is one of the negatives of ABA programs but the positive behaviour changes have outweighed the time it takes to initially implement a program. Parents that have education in Applied Behaviour Analysis are more capable of implementing effective programs for their children without the help of a professional.

Emotional Communication and Responsive Parenting

Emotional communication is essential in a parent-child relationship in order for a child to develop constructive coping strategies (Gentzler, Contreras-Grau, Kerns, & Weimer, 2005). Emotional communication involves openly communicating feelings either through words or constructive ways of emotional expression between a child and his/her parent. Gentzler et al. (2005) conducted a study examining parental reactions to children’s negative emotions and how often children share their feelings with their mothers. They also set up a scenario where the child was upset about an event and the parent-child emotional communication was
measured through direct observations. Results indicated that child coping strategies are negatively affected by a lack of open emotional communication between parent and child.

Similarly, Landry, Smith, Swank, Zucker, Crawford, and Solari (2012) examined parent-child relationships in relation to a responsive parenting intervention. Responsive parenting consists of a set of behaviours that include providing responses to children with warmth and acceptance, as well as responding contingently to children’s signals (Landry et al., 2012). Landry et al. (2012) conducted an intervention that involved teaching responsive parenting and then applying the skills in a mother-child shared book reading activity. Measurements of directly observed behaviour were recorded at pre and post-intervention. The results indicated that significant positive changes were observed in maternal and child behaviours at post-intervention. Mothers displayed more warmth as well as support in their responses, while children showed more engagement in the shared reading activity.

**Discipline Education to Decrease Child Problem Behaviours**

Education on the difference between punishment and discipline is essential for parents to effectively teach their children positive and adaptive behaviours (Flaskerud, 2011). Punishment such as verbal reprimands and corporal punishment are among the least effective ways of stopping undesirable behaviours and teaching positive behaviours (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1994). These methods are often used because they result from the parent’s frustration or they are fast and easy ways to temporarily stop undesirable behaviour by inducing fear in the child. Discipline is effective in reducing undesirable behaviours and teaching new adaptive behaviours while preventing long-term negative effects on the child (Flaskerud, 2011). Specific examples of discipline that are taught in parenting workshops sessions are time-out procedures and redirecting. Using calm and firm tones of voice as well as the giving clear directions in the presence of undesirable behaviours are also a form of discipline (Flaskerud, 2011).

Discipline strategies are important in order to recover from and prevent future signs of dysfunctional parenting (Arnold, O’Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993). Arnold, O’Leary, Wolff, and Acker (1993) conducted a study that measured dysfunctional discipline strategies and the negative outcomes for parents and children. Dysfunctional parenting practices such as spanking and verbal reprimands have been linked to children’s externalizing behaviours and future drug and alcohol abuse, as well as family violence. Parenting that is too passive can also lead to negative consequences. In relation to dysfunctional parenting, Morawska, Winter, and Sanders (2009) conducted a study on the role that parenting knowledge plays in effective parenting techniques and the avoidance of inconsistent and dysfunctional parenting. Parents that had greater parenting skill knowledge were less likely to display dysfunctional parenting and more likely to show increased parental confidence. Education in healthy discipline is important to preventing dysfunctional parenting and change child problem behaviours.

**Learning Positive Reinforcement**

Positive reinforcement is a process that is used to strengthen a measurable behaviour or dimension of behaviour such as rate, frequency, or duration (Sprague & Perkins, 2009). It is a process that has been shown to be effective in a variety of behaviour modification programs for children and adults with maladaptive behaviours. Positive reinforcement includes praise,
token economy, tangible rewards, and any consequence that follows behaviour and makes it more likely to occur again in the future.

Sprague and Perkins (2009) conducted a study on a behaviour modification program that included techniques such as praise, feedback, social skills training, and other positive reinforcement techniques and contingencies. This program was shown to decrease the frequency of problem behaviour for at-risk children by encouraging adaptive social behaviours. Teaching the use of social skills was combined with praise and positive reinforcement in order to increase positive social behaviours in at-risk children.

Another factor that is emphasized in the workshop is the importance of magnitude of positive reinforcement. Trosclair-Lasserre, Lerman, and Call (2008) examined the importance of reinforcement magnitude and the likelihood for behaviour to occur in the future based on reinforcer magnitude. Three children who were displaying problem behaviour participated in the study. Functional assessments were conducted to identify the function of each participant’s behaviour that would be manipulated. Results showed that reinforcer efficacy is significantly affected by the magnitude of the reinforcement and schedule of reinforcement.

Relaxation Techniques

Parental stress contributes to interpersonal interactions that promote externalizing behaviours in children that are at-risk of developing defiant or other aggressive behaviours (Kazdin and Whitley, 2003). It is important to teach parents about relaxation techniques and ways of stress reduction to reduce the negative effects parental stress may have on children’s behaviour. Kazin and Whitley (2003) conducted a study on the effects of additional components to parent problem-solving (PPS) that addressed parental stress and the implementation of parent management training. The results showed improvement in children’s behaviour in all programs but the program that addressed parental stress showed significant improvements in child behaviour and the parent’s likelihood to participate. High levels of stress can cause parents to withdraw from treatment so teaching solutions for reducing stress benefits both parent and child.

Relaxation is one skill that helps reduce parental stress (Hall & Long, 2009). Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a technique used to reduce stress and relax muscles by systematically tensing and relaxing groups of muscles (Hall & Long, 2009). Participants of PMR are also asked to focus on the feeling of tension and relaxation so that they can distinguish the difference and be aware of it for the future. PMR has been shown to treat symptoms of anxiety, trauma, stress, and anger. Hall and Long (2009) applied PMR in a group of female service users in a medium secure setting and were successful in reducing the women’s symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. Similarly, Ghafari et al (2009) conducted a study using PMR that showed modest support for PMR on improved quality of life for patients with multiple sclerosis. A control group was compared to an experimental group of patients with multiple sclerosis that participated in 63 sessions of PMR. The results showed no significant difference in mean scores from t-tests, but a modest difference in quality of life was found. Relaxation techniques can be a useful technique to reduce parental stress for parents dealing with challenging behaviours.
Summary

In summary, the literature suggests that parenting a child is challenging in a domestic violence situation. It also suggests that teaching parenting skills can help improve child problem behaviours, increase parental efficacy, and lead to stronger parent-child relationships (Bohr, Halpert, Chan, Lishak, & Brightling, 2010). The present parenting skills workshop includes multiple techniques and parenting skills that have been shown to be moderately or significantly effective in reducing challenging behaviours and improving parental efficacy. The workshop was designed in reference to peer-reviewed articles and research studies on effective parenting programs and parenting in the context of domestic violence.
Chapter III: Method

Confidentiality/Informed Consent
This thesis was approved by the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College. In the first session of the workshop, the consent form (Appendix A) was distributed, discussed, and signed. The facilitator ensured that the participants understood everything included in the consent form as well as the confidentiality of the workshop.

Workshop Facilitator Characteristics
The facilitator should have an educational background in psychology or behavioural sciences. The individual should have worked with people in community services either through placements or past employment. Education in Applied Behaviour Analysis is a requirement as the workshop is behaviour-based and requires the understanding of the function and modification of child behaviour. The facilitator should have a general understanding of factors associated with the abused women and children population. An understanding of how to facilitate a group would be essential as well because the workshop includes group discussions and interactive activities.

Participants
The workshop was designed for mothers that have experienced domestic violence residing at the transitional housing agency or associated shelter and who were in need of acquiring parenting skills.

Workshop participants were required to be mothers of at least one child ranging from ages 1 to 13-years-old who were residing at the shelter or transitional housing agency and were interested in obtaining parenting skills. There was no age limit for the mothers attending. The participants were required not to have serious cognitive impairments because it was a requirement to be able to obtain the skills being taught as well as understand the content in the workbook that was provided. It was acceptable if the participant was seeking additional counselling for parenting or other issues.

Participants were recruited through the transitional housing agency by recommendations from staff or by contacting the office directly to sign-up. Posters that stated the date and time of the workshop were posted on each floor of the transitional housing facility. It was recommended that only mothers that lived at the transitional housing facility or the women’s shelter attend the workshop. This was to ensure that all participants had documentation within the agency to determine that they had experienced an abusive relationship. If a participant was interested, she could contact the facilitator at the agency directly or through e-mail.

Participant 1
Personal details have been modified to maintain confidentiality.

Client Characteristics: Participant 1 was a resident at the agency. She had a young son. Agency staff and other residents had commented on her excellent skills as a mother but the participant wanted to further her parenting knowledge by joining the workshop group.
Participant 2

Client Characteristics: Participant 2 was not a resident at the agency. She had a young son and had been seeking counselling within the agency for a few months prior to the group. This participant also joined to further her parenting knowledge and better prepare herself for her child’s future development stages.

Participant 3

Client Characteristics: Participant 3 was a resident at the agency. She was attending additional parenting programming outside of the agency for her child. She attended to further her knowledge in parenting and for her son who had severe ADHD.

Participant 4

Client Characteristics: Participant 4 was a mother of 4 children and was a resident at the agency. She was recommended to the group, by an agency counsellor, for difficulty she had parenting her children.

Design

The design of the research study is a pre-post test AB Design. The dependent variables being studied are parental efficacy and child problem behaviours. The independent variable in the study is the parenting skills workshop. The results will be taken from 3 questionnaires and 1 on-going evaluation form. These results from the 3 questionnaires are complied into bar graphs for visual analysis. Tables will be compiled from obtained raw data scores. The focus of the workshop is parental skill building and confidence building. Participants are presented with information on child development and behaviour dynamics. Participants are then taught effective parenting skills through attending sessions and reading through the provided workbook (Appendix B). The author developed the workbook by researching a variety of literature on parenting skills, child development, and domestic violence. These materials were only used as a reference in the development of the workshop and for research purposes. The following resources were reviewed and referenced for the workbook:

- *Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse* (Bancroft, 2004).
- *Common Sense Parenting Using Your Head as Well as Your Heart to Raise School-Aged Children* (Burke, Herron, and Barnes, 2006).
- *Seven Steps to Improve Your Child’s Social Skills* (Hagar, Goldstein, and Brooks, 2006).
• *The Discipline Book: How to Have a Better-Behaved Child From Birth to Age Ten* (Sears and Sears, 1995).
• *How to Behave so Your Children Will Too!* (Severe, 1997).
• *How to Discipline your Six to Twelve Year Old Without Losing Your Mind* (Wyckoff and Unell, 1991).

The parenting skills were taught in a workshop format to allow opportunity for mothers to discuss their situations with other mothers who may have had similar issues with their children. Also, it was suggested that a workshop would be less time consuming for the agency, which has a variety of programs occurring daily. Most of the workshop sessions involved going through the workbook with the facilitator, discussing personal parenting experiences, and practicing skills taught. Parental efficacy was not the main focus of the group but it was a possible dependent variable associated with acquiring parenting skills.

This workshop was designed to deliver in a women’s shelter or a women’s transitional housing facility for abused women and children. The workshop was not intended for fathers or mothers that are not associated with a facility serving abused women and children.

The workshop was designed as a series of weekly 90-minute sessions delivered over the course of 8 weeks (Appendix C). The length was selected because the group programs at the agency ranged from 6 to 8 weeks in length and once a week would be easier for the mothers to find time to attend. Volunteers at the agency provided childcare during the 90-minute sessions. The maximum number of participants for the workshop was eight and the minimum number was two because of the group discussion component. The workshop was delivered by combining group discussion, lecture, and homework assignments. The facilitator used the workbook in order to deliver the weekly workshop sessions. A presentation board was not required for this workshop.

**Procedure**

Based on the literature review, parental efficacy, confidence, and stress, were chosen as the topics of the workshop. The interventions chosen for the workshop were: skill building, attentive listening, emotional communication, positive reinforcement, discipline, praise, activity planning, and relaxation techniques.

The main reason for developing the workshop was that many of the mothers at the agency had children that engaged in difficult behaviours and were in need of assistance when dealing with these behaviours. This was for developing a parenting skills workshop. Some problem behaviours identified by the staff were disruptive behaviours such as yelling and aggression. This information was taken into consideration while developing the workshop.

The workshop consisted of eight sessions (Appendix D). The first session, focused on introduction and child development. It was also used to collect pre-workshop data using three assessments. These included the TOPSE developed by Bloomfield and Kendall (2005), the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSCS) developed by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (1978), and the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale (CCBS) developed by Bourke-Taylor, Law, and Howie (2010). These measurements were delivered again for post-workshop data in the eighth session. The first session introduced positive parenting and an overview of the skills targeted in each session. Participants were asked to write their goals or what they wished to obtain from the workshop in their workbook provided. The participants
were taught about typical child development and associated behaviours. A homework assignment was provided in the workbook and given at the end of each session. The goal of the first session’s homework assignment was to develop awareness of the behaviours that the participants’ children were displaying. An on-going assessment form was distributed at the beginning of each session starting at session two (Appendix E).

Session two was used to teach participants about Applied Behaviour Analysis and how behaviour works. It was also used to teach about the behavioural and emotional symptoms children frequently develop from witnessing violence. Participants were taught how children learn certain behaviours and what can maintain behaviours. This included how children learn to hit and engage in other problem behaviours. The homework assignment was designed so that mothers could identify the possible causes and factors maintaining their child’s behaviour.

Session three was designed to teach emotional communication and attentive listening. It discussed how to increase positive interactions and positive parent-child relationships. The facilitator taught the participants how to respond to a child’s emotions and how to promote healthy expressions of anger. Attentive listening was taught in a step-by-step instruction. The participants’ homework assignment involved planning and participating in a positive activity with their children. This encouraged involvement and activity planning in the parent-child relationship.

Sessions four and five both involved teaching effective discipline techniques. Two sessions were needed in order to teach the skills effectively. Session four involved teaching disciplinary communication and how to set limits. Specific skills taught were: giving clear directions, stating behavioural expectations, and stating consequences. Activities during this session included rephrasing example directions. The homework assignment included setting rules and limits at home.

Session five addressed discipline as well as reinforcing positive behaviours. Skills such as time-out procedures, positive reinforcement, and planned ignoring were taught. The goal of this session was to increase the participants’ confidence by giving them specific discipline and reinforcement skills. Homework required the participants to set up their own time-out procedures at home.

Session six concentrated on a child’s positive and adaptive behaviours. Skills taught in this session were teaching children pro-social behaviours as well as how to maintain their already existing positive behaviours using reinforcement. Homework involved identifying children’s positive behaviours and what they find positively reinforcing. This allowed participants to identify and use existing reinforcers.

The last two sessions focused on the moms’ behaviour. These sessions were used to help participants decrease personal stress and learn how to control stressful responses. Relaxation techniques were taught in session seven and practiced while in session. This session also discussed how to control personal behaviour around children and what to do when a child witnesses misbehaviors.

Session eight was used to teach mothers about the importance of self-care. This session taught participants how to decrease stress and maintain their health. The last part of session eight was used for final discussion and concerns. During this time, the same three assessments were handed out and returned upon completion to the facilitator for post-workshop data collection.
Every session involved group discussion, a homework assignment, and practicing parenting skills. From session two to eight, the on-going assessment form (Appendix E) was filled out at the beginning of each session. Participants were able to keep the workbook to use for future reference when all eight workshop-sessions were completed.

**Measures**

Four evaluations were used during the workshop. The 3 Pre-Post Measures included the TOPSE (Bloomfield and Kendall, 2005), the Child Challenging Behaviour Scale (CCBS) (Bourke-Taylor, Law, and Howie, 2010), and the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSCS) (Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman, 1978). These measurements received permission for use in this research study but are copyrighted and will not be included in the appendices. Three were administered in the first session and the last session and the ongoing assessment form (Appendix E) was administered at the beginning of every session.

The first measure was a questionnaire that measures parental self-efficacy developed by Bloomfield and Kendall (2005). The questionnaire is comprised of 48 self-efficacy statements that address several domains of parenting. The domains include: affection and emotion, discipline and boundary setting, control and understanding, self-acceptance, learning and knowledge, and enjoyment. The TOPSE is measured on a Likert scale from 0-10, with 10 meaning completely agreeing with the statement.

The second measure was a Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSCS) (Appendix C) developed by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (1978). This scale measures parental efficacy and is also measured using a Likert scale. It consists of 17 questions related to parenting confidence.

The third measure was a scale used to measure the severity of a child’s problem behaviours from the mother’s ratings. The CCBS developed by Bourke-Taylor, Law, and Howie (2010), is used to evaluate the changes in child behaviour. It consists of 11 questions with answers based on a Likert Scale. All three measurements are used as a pre-workshop and post-workshop measurement.

The fourth measure was an on-going assessment (Appendix E) designed by the author to acquire feedback from the participants. It consists of 4 yes or no questions and two questions for long feedback answers. It measures whether or not the participant has used the skills taught in sessions. It allows the facilitator to identify what they need to improve as a facilitator.
Chapter IV: Results

The main hypothesis of the workshop was that participation in the developed workshop would increase parental confidence, increase parental efficacy, and decrease child problem behaviours. The pre-post questionnaires, The Child Challenging Behaviour Scale, Parenting Sense of Competence, and the TOPSE, were examined in order to evaluate the workshop’s effect on the participants. All 3 assessments were given to the participants at the first session of the group and the results of these were for the baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the workshop. Participants 3 and 4 only attended 2 sessions out of 8 in total. Intervention data was only collected for Participants 1 and 2 because they attended all 8 sessions. For both participants, pre- and post- raw data from the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale is presented in Table 1. Pre- and Post- raw data for the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale is presented in Table 2. Pre- and Post- raw data from the TOPSE subscales for participant 1 and 2 is shown in Table 3. Table 4 contains the answers for the on-going assessment evaluation form. A graph for both participants’ scores on the CCBS are presented in Appendix F and the graph for PSCS is presented in Appendix G. Separate graphs are presented for the TOPSE subscales for Participant 1 in Appendix H, and for Participant 2 in Appendix I.

Individual Participants Questionnaire Results

Participant 1 was administered all 3 assessments at the first workshop session. Participant 1 attended all 8 sessions. For baseline, she scored 33 on the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale (CCBS) (see Table 1). Possible scores range from 11 to 55 on the CCBS and a higher score means the child has more challenging behaviours. Participant 1’s score indicates that her child displays a moderate amount of challenging behaviours. Participant 1’s score on the final CCBS assessment was 30. This suggests a decrease in her child’s challenging behaviours over the course of 8 weeks. On the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSCS), Participant 1 scored 72 at baseline. This indicates that she had high self-confidence in her parenting abilities. Her final score for the PSCS was 48, which was a decrease of 24 from baseline indicating that participant one’s parental competence decreased from baseline to post-intervention (see Table 2). The TOPSE subscales are marked out of 60, the maximum score that can be achieved. The higher the score, the more confident the parent is in that area of parenting. Participant 1’s pre- and post-intervention scores for the TOPSE are displayed in Table 3. Participant one’s scores decreased from baseline to post-intervention for the subscales: emotion and affection, play and enjoyment, control, discipline and setting boundaries, pressures, and learning and knowledge. There was an increase in subscales: empathy and understanding, and self-acceptance. Overall scores indicate that the predicted outcome to increase parental efficacy was not met. The scores indicate that the study did affect child problem behaviours, resulting in an overall decrease from pre- to post-intervention results. Similar results were found with participant 2 but there was a higher increase in her parental efficacy scores at post-intervention.

Participant 2 completed all 3 assessments in the first session for baseline but completed post-intervention assessments outside of the sessions because she was ill for the final session. She attended all but the last session. She scored 39 on the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale (see Table 1) and 70 on the Parenting Sense of Competence scale (see Table 2) for baseline. For the intervention results, Participant 2 showed a decreased score on the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale, which indicates a decrease in problem behaviours. An increase
on the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale for post-intervention suggests an increase in parental confidence. This indicated that her child’s problem behaviours had decreased significantly from baseline scores and her parental efficacy increased from baseline to post-intervention over the course of 8 weeks.

Table 1

*Raw Data From the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale for Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Pre-Workshop Score</th>
<th>Post-Workshop Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From pre- to post-assessment scores, participant 2 increased in TOPSE subscales: emotion and affection, play and enjoyment, control, discipline and setting boundaries, pressures, and learning and knowledge (see Table 3). Her scores decreased for TOPSE subscales: empathy and understanding, and self-acceptance. Participant 2 benefited more in terms of increased parental efficacy than Participant 1. This indicates that the workshop may be affective in increasing parental efficacy for some participants as well as decrease child problem behaviours.

Table 2

*Raw Data From the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale for Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Pre-Workshop Score</th>
<th>Post-Workshop Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant 3 only attended the 3 sessions and did not participate in the final assessment, therefore the results will not be graphed for participant 3.

Participant 4 only attended 3 out of the 8 workshop sessions and did not participate in the final assessments; her data will not be graphed.

Table 3

Raw Data From the TOPSE Subscales for Participants 1 and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion and Affection</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play and Enjoyment</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy and Understanding</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressures</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Knowledge</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results From The Ongoing Assessment Evaluation Forms

At the beginning of every session, the participants were asked to fill out an on-going assessment evaluation form (Appendix E) in order for the facilitator to receive feedback and make changes if necessary. The results from all 7 evaluation forms for each participant were generally positive and emphasized that the facilitator was attentive and provided good communication to the group (see Table 4). Both participants responded to the question “Did you find the last session helpful?” and “Did you use the skills that were discussed in the last session?” with “yes” and gave comments such as “the facilitator makes me understand everything so well”. When asked questions such as “Was the last session informative?” and “In the last session, did you learn something that you did not know before attending the session?”, both participants responded with “yes”. None of the 7 evaluation forms were answered with “no” or had negative comments.
Table 4

*Raw Data From the Ongoing Assessment Evaluation Form for Participants 1 and 2.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>Session 5</th>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Session 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the last session helpful?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you use the skills that were discussed in the last session?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the last session informative?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you learn something that you did not know before attending the session?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Participants 3 and 4 did not provide feedback on the ongoing assessment evaluation form. Participant 2 did not attend session 8 due to illness.

These results suggest that the group was informative and there was good communication among the participants and facilitator. One participant commented, “The facilitator gives all of us equal amounts to participate”. The comments suggest that future facilitators should have strong listening and communication skills before facilitating the workshop. Overall, the feedback for the workshop was positive from all involved. The agency staff and participants commented that they thoroughly enjoyed the workshop.
Chapter V: Discussion

The current study set out to develop a workshop that would effectively increase parental efficacy experienced by mothers that have been abused by their ex-partners. As stated in the literature review, domestic violence can cause impairment in certain areas of functioning and can lead to a decrease in a mother’s ability to parent effectively (Jarvis, Gordon, & Novaco 2005). It was proposed that a workshop that was presented in a transitional housing agency for abused women would be the most effective way to increase the parenting abilities in a group format. Using a workshop format maximizes the number of women that can obtain useful parenting strategies as well as increase their parental efficacy and self-worth. The workshop delivers skills and provides social support without requiring a lot of staff time to do so.

Final Outcomes

The final product of the current project was: a participant workbook (Appendix B). The author of the current research study developed the participant workbook by reviewing and researching parenting and child development resources. It included information on child development, causes and maintenance of behaviours, positive parenting techniques, emotional communication, healthy discipline, self-care, and relaxation techniques. Other topics that were covered in discussion were parenting challenges, life stressors, and parenting after domestic violence.

Participant 1 showed a decrease on one of the parental efficacy measures and a decrease on the majority of the subscales for the TOPSE measure. There was no significant decrease from pre- to post- parental efficacy results for either participant. The workshop did not increase parental efficacy as Participant 2 showed a slight increase on all subscales for the post intervention TOPSE measure and an increase from pre- to post- results on the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale measure. Both participants 1 and 2 showed a decrease on the Child’s Challenging Behaviour Scale, which indicates that the workshop was effective in decreasing problem behaviours. The reason for this may be because the workshop was ABA-based and involved learning parenting skills to deal with problem behaviours rather than focusing on the participant’s confidence level. Adding additional sessions that focus on the experiences that the participants have gone through might assist in increasing their overall self-efficacy. This would validate their feelings about their parenting and allow them to change their negative thoughts through several sessions. Results show that the current workshop may be more effective in decreasing problem behaviours in children than it is for increasing parental efficacy.

There is a consistency with the literature in regards to reducing child problem behaviours through use of parenting programs but the workshop was not as effective in increasing parental efficacy for all participants.

Strengths

The development and implementation of this workshop showed various strengths, mostly seen through the feedback from the agency and participants. The workshop proved to be cost and time effective. It was implemented in the same building that the participants resided in, which allowed easy access to the sessions. The idea of a workshop that taught parenting skills and child development had never been implemented at the agency before and received
excellent support from agency staff. Sessions incorporated the behavioural effects of children who witness violence, which makes the workshop unique from other parenting skills workshops. It enabled participants to develop new relationships with other participants and was effective in providing a social support group with discussions. Since the participant sample was small, it allowed closer connections to develop between the participants. The two participants who showed up to every session gave positive feedback and reported that the sessions were informative and helpful. The workshop seemed to be a success in decreasing child problem behaviours from pre- and post-intervention. This may be due to the education on child development and parenting skills, as well as the homework assignments that were in place to practice and generalize skills outside of sessions.

Limitations and Challenges

One limitation of the study was the small participant sample. A larger sample in future studies would provide more data on how effective the workshop was, especially in regards to increasing parental efficacy and acquiring skills. Another limitation was not having direct observation of the parenting skills practiced outside of the workshop. Being able to witness the generalization of the skills to the participants’ everyday lives would provide objective data that skills were obtained and practiced appropriately. Lengthening the workshop might effect significant improvements in parental efficacy and further decreases in child problem behaviours.

A challenge to the workshop was contacting mothers at the shelter and transitional housing facility to invite their participation in the study. The methods that were used already established contacts through counsellors at the agency as well as posters that were put up around the facility. Due to the nature of the agency, confidentiality was carefully protected and directly contacting participants was not possible. Motivating participants to attend each session was difficult because most participants had additional appointments and life stressors. For example, a life stressor that caused Participant 3 to discontinue attendance was a custody battle. In future implementations, further incentives could be used to motivate participation.

Multilevel Challenges to Service Implementation

There are many challenges encountered when working with abused women in transitional housing facilities. These challenges are discussed on a client, program, organization, and societal level.

Client Level

Women and children that have been abused should be approached with sensitivity. Many of these women have low self-esteem and are vulnerable from the events that they have experienced. It is important to research this population before attempting to work its members so that you are aware of the situations they have been through. The women may take time to disclose information in counselling sessions until they have established trust with the counselor or other staff. Working with women in the groups made me realize the amount of stress and hardship that these women go through even after getting out of an abusive relationship. The women would get worried walking in town with their children in case they would run into their ex-partner. One woman I worked with was very afraid of her ex-partner and we helped her cope with this by safety planning. Being aware of the issues that the women face after an abusive
relationship made me realize how important it is to be open and understanding while implementing this workshop.

Program Level
Women from domestic violence situations often have a lot of things going on in their lives such as custody battles, single parenting, and loss of financial support. The programming and counselling services that are available at the transitional housing facility addresses these problems. The women enjoy attending programming such as quilting, scrapbooking, cooking, and other activities as well as individual counselling. Counsellors and staff are aware that women have multiple things going on in their lives, especially if they have children. Many women have to go through custody battles and other programming with their children, which can make attendance unpredictable. It is important to be understanding in these situations and realize that women may not always be able to attend every session of programming. Any programming that allows women to make connections and build their self-confidence is usually acceptable. While implementing the workshop, I had to be aware of these everyday life changes in the women’s lives.

Organization Level
The women’s transitional housing facility is a non-profit organization and it is not always easy to get donations in order to fund programming for residents. This is a major issue for most nonprofit organizations and it can cause stress among program facilitators who want to make programming available. The organization has a feminist perspective applied to its counselling and environment. A major goal in women’s shelters is to empower the women who have been degraded from abuse, therefore a feminist perspective is a good fit for this population. The organization and staff have been stereotyped in the past as being ‘man-haters’ and sometimes the staff members have been accused of being lesbians. Attitudes to the organization have changed greatly but stereotypes still persist. I have had personal incidents with this stereotype being projected towards staff while implementing the workshop and in my personal life. I found the best way to deal with this incident is to educate the person about the organization’s philosophy and why these practices are in place. These agencies mostly consist of women staff members due to the nature of the resident’s situations. Having male staff members is not encouraged considering the nature of the organization. It is important to be aware of the participant’s feelings towards the male gender when implementing the workshop. Having a male facilitator may not be acceptable.

Societal Level
Many people tend to ignore the issues surrounding a domestic violence situation. People may feel that it is not their right to intrude on another individual’s family or personal life by reporting abuse, even in violent and dangerous circumstances. Women that have been abused and return to live with their abuser may be misunderstood by the general population. People may find it hard to understand why a woman would return. From my experiences and from discussions with agency staff members, people tend to view the mother as not willing to get help and also careless for putting her or her children in a dangerous situation. The way to help remove these attitudes from society is to educate people about the cycle of violence. Women in abusive relationships leave and come back multiple times before finally deciding to leave their partner permanently. This cycle arises for a variety of reasons including but not limited to: financial
security, threats, lack of social support, and promises from the abuser. Society may also view agencies for abused women and children as not beneficial in helping women to be independent. The reality is that shelters and temporary housing facilities provide a variety of counselling groups, skill programs, and assistance aimed to help a woman become more independent. Transitional housing facilities have a limit as to the amount of time that a woman is allowed to stay. This practice is in place so that there is room for new residents and so women will not become dependent for housing. Educating the public about domestic violence is needed for further understanding and support for victims of domestic violence.

**Contribution to the Behavioural Psychology Field**

The effectiveness of Applied Behaviour Analysis in modifying child behaviours and providing parents with appropriate parenting skills has been repeatedly demonstrated. This workshop has taken that knowledge and educated individuals from domestic violence situations in need of support and guidance in order to successfully parent their children. A workshop specifically designed to teach abused mothers parenting skills could be advantageous to other agencies with clients in need of support. The workshop addresses the behavioural and psychological effects that violence has on parents and children. This is an approach that has not as yet appeared in the literature. Organizations could utilize a cost effective and time efficient workshop like this as a support group and teaching tool for abused mothers.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

With the help of this workshop the ability to teach abused mothers effective and appropriate parenting skills, while providing support, is possible. Each participant saw a decrease in their child’s problem behaviours from pre-assessments to post-assessments and each participant found the workshop to be informative and helpful. However, there are improvements that could be made in the future. As mentioned in the limitations, a larger participant sample would provide more insight as to the effectiveness of the workshop. The workshop could be modified to provide more sessions over a longer period of time as eight sessions does not seem to be long enough to see a significant difference in parental efficacy or to cover all relevant information. Providing an evaluation measure in between the pre- and post- measures would also provide further information on the participant’s progress throughout sessions. Providing more interactive homework assignments may make it more likely for the participants to practice the parenting skills at home. In the present study, the children were not included in any of the workshop sessions. For future studies, including the children in some sessions for observation purposes may provide more information as to the child’s problem behaviours. Then the appropriate skills can be taught specifically for those behaviours.

Overall, further studies should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the workshop in regards to teaching mothers from domestic violence situations appropriate parenting skills.
V. References


McMaster University, Canchild Centre for Childhood Research. Hamilton: Canada, see http://www.canchild.ca/en/measures/child_challenging_behaviour_scale.asp


Appendix A: St. Lawrence College Consent Form

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

St. Lawrence College

A Positive Parenting Workshop based on the Behavioural Components of Evidence-Based Programs to Increase Parental Efficacy in a Shelter for Abused Women and Children

STUDENT: Leah Dermott, St. Lawrence College
Ldermott05166@hotmail.com

ON-SITE SUPERVISOR: Michelle Cunningham

COLLEGE SUPERVISOR: Elizabeth de Grace
degfam@cogeco.ca

Invitation
Before your decision to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand the reasoning behind the study being done and what it will involve. I am a student in my 4th year of the Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College. I am currently enrolled in a placement at the Robin’s Hope through Kingston’s Interval House. This placement requires me to complete a research project. I would appreciate your help in completing this project. Please take your time in reading the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before you decide if you want to take part.

Why is this study being done?
This study is being done on the effectiveness of a Positive Parenting Workshop—a program that is meant to assist parents by providing them with the skills and confidence that they need to change their child’s problem behaviours. We believe that this program will be helpful in increasing parental confidence, and want to know if it is effective for mothers residing at Interval House and Robin’s Hope. I will be using three assessments to see if the program is helpful in increasing your parental confidence. Your opinions and thoughts are important and I am asking for your help in seeing if this workshop actually works.
APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

What will you need to do if you take part?
If you choose to take part in this study, you will be asked to take part in 8 sessions of the workshop. The sessions will be held on Wednesday mornings at Robin’s Hope in the meeting room and will last about 1.5 to 2 hours in length. At the first session, before you start the program, you will be asked to fill out three questionnaires that will take about ten minutes each to complete. At the beginning of the session each week, you will be asked to provide feedback on how you think the previous session went and what you think needs improvement. This will take about five minutes to complete. At the end of the series of 8 sessions, you will be asked to complete the same three questionnaires that you completed in the first session (this will take about ten minutes per questionnaire). These answers will help us to see your progress throughout the program. You will also be asked to participate in group discussions as well as homework assignments. This will include a workbook to help you follow along and provide you with additional tips and information. This includes practicing the skills learned in sessions.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?
Benefits of taking part in this research study include obtaining effective parenting skills to help you deal with challenging behaviours that your child may have. As well, you may feel more confident in your parenting abilities as well as feel better about what you are capable of in general. You may also make personal connections in the group from discussions and expand your social network. This workshop has the potential to decrease problem behaviours that your child may be engaging in.

What are the potential benefits of this research study to others?
Information from this project may bring awareness to positive parenting workshops and programs that single-parent families, as well as mothers from abusive relationship situations, can benefit from the program. It may also lead family centered programs to change parts of their program to better suit the needs of single parent families.
APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

What are the potential disadvantages or risks of taking part?
Risks from taking part in this study are minimal but may include loss of time from participating in other tasks during the sessions. You may get bored with answering questions in the workbook or on the questionnaires. You may feel tired at times during the sessions. The program should be effective in changing child behaviour and increasing parental confidence but there is the possibility that this will not occur. Some sessions involve discussion of children witnessing violence and may cause uncomfortable or unpleasant emotional responses.

What happens if something goes wrong?
If you do have any strong reactions to questions or anything during the sessions, you may talk to me, or Michelle Cunningham about your concerns.

Will information I collect from you in this project be kept private?
We will make every attempt to keep any information that identifies you strictly confidential unless required by law. You will be assigned a code number to enter in the “participant” spot on every questionnaire that you fill out. Information that is kept on a computer will not be released under any circumstances. It will also be protected by a password. You will not be identified by name in any written reports, publications, or presentations resulting from this project. All documents that are on a computer will be protected by a password. All documents on the computer will be deleted at the end of the study. Signed consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet at St. Lawrence college for seven to ten years after this study. Any completed questionnaires will be shredded once results are collected.

What are some privacy limitations?
Any personal information will be protected unless required by law in the possible event of child neglect or if a child or yourself is at risk.
APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Do you have to take part?
Taking part in this project is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to participate. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you do decide to take part in this research project, you are able to withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawal and there will be no penalty or negative effects.

Contact for further information
This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College and at Robin’s Hope. The project will be developed under the supervision of Elizabeth de Grace, my supervisor from St. Lawrence College. I appreciate your cooperation and if you have any additional questions or concerns, you can ask me, ldermott05166@hotmail.com, or Michelle Cunningham. Feel free to also contact my College supervisor degfam@cogeco.ca or you may also contact the Research Ethics Board at reb@sl.on.ca.

Consent
Please complete the following form and return it to me if you agree to take part in this research project. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records. An additional copy of your consent will be retained at the agency and at a secure location at St. Lawrence College.

By signing this form, I agree that:
- The study has been thoroughly explained to me.
- All my questions were answered.
- Possible risks and possible benefits of this study have been explained to me.
- I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.
- I am free now and in the future to ask any questions I have about this study.
- I have been informed that my personal information will be kept confidential.
- I understand that no information that would identify me will be released or printed without asking me first.
- I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.
APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

I hereby consent to take part in this research study.

________________________________  ___________________________________  _____________
Name of Participant (Print)                    Signature of Participant                  Date

________________________________  ___________________________________  _____________
Name of Student (Print)                      Signature of Student                      Date

________________________________  ___________________________________  _____________
Name of Agency Supervisor (Print)             Signature of Agency Supervisor             Date
Appendix B: Workbook Contents

Parenting Skills

Workshop

An 8 Session Interactive Workshop for Mothers who Have Experienced Domestic Violence and Abuse and are in Need of Guidance and Support in Raising Their Children.

Participant Workbook

Name:_________________________

Leah Dermott
Bachelor of Applied Arts in Behavioural Psychology
St. Lawrence College, Kingston, ON
What you will learn in the Parenting Skills Workshop:

- Typical Behaviours at Different Child Development Stages
- Positive Parenting Skills and Techniques
- Effective and Safe Discipline and Rewarding Positive Behaviours
- How to Establish Rules and Expectations
- Problem Behaviours and How to Approach Them
- Developing and Maintaining a Healthy Mother-Child Relationship
- Positive Interactions and Emotional Communication Skills
- Disciplinary Communication
- Promoting Child’s Prosocial Behaviours
- Self-Monitoring and Controlling Personal Behaviour
- Self-Care and Relaxation Techniques

What We Hope you will Gain: Confidence in your ability to be an effective and positive parent.
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Parenting Skills Workshop Outline

8 Week Program, 90 Minute Sessions

Group discussions are welcome throughout every session. This is just an outline of topics that will be discussed by the facilitator. Questions and group interaction is encouraged.

Session One: Introduction and Child Development
- Introduction/Confidentiality/Workshop overview
- Pre-Assessments
- Group rules established
- Workbooks Handed out
- What is Positive Parenting?
- Child Development and Age-related Behaviours
- Typical Problem Behaviours
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Behaviour Chart

Session Two: What Causes and Maintains Problem Behaviours?
- Group Discussion of Homework Assignment/Questions
- How Your Child’s Behaviour Works
- The Causes of Behaviour
- What Children learn from Witnessing Violence
- How Being a Witness can Affect Child Development
- How to move forward/coping/understanding
- Group Discussion*

Session Three: Positive Interactions and Emotional Communication
- Group Discussion of homework assignment/questions
- Promoting Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Interaction/Emotional Communication Skills
- Responding to child emotions/attentive listening
- Importance of quality time
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Planned activity with child

Session Four: Disciplinary Communication/Setting Rules and Limits
Group share: parent-child activities/what went well/what did not work
What is Disciplinary Communication?
Giving clear and appropriate directions
Activity: Rephrasing directions
Punishment Vs. Discipline
Setting rules and limits
Group Discussion*
Homework Assignment: Set your own limits

Session Five: Discipline and Behaviour Management
Group share: questions/what worked/what did not work
Attitudes about discipline strategies
Specific reinforcement and discipline
Avoiding Power Struggles
Proper Time-out Procedures
Group Discussion*
Homework Assignment: Time-Out Preparation

Session Six: Promoting Children’s Positive Behaviours
Group share: questions/what worked/what did not work
How to foster positive self-esteem
How to Encourage Positive Behaviour (manners, getting along, etc.)
Reinforcing Positive Behaviours
Sticker Charts/Praising/Rewarding
Group Discussion*
Homework Assignment: Reinforcing Child’s Positive Behaviours

Session Seven: Self-Monitoring and Controlling Personal Behaviour
Group share: positive behaviours/rewarding techniques
Controlling Personal Behaviour in Presence of a Child
What Children learn from Angry/Frustrated Responses
Relaxation Techniques (Deep breathing, Muscle Relaxation)
Group Discussion*
Homework Assignment: Practice Relaxation Techniques

Session Eight: Dealing with Setbacks and Self-Care/Goodbyes
Group Share: benefits/downsides of relaxation techniques
Discussing the Importance of Self-care
Staying Healthy and Happy
Taking time for Mom
Dealing with Setbacks/Additional Assistance
Group Discussion*
Post-Assessments/Feedback Form
Parenting Skills Workshop Goals

What do you wish to learn from this workshop?
What do you wish to obtain from this workshop?

______________________________________________________________________________
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Session One:

Introduction and Child Development
What is Positive Parenting?

- Positive Parenting is a helpful, practical approach to raising children that focuses on the positive.

- It uses strong, nurturing relationships, good communication and positive attention to help children develop.

- Positive parenting supports your child and rewards good behaviour.

- It doesn't mean that children don't need discipline, or limits and boundaries.
Positive Parenting Includes:

- **Saying positive things to your child.** Always acknowledging good behaviours that your child engages in. Examples:

  “Thank you for being helpful in the store today” or “You were nice and quiet during dinner today” and “Thank you for helping your brother”.

- **Display affection.** Even during stressful and busy days, smiling or hugging your child daily is an easy and healthy way to let them know they are supported.

- When your child’s negative behaviour improves, acknowledge this positive change.

  Examples:

  “Thank you for calming yourself down” or “You are getting better at not fighting with your brother and playing nicely”.

- **Make sure that your child knows that it is their behaviour that is not acceptable.**

- **Provide appropriate discipline for problem behaviours and praise for appropriate and encouraged behaviours.**
Child Development Stages & Behaviours

What to Expect at Different Ages

Most of the behaviour that children display at each age and stage in their development is quite normal. Every child will develop at their own pace so don’t worry if they are not developing certain skills right away. Keep your expectations of their behaviour and abilities realistic, use the developmental milestones below only as a guide so you have an idea of what to expect along your child’s development. Remember that encouragement and affection while your child develops is the most important element.

6 to 18 Months Old

- Around this age your child will begin to explore the world around them by using their senses such as tasting and touching.
- The child will have an increased curiosity in exploring the environments around them.
- The child’s language skills start to develop at this age.
- They may become distracted easily.
- **Temper tantrums are a normal and reoccurring behaviour for a child to engage in at this stage.**

Helpful things that you can for your child:

- Provide love and support such as encouragement when they are trying new things.
- Use specific praise for positive reinforcement, such as—“great singing”, “good jumping”, “Thank you for sitting nicely”
- Make sure to expose them to different people and environments
- Allow the child to take their time when trying new things
- Do not criticize a child or make them feel shameful for doing something
- Show encouragement in the little things that they are able to do.
- Don’t expect the child to do things that are out of their skill range.
- Put away hazards such as breakables and heavy items that may fall so that the child can freely explore without getting hurt.
18 Months to 3 Years Old

- Children at this age will begin to test their boundaries and see the positives and negatives of performing certain behaviours.
- Children at this stage are able to follow basic commands.
- They may want to decide what they want to wear and what foods they would like to consume.
- The child will start to play with other children.
- A child can also start developing a sense of humor at this stage.
- The child will start to understand the meaning of “now” and “later” and “In 5 minutes”.

Normal behaviours you may see:

- Showing a resistance to change such as transitions, like getting ready for bed.
- The child may test you such as refusing to comply with a command.
- Express ideas on what they would prefer to wear.
- They may ask the question ‘Why?’ a lot of the time and in a lot of situations.
- Storytelling is enjoyed at this stage.
- A child may want to eat any given time instead of only at set mealtimes.
- Being messy when eating and dropping or spilling food is typical at this stage.

Helpful things that you can do for your child:

- Have a daily routine for your child to follow and always be consistent with this routine.
- Always praise positive behaviour and discipline negative behaviours.
- Always provide verbal praise for good behaviours that your child exhibits.
- Make sure you provide specific praise for positive behaviour. For example: “I like the way you said thank you. Good job!”
- Always give basic commands that are easy to understand. For example: “Take your toys to the carpet please”.
- Support your child’s independence. “Good job, you got dressed all by yourself”.
- Your child learns by asking questions so always make sure that you answer them no matter how silly the question may be.
- When you offer your child a choice, make the options simple. “Do you want ice cream or a cookie?”
3 to 6 Years Old

- Children become very aware of themselves at this stage and will begin to use their imagination.
- Children will start to develop an identity at this stage.
- The child will know the consequences of certain behaviours.
- The child will learn acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.
- The child is aware of what is imaginary and what is real.
- The child will learn what they do not have control of, such as bedtime, and what they do have control over, such as what storybook mom will read.

Normal behaviours you may see:

- Imagine and play with imaginary friends and imaginary games.
- Your child will ask you lots of questions about their environment (Always answer questions, it helps your child learn and develop).
- Your child may engage in power struggles and test their boundaries. Example: Refusing to follow simple demands, saying no.
- Children will start to cooperate with other children.
- Games are especially intriguing for children at this age and they also enjoy making rules.
- Your child may engage in learned social skills, such as saying please and thank you.

Helpful things that you can do for your child:

- Encourage your child to be open about how they are currently feeling and what thoughts they may be thinking.
- Support your child in new challenges, especially when they start going to school and encounter possible anxiety provoking situations.
- Do not discourage crying or expressing emotion or children will learn to bottle up their feelings.
- Talk to your children about healthy emotional expression even with feelings like anger.
- In an age appropriate manner, provide children with correct knowledge about their environment.
- Always give verbal praise for positive behaviours. For example: “Good job cleaning up all your toys!”
- Any instructions you give, make sure they are basic and easy to understand.
6 to 12 Years Old

- At this stage your child will be able to identify needs and wants.
- Your child will learn rules and what happens when they break them.
- Children will also learn about boundaries in school and other areas outside of the home.
- The child will engage in behaviours and expectations specific to their gender.
- At this stage your child will learn self-control.

Normal behaviours you may see:

- In order to obtain information that they need, at this stage your child will ask a lot of questions.
- Playing with children specifically of the same gender is normal. Example: play strictly with male or female children in groups.
- Your child may appear moody and challenge rules regularly (This is normal and expected but should never be encouraged, proper consequences should be put in place for problem behaviours).

Helpful things that you can do for your child:

- Provide plenty of love and protection.
- Encourage them to be independent and an individual.
- Be supportive of decisions that your child may make. Example: Learning how to multiply or joining the soccer team.
- Let you child know exactly what is expected of them and what rules are in place.
- Make sure your child knows what rules are non-negotiable. Example: “Doing homework is non-negotiable but if you finish your homework, you may be able to go play with your friends”.
- Make sure that you teach your child how to problem-solve in difficult situations. Example: “Instead of crying over the situation, lets think of some solutions to your problem”.
- Make sure your child knows that disagreement is normal and still provide your love and support.
Difficult Behaviours

- Some behaviours, such as anger and aggression, are behaviours that you will probably want to change.
- Being consistent with consequences and delivering clear messages are key to dealing with difficult behaviours.

Remember: Disciplining Should be used to Teach Good Behaviours, it is not Punishment

- Teaching is what discipline is intended to do. Punishment is not teaching. Example: Spanking does not teach children how to behave, it only frightens and can lead to aggression later on.
- Stating “this behaviour is not OK” provides your child with a clear message of unacceptable behaviour. This may have to be repeated.
- You need to let your child know that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable.
- Do not tell your child that they are being bad. This can lead to them thinking that they are not a good person.
- **For example:** “You get a 5 minute time-out because I did not like your yelling behaviour. It is not OK to yell”.
- **Avoid:** “You are a very bad girl, you get a time-out for being bad”. The child will learn to associate themselves as being a bad person and won’t learn that it is the behaviour that is not good.

Dealing with Aggression:

- Make sure that your child knows that violence is unacceptable.
- Make sure that your child is not watching violent television program (Violent shows have been linked to violent behaviour).
- Provide a consequence for violent behaviour and never encourage it or reinforce the violent behaviour.
- Always encourage your child to talk about their angry feelings and talk about more constructive ways of dealing with their anger.
- Model skills such as cooperation and talking about your feelings. (Your child looks up to you for a lot of things and learns by doing so).
- Encouraging good behaviour and providing praise for good behaviour is a good way to discourage aggression and violent behaviour.
- Always support and praise changes in behaviour. For example: if aggression stops, “I like the way you calmed yourself down, would you like to go outside and play?”

Lack of Cooperation?

• Make sure that you are telling your child to do something, not asking them.
  Example: “Go clean your room please” not “Can you go clean your room please?”

• Make sure that your instructions are very specific.
  Example: “Go clean your room right now please” not “Go clean your room at some point today please”.

• Don’t provide too many commands at once.
  Example: “Please go clean your room” (when that task is done, reward child then move onto next direction)
  Not “Please go clean your room, feed the dog, and then do your homework”.

• Don’t argue or over-discuss the task with your child.
  Example: If you ask your child to do something and they ask why? Do not get caught in a discussion about the reasoning behind the task. If a child asks you “why do I have to do that?” avoid answering and respond with the direction again.

★ Effectively Giving Directions ★

1. Give you instruction. Make sure it is clear.

2. Give your child 5 to 20 seconds to cooperate.

If they do follow through with the task:

Provide a direct reward for the behaviour and provide praise.

Be enthusiastic and make sure you provide a specific praise. Always acknowledge the behaviour with “thank you for doing that for me” or “thank you for showing me your good behaviour”.

If they don’t follow through with the task:

Repeat the instructions you originally gave. Do not show anger or frustration in your body language or tone of voice. Make sure your voice is calm but firm.

If your child follows through after the second set of instructions, praise their behaviour.

If they do not follow through, provide them with an appropriate consequence. Such as for not turning off the television and getting ready for bed, use a consequence of time out or turning off the television.

To encourage your child following through with directions:

1. Provide a positive consequence or reward to the command. This way the child knows what good behaviour leads to—“Eat all of your vegetables and then you can have a cookie”.

2. Provide simple tasks with few choices or options—“Would you like to put away the cards or the stuffed animals first?”

3. Join in on the behaviour that you ant them to engage in— for putting away toys, join your child in putting away their toys.

Tips

No matter what age your child is at, keep your expectations of them realistic and achievable for their age. Be aware of the good behaviours as well as the behaviours that require improvement.

Tips for Communicating with Your Child:

- Always remain calm even when your child is displaying aggressive behaviour.
- Take time away from the current situation instead of getting frustrated (When you are upset, you may express feelings of anger and say things you don’t mean to say).
- Provide your child with the opportunity to reply and discuss why they feel a certain way.
- Listen to what your child is saying. (They might be trying to tell you something important).
- Never make fun of your child or make them feel ashamed. (They may lose confidence and learn not to try new things).
- Regularly give them positive feedback
- Try to avoid power struggles and giving ultimatums. For example: “You do this or else!” or Power Struggle: parent “yes” child “no” parent “yes” child “no”...
- When your child helps you with tasks, show them that you appreciate the help and assistance.
- When it makes sense, choose your battles. Not every disagreement should lead to an argument or long and heated discussion.

Most Important Thing to Remember….

- Always remind your child that you love them and are there for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Behaviour</th>
<th>What Happened Before the Behaviour?</th>
<th>What Did the Behaviour Look Like?</th>
<th>What Did I do After the Behaviour Occurred?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a tantrum</td>
<td>I asked Billy to clean up his toys and then he could play with his friends outside.</td>
<td>Billy started to cry and he yelled, “no, I don’t want to do that”. Then he flopped to the floor and started to stomp his fists on the ground.</td>
<td>I said “Billy if you don’t clean up your toys, you won’t be able to play with your friends for the rest of the week”. I had to repeat myself and I eventually got tired of trying to calm him down.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Two:

What Causes and Maintains Problem Behaviour?
How Behaviour Works

Why is it important to know how behaviour works?

- Everything we do, we learned at some point in our lives.
- This includes **bad habits** and **problem behaviours**.

! Important!

This does not mean that you intentionally caused your child’s behaviour or that you are a bad parent. It means that at some point in your child’s development, they learned that certain behaviours they do cause certain things to happen or to not happen.
How Behaviour is Learned

From the time we are born, we start to learn from the world around us. We learn how to walk, talk, and do basic things from learning from our surroundings and other people like our families.

Ways of Learning Behaviour:

- Being provided with encouragement or a reward after we behave.
- Receiving a cookie after giving the correct answer.
- Observing a specific Behaviour
- Watching someone being successful or rewarded for engaging in a specific behaviour.
- Escaping something that you do not like is also encouraging the behaviour of escaping something.
- Learning that putting up an umbrella allows you to escape the rain.
- Pushing someone makes them move further away, therefore you may be more likely to push people you don’t like.

Example of Learned Behaviour

Talking

Talking is a behaviour.

We learn to talk because at certain times in our lives, talking was rewarded and encouraged.

Babies Learn how to Coo:

Baby coos → Parent smiles at baby → Cooing is rewarded with smiling.

Baby coos → Parent laughs/talks to baby → Cooing is rewarded with responses.

Babies learn how to talk because steps towards talking (cooing) are rewarded with smiles and happy responses from the parent.
**Hitting**

Even problem behaviours are learned.

Hitting is learned because at some point in a child’s life, hitting was useful or had a purpose.

**How a Child May Learn How to Hit:**

Someone makes child feel uncomfortable $\rightarrow$ Child hits $\rightarrow$ Person leaves or backs away

Parent makes child angry by asking them to perform a task (“clean your room please”) $\rightarrow$ Child yells or hits $\rightarrow$ Child avoids task
Learning from Observing

- Behaviours can be learned from observing other people’s behaviour.

- If a behaviour leads to a reward or an escape from something unpleasant, someone else may learn to do that behaviour because it leads to a certain outcome.

- Adults and children learn from observing other people.

Example: Child Learns How to Play a Toy

Child wants to make a toy to play music → Watches parent push the toy’s button → Child attempts to push the button → Child is rewarded by the toy’s sound.

The child learns that by pushing the button, they can make their toy play music.

Children don’t always have to receive a reward or escape in order to learn a behaviour. Children can learn that a behaviour is okay by observing it from a role model or someone they look up to, usually this is a parent in a child’s earlier years.

Witnessing Violence

Children are aware of both emotional and physical abuse and they witness the negative impact that it has in the home and to the family.

- All children learn differently from violent situations.
- Some children may become more aggressive while others may become withdrawn.
- Children learn to recognize certain tones of voice even at a very young age (they can sense anger and sadness), they can also recognize intimidating body language.
- Children may be paying attention even when it is not obvious that they are.

The Impact of Abuse

- Children are very aware of the effects that spousal abuse has on a parent. It may be difficult to notice this at first.

- Children can sense intimidating tones of voice and actions and also when a parent is feeling uneasy.

Children know when things are not okay in a home but they have difficulty figuring out the reason behind the abuse and why there is tension in the family.

They have a hard time understanding why it is happening.

Physical, Emotional, and Behavioural Symptoms From Witnessing Violence

Physical Symptoms of Witnessing Violence

- Children may complain of headaches and stomach aches.
- Bowel habits may become irregular and bedwetting can also result.
- The child may say that they don’t feel well a lot of the time.
- A child may appear like they have Attention Deficit Disorder because they are not paying attention as much as they usually would be. (Short attention spans)
- The child may seem nervous much of the time.
- Irritability and not responding are also physical symptoms.
- Seeming exhausted or really tired.

Many physical symptoms mentioned above are not direct results of witnessing abuse and may be caused by other influences and events in the child’s life as well.

Emotional Symptoms

A lot of the time, children who act out or display disruptive behaviour have emotional pain and are confused about family violence. Other children may have more emotional symptoms and these children act out less, but are also experiencing pain.

**Emotional Symptoms:**

- Anxiety symptoms and nervousness
- Depressed and feeling sad
- Feeling insecure
- Blaming themselves or feeling guilty because of the violence.
- Feeling angry and bitter.
- Feeling responsible for the violence and the mom’s safety.
- Feeling responsible for the protection of siblings, especially young siblings.
- Putting blame on mom, and being resentful.
- Scared of small arguments. The child may fear that they will turn into something bigger.
- Putting the blame on siblings.
- Feeling worried about friends and family members safety.
- A child may be uncertain as to what is real and not real.

Emotional Symptoms may not be a direct result of abuse in the home and may be due to other events.

**Behavioural Symptoms**

Behavioural symptoms are the most common symptoms seen in children who have seen violence in their home. Recognizing and identifying these behaviours is the first step to change.

**Behavioural Symptoms:**

- Being aggressive towards peers, such as bullying or making insults to peers.
- Child may have very few friends and withdraws from socializing.
- Child may not want to be separated from their mother.
- Defiant behaviours with adults and authority figures. This happens a lot with mom.
- Compulsive behaviour, anxiety, and obsessing.
- Not able to pay attention at school and having trouble learning in class.
- Overeating or not eating.
- Having trouble sleeping due to nightmares, waking up easily, and not being able to fall asleep.
- Being violent towards siblings. This happens often with older child to a younger child.
- Trying to please people and overachieving.

**Pre-teens and Teenagers:**

- Substance abuse is a big risk for teens that have witnessed violence.
- Imitation of abuser’s behaviours such as being violent towards the mom, verbally or physically.

My Child’s Behaviours

Have you recognized any of the previous symptoms discussed with your child?

If so, which behaviours does your child engage in?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

This is the first step in recognizing and identifying your child’s behaviours.

You are not obligated to share your response.
Where Do I Go From Here?
How to Cope with Symptoms

Key Factors to Help Your Child:

- Establish a good relationship with your child.
- Make sure that you live in a safe environment, away from abuser.
- Spend quality time with close friends and family.
- Keep grandparents close in your child’s life for additional support.
- Make sure your child knows it is okay to express their feelings, especially sad feelings and angry feelings.

Identifying the Cause of Behaviour

The most important step before you can teach positive behaviours or change a problem behaviour is to identify what may be causing the behaviour.

• Are there certain things that always seem to occur before the behaviour happens? (A question, request, or demand)
• Are there certain places where the behaviour occurs more than in others? (At home, school, outside)
• What do you do after the behaviour occurs? (Do you give a time-out? Do you tell your child to stop?)

Session Three:

Positive Interactions and Emotional Communication
The Importance of Parent-Child Relationships

➤ The first step to changing your child’s behaviour is to establish a healthy and positive parent-child relationship.

➤ Children need love and support. They also need guidance and direction.

➤ A strong relationship is key to building a child’s confidence and self-esteem.

➤ Emotional Communication and Positive Interactions encourage a strong parent-child relationship.
**What is Emotional Communication?**

*Emotional communication* is anyway we express how we are feeling to other people.

This is expressed through **words** and **behaviours**.

*Emotional Communication is a healthy way to release our feelings*. It also lets parents know how a child feels to better help the child cope. This is where the communication part comes in.

Communicating tough emotions is **difficult and important**. When we are young we are not always taught how to communicate to other people about how we are feeling so we often get confused when we are emotional. Children are confused when it comes to how they are feeling and may not know how to express their feelings in a healthy or constructive way.

That is why it is important to encourage a child’s emotional expression. This includes: anger, frustration, happiness, fear, sadness, excitement, etc.

Emotional Expression is a Healthy Behaviour

Children tend to express their emotion through behaviours instead of communicating verbally about how they are feeling.

These are ways your children may express their emotions:

Crying

Crying is misinterpreted as a sign of weakness and fear, when it is really a healthy way of releasing one’s feelings.

- Children who experience trauma will cry more often than other children will. This can occur more than two times a day.
- Do not worry unless you can not figure out what your child is so upset about. Crying is a healthy sign that your child is healing.
- Children get more release from long sessions of crying so let them cry as long as they would like to (Do not be surprised if your child cries a lot in the day).
- If a child is shown affection while they are crying, they will cry longer as well. This is because they feel more safe to cry.

What to do when a child cries:

- Let them know that with you it is a safe environment to cry.
- Never make fun of a child for crying or make them feel ashamed. Boys should be able to cry just as much as girls and it will help in their healing process.
- Always ask the child how they are feeling and why it is that they feel this way. Always be supportive and do not judge the child’s feelings.
- Let your child know that it is always safe with you to express their emotions, especially sad and angry feelings.

Facts:

- If you allow a child to cry for a long period of time, they will actually cry less overtime. A child may try to cry a lot in a day and needs to have a big cry to feel better again.
- Parents are sometimes confused about the fact that children tend to cry after a source of fear or upset has already passed. A child cries more after an upsetting experience because they feel safe to release their emotions.

Anger

Anger can be a tough emotion for a child to express and release in a constructive way that won’t hurt others or themselves.

A child may feel that anger is a bad feeling due to the violence that they have seen from an angry parent.

- Anger is an acceptable emotion as long as it’s expressed constructively.
- It is not the direct cause of verbal or physical abuse.
- It is sometimes an excuse that certain people use to justify their actions.
- Children can often suppress their angry feelings. This is not a good thing.
- Many children will act aggressively to release their angry feelings.
- Anger may be seen in a variety of behaviours, such as: furious talking or yelling (“I hate this!”), angry actions (waving arms in air, stomping feet).

Imitating these behaviours is not a good idea. It can punish the actions and make the child feel ashamed for being angry.

When your child is angry:

- Let them know that you know that they are feeling angry. Example: “I know that you are angry, it is okay to feel this way”.

- Do reinforce your child to repress their anger, such as discouraging it. Example: Giving a time-out for expressing anger. Only use discipline if the child is directing anger at you in a disrespectful manner or hurting another person or property.

- If you have a child who is repressing their anger, reassure them that “it is okay for you to feel how angry you are. I’m here for you to talk to if you need me”.

- If your child shows physical aggression towards other people (hitting, hurting) to express anger, you may have to set rules on the behaviour. Example: explain that anger and hurting others are two different things and offer your child different options to express their anger.

- Do not imitate the child’s behaviour, this can lead them to feel ashamed.

- If a child is not being respectful to you, such as calling you names, state: “you can be angry with me, but I will walk away if you say disrespectful words to me”. Children often want you their with them instead of dealing with anger on their own.

- You may have to leave or impose a consequence if a child continues to test their boundaries.

Constructive Ways to Release Anger

1. Ask the child to tell you why they are angry, “I am angry because______”. Identify what is behind their anger.

2. Practice deep breathing with the child. Remind your child to take deep breaths in through their nose an out through the mouth. This is an easy way to help calm your child down.

3. Give the child a pillow to scream into. This is a good way to release anger by directing it at an object instead of an individual. They can also hit the pillow if it’s safe to do so (away from people or breakables).

4. Ripping up paper. Ripping up old newspapers and magazines are a good way to release anger.

5. Screaming out into the open, such as at a park or open area.

6. Throwing a ball against a brick wall outside.

7. Writing a note to their parent about how angry they are feeling.

8. Wringing out a wet towel or cloth.


10. Scribbling on a sheet of paper or in a drawing book.

11. Yelling at a teddy bear or telling a teddy bear why you are angry.

Inanimate objects are good for releasing anger because it avoids hurting themselves or other people.

Fear

Children who have been exposed to violence may have difficulties with nightmares or “night terrors”. Night terrors are when a child is awake but having a nightmare at the same time.

**When a child is afraid:**

- As a parent, try to appear strong for your child when they are afraid
- Make sure you convey concern for your child’s feelings.
- Tell your child that you will help them with their problem and that you have it all under control.
- Always use a soft tone of voice when you explain to your child about what they are going through. If it is a night terror, let them know that it is okay now and that the scary event has passed.
- Have your child tell you all about their experience. Tell them that there is nothing that can hurt them in their nightmares.
- A child may tremble or scream. When they are doing this, hold them close but try not to stop their behaviours, such as crying, screaming, or trembling.

Laughter is Very Important

Laughter is a natural tool that anyone can use to feel better with friends and family.

A feeling of relaxation often follows laughter and most people feel less tense.

Try to find ways to make your child laugh, especially when you are both going through difficult times.

Do not try to make your child laugh if they are upset or angry

Example:

- If a child is crying, it is not a good idea to laugh at them or make a joke. They will feel like their feelings are not being taken seriously.
- An angry child can become more angry if they are laughed at.
- Only when a child is over their sad or angry feelings should you introduce laughter.

Active Listening

What is it?

A valuable skill for *enriching* the quality of a parent-child relationship.

A way to communicate your *understanding of* what a child is experiencing.

A way for your child to learn how to become a good listener as well.
How to Use Active Listening

*It’s less complicated than it sounds.*

At times during the day, your child may attempt to communicate with you when you are busy or are doing something.

It is okay to excuse the child for the time being but make time afterwards to provide them with your complete focus and attention.

**How to be an Active Listener:**

1. **Eye Contact:** make continuous eye contact to your child while speaking with them.

2. **Reassure:** Let your child know that they have your undivided attention.
   
   Example: “I’m listening, now what did you want to say to me?”

3. **Body Posture:** Do not show that you are bored or don’t care about what the child is saying. Have an open and supportive body posture.

4. **Repeat:** Repeat back to the child what they have told you.

   Example: “So you are feeling angry because Sally took your teddy bear?”

5. **Show Interest:** Show that you care about what your child is telling you.

   Ask questions about the event or feeling that they are describing to you.

   Example: “What happened after that?” “Did you feel hurt?”

6. **Show Concern:** Show that you understand why your child would feel this way. Example: “Well that was not nice of Sally to do that. I would be upset too”.

Active Listening is Important!

- If you have a tendency to lose your attention after listening to your child for a while, try doing this: Listen as if you were going to repeat back what is being said to you or as if you are gathering information for an exam or important assignment. This will help you stay focused on your child’s interaction.

- Active listening lets your child know that you are acknowledging them. It is a good way to keep a strong relationship.

- Children and teenagers like to be acknowledged. It is also a chance for you to connect with your child. It is an important skill for your children to learn as well so that they can use it in the future with their peers and family.

- Let children know if you might be expecting an important visit or phone call before it happens. That way they can understand why your conversation was interrupted or why you are busy at the moment.

* The Importance of Quality Time *

Spending quality time with your child is a very effective and positive way to build a good parent-child relationship.

- Have a regular night once a week or once a month for you to spend time with your child. This could mean having a board game night or a tradition that is fun for you and your child.

- Do activities that are enjoyable and make you laugh. Tell jokes to each other and have nights where you can watch movies or play games.

- Ask your child how they would like to spend time with you. They will often have good ideas for activities and things to do together.

- Have dinner together whenever it is possible to do so. This is a regular tradition where everyone can talk at least once a day.

- Go to an event such as a movie at a theatre. Go to a free museum, spend time at a park or library. The idea is get out and do something that you don’t always get to do.

Always set aside time to spend with your child. This will make you obligated to do it. Make it a weekly or daily priority. Time together will make your parent-child relationship stronger.

**Planned Activity**

A simple and effective way to connect with your child during the week is to plan a specific time and activity that you can do together.

Take time out of your schedule this week to plan one activity for you and your child.

**On this Day:** ________________________________

**At this Time:** ______________________________

**For:** ________________________________________

**I will:** ________________________________________

**with ______________________(child’s name).**

**Examples of simple cost effective activities:**

- Bake cookies
- Play a game
- Build a snowman/snow fort
- Watch a movie/popcorn
- Read a story

- Go for a walk
- Go to the park
- Play with toys
- Pretend play (tea party, picnic, etc.)
- Draw/paint/make crafts
Simple Playdough Recipe

**Ingredients:**

4. 4 cups white flour  
5. 1 cup salt  
6. 1 1/2 cups water  
7. Food coloring (optional)

**Instructions:**

1. Combine flour and salt in a bowl and blend until smooth  
2. Add 1/2 cup of water and continue to mix for a few minutes  
3. Gradually add the remaining water and continue mixing the dough  
4. Form the dough into a ball, working in any dry flour and salt left at the bottom of the bowl.  
5. Knead the dough for approximately five minutes. Add food coloring if desired.

Use cookie cutters to shape this play dough or model it free hand.

To dry the dough, place on a foil-covered cookie sheet. Bake in a 250-300 degree F (120-150 degree C) oven until hard (about five minutes for 1"-2" pieces). When the baked pieces have cooled, paint them with paint as desired. Brush or spray on a finishing coat of polyurethane to seal and protect the ornaments.

Session Four:

Disciplinary Communication and Setting

Rules and Limits
What is Disciplinary Communication?

It is the way in which we communicate consequences to a child in regards to their behaviour.

It is the way we phrase our sentences and deliver consequences.

- Be specific when you ask a child to discontinue or improve a negative behaviour. The same as when you praise a child for appropriate behaviour.

- Children direction and instructions that are specific in order to change behaviour. They need to know why they are receiving a consequence and for what behaviour.

- Explaining rules and expectations helps children to learn why we do what we do and why we deliver consequences for certain behaviours.

- Providing simple reasoning for children so they know what behaviours are inappropriate and why they are receiving a consequence.

- Long explanations can confuse a child. Brief answers are enough for a young child to understand.

- The tone of your voice and body language are also a form of communicating.

- A calm firm tone of voice is more effective then expressing anger while delivering a consequence. Anger only adds more tension to the situation.

Your roommate comes up to you, flailing their arms and directly yells at you “I just washed the floor and now it is dirty from your shoes!”

- How are you going to feel? Are you going to feel calm?

More than likely you are going to feel angry or maybe even afraid. Angry reactions lead to angry responses.

- What do you learn from the statement that was made?

Chances are the most you can learn is that your roommate likes clean floors and that they get upset if the floors are dirty.

- How are you going to react to this situation?

You may feel as though you are in danger due to the angry response. You may also feel that communicating is out of the question.

What might be different in your response if the housemate approached you in a calm but firm manner. What if the housemate explained their situation? “I get upset when the floors get dirty after you wear your shoes in the house, Can you please not wear your shoes in the house next time?”

When the roommate approaches you in a calm and respectful manner, you are more open to hear what they have to say.

If body language displays anger (flailing arms, hands on hips) you are less likely to listen and more likely to get defensive and want to protect yourself. You may also become angry yourself.

When the roommate uses a calm but firm tone of voice, you can hear and understand what is being said to you and take it seriously.

If tone of voice is angry and aggressive, we are less likely to hear the words and focus more on the tone of voice. In arguments when both recipients are angry, we are less likely to understand what the other person wants or is upset about.

When the roommate explains exactly what made him/her upset and the specific behaviour you engaged in, you know what is expected of you and what you did wrong.

“"The floors are dirty from your shoes!" gives you no information on what behaviour they want to see in you or what behaviour was not acceptable.

Confusing Statements for Children

“You have a bad attitude”.
This does not tell the child what they are doing wrong or what they need to do.

• Rephrase: “The way that you are talking to me is unacceptable behaviour”.
The child now know that it is not an internal characteristic that is bad, it is the specific behaviour.

“Cut that out”.
This does not tell the child exactly what behaviour to discontinue or that the behaviour is unacceptable.

• Rephrase: “Stop hitting the wall please, that is not good behaviour”.
The child now knows which specific behaviour you do not approve of.

“You are being a bad boy/girl”.
This is referring to a characteristic of the child and not the behaviour they are engaging in. This can lead the child to belief that they are a bad child.

• Rephrase: “That yelling that you are doing is not good, you will receive a consequence if you do not stop your yelling behaviour”.
This lets the child know that it is the behaviour that you do not like and not them and that if they don’t stop, they will receive a consequence.

How to Give Your Child Clear Messages

1. Stay calm and relaxed.

2. Position yourself to be eye-to-eye level with your child (This avoids intimidating your child by standing over them).

3. Ask your child to look at you. Eye contact is key to giving and receiving messages. It is more likely that your child will hear what you say. (If your child has autism or a specific disability, eye contact may not be appropriate).

4. Give your child your full attention. This allows you to see your child's reaction to what you say. This also improves communication skills between you.

5. Use a firm but calm tone of voice. Do not display anger in your voice.

6. Give a short and basic phrase that your child can understand (depending on their age at the time). For example: “No, hitting is not good” or “This behaviour is not acceptable”.

7. Deliver your message. Tell your child what they have done wrong and ask them if they understand what you are saying. Example: “Do you know what you did wrong?” if responds yes “What did you do wrong?”

8. Let your child know that continuation of the unacceptable behaviour will lead to a consequence. Example: “If you do not stop hitting your brother, I will have to give you a time-out”.

**Vague Descriptions of Behaviour**

Vague descriptions of child behaviour and specific descriptions of child behaviour.

**Vague:** “Brandon, please act your age when your grandparents get here”.

**Specific:** “Brandon, when our guests get here, be sure to say ‘Hi’. Then you can go to your room and play”.

**Vague:** “When we get to the grocery store, make sure to be a good girl”.

**Specific:** “When we get to the store, remember that we aren’t buying any candy. I’d like you to help me by putting items I need in the cart. You can also push the shopping cart. Does that sound okay?”

**Vague:** “That was a nice piece of art you created in art class”.

**Specific:** “You used patterns and different colours. You are a very creative young man”.

**Vague:** “Jamie, please don’t eat like a pig”.

**Specific:** “Jamie, your eating with your fingers and making noises while you eat. Please use your fork and don’t make silly noises at the table”.

*You’re describing the bad behaviour and redirecting the child’s attention to acceptable behaviour.*

A clear message makes sure that the child understands and makes it more likely for the child to use appropriate behaviour in the future.
Group Activity:

Rephrasing Directions

1. “Stop being such a baby”.

2. “Julie, you did really well on your painting”.

3. “Please be good when we get on the bus”.

4. “Bad boys don’t get to play Xbox”.

5. “You are being very annoying right now”.

6. “If your sister sees you she will want to act silly too”.
## Discipline Vs. Punishment

Discipline is not punishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using positive ways to guide children.</td>
<td>Teaching that physical force is the way to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children skills that match their age and abilities.</td>
<td>Hurting the child, often because of the adult’s frustration and anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn to develop self-control.</td>
<td>The adult will continually have to control the child’s behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adult has control, but the child’s needs, wishes and abilities are respected.</td>
<td>The adult is powerful and rules over the child who must always obey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing positive relationships between children and caregivers making them feel good about themselves.</td>
<td>Breaking down the relationships between children and caregivers, making the child feel bad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Discipline** teaches a child how to act. Discipline should make sense to a child. It should have something to do with what he or she has done wrong. Discipline helps a child feel good about himself/herself. It gives him the chance to correct his mistakes. It puts him/her in charge of his actions.

- **Punishment** only tells a child that she or he is bad. It does not tell a child what he/she should do instead. So punishment may not make sense to the child. Punishment usually has nothing to do with what the child did wrong. (example: spanking has nothing to do with a child yelling at their parent).

Examples of Punishment vs. Discipline

Example one: A child throws his crayons on the floor.

Punishment: Tell the child he is a bad boy and slap his hand.

Discipline: Tell him to pick up the crayons. Explain that the crayons could break and mark up the floor. Do not let the child play with the crayons until the next day.

Example two: A two-year old empties a garbage can.

Punishment: Spank him and make him go to his room.

Discipline: Explain that garbage cans are not something he can play with. Give him a toy that he can dump just like the garbage can. (With older children, explain that they cannot dump the wastebasket because it is not a toy. If they persist provide a consequence such as a time-out). Younger children need different approaches to behaviour than older children.

Why Punishment Does not Work

Verbal and Physical Punishment usually doesn’t work for several reasons:

• It makes the child hate himself/herself and others. Spanking gives a confusing message and it disvalues the child. Example: Hitting a child can mean “I must be bad”.

• Hitting models hitting. Children love to imitate people who they respect and look up to. Parents are usually a role model to younger children. Children will think its is okay to do exactly what you do. If you hit your child, the child will think it is okay for them to hit as well.

• Hitting does not stop teach acceptable behaviour. A child who is punished will not remember the reason why they were spanked and will feel humiliated. The child does not learn from their mistakes because an alternative behaviour was not taught.

• Hitting causes angry feelings and promotes anger. When punishment humiliates children they will rebel against the parent or withdraw.

**Setting Rules and Limits**

Why do children need rules and limits?

Children need rules and limits the same as they need basics such as food and shelter. Children who are raised without limits may have trouble making decisions and become withdrawn. Other children may act out aggressively to see who can provide them with limits. Children need limits and boundaries in order to feel safe.
Set Realistic and Reasonable Expectations

Do not have rules or limits that are too complicated for your child to follow. Set expectations that are realistic and positive.

Specific Areas of Rules and Expectations:

Social

• Being nice and getting along with other people
• Greeting and having conversations in groups
• Helping others or offering to help others
• Using manners such as “please” and “thank you”
• Using appropriate language and mannerisms when socializing

Academic

• Studying and having a study schedule
• Attending school regularly
•Completing homework and assignments
• Having respect for authority figures like teachers and principals
• Following rules at school

Family Chores

• Cleaning their bedroom and common areas
• Helping out at dinner and mealtimes
• Picking your toys and messes
• Helping with outdoor chores such as gardening or picking up leaves
• Helping clean the house and common areas

Hygiene and Appearance

• Taking regular baths or showers
• Wearing suitable/appropriate clothing

First step for developing clear expectations is to identify ones that are already in place in your family.

Expectations Should be Reasonable:

➢ Consider your child’s age, abilities, and resources.
Example: it would be reasonable to expect a 6 year old to be able to set a dinner table, but it would not be reasonable to have a 6-year-old cook a meal.

➢ It is unreasonable to expect children to do something that they have not been taught how to do.
Example: If you do not practice saying “please” and “thank you” yourself then you are not modeling this behaviour for your child.

➢ Can the child understand what is expected of them? Can the child describe the behaviour to you in their own words? Can they demonstrate the behaviour to you without difficulty?
Example: Can the child tell you how they can make their own bed? And can they show you how to make their own bed?

Clarifying Expectations

First, explain expectations in a positive manner and then, follow through on the expectations consistently.

**What to Say:** Expectations are clear and more effective when they are stated positively and with enthusiasm. Instead of telling your child what they should not do, tell them what they should be doing instead.

**Examples of Clear Expectations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don't Say</th>
<th>Do Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t drop your books in the hallway”</td>
<td>“Please take your books up to the bookshelf in your bedroom”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When I ask you to help clean the dinner table, don’t talk back and roll your eyes”</td>
<td>“When I ask you to help clean the dinner table, say “Okay” and start cleaning right away please”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t want you to take toys away from your sister”</td>
<td>“Ask your sister to share when she has something that you want. If she says no, wait until she is finished, or find another toy to play with”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t sneak off and get on the computer when you’re supposed to be doing your homework”</td>
<td>“Start your homework right away when you get home from school. You can play on the computer when you’re finished”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Set Your Own Limits

It is important to set your own limits and expectations for your child.

What are two expectations for each category that are reasonable for your child to follow?

Social (example: no hats on at the dinner table)
1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________

Academic (example: complete homework before video games)
1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________

Family Chores (example: expected to make bed)
1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________

Appearance & Hygiene (example: brush teeth every morning)
1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________

Try negotiating these limits with your child at home and following through.
Session Five:

Discipline and Behaviour Management
Attitudes and Thoughts on Discipline

Group Discussion

What do you find the most challenging about disciplining your child?

Do your feelings (guilt) get in the way of you disciplining consistently and effectively?

Are you confused about the proper way to discipline your child?

What does discipline mean to you? What do you think of when you think of discipline?
The Truth About Discipline

Traditionally, discipline has been viewed in a negative way and parents don’t like using it in particular due to this reason.

**The Truth about Discipline:**

- **Discipline teaches children to make good decisions.** They can decide on their actions and what behaviours they will engage in. This is based on the consequences that might follow a behaviour.

- **Discipline teaches children about cooperation.** Children learn that if they cooperate with others, it will lead to more positive consequences.

- **Discipline teaches children what behaviours are approved of and not approved of.** Appropriate behaviours are taught. Children learn a positive alternative behaviour to replace their problem behaviours, instead of just stopping a bad behaviour (that would be considered punishment).

- **Discipline teaches children self-control.** Children learn responsibility and how to make decisions.

If you use punishment (spanking, or methods based on frustration and angry feelings), children do not learn how to make appropriate decisions or self-control.

Different Kinds of Consequences:

- **Losing Privileges** ➔ This is an effective form of discipline for younger and older children. If loss of privilege should be directly related to the inappropriate behaviour.
  
  Example: Refusing to get off of the computer for homework should be a loss of computer privileges for a set period of time.

- **Time-Out** ➔ This is a good form of discipline for younger children (teenagers wouldn’t benefit much from time-out). It removes the child from the current situation and allows them time to calm down and learn from their actions.

**Following Through with the Consequences**

After the first incident of inappropriate behaviour, let the child know that consequences may follow the continuation of the behaviour. Make sure to state exactly what behaviour is unacceptable and the alternative behaviour that is acceptable. If the behaviour continues, follow through with the chosen consequence.

**Always Be Consistent**

Be consistent with consequences and with verbally praising appropriate behaviour. Children will not learn appropriate behaviours if they cannot distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. When you do not enforce consequences for inappropriate behaviour, it suggests to the child that this is okay to do.

**Types of Reinforcement**

Teaching acceptable behaviour also requires the reinforcement and encouragement of acceptable behaviour when your child engages in it. When positive and appropriate behaviour occurs, use reinforcement to let your child know that it is acceptable behaviour. Children need to know the consequences that follow an unacceptable behaviour, just like they need to know that appropriate behaviour precedes positive consequences and approval.

**Praise:** Praise is the most simple and cost-efficient way to reinforce your child’s acceptable behaviour. It can be just verbal or it can also be written out in a certificate or a token for good behaviour.

**How to Properly give Praise:**

1. Acknowledge and state the behaviour that your child engaged in. (This can also be a behaviour that was followed by an alternative appropriate behaviour).

2. Verbally state what the child did and clearly show your approval.

Example: “I really liked the way that you said please and thank you, you have shown very awesome manners”.

And that is how simple it is to give praise as a reinforcement.

**Other Forms of Positive Reinforcement:**

- Sticker charts (for specific behaviours)
- Activities (playing games, going outside)
- Tokens (coins, stickers)
- Food (candy, treats)

Reinforcement will be discussed more in *Session 6: Promoting Children’s Prosocial Behaviour*.

How to Correct Inappropriate Behaviour

Correcting Inappropriate Behaviour Involves Four Basic Steps:

1. Stop the inappropriate behaviour.
2. Deliver the appropriate/reasonable consequence.
3. Teach the alternative or appropriate behaviour to the child.
4. Practice the positive alternative behaviour with the child. (Make sure they can show you this behaviour).

- Using this technique when correcting unacceptable behaviour lets the child know exactly what the unacceptable behaviour is, what the consequences are for doing so, and what acceptable behaviour is.
- It is simple and effective. Consistency is key to this approach.
- Remember to use the disciplinary communication techniques discussed in Session Four.

In order for this approach to work, established *Rules and Limits* for your child should already be put in place.

The majority of unacceptable behaviours will involve breaking your set rules. So knowing boundaries and the potential consequences is essential to teach appropriate behaviour.
How to Correct Unacceptable Behaviour

Use when children frequently do things they shouldn’t or don’t do things they should, or engage in unsafe behaviour.

If you can correct the behaviour with a simple instruction, redirection or consequence then don’t use this method.

The Situation: A brother and sister are fighting while you are talking on the phone. They are arguing over a toy truck.

Step One: Stop the current behaviour & describe the issue to your children.

❖ Stop the behaviour as soon as possible/when you first notice it
❖ Calmly describe the problem behaviour to the child.
Example: “Joanne, stop yelling and pushing your brother”.
❖ Give a calm and clear instruction.
Example: “Please come over here and sit down beside your brother”.
❖ Eliminate distractions and be at the child’s eye level.
❖ Specifically describe the inappropriate behaviour
    Example: “When I was on the phone you were yelling at your brother, trying to take the toy truck. I asked you to stop and you did not stop. This behaviour is not OK”.
**Step Two: Give an appropriate consequence**

- Remove a privilege or add a consequence, such as a time-out.
- Explain the problem behaviour that your child is receiving a consequence for.

Example: Putting both siblings in time-out for 6 minutes.
“I am putting you on a time-out for yelling and pushing your brother/sister”.

**Step Three: Describe the Acceptable Behaviour**

- Describe what appropriate behaviour you would like to see your child engage in. Be specific and clear.

Example: “I want you two to learn to share with your brother/sister. Joanne, when Danny has a toy that you want and he’s not done playing with it, ask him first if you can play with it”.

**Step Four: Practice the Acceptable Behaviour with Your Child**

- When you practice an acceptable behaviour with your child, they will be more likely to practice it in the future.
- Practice also helps a child remember what to do next time and how they can avoid negative consequences.
- Praise the child when they show you the acceptable behaviour.

Example: “Yes that’s the behaviour I like to see! Next time do this and you won’t be put on a time-out”.

**Example of the Four Steps:**

**Child gets into a big fight with their neighborhood friend outside.**

**Step One:** “Come here, look at me and listen to me. (Child looks at you). Thank you for looking at me. I know that friends can be mean sometimes and say hurtful things but fighting is not a good way to solve problems”.

**Step Two:** “Since you did not show respect to your friend, Mathew, you will not be allowed to hang out with him for the rest of the evening. I would also like you to apologize for fighting with Mathew, the next time you see him”.

**Step Three:** “When you disagree with someone and you feel angry, remember to take a couple deep breaths, count to ten, or walk away from that person so no one gets hurt”.

**Step Four:** “Now you can show me that you understand what we just talked about. You have great listening skills right now. What would you do if Mathew comes up to you again and starts to make fun of you?”

*Child:* “I would take a deep breath, count to ten, or walk away from Mathew so I can calm myself down”.

“Great job! That is the right thing to do. You won’t get into fights anymore if you do what we just practiced together. I’m proud of you”.

!How to Avoid a **Power Struggle**!

Children often do not like to follow through with demands and this can sometimes result in what is called a “power struggle”.

*What Exactly is a Power Struggle?*

This is when the end goal of an argument is to win. Each individual in the argument is not willing to give in and will try to force the other person to change their view. This is a common experience to have with most children.

Example: Child does not want to get ready for bed. Parent tells the child to do so again. Child does not comply. Parent gets angry and so does the child.

*What to do in a Power Struggle:*

- Attempt to stop the struggle and take a step back from the situation.
- Separate from each other briefly. This could include a trip to the bathroom or a time-out sitting at a table. This break offers an opportunity to start fresh.
- Suggest having a time-out for your child and yourself, “why don’t we both have a time-out and then come back to this”.
- A break will relieve some of the tension.

Hagar, K., Goldstein, S, & Brooks, R. (2006). *Seven steps to improve your child’s social skills.*

Plantation, FL: Specialty Press, Inc.
**Time-Outs**

Time-out is an effective behavioural technique where your child is removed from an area and required to sit quietly for a small period of time away from all interactions and activities.

This is an effective discipline approach that is used to decrease problem behaviours.
Tools Needed for an Effective Time-Out

Basic Tools that will be needed for a time-out:

1. **A Time-Out Chair or a step.**
   - Pick a chair or a step on a staircase that you will use as the time-out spot.
   - You child should be aware of where the time-out place is. So when you say “go on a time-out" your child knows where they should go.
   - Never use bedroom for time-out, this is not a good consequence. Children usually enjoy playing with toys and other activities in their room.
   - If you choose a chair for time-out, it should be small so that you can move it easily and a child can sit on it without difficulty.
   - Place the chair away from distraction, possibly in a corner facing outwards. Facing it towards the corner can make the child feel overly ashamed and ignored.
   - Do not have the chair facing a window, television or the child’s room.
   - Tell your child that the time-out chair is a their place to cool off and think about the inappropriate behaviour they just engaged in. Do not give it a negative name like “the bad boy chair”. This can cause your child to think that they are bad.

2. **A Timer or a Visual that Counts Down Time**

- Any timer or play clock that keeps time will work for this. As long as your child can see their time-out being counted down, any time-keeper will work. It can also be fun-shaped such as an apple shape, it just has to be a functional timer.
- The timer lets the child know that you are being serious about time-out and following through with it.
- It lets the child know when time-out begins and when it is over.
- The timer is a good way to keep yourself out of the time-out. It will teach your child how to self-monitor and calm themselves down.
- Place the timer directly in front of the child so they can see it counting down during the time-out.
- When you have a time-out, set the timer in regards to the child’s age. For every year, add a minute to the time-out. Example: 5 years old will be 5 minutes, 2 years old will be 2 minutes.
- You may have to adjust this time depending on how your child copes with time-outs and their level of temperament.
- A hyperactive 5-year-old may not be able to sit still for very long. You may have to adjust the time-out to 2 or 3 minutes. You just want enough time for the child to be able to calm down.

**Time-Out Procedure**

- Follow through with the time-out, do not become discouraged or stop in the middle of the process.
- Consistency is the best policy for time-outs.
- Have a calm but firm tone of voice.
- The very first time-out will be the most difficult because it will be a new concept for your child.

1. **Give a Time-Out**
   - After you have given the child a warning, and the behaviour continues, tell the child that they need a time-out for their ________ behaviour.

2. **Sit Your Child in the Time-Out Chair**
   - Move the chair to a corner not facing the wall but away from distractions, it can also be in a hallway away from distractions.
   - Show your child their time-out chair and state this is where you can “cool off”.
   - Tell the child firmly but calmly “Sit in the chair please”.
   - If the child refuses, firmly sit the child down in the chair without harming the child.
   - If the child jumps out of the chair, firmly but gently hold him/her in the chair until time-out is complete.
   - Tell the child why they are being put in time-out. Example: “You are in time-out for not listening when I told you to go to bed. That is not OK”.
   - Do not give-in or your child will not take time-out seriously and know that they can avoid it.

2. **Set the Timer**
   - Set the timer or time-keeping device in front of your child so they see it.
   - Set it to the appropriate time for the child based on their age. Example: 3 minutes for a 3 year old.
   - Do not stand over your child and try not to give them your attention during the time-out.
3. **When The Time is up**

- When time is up, your child will usually be happy to get out of time-out.
- If the child was doing an activity before time-out, state “your time-out is done, you sat nicely, and you may go play now”.
- Time-outs will be most effective if time-in is made to be reinforcing or enjoyable. The child will learn that when they comply with time-out procedures, they can return to their fun activities afterwards.
- Only use a reinforcing time-in if your child has followed through with the time-out appropriately.
- Do not talk about what the child did wrong after time-out is finished. Time-outs are a way to move on from the incident. It is a chance to start over.

Possible Problems with Time-Outs

Child is angry throughout the time-out and after the time-out.

- Talk the child through their time-out. This does not mean given them positive attention. It means talking about their anger and helping them calm down. Do not continue to talk about what they did wrong, this will provoke angry feelings for your child. It is about calming down.

Child acts aggressively when you attempt to put them in time-out.

- Let your child know that they will be put in a time-out, this does not mean being aggressive with them. It means being firm. Once the child knows that they can’t change your mind by screaming and refusing, they will know that you are in control.
- Always be consistent. Don’t use time-out one day and then ignore behaviours another day.

When you overuse time-outs

- Time-outs should only be given if a behaviour persists and when it can not be corrected with redirecting the behaviour.
- Only use time-outs when a child refuses to cooperate several times and an appropriate consequence is needed.
- Children will not respond well to time-outs if they are used too often.

Engaging in an argument during time-outs

- Never talk to your child while they are in a time-out, unless they need help to calm down.
- Talking about the reason why a child is in time-out only leads to angry feelings.
- Time-outs are an opportunity to calm down, not to get in an argument with your child.

Planning a Time-Out

Preparing for the possibility of having to use a time-out is key for time-outs to work effectively.

If you have to use a time-out, use this as preparation:

What chair would you use?___________________________

Where would you place the chair?_____________________

Do you have a timer?________________________________

How many minutes would you set the timer for?
_______________Minutes.

How would you describe the time-out to your child?
____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Will your child need help calming down?
____________________________________________________

What could you use to make “Time-In” rewarding?
____________________________________________________

Remember: Do not get discouraged. It is rare that time-outs are perfect every time. Be consistent and don’t give-up.
Session 6:
Promoting Children’s Positive Behaviour
What is Positive Behaviour?

Positive behaviours are behaviours that your child engages in that are socially acceptable, encouraged, and can benefit the child in personal, social, and parent-child areas. Positive behaviours include but are not limited to: good manners, doing homework on time, and helping out with house chores.

List of Positive Behaviours that your child may engage in:

• Saying “please and thank you”.
• Setting the table for dinner
• Painting a picture or making something at school
• Sharing with friends and family
• Saying “I love you” to mom or other family members
• Giving compliments to friends and family
• Helping a friend, teacher, or parent
• Talking about their personal feelings such as being angry or sad
• Using constructive ways to show angry feelings (screaming into a pillow)
• Doing homework before doing other activities

Positive behaviour is anything a child says or does that is approved of or appropriate. It can be helpful, productive, or the proper way to show negative feelings.


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Supporting A Child’s Positive Self-Esteem

Self-Esteem is an attitude and a belief about yourself.

- People with healthy self-esteem respect themselves.
- They are confident about decision-making.
- Children who believe in themselves feel good about themselves.
- They are confident about their abilities.
- Children with poor self-esteem do not have faith in themselves.
- Children with low self-esteem will stop trying to work harder and succeed.

Your goal as a parent is to promote healthy self-esteem in your children. Give your child support and encouragement and your child will develop healthy self-esteem.

! Self-Esteem is Important!

- **Self-esteem can be the difference between success and failure.**

  Why do you think this is important, especially at an early stage in a child’s life?

- **Self-Esteem can cause your outlook to be positive or negative. It can affect your thinking.**

  How do you think bad self-esteem could cause a negative outlook on life?

- **Self-Esteem is the difference between “I can do this” and “I can not do this”.

  Low self-esteem affects your confidence. A child with low self-esteem does not have the confidence to try new experiences and if they do, they may believe that they will fail.

- **Self-Esteem can affect Self-Image**

  Self-image is how you see yourself and also how you believe others see you. Bad self-esteem can mean that a child has a negative image about themselves. Children might think that others see them negatively as well.

  How do you think this can affect a child’s social development? Especially when they are forming new relationships.

- **Self-Esteem affects how you value yourself and how you value others**

  When you do not value yourself as important, this can reflect on your view of other people as well. Children may learn that if they are not valuable, other people are not valuable either.


North Vancouver, BC: Parenting Today productions Inc.
How You Can Develop and Support Your Child’s Self-Esteem

1. **Treat your child with respect.**
   Show your child that he is important by treating him with respect. Do not shame him/her in front of other people.
   **Example:** You have your friend over for dinner. During dinner, your child spills a glass of milk. How would you react?
   “Not again! I told you to be careful! You are so stupid!”
   This displays very little respect towards the child.
   “Accidents happen, do not worry. We can clean it up”. This lets your child know that they made an accident. They know that they are not a bad person, they just had an accident.

2. **Accept your child just the way they are.**
   This does not mean that you have to love their unacceptable behaviours. It means loving your child despite some bad behaviours.
   **Example:** “I love you, but I do not like that behaviour, it is not okay”.
   This lets the child know that you love them but you do not like their unacceptable behaviour.

3. **Teach your child that effort is the key to success.**
   Let your children know that success requires hard work and that nothing is achieved without effort. Encourage your children in everything they work towards. Show that you have confidence in them and you fully support their efforts.
   **Example:** “You will have to study hard for that test. You are very smart and will do just fine if you study. You can do this!”.


   North Vancouver, BC: Parenting Today productions Inc.
4. **Do not do things that they are able to do by themselves.**

   Being overprotective can cause children to feel insecure or act lazy. They might learn to depend on you to do things for them. Having confidence in their abilities leads to healthy self-esteem.

5. **Teach them to accept both weaknesses and strengths.**

   Children with low self-esteem focus a lot on their weaknesses and not their strengths. They overlook their positive qualities. Let your child know that everyone has strong and weak qualities.
   
   Example: “Everyone is good at something. See, Mommy is bad at drawing pictures but very good at reading stories”.

6. **Teach children to overcome disappointments.**

   Disappointments are a part of life and your child should learn that at a young age. Teach children to experience their disappointments without the results being tragic.
   
   Example: “You lost the soccer game. You won’t win every soccer game but that doesn’t mean your team won’t win again someday. It’s not the end of the world”.

7. **Teach children to love who they are.**

   Life is full of disappointments and people who are untrustworthy. Teach your child to love who they are and to support themselves in whatever they decide to do. This means that your child won’t learn to depend on others for their own confidence.
   
   Example: “You should always be proud of who you are, because you are an amazing person who can do awesome things”.

8. **Provide encouragement in any given opportunity.**

   Supporting your child will lead them to be able to support themselves in the future.

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Promoting Positive Behaviours

If children are taught how to engage in specific behaviours and why they should engage in them, it can prevent problem behaviours from occurring in the first place. When children are taught how they should act in particular situations, the behaviour is already there for them to practice in the future.

Preventative Teaching involves teaching important skills to children before they need to use them. You have probably done this before without realizing.

Example: Showing your child how to safely walk across the street.

When to use preventative teaching:

- When your child is going to be experiencing a new situation such as school.
- When your child has had difficulty performing a certain behaviour that they will have to use again in the future. This includes table manners.
- Use this technique when your child is calm and not when problem behaviours occur.
- If your child argues with you when you ask them to hang up the phone and come for dinner, use this method before they make another phone call so they can practice how to respond to you in the future.
- Preventative Teaching is a very simple concept and easy to introduce.

Examples of when preventative teaching can be used:

- Say “hello” when being introduced to new people.
- Say “no” if someone offers you drugs or alcohol.
- Say “Okay” with no arguing when it’s time to set the table for dinner.
- Preparing to give a presentation to the school.
- Clearing the table and doing dishes after dinner.

The Positive Reinforcement Technique

1. **Describe the Child’s Positive Behaviour**
2. **Give a Reason for Engaging in the Behaviour**
3. **Practice the Behaviour With the Child**

A 7-year-old boy frequently gets upset and argues with his mom when it’s time to get ready for school. In the morning, she uses the preventative teaching to teach him how to stay calm.

**Step One: Describe the positive behaviour.**
“Sometimes you argue and get upset with me when it’s time to get ready for school in the morning. Instead of arguing with me, I want you to take 3 very deep breaths (Mom then shows him how to take in deep breaths and blow out).

**Step Two: Give a reason for engaging in the behaviour.**
“When you take 3 deep breaths, it will let me know that you are upset but you won’t get into trouble like you do when you yell at me. When you’re finished taking your deep breaths, we can talk about why you’re upset, okay?”

**Step Three: Practice the behaviour with the child**
“Pretend that it is morning and you are upset that you have to get ready for school. Show me how you would take 3 deep breaths in order to let me know that you are angry”.
“That’s awesome! Take 3 deep breaths whenever you feel upset. Then we can talk about your feelings instead of arguing”.

**Always verbally praise the child after they practice the behaviour correctly and calmly.**

What do I do if I misbehave in front of my child?

First of all, do not get defensive. Parents ignoring the fact that they just swore or did something wrong and attempt to distract their child from the situation.

**An example of a parent being defensive:**

Mom swears in front of child because a car cut her off.

Child: “What does that mean?”

Mom: “Nevermind what that word means. Just don’t ever let me hear you say it or you will be punished”.

This response is wrong because it closes off communication between the child and parent.

It says to the child “I can say this word, but you definitely can not”.

The first thing your child may do at school the next day is ask his classmates what the word means and then your child will end up in a bad situation.

**What you should do:** Do not get defensive when your child catches you misbehaving.

- Turn your situation into a learning opportunity for your child.
- Admit that you were wrong to swear.
- Do not blame the car that cut you off because this is not taking responsibility.
- Explain that you made a mistake and that you got angry.
- Explain that no one should use bad words like that and neither should mommy.
- Apologize for swearing and that you will try hard not to do it again.

The child will now understand that the word is not a good word to use. You are modeling the fact that parents make mistakes too, just like children.

Monkey See, Monkey Do

Examples of Children who Model Parent’s Positive Behaviour:

• Speaking in a calm voice instead of an angry one, teaches children how to stay calm when they are provoked or feel upset.

• Apologizing for using bad language, teaches children to take responsibility for making mistakes.

• Using polite language, teaches children to use polite language as well.

• When you are kind to others, you teach children to be kind to others too.

• When you eat healthy foods instead of junk food, you teach your children to eat healthy foods.

Examples of Children Modeling Parent’s Negative Behaviour:

• If you lie about your 12 year olds age to avoid paying the price of an adult movie ticket, you teach them that lying is okay.

• If you yell, argue, and call people names, you teach your children that it is okay to do these things too.

You can’t always control negative behaviour in front of your children but by owning your mistakes and explaining that it is not good behaviour, your children will learn that it is not okay.

The Power of Praise

What is Praise?

Praise is a behaviour that parents engage in on multiple occasions when their child has done something good, correct or outstanding such as a good grade on a test.

Example: “Good work!” when child hands you their graded test paper is considered a form of praise.

• Praise is one of the most simple ways of encouraging positive behaviours.

• It encourages children to see themselves as well as the world around them in a more positive way.

• It helps to develop self-worth and improve the positive parent-child relationship.

• Sincere and enthusiastic praise can help your child grow emotionally as well.

How to Focus on The Positive

Praise is not a new technique or concept but many parents do not know about it or use it as often as they should.

One of the reasons why we don’t use praise as often is because we have a habit of seeing only negative behaviours instead of positive ones.

Example: If you come out of a movie theatre and during your experience the screen shuts off for 1 minute. It comes back on and you are able to see the rest of the film. Afterwards, you are more likely to focus on the one negative event than on the positive occurrences in the entire experience. Ex. Good popcorn, cold drink, the whole movie, etc.

The same goes for child behaviour. A child could be sitting quietly drawing for awhile at a table and make an annoying noise once out of a 30 minute time period. We are likely to say “stop making those noises” than to say “I like how you are sitting quietly, that is good behaviour”.

Unacceptable behaviour is easier to spot.

The more we praise a child for good behaviour, the more likely they are to engage in it. Children are aware of when they are given attention for certain behaviours. If you are providing more attention for unacceptable behaviour, then the child won’t care whether it’s negative attention as long as they are receiving attention either way.

Effective Praising

When to use praise:

- Things your children already do very well and that you would like them to continue
- Improvements in inappropriate behaviour (towards appropriate behaviour)
- Attempts at new skills

Steps of Giving Effective Praise

When the behaviour occurs use the following steps of praise.

Step One: Show Your Approval

In an enthusiastic tone of voice provide verbal praise.

“Way to go Billy! I’m proud of you!”

Step Two: Describe the Positive Behaviour Your Child is Engaging in

Describe it very simple and to the point.

“You did all of your homework before asking to go outside to play”.

Step Three: Give a Reason for Continuation of the Behaviour

“When you finish your homework early, you have time to play”.

Step Four (Optional Step) Provide an Additional Reward

When you are happy with a certain behaviour you can reward your child with a special privilege or reward. Example: A movie night or baking cookies.

Sticker Charts

Another effective way to reward positive behaviour is to have a sticker chart or a chart where you can document your child’s daily or weekly positive behaviour.

**Mathew’s Good Behaviour Sticker Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of The Week</th>
<th>Made my Bed</th>
<th>Packed my Bag for School</th>
<th>Did my Homework after School</th>
<th>Got Ready for Bed on Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>★</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td>★</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>★</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td>★</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td></td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>★ ★</td>
<td>★ ★</td>
<td>★ ★</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stickers are very effective rewards for children (and for some adults) and they can be used as a progress towards a larger reward.
How to Use a Sticker Chart

• Find a chart that suites your child’s interests/hobbies.

Example: If your little girl likes Dora the Explorer, you can search the internet for charts with Dora on them and cut out stickers to go with it.

• Find a spot to place the chart so that the child can see it daily.

Example: On the fridge or on the front of their bedroom door.

• Keep stickers somewhere where only you know the location.

Example: children will try and take stickers if they know where you keep them.

• Use stickers with images that the child likes.

• Explain the meaning of the chart to the child.

Example: “This is a homework completion chart. When mommy sees that your homework is done, you will get a sticker. When you get 3 stickers this week, we can rent a movie and we will have a slumber party on Friday”.

• It is good to have a chart for a specific behaviour instead of multiple behaviours. The child may get confused.

* You can find lots of stickers charts on the internet by using a search engine. Stickers can be found at the dollar store or on the internet.*

Reinforcing My Child’s Positive Behaviours

Lots of things can be rewarding for children. It can be as simple as taking a walk to the park. Whatever your child enjoys doing can be used as a reward for good behaviour.

List 3 Activities that your child likes to do:

1. _____________________________

2. _____________________________

3. _____________________________

List a food item that your child enjoys:

________________________________________________________

All of these activities and items can be used as rewards.

What are 3 Positive Behaviours that your child does?

1. _____________________________

2. _____________________________

3. _____________________________

Try using Praise every time your child engages in these positive behaviours. See if you notice a difference afterwards.
Session Seven:
Self-Monitoring and Controlling Personal Behaviour
In a Child’s Presence

It is true when people say “children are like sponges”.

Children pick up on our positive behaviours as well as our problem behaviours and are more likely to engage in those behaviours the more that they see them.

Children can also learn how to solve their problems from watching what their parents do. If you get frustrated and angry when you can’t find your keys to the car, your child will learn that getting angry is how they are supposed to act when they lose something.

The most important thing to do around your children is to set a good example. They look up to you and will model your behaviour. So make sure that you are displaying the behaviour you want to see in your child.

No parent is perfect or without flaws. There will be times when your child sees you misbehaving. The best thing you can do is admit that the behaviour was not the right thing to do and explain to you child that you made a mistake.

No One Said it was Easy

It is not easy to be a parent. It takes time and a lot of energy to make sure your children are learning the right behaviours.

• There are going to be times when you want to give up.
• There will be times when you have had a long day and do not have the energy to deal with certain behaviours.
• There are going to be times when you lose control and find it hard to calm yourself down.

All of these are normal and will happen once in a while.

If you catch yourself displaying negative behaviour in the presence of your child, the most important thing to do is explain that what you are doing is not the right thing to do.

Example: If you find yourself unable to calm down in a situation.
Respond with: “Mommy is feeling angry right now. Slamming cupboards is not okay so mommy needs time to calm down. Maybe going on a time-out would be good for mommy”.
Step back from the situation. Try sitting down at a table and practicing relaxation or laying your head down on the table.
Only try again when you have calmed down and you are ready to approach the situation again. Sometimes moms need time-outs too and that is okay to take time to calm down and revisit the difficult situation later.

Monitor Your Own Behaviour

A child may be displaying behaviour that was learned from their parent but sometimes it’s hard to remember doing that behaviour to begin with.

An important technique to learn if you are unaware of where your child is learning their unacceptable behaviour, is self-monitoring. Self-Monitoring involves tracking your own behaviour and being aware of when you are engaging in unacceptable behaviours.

**Example**

- Your child starts to swear and this word has never been heard from them before.
- You can’t remember ever swearing in your child’s presence before but are not certain if you have or not.
- Next time you are in the presence of your child, especially if you are angry or frustrated, pay attention to what you say and exactly what you are doing.
- Pay close attention to the way you are feeling and the words that are coming out of your mouth.
- The more you pay attention to your own behaviour, the easier it will be to catch your behaviour and control it in the future.

To practice you could try a behaviour that is more obvious to catch, such as nail-biting. It is sometimes hard to realize when we are engaging in bad habits but once we make ourselves fully aware of them, they are easier to notice.

When you can catch yourself engaging in unacceptable behaviours in front of your child, admit to making a mistake and explain that it is unacceptable behaviour.

Relaxation

It’s hard to stay relaxed when your child is responding to you with anger and frustration. Especially when they are engaging in aggressive behaviours.

As humans, we have natural defense mechanisms.

When anger is directed towards us, our body is naturally on alert for possible danger and prepares us for a reaction.

This is why calming down in tense situations is so difficult.

It is also the reason for speaking calmly to our children when giving instruction and discipline. So that our children do not tense up from our tone of voice.

Practicing relaxation techniques is a good way to control your natural body responses and prepare yourself for future disagreements with your child.

When you appear calm and collected, it will be easier for your child to calm down too.

Relaxation Techniques

Find a time period (between 10 to 20 minutes) in a day to practice your relaxation. If you cannot find time every day, try once every two days or once a week if it is not realistic. Being a full-time mom means that it is hard to find time alone. This should be a time when your child is not around (at school, or in someone else’s care).

Pick a place or situation in your mind that makes you feel at peace. This should be something that you can visualize easily and that you feel comfortable with.

Lets get started!
Simple Relaxation Techniques

1. Deep Breathing for Stress Relief

Deep breathing is a simple yet powerful relaxation technique. It can be used anywhere and is easy to learn. Deep breathing is usually the first step for most relaxation techniques. The main thing to focus on is to get as much air as you possibly can into your lungs by breathing from the abdomen, not your chest. Taking breaths from the abdomen, leads to more oxygen intake.

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, get as much air as possible into your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

- Sit or lay down comfortably. Put a hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Close your eyes.
- Breathe in through your nose causing the hand on your stomach to rise up. If the hand on your chest moves, you are not breathing in through your abdomen properly.
- Exhale through your mouth and push out as much air as you can. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Inhale so that your lower abdomen is rising and falling. Count slowly to a number of your choice until you are fully relaxed and calm.

2. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

A technique in which you tense and relax different muscle groups in your body. It makes you aware of how your body feels when it is tense and when it is relaxed.

Breath in and out for few minutes until relaxed. Sit comfortably or lay down.

When you are ready to get started, keep your attention on your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.

Start at your feet and work your way to your head and face muscles.

Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeeze the muscles as tight as you can. Hold this tension for 10 seconds.

Release the tension and relax your right foot. Notice the tension going away and the way your foot feels as it becomes completely relaxed.

Continue to breathe deeply and slowly throughout this exercise.

When you’re ready, shift your attention to your left foot. Follow the same tension of muscles and relaxation movements for the rest of your muscle groups.

Go slowly up your body, contracting and relaxing the muscle groups from your feet to your head.

Use deep breathing at the same time.

3. **Full Awareness**

Being fully aware is the ability to remain aware of how you’re feeling right now both internally and externally, in the current moment.

**Key points in Full Awareness are:**

**A quiet and calm environment.** Choose a private place such as a private office, garden, in your car, or in a non-busy park where you can relax without distractions or interruptions.

**Find a comfortable position.** Get comfortable by sitting up or laying down. Sitting up with your spine straight, either in a chair or on the floor is a good position. You can also try a cross-legged position or laying on a bench or sofa.

**An image or point of focus.** This can be a feeling (happy, joyful) or imaginary scenery. Something external would be a flower, sunset or a meaningful word or phrase that you repeat it in your relaxation session. You may do this with your eyes open or closed. Choose an object to focus on in your environment to enhance your concentration or close your eyes.

**Have a nonjudgmental self-attitude.** Ignore distracting thoughts that go through your mind. If thoughts do come about during your session, try not to get frustrated and leave them be. Instead, focus on your image or point of focus.

Thinking about negative thoughts can lead to an overwhelming amount of stress and frustration, which is exactly what you are trying to avoid. By staying in and focusing on the present moment, you can stay relaxed and calm yourself down.

4. Meditating with Relaxing Visuals

Visualization involves imaging a place or a scene where you feel relaxed and at peace. A place where you are free of tension and stress.

Choose a setting that you find to be the most calming. A favourite vacation spot, a place from a dream, a movie scene, or even a favourite childhood memory.

Find a quiet place where you won’t be interrupted. You can lay down or sit up, which ever one you prefer is fine.

Close your eyes and imagine your place of rest. Try to picture it as best you can, including details of sounds, smells, and tastes. Add vivid colours and relaxing sensations. Always use imagery that is appealing to you and not to someone else. Create your own images that you find relaxing and work with them as you go.

Losing track of where you are in your imagery is normal as well as falling asleep (during the first session especially).

Stay in your place of relaxation until you feel like coming out of it. Don’t ever feel pressured to hurry this process, the longer you practice it, the better you will feel afterwards.

Use Relaxation Whenever You Are Given the Opportunity

Relaxation is good for your health and well-being.

Stress can cause sickness and other health problems if they are not dealt with immediately.

Make use of the little amount of time you have when you are by yourself and practice relaxing and relieving stress.
Practice Relaxation at Home

For homework this week, pick one relaxation procedure that we discussed and practice it at home.

I will use the ____________________________ relaxation technique,
for ________________ minutes, on ________________ (day of week).

After Practicing the relaxation technique…

Was this helpful in reducing your stress?
Yes ___  No ____  Sort of ____

Will you use this technique in the future to relieve stress?
Yes____  No _____

What did you like about it or what did you not like about it?
___________________________________________
____________________________________________
___
Session Eight:

Dealing with Setbacks and Self-Care
You are Important Too

Taking care of and setting a good example for your child is hard work but you also need to remember how important it is to take care of yourself too.

If you get worn out, you will not have the energy and patience that it takes to take care of your child.

**Stressful Outcomes**

- Taking care of yourself is important for your health and well-being.
- Being overly stressed can lead to illnesses and overtime, it can also be an influence for some diseases.
- Stress affects the immune system. The immune system helps your body heal from sickness.
- Stress can make you more impatient and frustrated when dealing with your child’s behaviours.
- It can alter your mood. If you are usually an upbeat individual, too much stress can make you feel down.
- Getting sick can leave you down and out for a few days, which makes it difficult to be a caregiver during this time.
- Stress can wear down the body making you feel more tired than you really are. It takes a lot of energy.


*HelpGuide.org. Retrieved September 1, 2012 from*

*http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm*
Did you Know...

Most illnesses and disease can be attributed to stress.

When stress is excessive, prolonged and chronic, it actually breaks down our body’s defense mechanism and leaves us vulnerable to disease and illness.

That is why when we are stressed for a long period of time we often get sick as well.

The Flight or Fight Response & How It May Cause Stress

It starts with how your body naturally reacts to stressful or frightening situations.

Something triggers your brain to think that you are in danger. This is called the **fight or flight response**. Your body gets you ready to run or fight. Back in the caveman days, this reaction would have saved our lives in many situations.

Today, it might be your child having a tantrum, or the boss at work reminding you that you need to meet a deadline. So this response is not so helpful but makes us naturally more stressed anyways. It really doesn’t matter if you are in physical danger or if the stressor is a real threat or an emotional reaction.

Your body reacts by giving you an **adrenaline rush** and raising your **cortisol levels**. If you were really in danger, these two chemicals would work together by:

- **Giving you a big burst of energy.**
- **Shutting down non-essential body functions** such as digestion is slowed, and your immune system is weakened.
- **Heart rate increases** pumping adrenaline and blood to your major muscle groups, so that you can run or defend yourself. Your immune system function is slowed in this process.
- **Lowering your sensitivity to pain.** You are less sensitive because your body is sensing that there is an emergency.

This is a wonderful response is you actually are in danger and have a real problem on your hands when you need to react quickly and effectively. But if it is only due to stress, then it can greatly affect your health in negative ways.


*HelpGuide.org. Retrieved September 1, 2012 from*

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm
# How Stress Relates to Your Health

If your stress levels remain high, you may end up with a serious illness, like heart disease or cancer.

The quality, intensity and length of the stress, all determine the effect that stress can have on your body and health. Some people can handle stress easier than others. It all depends on the individual.

How stress affects the immune system is dependent on your ability to relax and handle stress and anxiety. So learning relaxation techniques as well as healthy living habits are essential to overcoming stressful outcomes.

Stress and the immune system are connected and so learning how to handle stress well can have you avoid consequences such as illness, diseases and autoimmune diseases.

These consequences are related to a weakened immune system due to stress:

- High blood pressure
- Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Hives or stress rash
- Bowel problems (diarrhea)
- Cancer

When the immune system is not working properly it leaves our body vulnerable to infections, allergies, and even cancer. So we tend to get sick easier when we are stressed.

Disease and illness can be prevented by learning how to cope with stress.

You can do this by learning to meditate, finding fun activities that help you to relax, and by changing your daily bad habits and behaviours or changing thought negative thought patterns.


*HelpGuide.org. Retrieved September 1, 2012 from*

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm)
Finding Relaxation Time for Yourself

Being a single mother is exhausting. Your child depends on you for everything and it is hard to find a moment for yourself to do things that interest you. Your solution is to create little moments during the day or month for yourself.

Creating Time for Yourself

1. **Get up Earlier than usual** – Set your alarm 30 minutes before you need to get up in the morning. Then use that time to do something relaxing.

2. **Make Your Child’s Bed Routine Consistent** – Plan time for yourself after you put your child to bed for the night. Your child will learn exactly when their bedtime is and will learn to follow this routine.

3. **Using Your Shower-time** – Your morning shower is the one guaranteed time that you can have to yourself. Purchase some lovely smelling body wash or body scrubs that will make you feel good. Take deep breaths and enjoy this time to yourself.

4. **Take a Walk on Your Work Lunch Hour** – Walking is a great way to clear your mind. If you have a job during the day-time, take your lunch outside of the office. If you are unemployed and a full-time mom, take you and your child for a walk outside or ask a friend to watch your child for a period of time while you take a walk.

5. **Invent a Quiet Time** – Invent a quiet time. Tell your kids to read or play quietly while you find time to read a book or listen to music. You can use this time to relax and do what you would like to do. Reinforcing your child for playing quietly would make it more likely to have quiet time in the future.

6. **Make a Date with Yourself** – Actually schedule time on your calendar to do something nice for yourself. Take this time to go out or stay at home. Try and make a date at least once a month and even hire a babysitting if you have to.

7. **Use the Time Spent in Your Car** – If you have a car, try turning everything off to enjoy the quiet. This is a good way to calm down and relax without the noises of the outside world.

8. **Do Not Use a Child’s TV-Time to do Work** – Use this time to sit and relax and maybe even watch TV with your child. Collect your thoughts or sit and listen to music, etc. Chores should be done when your child can help out too.
Everyday Natural Stress Relievers

Meditate or Use Self-Awareness
When you slow your heart rate and relax specific muscles, it can alter your body’s reaction to stressors. This makes it less likely for you to get sick or develop a disease. It is also good for clearing your head of negative thoughts. Use just 5 or 10 minutes a day to meditate.

Physical Activity/Exercise
People who are physically active are less depressed and less anxious. Exercise increases our levels of norepinephrine, which helps relief stress. Get moving for at least 30 minutes 5 times a week or walking more than driving, can help reduce your stress levels.

Avoid Eating Carbohydrates
High cortisol levels are a trigger to stress and they are found in white flour, desserts, and candy (refined carbohydrates). Focusing on omega-3 foods, vitamin B5 and cutting back on caffeine can lower stress levels. Fruits and vegetables are also a healthy choice.

Leave Electronic Devices Alone
If checking your email is a constant task, think twice about how needed it might be, especially when you first wake up or right before you go to bed. When you start and end the day by constantly being plugged in, it gets us right into work mode before we have a moment to relax. Take some time to meditate, sit out on the patio, read, or even watch TV before we have the overstimulation of instant stress.

Relaxing Music or Your Favourite Kind of Music
Music is a good way to vent as much as it is to relax. Especially if it is music that you love and don’t get to listen to very often, taking some time to catch up on your favourite musicians will definitely be enjoyable.

Don’t Take on Too Much
Feel free to say no when you have a lot to do. If you take on too many activities and dates to do things, this can be overwhelming and very stressful. Even if it is a friend or a co-worker that you are trying to please but just don’t have time for, say no and don’t feel bad for doing so. Think twice before taking on new tasks on top of the ones that you are already committed to, like taking care of your son or daughter.

Do Something That You Love to Do/Hobbies
Any enjoyable and relaxing activities take our focus away from worries and stress-inducing thoughts. If you love to do art then engage in this activity whenever you have the time. Do something that you truly love to do and feel good about doing it.

Dealing With Setbacks

It is perfectly normal to get discouraged when you do not see results in your child’s behaviour right away.

It takes consistency and time to see changes.

But, if you find that you have tried everything you can and put your skills to sue and are not seeing results, it may be a good idea to seek a doctor or a professional behaviourist.

Use the resources that are available to you. There may be an underlying medical condition or a neurological illness that your child has and it has not yet been detected.

Many disorders, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, have medications available to help children focus. This may be the reason why you are not seeing results.

Seek as many resources that are available to you. As a single parent, it can be stressful to not have additional supports so seek these out as much and as often as you can.
There is no such thing as “Super Mom”, but you now have the skills and knowledge to conquer any behaviours that may come your way.

Best of Luck!

All materials that were referred to in creating this workbook have been referenced on the following page. All images used in this workbook are free of copyright.
References


Appendix C: Positive Parenting Workshop Outline
Positive Parenting Workshop Outline

8 - Week Program  Facilitator: Leah Dermott, 4th Year Behavioural Psychology Student

Group discussions are welcome throughout every session. This is just an outline of topics that will be discussed by the facilitator. Questions and group interaction is encouraged.

Session One: Introduction and Child Development

- Introduction/Confidentiality/Workshop overview
- Pre-Assessments
- Group rules established
- Workbooks Handed out
- What is Positive Parenting?
- Child Development and Age-related Behaviours
- Typical Problem Behaviours
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Behaviour Chart

Session Two: What Causes and Maintains Problem Behaviours?

- Group Discussion of Homework Assignment/Questions
- How Your Child’s Behaviour Works
- The Causes of Behaviour
- What Children learn from Witnessing Violence
- How Being a Witness can Affect Child Development
- How to move forward/coping/understanding
- Group Discussion*

Session Three: Positive Interactions and Emotional Communication

- Group Discussion of homework assignment/questions
- Promoting Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Interaction/Emotional Communication Skills
- Responding to child emotions/attentive listening
- Importance of quality time
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Planned activity with child
Session Four: Disciplinary Communication/Setting Rules and Limits

- Group share: parent-child activities/what went well/what did not work
- What is Disciplinary Communication?
- Giving clear and appropriate directions
- Activity: Rephrasing directions
- Punishment Vs. Discipline
- Setting rules and limits
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Set your own limits

Session Five: Discipline and Behaviour Management

- Group share: questions/what worked/what did not work
- Attitudes about discipline strategies
- Specific reinforcement and discipline
- Avoiding Power Struggles
- Proper Time-out Procedures
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Time-Out Preparation

Session Six: Promoting Children’s Positive Behaviours

- Group share: questions/what worked/what did not work
- How to foster positive self-esteem
- How to Encourage Positive Behaviour (manners, getting along, etc.)
- Reinforcing Positive Behaviours
- Sticker Charts/Praising/Rewarding
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Reinforcing Child’s Positive Behaviours

Session Seven: Self-Monitoring and Controlling Personal Behaviour

- Group share: positive behaviours/rewarding techniques
- Controlling Personal Behaviour in Presence of a Child
- What Children learn from Angry/Frustrated Responses
- Relaxation Techniques (Deep breathing, Muscle Relaxation)
- Group Discussion*
- Homework Assignment: Practice Relaxation Techniques

Session Eight: Dealing with Setbacks and Self-Care/Goodbyes

- Group Share: benefits/downsides of relaxation techniques
- Discussing the Importance of Self-care
- Staying Healthy and Happy
- Taking time for Mom
- Dealing with Setbacks/Additional Assistance
- Group Discussion*
- Post-Assessments/Feedback Form
Appendix D: Positive Parenting Workshop Sessions Layout

**Positive Parenting Workshop Sessions Layout**

Sessions are based on parenting skills and knowledge that have been proven to shape child behaviour and increase parental efficacy. These components are evidence-based as researched in peer-reviewed articles and material. Workshop is ABA-based.

**Session One: Introduction and Child Development (2 Hour)**

A consent form will be discussed and signed during this session. Volunteers will decide whether they will participate and commit to the eight-session program.

The three measures (TOPSE, PSCS, and the CCBS) will be distributed at the beginning of the first session to each participant. The measures should be completed and returned to the facilitator. The principles and reasoning behind the program will be explained and the facilitator will introduce herself and her educational background. Each member will introduce themselves to the group by stating their name and their reason for attending. A workbook will be handed out to each participant (Appendix H). In a group discussion, the facilitator will have each participant write out their goals or what they want to attain from the program. These goals will then be discussed among the group in order to point out similarities. Facilitator will discuss the common problem behaviours that children have at various stages in child development. An explanation of what positive parenting is and how this program will provide participants with skills will be provided. A layout of the sessions will be provided. A recording sheet will be handed out to each participant. This sheet will be used to record the behaviours that the participants see their child engaging in within the next week until the following session. This sheet will be explained and assigned for homework. The last 15 minutes will provide an overview of the next session and room for group discussion.

**Session Two: What Causes and Maintains Problem Behaviours? (1.5 Hours)**

The on-going assessment form (Appendix E) will be given to participants and handed back to the facilitator. This assessment form will be distributed before every session and handed back to the facilitator. Participants will discuss the behaviours that they noticed with their children to the group and facilitator. Similarities will be discussed. The facilitator will then explain the purpose behind recording the children’s behaviour. A basic ABA lesson will be taught to the group. The facilitator will use the examples to help explain the maintaining antecedents and consequences of the child’s behaviour. Discussion of what causes and maintains problem behaviour is discussed. The group members will interact by asking questions and giving examples. Another sheet will be provided to the participants in the workbook. This will be used to observe the occurrences before and after the child’s behaviour. The sheet will be explained and assigned for homework. Room for discussion will be left at the end. Personal topics may be discussed as well.
Session 3: Positive Interactions and Emotional Communication (1.5 Hours)

In this session, the main topic is to promote positive parent-child relationships. It will also provide parents with the interaction skills and emotional communication skills that they need. This will also include the specific skills such as attentive listening that promote positive relationships. Examples will be used to demonstrate skills such as responding to child’s emotions, attentive listening, and discussing the child’s emotions. Parents will be taught what they can do to promote healthy parent-child relationships such as spending quality time with children, talking with children, and showing appropriate affection. There will be an open group discussion regarding the last homework assignment. The next homework assignment will be to practice the positive parenting skills that were role-played. Open discussion will be left for last.

Session 4: Disciplinary Communication/Setting Rules and Limits (1.5 Hours)

The session will begin with a group discussion and feedback on how practicing positive communication went for everyone. The facilitator will discuss the proper use of disciplinary communication. This will include giving clear and developmentally appropriate directions, stating behavioural expectations and consequences, and setting limits and rules. A demonstration will be done for each skill by the facilitator and then participants will be asked to rephrase examples of unclear directions. The homework for the participants will be to set up a basic and reasonable set of rules and limits for their children to follow. This will be practiced by following through with the plan while using the skills attained. A group discussion will be left for the end of the session.

Session 5: Discipline and Behaviour Management (1.5 Hours)

This session will discuss: Attitudes about discipline strategies, attributions about child misbehaviours, monitoring and supervision practices, specific reinforcement and punishment (ex. planned ignoring, positive reinforcement, and time out), problem solving about child behaviours, and consistent responding or generalization. Participants will role-play specific skills such as positive reinforcement and time out procedures. Participants will be informed on the proper communication skills to use such as tone of voice and controlling angry responses. This will also be demonstrated. The next homework assignment will be to demonstrate proper discipline the next time problem behaviour occurs and to follow through with proper discipline. The last 10 minutes will be left for group discussion.

Session 6: Promoting Children’s Positive Behaviours (1.5 Hours)

In this session, we will begin by discussing as a group how the last homework assignment went. The facilitator will explain the importance of both discipline and promoting positive behaviours. This will be presented to the group. It will discuss teaching children to share and cooperate, use good manners, and get along with peers, siblings and adults. It will also explain reinforcement techniques for already existing positive behaviours. The group will discuss their children’s positive behaviours, proper
reinforcements and promoting positive behaviours. The next homework assignment will be to identify positive behaviours in their children and to positively reinforce these behaviours, while also promoting new adaptive behaviours. Participants will write down their reinforcement technique for next session. The last 15 minutes will be used for discussion.

**Session 7: Self-Monitoring and Controlling Personal Behaviour (1.5 Hours)**

This session will discuss the importance of controlling your own behaviour in the presence of a child. It will also teach relaxation techniques as well as how to stay calm in problem situations. The facilitator will present a presentation on effective ways to self-monitor your own behaviour and how a mother’s behaviour can affect a child’s behaviour. Participants will have an open discussion about losing their temper in problem situations and brainstorm about possible future solutions to regaining control of their behaviour. Relaxation techniques will be discussed and taught. Participants will be asked to use these techniques for homework and write down the benefits and possible improvements of the relaxation technique for next session. The last 15 minutes will be used for group discussion and possible concerns.

**Session 8: Dealing with Setbacks and Self-Care (1.5 Hour)**

The last session will consist of how to deal with setbacks and self-care. Self-care refers to the ways that the participants can take time for themselves, and stay healthy and content. The discussion will begin with discussing how the homework went for everyone and what techniques may be presented to the group. The facilitator will then discuss how to deal with setbacks by discussing suggestions. This will include using resources such as counselors or healthcare providers for ongoing problem behaviours. The last part of the session will be used to discuss the importance for the participants to take care of themselves and stay healthy. Working with problem behaviours can be stressful and so it is important for the participants to remember to take care of themselves. Suggestions would be: taking walks, reading a book, having a bubble bath, baking with their child, etc. The last 30 minutes will be used to distribute the three measurements from the first session and have the participants fill these out and return to the facilitator. Participants will be able to keep their workbooks to assist them after the sessions as well as room for final questions and feedback.
Appendix E: Ongoing Assessment Evaluation Form

Session Evaluation

Did you find the last session helpful?       Yes ( )       No ( )

Did you use the skills that were discussed in the last session?     Yes ( )   No ( )

Was the last session informative?       Yes ( )       No ( )

In the last session, did you learn something that you did not know before attending the session?       Yes ( )       No ( )

What are some of the things that the facilitator can improve?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What are some things that the facilitator did well?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix F: Pre and Post Child Challenging Behaviour Scale Scores Graph for Participants 1 and 2
Appendix G: Pre and Post Parenting Sense of Competence Scale Scores Graph for Participants 1 and 2
Appendix H: Pre and Post TOPSE Subscale Scores Graph for Participant 1
Appendix I: Pre and Post TOPSE Subscale Scores Graph for Participant 2