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Mother/Daughter Dyads: The Significance of Communication in School Performance

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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This research examined whether there is a difference when mother and daughter work on having a healthier relationship by enhancing their communication with each other, if there is change in mother's involvement in her daughter's school. The workshop was conducted with ten eighth-grade girls, a pre-test and post-test was used to measure changes. Communication between mother and daughter was examined using five categories. The results showed that daughters wanted their mothers to be more involved and there is a need for improvement with communication between the mother and daughter. Daughters needed to increase confident levels to be able to express themselves. Recommendations such as having both the mother and daughter at the workshop for future study were discussed.

Mother/Daughter Dyads: The Significance of Communication in School Performance

"The popular culture and literature are filled with tales of complex, often conflictual mother-daughter relationships. The expectation of difficult times between mothers and daughters as girls become adolescents is almost universal in our culture" (Kenemore & Spira 1996, p.226). For example, Cohen-Sandler and Silver (1999) indicated that with the onset of adolescence, there are times when daughters have unpredictable moods and they might dislike their mother's decisions and involvement in their everyday activities. However the relationship is perceived, mothers are often the most influential individuals in developing confidence and self-esteem in girls (Cohen-Sandler & Silver, 1999; Kenemore & Spira, 1996; Manning, 2002; Debold, Wilson & Malvave, 1993). Often this relationship between mothers and daughters is laden with barriers that build into high stress as noted by Koffinke &Jordan (1993). This stress can be one reason mothers lose the maternal bond between mother and daughter. In addition, these barriers can limit a mother's involvement in her daughter's school.   A report from the S.C. Education Oversight Committee (2005) stated that,

> "Parents may be hesitant to become involved with their child's schooling because of their personal fears, frustrations and apprehensions. This is especially true if a parent had a negative experience with school, is anxious about their child, or dropped out of school".

Finders and Lewis (1994) and Haynes and Comer (1996) discussed some of these barriers as; reminders of their own past negative school experiences, anxiety about their child's performance or behavior, mistrust of the educational system, anxiety and apprehension of what the school expects of them, lack of knowledge about how to become involved, lack of support from partners or spouses, and possible limited parental education, making it more difficult for parents to assist their children in school. This literature review will provide an overview of definition of terms,

mother and daughter communication and factors that impede, and factors that facilitate. In addition, healthy relationships between mother and daughter with the use of empathy and parent style, the relationship between parental involvement and academic success, the importance of a mother/daughter workshop and the purpose of the study will be discussed.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined by the researcher:

Mother.

A female parent (Merriam-Webster Online, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the definition includes not only biological mother but also stepmothers, grandmothers, foster mothers, guardians, and any other concerned female who may carry the primary responsibility for the child's development, education, and general well-being. According to Kenemore and Spira (1996) mother is characterized as a caring and nurturing individual who has the task of dealing with ambiguity and managing ambivalence of their daughter.

Parent(al) involvement.

Interaction with the child at home, at school, and extra-curricular activities. The definition also includes involvement with the school as learners, as advocates for their children, and may include being decision makers in such areas as school policy, hiring, and budget (Merriam-Webster Online, 2006). Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) points out that parental involvement which help support their daughter's successful education experience is varied. Examples of such are, effective parental behaviors include helping children with their homework, encouraging them to study, answering questions, offering guidance on educational decisions, and attending school events. In accordance with Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) parental involvement is not only limited to the above physical aspects, in addition having high

expectation of their daughter's academic success is considered as an important part of involvement.

Student success/achievement.

The gain of wealth, fame, etc. to a favorable result. Additionally, friendship, respect, happiness, academic achievement, and a general feeling of self-satisfaction are included (Merriam-Webster Online, 2006). Ablard (1997) defined student success/achievement into two categories there are internal and external. Internal is classified as emphasized behaviors relative to the student, whereby the individual felt the importance of self-satisfaction. External is explained as emphasized behaviors recognized as important by others or superior to peers, whereby the individual is strongly encouraged. Student success/achievement is related to a love of learning, and can be measured by getting good grades (Ablard, 1997).

Mother/Daughter Communication

Factors that impede.

Kenemore and Spira (1996) suggested that communication between mother and daughter has moments of highs and lows, in that both mother and daughter are dealing with their own emotions, need for separateness and connections. Therefore, between mothers and daughters some factors can either impede or facilitate that relationship.

Powell (2004) acknowledged that during the period of adolescence, biological, emotional or psychological conflicts are evident. In addition, adolescents are learning to manage changes in life as they concern themselves with self-esteem, social expectations and academic achievements. While dealing with these struggles adolescent girls, could feel overwhelmed. Due to these internal struggles, communication between mother and daughter can be difficult. As Caron (1991) mentioned, mothers on the other hand, have stressors and possible fears that could

cause them to have difficulty communicating with their daughter. Caron (1991) explained these fears by using examples; she stated that times are different for the new generation, which now does not only include unwanted pregnancy, but the presence of drugs and alcohol, date rape and eating disorders. A mother fears that she cannot keep up with the time and new trends of adolescence girls. Also, Manning (2002) addressed that mothers fear that their daughter might not love them.

Although mothers and daughters might recognize that there are issues surrounding their communication, unfortunately, "they get stuck in a vicious circle, reacting in the same old way to one another" which can lead to them finding it difficult to express their own feelings (Ford & Ford, 1999, p. 5). Schuller-Coleman (1982) mentioned that a mother might want to communicate with her daughter about what is going in her life, but she might feel that she is being a bother to her daughter. In addition, some mothers are consumed with their work so that they do not have time to spend with their daughters. Another reason mothers and daughters might not resolve any issue is that, "some mothers intentionally play the role of a mannequin" (Schuller-Coleman, 1982, p. 17). The researcher interprets this to mean that, when mothers are afraid to show their shortcomings, they put on a deliberate false front and possibly deny that there are any issues.

Factors that Facilitate.

Both mother and daughter have expectations of each other. A mother that wants the best for her daughter might not express this in an understandable manner to her daughter. She might not understand how to articulate her thoughts and feeling to her daughter; this is the same for a daughter. Mannings (2002) explained that one expectation between mothers and daughters is that both expect each other to understand that whatever struggles they are going through; they should support and love each other no matter what. However, both mother and daughter find that

the display of emotion often is more complicated, and not as easy to express, because sometimes perceptions are not clearly understood (Demo, Small & Savin, 1987; Manning, 2002; Prinz, Rosenblum & O'Leary, 1978).

Demo, Small and Savin-William (1987) suggest that it is necessary to examine the observation of how mother and daughter perceive each other. From an adolescent's perception, control involves the parents' (namely a mother's) attempt to limit or direct her activities; thus, the more the daughter feels that decisions and behaviors affected by her are under control by her mother, the lower will be the daughter's self-esteem. In contrast, Demo et al (1987) stated that mothers may view their control differently, however, perceiving it as necessary for her daughters' growth and development. Prinz, Rosenblum, and O'Leary (1978,) explained in their research that negative communication of daughters was highly related to their perceptions of their mothers as exaggerative, demanding, personally attacking, angry or hostile, and complaining about unfairness. Whereas positive communication behavior was moderately high related to their perceptions of their mother as appreciative of them, complimentary, and enjoying the relationship (Prinz et al, 1978).

The researcher acknowledges that both factors that can either impede or facilitate, help assist with building a relationship that leads to communication between mother and daughter. When both mother and daughter learn how to express feelings and thoughts, recognize each other's shortcomings and have a clear understanding of what is expected of each other, then they can start to develop a healthy relationship that involves communication.

Healthy Relationships

     Empathy.

 A healthy relationship is one where both mother and daughter are communicating and

understand that this requires work (Riley, 1977). This work includes the capability for both mother and daughter to be empathic (Ruebush, 1994). Riley (1977) states that all communication skills are learned. Therefore, how a mother teachers her daughter to communicate is relevant. These two topics are explored with relation to having a healthy relationship.

The mother's ability to relate to her daughter empathically rather than through identification enhances and facilitates the adolescent's refinement of separation-individuation, allowing a healthy transition to the adult world (Ruebush, 1994). Pluhar and Kuriloff (2004) discussed the importance of using empathy in the mother-daughter relationship in order for the relationship to remain close and real. They concluded that daughters were closer to mothers, who were able to empathize with them regarding certain feeling and actions.

Sometimes it might be hard for a mother to differentiate between being a disciplinarian and being the fun-loving mother. In addition, it is easy for a mother to forget what it is like to be an adolescent. With this, the struggle of being a mother can be a challenge. Mannings (2002) stated that conversations between mother and daughter are often conflictual; it is a learning experience for both mother and daughter. However, it is a tricky balance of empathy for the mother because, it is difficult for a mother to understand what her daughter is going through when she is consumed with being a concerned mother.

A daughter's use of empathy is different in that she is trying to understand herself and the relationship with her mother, whether it is conflictual or not. Mannings (2002) uses an astounding analogy to describe a daughter use of empathy with her mother. She wrote:

Just because you can put yourself in someone else shoes doesn't mean you have to walk around in them. And it certainly doesn't make you responsible for their upkeep. Sometimes adolescents and adults who have survived rocky relationships with

demanding mothers, the kind who were never pleased, for whom perfections wasn't good enough, have to be able to say, "Yes, I can put myself in my mother's shoes. I can try to see the world from her perspective." But maybe her mother's shoes are five-inch-heels, uncomfortable as hell, with no protection or support. The daughter might have to learn to believe and articulate, "Yes, Mom, those are uncomfortable five-inch-heels, and no, I don't know how you do it and how your feet must suffer. But you know what? It's not like you don't have other shoes. It's your choice. I will help you patch them up, or choose alternatives from your closet, or even buy you a new pair. But Mom, if you decide to stay in those shoes, the calluses, the blisters, and the feeling of being constantly off balance are all yours, not mine." (p. 202)

Empathy requires a clear sense of self that is not threatened by the feelings or conditions of another, but which willingly detains those feelings (Ruebush, 1994). The researcher concludes that how a mother and daughter display empathy to each other contributes towards them having a healthy relationship. The researcher proposes that in addition to empathy contributing to a healthy relationship, that there is a connection with mothers' parenting style.

Parenting Style.

Zellman and Waterman (1998) stated that, "researchers have argued that parenting style moderates the impact of a specific parenting practice such as parent school involvement by affecting the nature of the parent-child interaction and by influencing the degree to which a child is open to a parent's influence (p371)." Zellman and Waterman (1998) explained that although most parents want success for their children, some are far more successful at doing this than others. According to Zellman and Waterman (1998), this is attributed to the overall volume and dedication of parent-child interaction. To conclude, Zellman and Waterman (1998) stated that,

when parent-child interaction is limited, negative, and shows little support, the child is less likely to want to please the parent by doing well.

Parental Involvement

Children's success in school is related to parental involvement (Hess & Holloway, 1984). The research is discussed in light of the specific relationship of mothers and daughters. The researcher uses this knowledge to draw conclusions for mother and daughter relationship. Mother's involvement and parenting style is discussed in relation to a daughter's success in school.

Winquist- Nord and West (2001) explained that mothers in comparison to fathers are more involved with school activities such as parent conferences and after school extra-curricular activities. In addition, a study done by Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) indicate that mothers tend to be more involved with their daughters' school achievement more so than with their sons'. For example, Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) indicated that in a two parent home, mothers took on the role of being more involved in daughter's activities whereas fathers were more involved in their sons' activities more so than the daughters'. On the contrary, research done on mothers involvement in child, whether daughter or son, is decreasing due to the influx of mothers going into the work world (Bryant & Zick, 1996). This could be an explanation as to why mothers are losing the connections with their daughter's school involvement.

Hess and Holloway (1984), agree that parental involvement is considered an important aspect of parenting, especially in relation to children's academic achievement. While parents frequently recognize the need for their children to be successful in school, they do not realize the critical role they play in their children's academic achievement. Parents often assume that the public school will take the place of the home in effecting their children's growth, but research

does not support this assumption. Snodgrass (1991) stated that researchers have identified parental participation as a more important factor in children's school progress than parents' level of education, their occupations, or family socioeconomic status. The home environment has a significant impact on children's overall capacity to learn. Therefore, parents can be helpful or counterproductive to the development of those skills and attitudes, which facilitate children's movement through academic experiences.

Educators report that parents begin to 'neglect their responsibility to encourage and aid their children in academic success' during the intermediate and secondary school grades (Snodgrass, 1991). Amato (1989) suggested that parental involvement seems to be more active in the elementary school years when parents most frequently attend open houses, school programs, parent-teacher conferences, and PTA meetings. As children progress in the school system, teachers witness a decline in parental involvement such that there is less parent-teacher communication, and a smaller number of parents join Parent Teacher Association (PTA) groups or participate in open-house sessions (Snodgrass, 1991).

The importance of having a healthy relationship between mother and daughter appears to contribute significantly to the success of daughters in school. Snodgrass (1991) statement agrees that parents have a strong impact on their children's success. As such, they must accept responsibility by participating as key members of the educational team. They need to establish a supportive and positive partnership with their children. The sense of mutual respect that is the basis of this partnership makes each partner, the parent as well as the child, responsible for academic achievement. The classroom does not take the place of the home environment. Each plays a critical role in affecting children's' potential for success in school.

Bridging the gap: Mother-Daughter workshop

In many cases parents (mothers) have look to the schools to help solve their problems with they children (daughters). One way for schools to help with communication between mothers and daughter is to implement a workshop. The premise of having a workshop would be to suggest ways to enhance and maintain communication and help mothers and daughters. A workshop of such measures has many advantages in that (1) mothers and daughters will have a healthy relationship (2) this is a way to solicit parental involvement (3) help daughters to be more successful in school, and (4) participants can learn from each other. Barlow and Stewart-Brown (2001) acknowledged that programs in school of any degree are beneficial in three main ways: (1) the support that is received in the role of a parent from other parents or peer-to-peer; (2) the feeling of having regained control in the parental role; and (3) an increased ability to empathize and identify with others.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a difference when mothers and daughter(s) work on having healthier relationship by enhancing their communications with each other, and if there will be a change in mother's involvement in her daughter's school. This study focuses on eighth grade girls and their mothers at a suburban middle school. The focus is on mothers and daughter for two reasons: (1) in two-parent families, fathers are much less likely than mothers to be highly involved in their child's school and (2) with the changing time, mothers are busy with work and are losing the connections between mother and daughter (S.C. Education Oversight Committee, 2005; Koffinke & Jordan, 1993). Given that there are communication difficulties between mother and daughter as mentioned by Collins, W. A. & Laursen, B. (1992); Powell (2004) and Prinz, R.J., Rosemblum,R.S., & O'Leary,K.D. (1978),

one method to help bridge the communication gap is providing workshops that can offer some suggestions and ideas on ways to enhance, maintain communication and understanding among mothers and daughters. Since, middle school is a major part of an adolescent girl's life (Keith at el, 1986), the researcher considers having a mother's support as essential to being successful. The researcher concludes that if a workshop of such measures was implemented, mothers, daughters, and schools could benefit.

Methods

Participants

The workshop consisted of 10, eighth-grade girls attending a suburban middle school located in Western New York. The participants were targeted based on expressed interest to improve their communication with their mothers, when approached by the researcher about the topic. The girls ranged in age from 13 to 14 years. The ethnic breakdown of the participants were; three White (non-Hispanic), three Black (non-Hispanic), and four Other. All of the students live within the community.

Setting

School district.

The research was carried out in a suburban school located in western New York. The ethnic break down of the school according to the New York State Education Department (2005) was: eight American Indian or Alaskan Native; 75 Black (non-Hispanic); 5 Asian Pacific Islander; 33 Hispanic; 801 White (non-Hispanic). There was a total enrollment of 922 students, not including students attending BOCES full-time, in 2005.

The gender composition of the school was approximately equal with the population of boys slightly higher than that of the girls. For free and reduced priced lunches, 172 students were

eligible for free lunch and 97 students were eligible for reduced price lunches. There was a 95% attendance rate.

The community is multicultural however, the population is predominately white. This community is relatively large with the population of approximately 95, 000. The economic position of this community is estimated to have a median household income of approximately $42, 000 per year.

Procedures

The participants were each given consent forms (see Appendix B) to take home and return signed by a parent or guardian to allow them to participate in the study. This was necessary because the participants were minors. The workshop consisted of 12 girls, and was conducted during their study hall and lunch period on an agreed day. A pre-test and post-test (see Appendix C) were administered to each girl to assess their feelings concerning their communication relationship with their mothers. The feelings assessed were; (a) how well they communicated with each other, and (b) the ability to communicate with each other and their mother's involvement in they life.

Workshop.

The workshop was conducted in one of the two group rooms available for meetings at the middle school. The room was set up with chairs and tables in a semi-circle. The room had adequate space for the participants with plenty of space left over. There was an easel with chart paper for the presentation set in the center of the semi-circle. During the workshop both doors were closed to ensure there were no interruption and the maintain confidentiality.

Intervention

The workshop consisted of three consecutive 60-minute sessions. The session entailed

the researcher presenting a mini lecture of material pertaining to communication skills, the participants sharing their thoughts and ideas and group activities. In addition to the mini-lecture, each of the participants was given handouts of the materials presented. There was the expectation that each participant would take the knowledge shared and use the techniques with their mothers at home. This was the homework for the group. Upon return to the next group session, each member would share her progress. In order to establish an understanding of whether the workshop was effective, a post-test and an assessment of learning needs was administered. The workshop is outlined as suggested by Riley (1977).

Week 1- *"Behavior is a Statement of Feelings."*

The participants sat where they were comfortable. The researcher introduced herself and the participants shared their name and any other information that they wanted to share. The researcher handed out the outline of each session to the group (see Appendix D). For a complete outline of Session One, see (Appendix E). Confidentiality was discussed and rules were agreed upon. The Pre-test was administered. In order to find out what the participant hoped to get out of the workshop, the participants listed their objectives (see Appendix F). The mini-lecture's objective was to start participants thinking about the feelings underlying behavior and the need to tune in to those feelings as a means of better understanding the behavior. In addition, for both mother and daughter to be able to talk with each other and solve problems, they must first start by thinking about and identifying what they are feeling. The participants then engaged in a discussion whereby they shared situations where they recognized feelings behind some behaviors. This sparked a lengthy discussion where all participants wanted to share their thoughts. At the end, participants were given homework (see Appendix G). Participants were reminded that they are to practice with their mother at home in order to accomplish goals.

Week 2-Sensitve Listening and Responding and Sensitive Expressing.

This week only eight participants attended the workshop. The researcher and participants discussed the homework and any results. The participants shared personal experiences and many of them were pleased with what little progress that was made. Others shared disappointment in trying to connect with their mother. For a complete outline of session, (see Appendix H). This workshop was based on exercises and a mini-lecture, the participants were given handouts to follow along (see Appendix I, J, K, L, and M). The participants were fully engaged and eager to discuss their reactions. However, there was not enough time to go into a detailed discuss after the mini-lecture, but each participant was reminded that the researcher is available to discuss any concern any time after the workshop and at the next workshop. The researcher informed the participants that the next session will be lengthy and required more time and would like to extend the session. This met that participant would have to eat lunch with the researcher. All of the participants agreed and the researcher suggested purchasing pizza and wings for them, they all agreed that it would be a working lunch. Homework handouts (see Appendix N) were given to the participants.

Week 3-The ABC Method of Problem Solving.

This week one of the participants received long-term suspension, therefore she will no longer be attending the workshop this left seven participants. The participants and researcher discussed the homework and any new results. One participant shared the she connected with her mother and she used Sensitive Listening. This started a discussion about situations that happened and the participants were able to share their ideas and thoughts with each other as to how a situation could have been handled differently. This week's mini-lecture (see appendix O) was divided into two stages; the first stage focused on assisting the participants to familiarize

themselves with what goes into each step of the problem-solving method, in the second stage the participants would use actual problem situation in role-plays to practice the problem-solving process. Handouts (see Appendix P, Q, and R) were given to participants to help them follow along. The researcher inquired from the participants if any of the information was familiar them. They all agreed that at some point in their daily life, they used some of the information, but they did not call the process a name. The researcher reminded the participants that the next session would be the last. There was discussion about termination and the participants expressed sorrow in not being able to meet anymore. There was no homework.

Week 4-Discussion, Post-test and Termination.

The researcher and participants discussed the benefits of the workshop and if initial goals were met. A handout of the workshop was given to the participants (see Appendix S). The post-test was administered. There was discussion on suggestions for future workshops and on what they thought was useful about the workshop. The participants were open to share their comments.

Measure

The instrument used for the research was developed by the researcher and therefore has not been validated in previous studies. The pre-test and post-test consisted of 10 items with four groupings. Items one, eight and nine assessed mother/daughter relationship; items three and six measured mother/daughter communication; items two, four, and five measured the daughter's feelings and thoughts of her mother; item seven measured daughter's success in school; and item ten measured the workshop's helpfulness.

The participants responded to the questions using a five point Likert Scale that ranged from 1-5, 1 = strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=undecided, 4=somewhat agree, and

5=strongly agree. To assess any changes in the participant's view of reaching their goal through the workshop this tool was used.

Results

The results for each of the ten items of the pre-test and post-test will be discussed. The items of assessment will be described individually. Table 1 presented the results of the pre-test and Table 2 presented the results of the post-test. The pre-test results are based on the original 10 participants and the post-test is based on the 7 participants who completed the workshop. The mean, mode and median are given for each individual item. The measure of central tendency analyzed, were the mean and the mode.

Table 1

Pre-test Results

	Item 1	Item 2	tem 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10	Sum
Student 1	4	2	3	1	2	1	4	4	4	4	29
Student 2	3	1	3	1	1	3	5	5	5	3	30
Student 3	4	4	4	5	3	5	2	3	3	3	36
Student 4	3	5	4	4	4	4	2	5	4	5	40
Student 5	4	3	5	2	2	5	1	4	4	5	35
student 6	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	5	4	29
Student 7	2	3	4	1	1		4	1	5	3	23
Student 8	2	5	2	2	3	2	2	5	5	5	33
Student 9	2	5	2	2	3	2	2	5	5	5	28
Student 10	5	4	5	5	4	4	1	3	2	4	37
MEAN	3.1	4	3.4	2.5	2.6	2.9	2	3.8	4.2	4.1	
MEDIAN	3	3.5	3.5	2	3	3	2	3.5	5	4	
MODE	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	5	5	5	

Table 2

Post-test Results

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10	Sum
Student 1	4	2	3	1	2	1	4	4	4	4	29
Student 2	3	1	3	1	1	3	5	5	5	3	30
Student 3	4	4	4	5	3	5	2	3	3	3	36
Student 4	3	5	4	4	4	4	2	5	4	5	40
Student 5	4	3	5	2	2	5	1	4	4	5	35
student 6	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	5	4	29
Student 7	2	3	4	1	1		4	1	5	3	23
MEAN	3.1	3	3.5	2.28	2.28	3.5	2.71	3.57	4.28	3.9	
MEDIAN	3	3	4	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	
MODE	2,3	3	4	1	1,2,3	3,5	1,2	3,5	4,5	3	

Pre-test and Post-test

Mother/daughter Relationship

Four questions pertained to this grouping. Questions one, eight, and nine obtained information on the individual's perception of how well they get along with their mother.

Item 1. "On the whole, I get along well with my mother." This item measured the participant's view of how strong the connection is between mother and daughter. The mean score for the pre-test was x = 3.1, the post-test yield the same response. The mode for the pre-test was 2 (somewhat disagree), but changed slightly in the post-test to 2 (somewhat disagree) and 3 (undecided).

Item 8. "I would like my mother to be more involved in my life." This item measured the

participant's need to have her mother more engaged in her life. The mean score for the pre-test was x =3.8 and the post-test was x =3.57. The mode for the pre-test was 5 (strongly agree), the post-test was 4 (somewhat agree).

Item 9. "I feel like my relationship with my mother needs improvement." This measure the participants call for a better relationship with their mother. The mean score on the pre-test was x =4.2, and increased in the post-test with the x= 4.28. The mode on the pre-test was 5 (strongly agree) and 4 (somewhat agree) on the post-test.

Mother/ Daughter Communication

Questions three and six measured how the participants perceive their ability to communicate with their mothers.

Item 3. "I am communicating well with my mother." This measured the participant's feeling on how they are communicating with their mothers. The mean score on the pre-test was x= 3.4, and x = 3.5 on the post-test. The mode on the pre-test was 2 (somewhat disagree), to 4 (somewhat agree) on the post-test.

Item 6. "I know I will be able to talk to my mother at any time." This measured the participant's ability to communicate with their mother whenever there is a need. The mean score for the pre-test was x =2.9, and increased on the post-test with the x = 3.5. The mode on the pre-test was 2 (somewhat disagree), to 3 (undecided) and 5 (strongly agree) on the post-test.

Feelings and Thoughts about Mother

Questions two, four and, five measured the participant's understanding of how their mother's feelings and the ability to express their feelings and thoughts with their mother.

Item 2. "I understand my mother's feeling." This measured the participant's ability to show empathy towards their mother. The mean score on the pre-test was x = 4.00, and the x =

3.00 on the post-test. The mode on the pre-test was 3 (undecided) and remained 3 (undecided) on the post-test.

Item 4. "I can express how I feel and think to my mother." This measured the participant's ability to appropriately express what is going on with them to their mother. The mean score on the pre-test was x = 2.5, and the x = 2.28 on the post-test. The mode on the pre-test was 2 (somewhat disagree), to 1 (strongly disagree) on the post-test.

Item 5. "I am able to share my thoughts and feelings with my mother. This measured the participant's ability to share with their mothers their concerns that may or may not be having. The mean score on the pre-test was x = 2.6, and on the post-test the x = 2.28. The mode on the pre-test was 3 (undecided) and change to 1(strongly disagree), 2 (somewhat disagree), and 3 (undecided) on the post-test.

School Success

Question seven measured the participant's ability to be successful in school.

Item 7. "I am having a difficult time being successful in school. (not making friends and or with academics." This measured the participant's ability to be successful in school with or without the support of their mother. The mean score on the pre-test was x = 2.00, and on the post-test the x = 2.71. The mode on the pre-test was 2 (somewhat disagree) to 1 (strongly disagree) and 2 (somewhat disagree) on the post-test.

Workshop Helpfulness

Question ten measured the participant's perception of the workshop.

Item 10. "I feel that having a Mother/daughter workshop in a school is helpful." This measured the participant's perception of the helpfulness of the workshop. The mean score of the pre-test was x = 4.1, and the x = 3.9 on the post-test. The mode on the pre-test was 5 (Strongly

agree), and 3 (undecided) on the post-test.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the communication relationship between mother and daughter also, how this relationship effects the mother's involvement in her daughter's school and life. Furthermore, this study aimed to determine whether implementing a workshop that addressed ways to communicate with each other (mother and daughter) if the relationship would be healthier. To summarize the results, daughters tried to reach out to their mothers via communication, however their confidence level were low, which impeded ton the success rate. In addition, mother's involvement was not significantly changed.

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test

The conclusions gathered from the study presented yield similar results established in previous literature on Mother/Daughter relationships. Both mother and daughter are trying to be there for each other, but communication between the two is sometimes difficult and stressful (Demo, Small & Savin, 1997; Mannings, 2002; Printz, Rosenblum & O'Leary, 1978). A comparison of the mean and mode between pre-test and post-test are discussed in five areas of assessment (1) Mother/Daughter relationship (2) Mother/Daughter communication (3) daughter's feelings and thoughts of her mother (4) daughter's success in school and (5) workshop's helpfulness.

Items one, eight and nine all concentrated on the individual's awareness of how well they get along with their mother. The researcher's expectations were that after the four-week workshop the participants would show and increase in the mean and a change in the mode. However, the results were not compatible with the researcher expectations. There were two noticeable indicators; 1) the literature indicated according to Barlow and Stewart-Brown (2001),

having a mediator or parent-child programs of any degree is a stepping-stone to making changes in a relationship. The hypothesis was not consistent with the results, which indicated that there was minimal connection between mother and daughter. 2) According to Bryant and Zick (1996) parent and child (mother and daughter)tend to spend limited shared time engaged with activities involved building on the relationship, instead time is spent with each other doing household chores or activities that does not involve building a better relationship. The literature presented indicates that any time spent together does not necessarily mean that there is work being done on the relationship. With relation to the research, this pointed out that the workshop was not successful at meaningfully building a connection between mother and daughter. The researcher concluded that the negative drop in the mode of positive response showed that although there was some communication there was not a strong enough communication between the two to build better relationship. Considering the presented questions, the results were not significantly changed from positive to a negative.

Items three and six all focused on the participant's ability to communicate affectively with their mothers. These questions are essential in that they help determine if after the workshop there are any improvements with the way, mother and daughter communicate. There were significant changes from negative to positive, which suggested that it is important for both mother and daughter to understand that it does take work for a relationship to be healthy (Riley, 1977). In addition to being empathic, both daughter and mother needed to understand that communication skills are learned (Riley, 1977; Ruebush, 1994). The researcher agreed with Pluhar and Kuriloff (2004) when they stated that it is important the way both mother and daughter communicated with each other. By attending the workshop, both mother and daughter learned different approaches to communicate with each other to better their relationship.

Therefore, the findings are consistent with the research.

Items two, four, and five addressed the issue of the confidence level of the daughter's ability to share and express their thoughts and feelings with their mother. The findings suggested the level of confidence is not high and that the daughters are not comfortable with fully expressing themselves. This was not surprising in comparison with the literature; these results remained consistent with the literature. Pluhar and Kuriloff (2004) discussed the importance of mother and daughter to be able to use empathy in order for the relationship to remain close and real. However, the struggle between mother and daughter is evident when either mother or daughter cannot get past the gray areas of mother being a disciplinarian and a daughter vying for independence (Mannings, 2002).

Item seven addressed the participant's ability to be successful in school. The premise behind this question was to find out whether the increase in the mother's involvement in her daughter's life would increase the chances of the daughter being successful in school. The mean result increased, which meant that the daughters were able to be successful with her mothers being involved in her life. This also remained consistent with the research. Snodgrass (1991) talked about when the parents are actively involved in school activities it increased the ability for parents to comprehend better the ins and outs of academics, and social life of their children. In addition, when a mother becomes more involved in her daughters school activities, the likelihood of building a better communication relationship increases. In a research study by Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) they stated that daughters communicated more with mothers on school issues (regardless of academic standing) more so than sons, however mothers tend to be more involved in their son's schooling than daughters. The researcher agrees that there should be equal parental involvement.

Item ten addressed the helpfulness of the workshop. There was a decrease in the mean results. This was inconsistent with the research. As suggested by Barlow, Stewart-Brown (2001) there would be an increase in the need of a parent wanting more workshops or program to help assist them with their needs. The researcher agreed with Snodgrass (1991) when he stated that parents who were actively involved in school programs were effective in enhancing their children's academic achievements. These parents reported an increase in mutual respect and closer personal relations with their children. However, the results showed that the daughters were not in agreement with the literature. For example, Snodgrass (1991) stated that when programs are introduced in a school setting students are more likely to interact with each other by using peer to peer connection and learn from each other.

Although the results showed increasing to decreasing, these changes did not range in extremes. An illustration would be, while a response stated, "strongly agree" it changed to "agree"; therefore the changes were not extreme. However, there were changes made and there are worth noting due to the small sample size.

Limitations

Some limitations made the workshop not as effective. These limitations are, (1) the sample size did not remain the same. As the workshop progressed three of the participants dropped out of the research; (2) the effectiveness of the sessions relied on the daughters going home and implementing what was learned. The participants were unsure of the effectiveness of the workshop and the response of their mothers; therefore, their confidence levels prevented them from doing their homework with their mothers; (3) the validity and reliability of the survey had not been previously tested. The researcher had developed the survey and this was the first time that the survey was used.

The participants were not a random sample, they were either recommended by the school social worker, or the researcher met with them in individual counseling sessions. Also, the sample group was not an even distribution of the entire school. They were chosen from only one team, this was because it was easier to meet at a common time. If participants were chosen from other teams, there would not be a common free time to meet. The sample size started with ten participants but by the second meeting, two participants did not return, and by the third session, one participant was suspended from school. Due to the nature of the workshop, it was not appropriate to have new members. This might have caused the pre-test and post-test results to be inconsistent.

Another limitation was that the effectiveness of the sessions relied on the participants going home and implementing what was learned. Upon the second meeting of the workshop, 25% of the group had not tried what was learned in the workshop with their mothers. Although emphasis was placed on the homework, some participants needed the courage to do the homework with their mothers. This slowed the workshop progress down because by the time the participants were ready to try the homework they were a few steps behind the other participants.

The final limitation of the research was the reliability and validity of the survey had not been previously tested. Due to this, there was no baseline to compare the results. The workshop curriculum had been used and has yield favorable results that are documented (Riley, 1977). However, there is no validity data documented showing the survey being used in conjunction with the sessions that were provided.

Implications for Future Counseling

One major implication to this workshop is not having the mothers at the workshop. Having the mothers at the workshop would mean that the information would be delivered to both

participants, making it more effective. The way this research was done depending on the daughters going home and implementing what was learned at the workshop. Some of the daughter took the homework seriously while other did not consider it as important. The researcher believes that once the mother is at the workshop the exercises would be done with the mother and the daughter.

Another concern that future counselors should consider would be the allotted time for the workshop. This is important especially if the mothers would be involved. It would be difficult to find a common time for parents to meet, bearing in mind that there might be working parents. In addition, the girls might be in after school activities, or the daily schedule might not permit a common meeting time during school hours. Riley (1977) recommended that this workshop be held for at least two hours, with the meeting period of six weeks. This would give participants enough time to process the exercises and any other interactions and experiences.

An additional section that would help the workshop would be to add more time for the group to process. Originally, the outline entailed about fifteen minutes for the group to process, but more time was needed because the students thought that this was difficult for them to do and they needed reassurance that the process would work, and they needed the processing time to interact with others that have tried the exercise to dialog with them. The researcher believes that the peer-to-peer interaction would help with the self-confidence of the students, which would help them to express themselves better to their mother.

Overall, there needs to be more research conducted on Mother/Daughter relationship and the significance of communication in school performance. There is limited information in this area, which makes it difficult to attain adequate results. However, if implementation of the necessary adjustments is made, there is a possibility of producing different results. The results

that are produced are necessary and show the need for such research.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Letter of Invitation

Date

To the Mother/Female Primary Caregiver of: _____

I am extending an invitation to attend a Mother and Daughter workshop at Arcadia Middle School. My name is Mrs. Annmarie Gilbert, I am a graduate student, from the State University of New York at Brockport College in the Counselor Education Department, and I will guide this workshop. This workshop is part of a research study for my thesis.

Mothers or female primary caregivers are often the most influential individuals in developing confidence and self-esteem in girls. This relationship may be complicated with conflict and misunderstandings. Communication barriers can cause struggles and interference with being successful in school and adulthood. The purpose of this research project is to examine the effects of participating in this workshop program with emphasis on mother-daughter communication.

Through activities such as games and discussions, participants will gain tools and strategies to assist them to enhance and maintain their relationships. The group will consist of approximately 8 mothers or female primary caregiver and their daughters. The workshops sessions will be for six weeks. Each workshop will be for two hours. The first meeting will be on a Saturday then the group will determine future dates. At this first meeting, a survey will be given and collected.

This group will not be starting until the month of January. I am truly excited about this workshop and believe that it will be a positive experience. I hope that you and your daughter will consider being a participant and I am looking forward to meeting with you and your daughter.
If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me at 966-3407.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Annmarie Gilbert
Counselor Intern

Appendix B

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

This form describes a research study being conducted with girls in 7th and 8th grades and their mothers or female primary caregiver. Mothers or female primary caregivers are often the most influential individuals in developing confidence and self-esteem in girls. This relationship may also be complicated with conflict and misunderstandings. Communication barriers can cause struggles and interference with being successful in school and adulthood. The purpose of this research project is to examine the effects of participating in this workshop program with emphasis on mother-daughter communication.

The person conducting the research is Annmarie Gilbert. I am a graduate student at State University of New York College at Brockport in Counselor Education. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be actively engaged in group activities which will help you to learn how to better communication with your daughter. You will fill out a pre-test and a post-test of about 10 questions. The workshops will be for six weeks. Each workshop will be for two hours. There will be eight daughter and their mothers or female primary caregiver at the workshops.

A possible risk of being in this study/program is your feeling that the personal nature of some questions may cause discomfort. There are no other anticipated risks. You and your daughter do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You and your daughter will have a chance to discuss any questions that you have with the researcher. If anything that you or your daughter say or do anything during this study/program that causes concern, I will talk to you and/or your daughter more about it. Also, the School Counselor and School Social Worker will be available in the building, if there is a need for additional assistance.

The possible benefit from being in this study/program could be that information learned would allow professionals to better help daughters and mother or female primary caregiver communicate more effectively. In addition, information from this study/program might also suggest ways that girls can be successful in school. Also, a benefit for you would be that you would better understand each other and build on the relationship that you have.

Any information that you and your daughter give will remain confidential and will be known only to me. Except for this consent form, no questionnaires will have your name on them. If publications in scientific journals arise from research, result will be given anonymously and in

group form only, so that you cannot be identified. You and your daughter's consent forms and any other collected information will be under lock and key and once the study is over, they will be destroyed. The consent forms and questionnaires will be stored separately.

You and your daughter's participation in this study/program is voluntary. Being in it or refusing to be in it, will not affect your contact with teachers, counselors or any other staff member. You and your daughter are free to change your mind or stop being in the study/program at any time and there will be no penalty.

You are being asked whether you and you daughter want to participate in this study/program. If you both wish to participate, and you agree with the statements below, please sign in the space provided.

If you have any questions, you may contact:

Primary researcher   Faculty Advisors

Annmarie Gilbert   Susan Rachael Seem, Ph.D., NCC, ACS

(585) 966-3407   Tom Hernandez, Ed.D

                                                              Counselor Education Department

                                                              (585) 395-5492

I am 18 years of age or older. I understand the information provided in this form, and agree to participate as a subject in this project.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

I understand the statement and agree to allow my daughter _____ to

                                                              (Daughter's name)

participate in this project.

_____   _____

        Parent Signature   Date

Appendix C
Daughter Pre-test and Post-test

Instructions: Please rate how you feel about each of the following statements by circling one of the appropriate responses.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Somewhat Disagree

3 = Undecided

4 = Somewhat Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5   1. On the whole, I get along well with my mother.

1 2 3 4 5   2. I understand my mother's feelings.

1 2 3 4 5   3. I am communicating well with my mother.

1 2 3 4 5   4. I can express how I feel and think to my mother.

1 2 3 4 5   5. I am able to share my thoughts and feelings with my mother.

1 2 3 4 5   6. I know I will be able to talk to my mother at any time.

1 2 3 4 5   7.   I am having a difficult time being successful in school. (not making friends and or with academics)

1 2 3 4 5   8. I would like my mother to be more involved in my life.

1 2 3 4 5   9. I feel like my relationship with my mother needs improvement.

1 2 3 4 5   10. I feel that having a Mother/Daughter workshop in a school is helpful.

* Mother is used for simplicity, it also refers to female primary provider.

Appendix D

Outline of Each Session

Session 1: Week One

Objective: To involve the participants in the workshop through introductions and the process of objective setting. To develop an understanding of the importance and the dimensions of effective communication with emphasis on "Behavior is a statement of feelings."

Statement and purpose of the workshop

Setting Objectives for the workshop

Pre-test

Mini-lecture: Behavior is a statement of feelings

Session 2: Week Two

Objective: To develop skills in listening through mini-lectures, discussions, and practice exercises.

Discussion of objectives selected for workshop.

Mini-lecture: Sensitive listening and responding

Practice exercise on sensitive listening and responding

Session 3: Week Two

Objective: To develop skills in expressing your thoughts and feelings through mini-lectures, discussions, and practice exercise.

Mini-lecture: Sensitive Expressing

Practice exercise on sensitive expressing

Session 4: Week Three

Objective: To develop skills in using the ABC Method of problem solving mini-lectures, discussions and practice exercises.

Mini-lecture: The ABC Method of problem solving

Practice exercise using the ABC method of problem solving

Session 5: Week Four

Objective: To encourage the participants to discuss their individual concerns and questions.

To enable the participants to apply the skills learned in the workshop as they relate to their specific concern and questions.

Discussion of individual concerns and questions

Review of basic concepts covered in workshop

Post-test

Appendix E

Session 1

OBJECTIVE: To involve the participants in the workshop through introductions and the process of objective setting. To develop an understanding of the importance and the dimensions of effective communication with emphasis sis on "Behavior is a Statement of Feeling."

I   INTRODUCTION — GET ACQUAINTED

A. Participants fill out identification cards

B. Leader introduces self

C. Introduction of members

0. Statement and Purpose of Workshop

E. Overview of Course

II   SETTING OBJECTIVES

A. Leader Sets Stage

B.   Members List Objectives

III   MINI—LECTURE

A. "Behavior is a Statement of Feeling"

B.   Discussion

IV   HANDOUTS AND HOME PRACTICE EXERCISES

Appendix F

GOALS FOR ADOLESCENTS

COMMUNICATION

To learn: (a)   how to listen to what our parent is saying

(b)   how to express what I feel and think to my parent

FEELINGS ABOUT BEING AN ADOLESCENT

To learn how to:

(a)   **belong-** The need to create individual and group identities

(b)   **Voice-** The need to express personal perspective

(c)   **Choice-** The need to examine options and choose a path

(d)   **Freedom-** The need to take risks and assess effects

(e)   **Imagination-** The need to create a projected view of self

(f)   **Success-** The need to demonstrate mastery

All of which leads to trust, respect, responsibility, purpose and personal learning.

Appendix G

SESSION 1
HOME PRACTICE EXERCISE
BEHAVIOR IS A STATEMENT OF FEELING

In the first session you learned that you can begin to understand a problem or discover the meaning of each other's behavior by applying the principle, "Behavior is a statement of Feeling." This principle simply means that feelings are not only expressed by the words you hear, but especially by what your daughter/mother does. This assignment will help you look for feelings in the actions you observe as well as the words you hear.

Observe a situation between yourself and your daughter/mother. Describe the situation.

1. Identify and list any feelings your daughter/mother may be experiencing.

    1.

    2.

    3.

    etc.

Appendix H

SESSION 2

BRIEF OUTLINE- Sensitive Listening and Responding and Sensitive Expressing

OBJECTIVE: To develop skill in listening, and expressing your thoughts and feelings through mini-lectures, discussions, and practice exercises.

I   OPENING THE SESSION

Review of Home Practice Exercises

II   OVERVIEW OF SESSION 1

A. Results of Setting Objectives

    1. Handout: Listing of Objectives and Guide for Using Sensitive Expressing

    2. Explanation and Brief Discussion of Workshop's Learning Objectives

III. MINI—LECTURE -SENSITIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING

A. <u>Objectives</u>

To develop an awareness of how we listen and respond to people.

To increase skills in listening and responding.

To develop awareness and basic understanding of how we express ourselves to people.

To develop and increase our skills in using Sensitive Expressing.

B. Mini-lecture

IV   LEARNING SENSITIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING THROUGH PRACTICE EXERCISES

    A.   Listening Exercise

    B.   Styles of Communication

V.   HANDOUTS AND HOME PRACTICE EXERCISES

    Sensitive Listening and Responding Guide

    Nonverbal Clues

Appendix I

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
BY
"HEARING" FEELINGS AND LETTING THE OTHER KNOW THAT YOU "HEARD"

TODAY'S GOALS
1. To notice how I listen and talk
2. to develop listening skills

Communication is giving and getting information.

All communication skills are learned

Taught directly/indirectly by families, friends, teachers, and culture.

Examples when:

Feelings are clear

Feelings are puzzled

Ask: what feelings am I hearing?

Nonverbal Clues to look For

Appearance

Facial expressions

Tone of voice

Mannerisms

Behavior

Other Possible Influences

Values

Expectations

Knowledge

Appendix J

WHEN YOU WANT TO USE SENSITIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING
TO
"HEAR" EACH OTHER'S FEELINGS

SENSITIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING

Tool to understand feeling and meaning, accepts, respects feelings.

Avoid: cross-examining, blaming, judging, giving opinions and advice.

BUILDS: Self-confidence, independence, responsibility for solving own problems, better relationships.

1. **Sensitive Listening**
   Listening for hidden messages in words and actions.
   Avoid judgments, criticisms.
   Avoid giving solutions.
   Listen with caring and understanding.

2. **Sensitive Responding**
   Check out your understanding.
   Repeat listening and checking out if necessary.

DON'T USE SENSITIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING IF:

It's not needed

The timing is off

You feel impatient or can't accept the feelings

Appendix K

SENSISTIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO "HEAR" FEELING

I *SENSITIVE LISTENING*

Be an accurate observer

Listen for hidden messages (in words and motions)

Avoid undermining self-esteem (comment on the behavior ***not*** the person)

Avoid giving hasty solutions (saying ought to, must, should, or else!)

II *SENSITIVE RESPONDING*

Check out the accuracy of your observations (regarding the person's feelings and meaning)

Repeat sensitive listening and checking out (until the other person agrees you understand what she feels and means)

Checking out examples: Do you mean …?   Are you feeling …?   You seem to feel ....

DON'T TRY TO USE SENSITIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING IF

1. The Timing is Off - One or both of you might feel too upset to use it. If this is so, let each other know that you are feeling too upset to talk right now, but that because you think it is important, both of you will talk later.

2. You Don't Have the Time of Energy to Really Listen- Wait until another time and let her know when that might be. There is the danger here of letting "time" itself "handle" the problem. Too often many people feel the best solution is to let time pass instead of becoming involved in listening. The main point to keep in mind is that it is important to respond to every situation even if your response sets a later date to talk.

3. You are Feeling Impatient, or Can't Accept Her Feelings- If you feel "she shouldn't feel that way," work first on understanding what your own feelings are; also remember that feelings do change, yours and your daughter's.

Appendix L

NONVERBAL CLUES TO LOOK FOR IN THE TALKER

APPEARANCE -   does the person look alert, dragged out?

EXPRESSION-   does the person look uptight, worried, angry, cool and calm with little

expression, pleasant, friendly?

TONE OF VOICE- loud, shouting, soft, warm?

MANNERISM-   nervous and jumpy or relaxed and comfortable?

BEHAVIOR-   slamming, banging, acts tired, poor appetite, withdraws into room,

talks/does not talk with family/friends, dramatic change in interests,

activities, play?

ADDITIONAL FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE

WHAT THE TALKER MEANS AND FEELS

The different value systems of adults and children.

EXPECTATIONS- do each of you expect each other to understand, be helpful; does each of

you see yourself as a successful/unsuccessful person?

KNONLEDGE-   how much do each of you know about the issue under discussion?

Appendix M
The Descriptive 'cover' Roles

<u>The Placater</u>

<u>What they say-</u> they will agree with what the other person says or wants. They apologize and
          seek forgiveness; they take the blame.

<u>How they look-</u> They are on one knee; begging and pleading.

<u>How they feel</u> -   They feel worthless and unimportant.

<u>The Blamer</u>

<u>What they say</u> - They will act superior and find fault with everything and everyone else. They
          are very critical.

<u>How they look</u> - They point an accusing finger and look angry.

<u>How they feel</u> - They feel weak and not successful.

<u>The Computer</u>

<u>What they say -</u> They will talk very calmly and without emotion. They are smart.

<u>How they look -</u>   They have no expression on their face. Their bodies are straight and still.

<u>How they feel -</u>   They feel afraid of being criticized.

<u>The Distracter</u>

<u>What they say</u> – They say a great many things, none of which relates to the subject. They change
          subjects often.

<u>How they look</u> - They try to move in many directions at the same time. They are "all over the
          place" spinning around.

<u>How they feel</u> - They feel as though they do not have an important contribution to make that no
          one will listen to them.

Appendix N
SESSION 2
Home Practice Exercise
Building a Better Relationship Through Communication Skills
Learning to "Hear" Feelings

To communicate with your mother/daughter and build a closer relationship with her use Sensitive Listening to see and hear the hidden messages in what she says and does: use Sensitive Responding to let her know you understand and to check out with her whether you have "heard" her feelings accurately. Sensitive Listening and Responding accepts each other's feeling, does not focus on judgment, and does not give solutions.

It is much easier to notice how other people listen to each other and respond to us and harder to notice this in ourselves. During the week, try to notice how you listen and respond to each other, and other people too.

Observe a situation and describe below.

The situation

How I listen

How I responded

Appendix O

SESSION 3

BRIEF OUTLINE

OBJECTIVE: To develop skill in using the ABC Method of Problem Solving through mini-lectures, discussions, and practice exercises.

I   OPENING THE SESSION

A. Free Discussion

B. Review of Home Practice Exercise

II   OVERVIEW OF SESSION 3

III   MINI—LECTURE — THE ABC METHOD OF PROBLEM SOLVING

A. Objective

B. General Instructions

C. Mini-Lecture

IV   LEARNING THE ABC METHOD OF PROBLEM SOLVING THROUGH

PRACTICE EXERCISES

A. Objective

To enable participants to develop and increase their skills in using the ABC Method of Problem Solving through use of practice exercises.

B. Problem-Solving Exercise.

VI.   HANDOUTS AND HOME PRACTICE EXERCISES

A. Handouts: The ABC Method of Problem Solving

B. Home Practice Exercise on Problem Solving

Appendix P

THE ABC METHOD OF PROBLEM SOLVING

Step A, Defining the Problem Situation

Your task in Step A is to define, in specific terms, the factual information about the situation as it applies to the parent and to the child. This means to look at what the behavior is that is upsetting to you and your mother. You are not defining vague or global problems. You are defining in specific terms a specific situation.

Step B, Self-Talk

Your task in Step B is to think about and feel for what the problem means for you and the child. Give yourself some time to think about what you and your mother are thinking and feeling.

In self-talk, ask yourself these questions:

1. What am I feeling? You will be better able to control your reactions and responses if you let yourself think about what you are feeling.

2. What might my mother be feeling? After having some time to think about what you are feeling, think about your mother. Just why is she acting that way? Remember that feelings are behind behavior.

3. Has this situation happened before? If it has, how did I handle it and did that work? If not, why might this be happening now?

4. Am I 'self-talking' thoughtfully or emotionally?

      a. Thoughtful self-talk means that you do ask your self what you are feeling and what your mother is feeling. You let yourself calm down.

      b. Thoughtful self-talk means that you do not think of who's to blame or at fault. Playing judge only makes someone feel like a criminal.

      c. Thoughtful self-talk has appropriate expectations. You expect behavior that is appropriate, in contrast to behavioral expectations that you might like but which are unrealistic to expect.

      d. Thoughtful self-talk means not over-reacting to your own feelings, and looking at your mother's feelings.

      e. Thoughtful self-talk means having the courage to face an issue at the time it happens, not to avoid it. Emotional self-talk involves self-talk based on strong emotions. We all have strong feelings. Strong feelings are not bad, but if we base our reactions only on

these strong feelings self-talk, the solutions do not work. Intense emotional feelings can interfere with the process of Sensitive Listening and Expressing. These feelings can also interfere in the process of effective problem solving. You will need to take time to examine the reasons for these strong feelings. For example, which feelings are related to the problem situation right now and which feelings are related to past difficulties with the same problem? Is some of what you are feeling not even related to the situation? By taking some time to think about your strong feelings you should feel calmer and better able to proceed with finding workable solutions.

Step C, Reactions and Solutions

You have 4 tasks in Step C. These are:

1. Search for areas of agreement and disagreement.

2. Brainstorm possible solutions.

3. Choose a solution. It is important to remember not to choose a solution that you cannot carry out, and not to choose a solution that undermines your mother's good feeling about herself.

>**a**. Agreement - The people agree on the solution.

>**b.** Compromise - Both people involved must give up having their solution used completely; part of each solution is used.

>**c.** Going Along - One of the persons involved agrees to go along with the other person's solution. This is often done for a period of time as a trial and then discussed further.

>**d.** Protective - When all attempts at problem solving have failed behavior could result in:

(1) Physical harm to herself or others

(2) Damage to property

(3) Breaking the law.

>**e.** Ignoring - For situations where there is a reason able degree of certainty that other factors, such as peer pressure or changing fads, will alter the behavior and that parental intervention will not be needed.

4. Put solution into practice. Evaluate how the solution works. It is very important that you plan a time to evaluate the solution at the time you choose it. Build an evaluation into the solution plan.

There may be times when you find the method not working. If you find this happening, you might ask yourself the following questions:

a. Have I and my mother really agreed to try this new approach?

b. Is the timing off? Does one of us still feel too angry or upset to really use this method? is there too much else going on for problem solving to work?

c. Do we need to do more work on the Sensitive Listening and Expressing in Steps A and C?

d. What kind of self-talk did we do? Too much emphasis or emotional self-talk will lead to hasty, emotional, unworkable reactions and solutions. Emphasis on thoughtful self-talk will lead to more thought-out and workable reactions and solutions.

Appendix Q

THE ABC METHOD OF PROBLEM SOLVING (for students)

STEP A-   Defining the problem situation for mother

STEP B –   Self-Talk (thinking and feeling about the problem)
Emotional
Thoughtful

STEP C-   Reactions and solutions
Search for areas of agreement
Brainstorm possible solutions
Pick a workable solution
      Agreement
      Compromise
      Going along
      Protective
      Ignoring
Put the solution into Practice
Evaluate how the solution works

Appendix R

THE ABC METHOD OF PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET

A.   STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

FACTS

FOR PARENT   FOR CHILD

B.   SELF-TALK - THINKING AND FEELING

THINKING

FOR PARENT   FOR CHILD

 FEELING

FOR PARENT   FOR CHILD

C. REACTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

1.   Areas of Agreement, Disagreement

Agree   Disagree

2. Possible Solutions

Agreement, Compromise, Going Along, Protective, Ignore

Appendix S

SESSION 4

BRIEF OUTLINE

OBJECTIVE: To encourage the participants to discuss their individual concerns and questions.

To enable the participants to apply the skills learned in the workshop as they relate to their specific concerns and questions.

I   **OPENING THE SESSION**

Presentation of Agenda

II   **CONTENT OF SESSION 4**

A. Review of Basic Concepts

B. Discussion

III   **POST-TEST**