

4. We All Need Somebody to Lean On

At a Glance...



Each of us has resources that we draw on when we need help. The more different resources we have, the better off we are when problems arise.

Time Required



30 minutes

Core Concept



Parents will make use of resources in the family and community to improve quality of life.

Objective



Parents will identify family and community and resources available for support and information that can help them with parenting.

Materials



- ☐ Toothpicks (20 per participant)
- ☐ Flip chart or chalkboard
- ☐ Markers or chalk
- ☐ “Whole World” (handout B-4-a)
- ☐ List of parenting topics created at first class session
- ☐ Recommended Supplemental Materials: *SP487-C Principles of Parenting: Building Family Strengths* – available from your county UT Extension Office



Ice Breaker

Power in numbers – Give each participant 20 toothpicks. Instruct each of them to pick up one toothpick and break it. Now have each pick up the other 19 toothpicks in one bundle and try to break them. This illustrates the strength that comes from working together.



Facilitator Script

No one can be completely independent. All of us rely on others to some extent. We purchase items that others have made or grown. We receive wages from our jobs or from some other source. We receive education and training from other individuals or from books that others have written just to name a few.

Knowing when to seek help, who to go to for help, and the kind of help needed can mean the difference between someone who learns and grows and someone who barely gets by or even fails.

Knowing where to go to get the information you need is an important skill.

Have participants brainstorm where they might get information about parenting. Possible responses include:

- Family
- Friends
- Parenting Class
- Health Department
- Doctor
- Library
- Internet
- Teacher
- Counselor
- Church

Look at the list of parenting topics of interest we created the first session of this course. From this list, pick one topic in which you are interested. Find one written source of information on that topic.

You may go to the library and check out a book or magazine, go to the internet and do a search on the topic, or go to the health department, school, or other agency that may have printed material available. Your UT Extension Office is another place you may be able to find printed information.

It is important that the information you find is accurate. As you search for the topic you selected, try to find the answers to the following questions about the information source:

- a. What makes the author an expert on the subject (degrees, education, certification, etc.)?
- b. Is the author trying to sell you something (a book, a product, a service)?
- c. Who is the owner or who paid for the information to be published (for example, is the information about choosing infant formula on a web site owned by a company that makes infant formula)?
- d. Is the information sensational (for example, does the writer claim that this information is not available from any other source or that the government does not want you to have this information)?
- e. Does the information make sense based on what you already know? (For example, a few years ago a well-known doctor recommended that children not be fed milk – a recommendation that goes against nutritional recommendations that have been established for years. This did not make sense.)

Bring the information you find to our next class to share with other class members. If you are able to get extra copies of the information at no cost to you, get enough copies for each class member.

One resource we often overlook is our own children. School-age children (and some younger children) can help them with chores at home. Family members should contribute to taking care of the house according to their ages and abilities. Children should be given responsibilities early, taught how to do their jobs, and be expected to do them. Though it may take more time to teach the child to do the task than it would to do it yourself, in the long run, it will be easier for the parent whose children help with taking care of the house. Not only does this help the parent, but it helps the children learn how to take care of themselves so that they can move away from home and live on their own successfully when they are grown.

We often take-for-granted our own personal resources.

Give each participant a copy of “Whole World” (handout B-4-a.) Instruct participants to write in each box one thing that is important to them. This may include people, relationships, home, job, pet, church, other organizations, hobbies, recreation, etc.

Are there things you listed that you don't get to spend as much time on as you would like? Were you able to come up with something to go in every box? Now, think about what would happen if one of those important things was taken from your life. What if you lost your job, or what if one of your relationships broke up? Would you be able to draw strength or comfort from things you listed in other boxes?

What if you had only three important things in your life? What would happen if one of those three was taken? This exercise shows our personal resources are important in helping us to deal with stress. If we don't cultivate interests outside our home and work, we will have greater difficulty when problems arise at work or at home because we will have fewer resources to draw on.

Final Thoughts



Here is a reminder about your homework assignment

Homework:

- Remind participants of the assignment to find a source of information about a parenting topic of interest to them.
- Ask each participant to identify one area of personal interest they have neglected and to devote some time to that area this week.
- Ask participants with school-age children to make a list of chores that need to be done at home. Go over the list with their children, and come up with a way to involve each person in the care of the home, in