Parent Goal 1: When Teens Need Help

I. Eye-Catcher

A. Show “Teen Don’ts” from StayConnected DVD/Video. Discuss how teens still need parents but the ways they need parents differ from when they were younger children (see Appendix 1A for process questions).
B. Show “Fun Together” from StayConnected DVD/Video. Discuss ways that the parents and their teens currently have fun together (see Appendix 1A for process questions).
C. Show one or both “Be Available” from StayConnected DVD/Video (see Appendix 1A for process questions).

II. Mini Lecture/Discussion

(Powerpoint slides can be found separately on the website; see speaker notes in the slide show for additional information).

* After slide show, mention that a parent should encourage his or her teen to talk with an adult that the teen trusts/respects if the teen is not talking with the parent. A parent also can talk with an adult whom s/he trusts and respects, and whom the teen likes, and ask that adult to reach out to the teen.

III. In-session Activities:

A. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ACTIVITY FOR INCREASING AWARENESS:

The main goal of this activity is to increase parental awareness of what it means to be responsive to their teens and why it matters. Materials needed are a flip chart, markers, note paper, and pencils.

- Have participants get into groups of 4-6 people and discuss when they, as teens, reached out to adults and:
  a. the adult did not respond in a supportive way
  b. the adult did respond in a supportive way

Ask: “How did these experiences influence: your relationships with these adults; how you felt about yourself?

*Have each group select a person to be the group note taker.
- After the groups discuss how adults did and did not support them, create, on a flip chart, a list of the outcomes when they reached out and were/were not responded to supportively.

- Now have the groups discuss examples of when their teens reached out to them and how they responded in a positive way - what did they do; what happened? Also get examples of when they responded in a negative way - what did they do; what happened?

- After the groups discuss these experiences, they will create, on a flip chart:,

  - examples of what the parents did (and did not do) to be supportive

  - what happened to their adolescents and their relationships with their adolescents.

**B. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS ACTIVITY:**

The overall goal of this activity is to help parents become aware of different issues teens face and how teens feel about these issues. In addition, they will learn how to identify different people that may be available to help their teens deal with the problems and challenges they may face (see Appendix 1B).

**IV. Wrap-up:** Review the main points of the session; check for understanding and questions. It can be useful to have the group generate the main points and for the facilitator to write them down on a flip chart or overhead. The main points covered include: Identifying the different ways teens reach out and how to respond; Identifying when teens need help and ways parents can support and help their teens; Increasing parents’ awareness of their own experiences as teens, their current experiences as parents of teens, and the importance of supportive adults in their teens’ lives; Understanding how teens feel about different problems they face and identifying people within the parent’s and teen’s social network/community that may be available to help.
V. Handouts


StayConnected Tip Card (see Appendix 1C).

VI. Out of session Activities:

Do one of the StayConnected activities with your teen (these can be duplicated and handed out to parents as a set). All of the StayConnected activities can be found in the facilitator’s notebook and on the CD.

VII. Evaluation (see Appendix 1D).
Appendix 1A

Process Questions for StayConnected Video Messages

Teen Don’ts:
a. Can you think of any reason why your teen might feel like this?
b. Think back to when you were a teen - what things did your parents do that embarrassed you?
c. In what ways do you feel/think that your teen does not need you anymore?
d. Identify some ways that your teen needs you differently now than when your teen was younger.

Fun Together:
a. What are the things and activities you and your teen like to do together?
b. Identify what you and your teen have done together in the past that you both liked.
c. Why are you not doing these things anymore?
d. What other activities would both of you be interested in doing together?

Be Available (dating):
a. Do you think that your teen might feel like this on occasion?
b. Are you always available to discuss dating issues with your teen?
c. What do you usually do when you disagree about the importance of this topic?
d. Are there other topics that you find difficult to discuss with your teen?
e. What could you do differently to make it easier to talk about these issues?
   - What would you like your teen to do differently?

Be Available (new school):
a. Are school issues sometimes a problem?
b. Do you think that you completely understand your teen’s problems regarding school?
c. How do you deal with it? Are you available for discussions?
   - What could you do differently?
   - What could your teen do differently?
Appendix 1B

The Family and Community Connections Activity

The overall goal of this activity is to help parents become aware of different issues teens face and how teens feel about these issues. In addition, they learn how to identify different people that may be available to help the teen deal with problems and challenges. Print and paste the different roles for each of the teen problem scenarios onto 3 x 5 or 5 x 7 index cards. If possible, use a different color index card for each scenario (e.g., pregnant teen=yellow cards, teen thinking of suicide=green cards, teen using drugs=blue cards, teen with deployed parent=purple cards). Feel free to create additional scenarios as needed.

- Have 5 participants volunteer to do the first scenario. Give one volunteer the teen card and the four other volunteers the helpful adult cards.

- Ask the “teen” to read his/her card. After the teen reads the card, ask him/her if there are other things s/he is worried about or needs.

- Next have the teen point to one of the “Helpful Adults,” and have that person read his/her card. Ask that person how else s/he may be able to assist the teen. When this person finishes, ask him or her to select another “helpful adult” to read his or her card. Repeat this process until everyone has responded.

- Ask the audience who else might be able to assist the teen, and how. Also have them discuss the extent to which they believe this is a serious problem for teens in their community and steps they can take personally to help deal with and/or reduce the problem.

- Move to the next scenario and repeat the process described above.

- When you complete all four scenarios, ask the group to list ways for helping teens get connected with helpful adults. Ask them if they can identify helpful adults for their own teens and how their teens do, or could, connect with these helpful adults. If some of the parents’ teens are not connected with other helpful adults, have the group generate ways these connections could be facilitated.

- Ask the group if there are other teen issues that they think is important, and for which having a range of “helpful adults” could make a difference. If there is time, you can talk about those issues that are of greatest concern to your participants. Find out if there are ways that people in the group have dealt with the issues effectively. Encourage participants to take notes if they think some of the ideas being shared might be helpful in their own lives.
I am a Pregnant Teen. I’m worried about how I’ll care for my baby, and whether I should keep the baby or put the baby up for adoption. I also worry about how this will affect my life goals.

I am your Guidance Counselor and I can help you by talking confidentially about your pregnancy with you. I also can help you talk with your parents, and I can help you find ways of furthering your education. Come see me.

As your older Brother, I can be a friend for you to talk to. Since my wife (your sister-in-law) is a nurse, she can talk to you about the medical care you will need. We really want to help.

As your Parent, I am here to help you make wise decisions about how to handle your pregnancy and to consider the choices you have for your future. We have a lot of talking to do.

I’m Myra, your Best Friend’s Mother. You know I think of you as a daughter. I am here anytime you need me, to talk, to listen, and to just be supportive.
I’m a Teen who’s thinking about Suicide. My life has gotten too hard, and it seems like nobody understands how I feel. How can anyone really understand what I’m going through?

I am your Teacher. I have known other students who have felt as bad as you do. It is not unusual for teens to have suicidal thoughts some of the time. What helped these other teens was to talk with someone they trusted. You can talk with me or I can help you find someone to talk to.

I am a Medical Doctor who helps determine how serious a teen’s depression is. In some cases I need to prescribe a medicine to help with depression. Let’s find out what will help you most.

As your School Coach, I can give you encouragement and support. When you are engaged in a sport or exercise activity you enjoy, this can help you feel better. Come by this afternoon and join the game.

As the School Counselor, I can talk with you about your feelings and help you figure out who else might be available to offer you the help you need right now. I take your feelings of suicide very seriously.
I am a Teen who is using Drugs. I can’t seem to stop. My grades have slipped, I look terrible, and I can’t keep my mind on anything except getting high. My parents don’t know what to do anymore.

I am Lisa, your Neighbor. I see how you’ve been changing, and I have a good idea why. When I was your age, I used drugs too. It was hard to quit, but I did. My life is so much better now. I wish you’d come over and talk to me.

As your Drug Counselor, I can help you if you let me. I am trained to work with people who can’t stop using drugs. It is not easy to stop; I understand that. Let’s work together so you can do what it takes to make your life better.

I’m your Youth Minister. I’m glad to see you when you come to services on Sunday. We also have teen activities on Wednesday night; I think you’d like them. Having a strong faith can help a person get through many difficulties.

As a 4-H Extension Agent, I work with a lot of teens. When I’ve seen you participating in some of the activities I’ve led, I have noticed that you get along well with other people. I am looking for teen leaders to help run groups for elementary age kids – are you interested?
I’m a Teen whose parent is in the military and is deployed. I worry all the time about whether my parent is safe. I miss talking with my parent and feel very lonely sometimes.

I am a military Chaplain. I run groups for teens whose parents are deployed. The teens find the groups helpful for talking about their feelings and finding ways to deal with their worries.

I am your school Principal. I can help bring people here who run support groups for students whose parents have been deployed. You are not the only teen who is dealing with this. I can help.

I am the Director of the Youth Center on the installation. At the youth center we have places for you to do your homework and get help if you need it. We also have a game room, a gym, and a place where you can hang out and listen to music. Come by this afternoon.

I am the local Librarian. We have several computers with internet access at the library. There are several helpful websites for teens whose parents are deployed. I can help you find them.
Appendix 1C
StayConnected Tip card for Goal 1
(duplicate as many as needed on card stock paper)

How Teens Reach Out/When Teens Need Help
- Spend a little time each day with your teen to have a window into your teen's life.
- If you think your teen is having difficulty managing stress:
  - Watch to see if stress is affecting the teen's health, behavior, thoughts or feelings.
  - Listen carefully to your teen and watch for signs of overload.
  - Learn and model stress management skills.
- If you think your teen is having thoughts of suicide... Get your teen talking -> Assess the danger -> Don't preach – LISTEN -> Don't minimize feelings -> Get help.

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Appendix 1D

**Parent Goal 1: When Teens Need Help**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County_____________________</th>
<th>Name of Facilitator__________________________</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital status: single(never married) married(first marriage) divorced remarried widowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Status: mother father grandmother grandfather other (please write in)_______________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Race/Ethnicity: Black/African American White/Caucasian Hispanic/Latino Native American Asian American Other(please write in)_____________________
| How many sons/grandsons do you have____ What are their ages:_________________ |
| How many daughters/granddaughters do you have_____ What are their ages:_________________ |

Please circle the number that indicates how much you enjoyed the activities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No t at All</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>So me</th>
<th>A lo t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  The Video Clips</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small Group Discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family and Community Connections Activity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Please circle the number that indicates what you knew before and after participating in this session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before the Session</th>
<th>After the Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>A little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>A little</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am sure that I can recognize when my teen is reaching out to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sure that I can recognize the signs of when my teen needs help.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what to do if I think my teen is in need of help.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can identify people in my family and social network who my teen or I could call on should my teen need help.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can identify professionals in my community who my teen or I could call on should my teen need help.</td>
<td>1</td>
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