Teen Goal 6: *Who can I talk to?*

Today's goal is about learning to identify, and feel safe talking with other helpful, knowledgeable, safe adults, if you can't talk to your parents. The value of your similar age friends’ knowledge has limitations - more experienced adults may be helpful in ways your friends cannot be.

This goal has the potential for being difficult for some participants, depending on what topics are brought up during discussions.

**I: Eye-Catcher**

Please use one of the following role-plays at the beginning of your session as an eye-catcher. *The actual scripts for each skit are located in Appendix 6A.*

1. *Mrs. Smith, a friend’s mother* - Lisa is 17 years old and she has a problem. She does not know who to go to. Mrs. Smith has always been nice and Lisa has heard that she has been helpful to other students in trouble. Lisa decides to goes to Mrs. Smith, her friend’s mother, because she cannot go to her parents this time.

2. *Mr. Jones and School Violence:* Jeremy, a high school student, is concerned about some comments a friend has said recently about guns and bombs. Jeremy’s friends don’t believe he should go talk with Mr. Jones, a schoolteacher, but Jeremy disagrees. Jeremy goes and talks with Mr. Jones.

3. *The Balloon of Problems:* In this activity, students will learn that problems can be too difficult to manage on their own, especially when they are trying to cope with a number of problems at one time (*See Appendix 6A for directions*).
II: Mini-Lecture *

(PowerPoint slides can be found on the CD; see speaker notes in the slide show for additional information.)

- Facilitator: You will want to transition from the role-plays into the mini-lecture. For example: In the role-play / activity we just saw / completed, we saw how important it is to talk with an adult sometimes. During the mini-lecture, add in additional examples of when a teen should go talk with a non-parental adult.

III: In-session Activities

A. **Family and Community Connections Activity:** This activity helps teens 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 (See Appendix 1B).
   - Materials Needed: Teen and helpful adult cards

B. **Brainstorming:** Task Objective: Identifying trustworthy adults and where they can be located. For this activity, students can either stay in one large group or break into smaller groups.
   - Materials Needed: Large post-it notes, markers
   - On a large post-it note, create a list of helpful and trustworthy adults.
     - **Process Questions:** Why are these particular adults trustworthy? Will each of you feel that all of these adults are trustworthy, and that you can talk with the adult? Why, or why not?
   - On a large post-it note, create a list of where to find these kinds of adults.
     - **Process Questions:** How would you be able to get in touch with these adults? Can you identify someone that will help you find a particular adult, if for some reason you are unable to locate that person?
   - On a large post-it note, create a list of things/issues you might not, or would not, talk with your parents about, but are so important that you want to ensure you are receiving accurate information/good advice.
     - **Process Questions:** Do all of you feel all of these issues are difficult to talk with your parents? Are any of these issues something you can talk to your friends about? Are any of these something you could talk to your parents about, with some practice? What are ways in which you can help yourself feel more comfortable in talking with this person, or your parents?

* See supporting research topic:
  - The importance of a support network
  - Serious problems during adolescence: Signs that teens need help
IV: **Wrap-up** - see last slide of PowerPoint
   - Provide handouts. Explain how to use them at home and when to take a look at them.
   - Pass out and discuss the out of session activities, if applicable. Remember to discuss the activity during the next session.

V: **Handouts**
   - Stay Connected Tip Card (*See Appendix 6C*)
VI: Out-of-session Activities

* Vow to yourself that if you need to talk with an adult about something, you will talk to someone. Even if you feel it is trivial, go talk with someone. *

Building a relationship with a trustworthy adult.

Is there, currently, an adult in your life that you think you could trust to openly talk to about things?

If you already have a trustworthy adult in your life, continue to make that relationship stronger. If you don’t have someone currently, but you have someone in mind, begin building a relationship with that person.

Ideas of how to build a stronger trustworthy relationship: Always be open and honest yourself. You can begin by talking to that person about everyday none-serious events. Eventually, you should feel comfortable talking to that person about more serious topics as well.

Remember, it’s always good to have several people in your life with whom you can talk.

VII. Evaluation (see Appendix 6D).

* Please remember to have participants complete the evaluation form found at the end of this goal. Feel free to change activities as needed before duplicating.
Appendix 6A: Eye Catchers

1. Mrs. Smith, a friend’s mother

Lisa: Mrs. Smith, do have a minute?

Mrs. Smith: Yes, Lisa. What is it? Is everything okay?

Lisa: Well, I don’t know who else to go to and my parents will be so mad at me if they knew.

Mrs. Smith: Knew what?

Lisa: I’m pregnant. I don’t know how it happened.

Mrs. Smith: What do you mean you don’t know how it happened?

Lisa: I didn’t know that if I had sex the first time that I would get pregnant. I didn’t know who I could go talk to about sex. My friends and my boyfriend said that I couldn’t get pregnant the first time I did it.

Mrs. Smith: You could have talked to me and I could have given you the facts about sex. I would have rather had that conversation with you than the one we are having now. Your friends are just as clueless as you are, Lisa. It’s important that you talk to adults about stuff that you aren’t sure about. I am glad that you came to me now and we’ll figure out what to do.

2. Mr. Jones and School Violence

Jeremy: Mr. Jones, I need to talk to you.

Mr. Jones: Come on in, Jeremy, what’s the problem? You seem very concerned about something.

Jeremy: First of all, I’ve been talking with my friends and they said not to involve any of the teachers or anyone because they would only kick Erik out of school. But, I think this is too serious and I thought I needed to tell someone. Don’t tell anyone that it was me. I don’t want to be known as the nark.

Mr. Jones: Ok, well let’s see what you have to say first. But, I’m sure you are making the right decision to come and talk with me.
Jeremy: I think that Erik is going to do something bad. He’s been acting really strange. He’s been hanging out with a lot of different people lately. I even overheard him say something about bombs and guns.

Mr. Jones: Ok, what else has been going on? Has anyone else heard Erik say anything? Does he have any plans?

Jeremy: Some of the other kids have heard him say things like that too. We are real worried that he’s going to hurt someone or hurt kids at school. What should I do?

Mr. Jones: Jeremy, you did exactly what you should do. In this case, you wouldn’t want to listen to your friends. They may have some ideas of what can be done, but they aren’t able to do anything. Now, we’ll be able to talk with Erik and hopefully, stop something horrible from happening. Thanks for telling me, Jeremy.

3. The Balloon of Problems

Task Objectives: Problem identification; problem solving

Materials: One balloon for each group member and a sharp object to pop the balloon with (i.e. - a straight pin). If popping will be too loud, instead have scissors available to cut the knotted bottom of the balloon to let the air out.

Directions: The facilitator can begin the activity by discussing the importance of problem identification and explaining to the group that some problems can be controlled and others cannot. For example, a teen with a bad temper can control outbursts but cannot control decisions that his or her parents make. Elicit examples from the group by asking questions like: “In your own life, what is a problem you can do something about and what is one that you can’t?” In addition, some problems may be too difficult to handle without the help of a trustworthy adult. For example, if a teen and his/her parents are always fighting, it may be necessary for the teen to get some help from another adult on how to eliminate the fighting. Elicit examples from the group by asking questions like: “In your own life, what is a problem that you may need help from an adult to solve?”

Balloons are passed out to each member of the group. Each person blows up his or her balloon; using one breath to represent each problem they are experiencing in their life. Facilitators can cue the teens by saying: “It may be problems with parents or siblings; it might be problems with school, friends, or the law.” If a teen has only one or two problems, they should blow those problems into the balloon over and over again. Eventually each group member should blow up his or her balloon to capacity and tie into a knot.
Once all the balloons have been blown up, the facilitator instructs the students to hold their balloons with two hands, placing their palms flat against the balloon. Then the facilitator tells them to keep both hands on their balloons and pick up a pencil. Now holding the balloon and a pencil, the facilitator tells the students to also pick up a piece of paper. Now holding all these things, the students are told to pick up a book, and then another book... After students struggle a bit, tell the students they can ask for help picking up the items from someone in the room (depending on the number of facilitators and students, it may be necessary to allow other students to help.)

The facilitator acknowledges that this is hard, if not impossible, just like it is hard in real life to deal with tasks in our day-to-day lives when we hold onto a lot of our bad feelings. However, when we ask for help, we are able to manage our problems more easily than by ourselves.

The facilitator says that one way s/he gets rid of stress and bad feelings is to __________ (say what you do: read, run, listen to music, talk to a friend) and then asks how the students get rid of stress in their own lives. After the students share their ideas, point out that there are many good ways to reduce stressful feelings. Additionally, as we already stated, asking for help from a trustworthy adult, is a great way of dealing with our stress and problems.

Conclude the activity by having the students either: pop their balloons, gradually let the air out of their balloons, or place their balloons (disposing of the stress) into a trash bag (we provide the bag).
Appendix 6B: In-session Activities

The Family and Community Connections Activity

Print and paste the different roles for each of the teen problem scenarios onto index cards. If possible use a different color index card for each scenario (i.e., pregnant teen, teen thinking of suicide, teen using drugs, teen with deployed parent). 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 adults 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 teens can get connected with helpful adults. Ask them if they currently have any helpful adults in their life. How did they get connected with that person? Ask who else could be a helpful adult and how to get connected with these helpful adults.

- Ask the group if there are other teen issues that they think are important and where 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.
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 can help 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.

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 gameroom, 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 6C
Stay Connected Tip card for Goal 6
(Duplicate as many as needed on card stock paper)

Who Can I Talk To?
- Above all, when you have a problem you should talk to SOMEONE: a parent or a friend.
- Sometimes, though it’s a little scary talking to parents, and friends may not provide the kind of support you need. If so, find a trustworthy adult you can talk to: a teacher, a youth minister, a counselor, even a hotline #
- Recognize the signs of when you need to talk to an adult: you’re uncomfortable talking to your parent(s), you are feeling depressed, anxious, or suicidal. Talk to Someone.
- Remember there a number of different people in the community that you can talk to about a number of issues.
Appendix 6D

Goal 6: Who Can I Talk Too?

County_________________ Name of Facilitator____________________________
School__________________ Grade in school ______________ Age____________
Circle one: male female
Race/Ethnicity: Black/African American White/Caucasian Hispanic/Latino
Native American Asian American Other____________________________

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I enjoyed the Family and Community Connections activity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I enjoyed the Brainstorming activity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please circle the number that indicates what you knew before and after participating in this session.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before the Session</th>
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<th>After the Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that there are some issues I should talk over with</td>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a trusted adult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the value in talking with a trusted adult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know where I can locate a trusted adult to talk to.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that sometimes getting advice from friends just is</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>not enough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to recognize times when I should talk with a trusted</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>adult.</td>
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