A.

**Teen Goal 7: We’re Fighting, Again?!**

*Today’s goal is about understanding what you can do when you and your parent(s) are always fighting.*

This issue may be challenging for participants who have a difficult relationship with their parents or are always fighting with their parents.

**I: Eye-Catcher**

Please use one of the following activities at the beginning of your session as an eye-catcher (See Appendix 7A for Process Questions for each of the activities).

1. Video Messages from Stay Connected -- Two Views: *This clip demonstrates how a parent and a teen can have two different views regarding a topic. If they were to think about each other’s point of view, this may decrease the number of arguments they have.*

2. Parenting Wisely: Problem 5: Solution 1: *In this clip, we see both parents and the son arguing over the son’s choice of friends.* (Stop clip when the next scene starts.)

3. Parenting Wisely: Problem 6: *In this clip, we see a mother and her son arguing over the son’s loud music.*

4. Malcolm in the Middle: TV series – check listing for when program airs. *Every week, one of the kids is fighting with his parents. You can pick any episode and show a clip that the parent(s) and child are arguing.*
II:  Mini-lecture*

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

III: In-session Activities - (See Appendix 7B for directions and process questions.)

Human Knot - Task Objectives: To illustrate how our actions affect other people and the importance of being considerate of others when we are attempting to deal with the challenges we face. (Only use if you have not already done so in another session.)

B. Tug of War - Task Objective: Allows participants a chance to understand that when parents and teens have two different views on something that their arguing is much like a tug of war.

Materials Needed: a rope with a bandanna tied around the middle of the rope.

C. Obstacle course - Task Objectives: Illustrate problem anticipation process; problem solving; planning; receiving social support

Materials Needed: Obstacles for students to hold (foam boards), paper and tape for goals; students play the “obstacles” and the “supports”.

D. Negotiation Game: The Collaborative Problem - Task Objective: Learning to work together to negotiate a solution that both you and your parent(s) think is fair.

* See supporting research topic: Parent-adolescent communication problems
E1. **Role-playing “I” statements & “Active listening”**: The participants should break into pairs of two. The goal is for each participant to practice using “I” statements and “active listening” skills. They should think of problems / disagreements they currently have in their homes and practice using “I” statements and “active listening” while discussing that topic. Although the participants should come up with their own examples, one role-play between a parent and teen using both “I” statements and “active listening” can be found in *Appendix 7B*.

E2. **Practicing “soft startups” and “repairs”**: After the participants practice “I” statements and “active listening”, each pair should practice “soft startups” and “repairs”. Remember that it is healthy to have disagreements; it’s how you solve the disagreements and what you do afterwards that matter. Again, each group should come up with their own examples. Think of what is going on at home. Use that topic to practice with today. However, there are examples in the *Appendix 7B*.

- Possible Topics for role-plays: chores, friends, dating, driving, school work/grades, working, getting into trouble, curfew.

F. **Overcome the Obstacles**: Task Objective: Learning to identify different, and possibly unique, solutions to problems that teens and their parents may face.

G. **Show Teen Species video**: This video segment discusses how Charmaine, 14-years old, is constantly arguing with her mother. Later when Charmaine is older, 16-years old, there are fewer arguments.

IV: **Wrap-up (Slide 7)**

- What was the importance of today’s session?
- What do negative patterns in fighting look like?
- How can you *Repair* your relationship after an argument?
- What have you learned today and how can this be applied in your own home?
  - Facilitator: Please have the participants answer these questions first, then add additional information as needed.
  - Provide handouts. Explain how to use them at home and when to take a look at them.

V: **Handouts**

- Stay Connected Tip Card (*See appendix 7C*)
VI: Out-of-session Activities

**The Web of Connection:** This activity is to help parents and teens recognize each others’ accomplishments, to reinforce the notion that the family can be and is a support system for one another, and to promote the feeling of success within the family. Remember, this activity offers you and your parent(s) an opportunity to recognize each other’s accomplishments (*See Appendix 7D*).

**ICED:** As you and your parent(s) sit down together, think about some conflicts between the two of you. Follow the steps of ICED and determine what the best solution(s) should be; compromise. Try it out. Evaluate what happened next. Did ICED help you? Were you able to determine what the best solution was by using ICED? If you feel that starting on a minor conflict may be more beneficial in the beginning, start with a topic that involves less conflict. (*This can only be assigned if ICED has already been taught—see Goal 4 -- See Appendix 7D for ICED steps.*)

Do a **Stay-Connected Activity** with your parents to strengthen your positive feelings for each other. (*Activities are located in the Additional Stay-Connected Activities and Resources for Parents and Teens section.*)

**Write a poem / rap / story** about an argument you and your parents always seem to get into. Write about what the topic is, how you are feeling, what you would like to see happen, and anything else you would like your parents to know about your perspective. Be respectful and honest. Share and discuss your poem / rap / story with your parents.

VII. **Additional Information:** Please see Appendix 7E for additional information that may help you facilitate this goal.

VIII. **Evaluation** (see Appendix 7F)

* 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 7A: Eye-Catchers

General Process Questions for each of the Eye-Catcher Activities:

a. What appears to be the problem in this activity; why are the parents and the teen fighting?
b. What can the parent(s) and the teen do to solve this problem?
c. Is this a topic of disagreement within your family?
d. Do you think that your parent(s) see your point of view?
e. Can you see your parent’s point of view?
f. What can you do to reach a compromise?

Additional Stay-Connected: Two Views Process Questions:

a. What is the parent’s perspective?
b. Why do you think he or she feels that way?
c. Is he or she entitled to feel that way, even though it’s the teen’s room?
d. What is the teen’s perspective?
e. Why do you think he or she feels that way?
f. Is he or she entitled to feel that way, even though it’s his parent’s house?
g. Is there a way to negotiate the cleanliness of the teen’s room, so that both the parent and the teen are happy?

Additional Parenting Wisely: Problem 5: Solution 1 Process Questions:

a. What was the problem in this video clip?
b. What could the parents have done differently to avoid the confrontation?
c. What could the son have done differently to avoid the confrontation?
d. What do you think will happen next if the family leaves the problem as it stands now?

Additional Parenting Wisely: Problem 6 Process Questions:

a. What was the problem in this video clip?
b. What could the mom have done differently to avoid the confrontation?
c. What could the son have done differently to avoid the confrontation?
d. What do you think will happen next if the family leaves the problem as it stands now?
Appendix 7B: In-session Activities

A. **Human Knot:**
Directions: Divide into groups of 6-8 students plus a facilitator. Students get in a circle and then reach across and take the hands of two different people standing on the other side of the circle. Tell them that they cannot hold hands with the person next to them (when everyone has grabbed hands you have a human knot). The challenge is to untangle the knot without letting go of each other’s hands. Remind participants to take their time and to make sure no one gets their arm twisted in a way that hurts.

- **Process Questions:** How did it feel to be in the human knot? What did you do to untangle the human knot? How did you make sure no one got hurt? How did the moves you made to get out of the knot affect other people around you? Why is it important to be considerate of others when we are attempting to deal with the challenges we face? How does this relate to fighting with your parents? Does this activity give you any ideas of what you could do to stop the fighting with your parents?

B. **Tug of War:** This activity represents the power struggle within the relationship. Break the large group up into two smaller groups of approximately equal strength. Have one group go to one side of the room and the other group go to the other side of the room. In the middle have one line taped to the floor. Explain to the group that one group represents the “parents,” one group represents the “teens,” the middle bandanna represents the problems, and the line on the floor will determine the winner of the argument. Then have the groups play a game of tug of war.

Before the two teams begin to struggle, explain to the group that the problem is about the teen’s messy room. The teen feels that it is his/her room and should be allowed to have his/her room the way he/she would like to have it. However, the parents feel that the room is still under their roof and needs to be cleaned just like the rest of the house. How else is he/she going to learn to keep their belongings picked up in the future if he/she can’t even clean his/her own room? The parent and teen have two different perspectives and two different goals. The tug of war represents the struggle between these two perspectives.

Have the two teams tug for 1-5 minutes. At the end of the time, have the two teams stop tugging and let the bandanna land on the floor. If the bandanna lands on either side of the line, that group wins (i.e., either the parents or the teens win the argument). The tugging represents the struggle between parent and teen when each has a different perspective of the topic.

- **Process Questions:** How does the tug of war represent an argument between you and your parents? How did it feel to “lose” the argument? How did it feel to “win” the argument? Did you really win the argument?
Pretending that this really is an argument between you and parents, what would be a better way to solve the problem?

C. **Obstacle Course Activity:**

Directions:

a. Have each student write in large letters on a piece of paper, one of his or her parent-teen relationship goals. Examples: “to be listened to,” “get along,” “compromise,” “not argue as much”.

b. After students write down their goals, tape them on the wall that is at the far end of the room. Have the students read out their parent-teen relationship goals as they tape them on the wall.

c. Ask the group for a volunteer to complete an obstacle course. Instruct the first volunteer to leave the room with one of the facilitators and use the group members still in the room to make an obstacle course for the student to navigate. That is, chairs, tables, desks, and the students themselves serve as the obstacles in the obstacle course. Have about 8 students play the obstacles. As obstacles, the students’ feet need to remain “glued” to the floor and they need to hold the foam board up in front of them. The end of the obstacle course is the wall with the life goals. Once the obstacle course is complete, blindfold the first volunteer and then have him or her reenter the room. Tell the volunteer that s/he should attempt to make it to the wall with the life goals. **After the first student has made it through the course, ask the volunteer: “What made it difficult to get through the course?”**

d. After the first volunteer has completed the course, ask for a second volunteer. Have the volunteer leave the room with one of the facilitators. While the person is gone, select 8 new people to play the obstacles. Tell them that their feet are glued to the floor but they can move their foam boards around (stick them out so they get in the way of the person moving through the course). Have all obstacles assume their positions. Have the second volunteer reenter the room. Permit the volunteer to study the layout of the obstacle course. Then blindfold the second volunteer and ask him/her to walk through the obstacle course. **When the second volunteer is finished, ask: “What problems did you run into while navigating the course?” Did it help getting to see the course before you walked through it?”**
e. The third volunteer is selected, and 8 different people get to play the obstacles. This third time, the person will be blindfolded after studying the course. Select 1-2 of the observers (those not playing obstacles) to walk near the blind-folded person and give the person directions for getting through the course as safely as possible (i.e., running into as few obstacles as possible). They need to tell the person whether to turn right or left, how many steps they can take forward, etc. **After the third volunteer has successfully navigated the course, ask: “Did the guidance offered by other members of the group help you get through the course?”**

f. Finally, a fourth volunteer is selected. Select 8 students to be the obstacles. Have the fourth volunteer leave the room with a facilitator. Then select 1 person to give helpful directions and 2 people to give unhelpful directions. Have the person reenter the room, study the course, and then put on the blindfold. Tell the person that she or he will be getting directions, but some of them will be helpful and some will be unhelpful. His or her job is to try to figure out which directions are the helpful ones and to follow those. Tell the person s/he can ask questions of the guides to help him or her figure out how to get through the course. As the person walks through the course, the direction givers will offer suggestions and the obstacles can move as long as their feet stay glued to the floor. **After the fourth volunteer has successfully navigated the course, ask: “Were you able to figure out who to listen to as you tried to get through the course? What made it easy (or hard) to figure this out? How did this help you navigate through the obstacle course?”**
D. **Negotiation Game - Collaborative Problem Solving:** Task Objective: Learning to work together to negotiate a solution that both you and your parents think is fair.

**Step 1:** Have the students form two groups (the parent group and the teen group). Select a topic: Teens drinking alcohol, curfew, Teens’ Use of the Car, Teens’ Style of Dress (include other topics suggested by the group).

Explain that the group will be engaging in collaborative problem solving as they play the negotiation game. Collaborative problem solving involves six important steps:

- **Step 1:** Establish ground rules
- **Step 2:** Reach mutual understanding
- **Step 3:** Brainstorm
- **Step 4:** Agree to one or more solutions
- **Step 5:** Write down your agreement
- **Step 6:** Set a time for a follow-up discussion to evaluate your progress

Explain to all the participants that ground rules must be established first, such as: no yelling, listen without interrupting... Have the students make a list of 3-4 ground rules to ensure everyone will be able to work together. Post the ground rules on the wall for all to see (step 1: ground rules).

Next, have all participants agree that they are there to work out the problem they have selected (step 2: mutual understanding about the problem to be solved).

Third, have the teen and parent groups move to different parts of the room and have each group brainstorm (step 3) all possible solutions to the problem (remind the group playing parents, that they need to take their parents’ perspectives).

Have each group select 2-3 participants to play the “jury.” The jury will watch the parent and teen group discuss ways to solve the problem and will evaluate how well the process goes. Give the jury signs that say: “slow down,” “speak louder,” “take turns,” “be calm,” “good job” (you can add others as you see fit). The jury will hold up these signs as the negotiation process is occurring. The parent and teen group members should be asked to heed the jury’s signs.

Bring the groups together and move to Step 4: Have the group review the list of possible solutions that the teen and parent groups generated. Have them discuss the pros and cons of the solutions. Mark out solutions that both groups say will not work. Have the group keep working until they arrive at one or more solutions to the problem that both think will work.

To finish the negotiation, write down the agreed upon solution and agree on a time frame for testing out the solution (steps 5 & 6).

Ask the jury to confer briefly to discuss how well the groups negotiated. Have them rate the overall process on a scale of 1 (unsuccessful) to 5 (extremely successful). Have participants from the two groups shake hands to end the game. If there is
time – pick a second topic, have the two sides switch roles (teen group plays parent group; parent group plays teen group) and repeat the game.

E1. **Role-play: Example of “I” statements, “soft startup,” and “active listening”**

**Soft Start-up:** Using “I” statements to convey what it is you need, want, or feel in a respectful manner (for example, I would really like to go to the dance on Friday because all of my friends are going to be there.). “I” statements are a way to own your behaviors and disclosing your feelings. It is NOT starting a conversation with “you” statements (for example, You told me I could go to the dance and now you are saying I can’t.”) or acting out. This includes being *respectful* to the person you are talking with and speaking calmly.

Mom: Joe, I understand that you would like to go out this Friday night with your friends. However, your father and I don’t feel very comfortable with you going out when we are not in town. (*I* statement; *soft startup*)

Joe: So, you don’t want me to go out with my friends when you are out of town because you are afraid of what might happen to me. (*Active listening*)

E2. **Role-play using “repairs”**.

**Repairs:** Repairs are ways that you can recover after an argument (i.e., ways that you can reduce the negative effects of an argument). Examples include apologizing, trying to understand what the other person’s point of view is, and compromising in a calm respectful manner. Repairs can also include non-verbal behaviors that demonstrate that you are apologizing, that you are forgiving the other person, or that you still love and respect the other person (for example, smiling, laughing, joking with). Repairs can be as simple as being honest with the other person. If a repair is not completed after an argument, anger and resentment can accumulate and destroy the relationship in the long run.

**Active Listening:** Active listening is when you repeat in your own words what the other person has said, try to understand what the meaning of what they said, and try to understand and determine the feelings underneath what the other person is saying. Active listening lets the other person know that you are interested in what they are saying.

Anthony: Mom, I know that you just want to see me make good decisions and do well in life. I’m sorry for not understanding why you are so concerned about who I hang out with.
Process Questions: (applies to all role-plays) Why do you think using “I” statements, “active listening”, or “soft startups” helps conversations not turn into arguments? Why is this important? Why is it important to use “repairs”? Are using these skills easy or difficult? What makes them easy / difficult?

Overcome the Obstacles: Task Objective: Learning to identify different, and possibly unique, solutions to problems that teens and their parents may face.

Set up: Write the following issues at the top of separate giant post-its (poster size) and then place the post-its around the room. Topics:

- Disagreeing with your parent about: CURFEW
- Disagreeing with your parent about: HOUSEHOLD CHORES
- Disagreeing with your parent about: YOUR FRIENDS
- Disagreeing with your parent about: YOUR BOYFRIEND / GIRLFRIEND
- Disagreeing with your parent about: THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU SPEND STUDYING
- Disagreeing with your parent about: HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME ON THE WEEKEND
- Disagreeing with your parent about: HOW MUCH TIME YOU SPEND TALKING ON THE PHONE
- Disagreeing with your parent about: HOW YOU KEEP YOUR ROOM

Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people. Give each team a different color marker. Have each team go from issue to issue, writing down 1-2 ways the situation could be handled. They are not allowed to duplicate a solution that another team has already written on the post-it. When the teams have finished (or time is up, if you decide to set a time limit), review the different solutions that the participants have written down. Ask which ones they think will be most effective and why. Make a master list of the issues and solutions that you can hand out at the next meeting or mail to participants (if this is their last session).

Teen Species Video: Process Questions: Why do you think that Charmaine and her mother are always arguing? What has changed now that she is older? Is it ok for Charmaine to always argue with her mother? What are some other ways that she can handle her frustration better?
Appendix 7C
Stay Connected Tip card for goal 7
(Duplicate as many as needed on card stock paper)

We’re Fighting, Again!
■ After realizing you and your parents are fighting too often, break the cycle: see their point of view and use effective communication.
■ Although you can’t change your parent’s behaviors, you can certainly change your behaviors.
■ Avoid criticizing, being defensive, being rude and don’t ignore your parent(s) when they are talking to you.
■ Remain calm and respectful, listen to your parent’s point of view, be honest, compromise, take self-timeouts, and apologize.
Appendix 7D: Out-of-session Activities

1. **The WEB of Connection** - Task Objectives: To offer recognition of child and parent accomplishments, to reinforce the notion that the family can be and is a support system for one another, and to promote the feeling of success within the family. Remember, this activity offers you and your parents an opportunity to recognize each other's accomplishments.

   Materials: Ball of yarn

   Directions: Overall, each family member will be tossing the ball of yarn back and forth to one another. Before you toss the yarn ball to a family member, make sure to wrap it around your wrist. When you toss the ball of yarn to someone, first say the person’s name, and then tell him/her one thing you saw this person accomplish or do well recently. Take turns tossing the ball until everyone has received it at least once, allowing for each person’s accomplishments and strengths to be recognized. Remember the person who tossed the ball to you. While the group is connected someone in the family says, “We are all in this family together, and everyone is important for the success of this family. Although we have had our difficulties recently, we will continue to try hard at making our family succeed.” To untangle the family web, the last person who received the yarn needs to unwrap it from his or her wrist, carefully toss it over to the person who threw it to her/him and say one thing regarding how s/he plans on making the family more successful (i.e., a less argumentative place). This process continues until all people are free from the web. Those who are freed first can assist those still tangled (if needed). After all are free, a family member points out that we can continue to be positive people in each other’s lives by cooperating with one another to solve the problems and challenges we face.

2. **ICED:**

   - **I** Identify the problem (for example, disagreeing with a friend)
   - **C** Create constructive alternatives (for example, (1) never talk to friend again, (2) yell at friend, (3) talk about problem with friend)
   - **E** Evaluate the alternatives (for example, (1) lose the friendship, more free time, (2) disagreement gets worse, you win disagreement, but friend’s feelings may be hurt (or vice versa), (3) you and your friend gain a better understanding of each other – may lead to a better friendship, may not).
   - **D** Decide on the best alternative to do (for example, alternative 3 - has best chance of saving and possibly strengthening friendship).
Appendix 7E: Additional Information

Ineffective Communication: What starts and/or continues the argument.

1. Harsh Startup- “What’s wrong with you?” “You did this!” Instead use “I” statements with feelings.
2. Failure of repair
3. Failure to compromise
4. Negative perceptions of parent/teen- seeing them as selfish
5. Feeling overwhelmed by the way parent/teen complains, flooding-produces distance between parent/teen.
6. Chronic defensiveness

7 Techniques to decrease the number of arguments and increase the bond between parents and teens.

1. Enhancing your love maps- Parents need to know teen’s love map and vice versa. This includes feeling that your parent/teen understands you, knows your current stresses, worries, hopes, values, is interested in knowing how your day has gone-what they did during the day, and asking how the day was. Just asking about the other’s day engages each other, which strengthens the bonds and decreases the problems. Needs to be reciprocal.

2. Nurture your fondness, admiration, and appreciation for one another; telling your parent/teen thank you, giving compliments, being respectful. “You did a good job and I couldn’t have done it without you.”

3. Acknowledging versus Ignoring- When a parent/teen tries engaging in a conversation with you, they are making a “bid for connection.” It is important to respond in some way to indicate the other person is important. By ignoring the bid for connection this may imply that the other person is not important and may weaken the bond. We want to build the bond between our parents and us.
   Ways to Connect:
   - Interest
   - Humor
   - Conversations
   - Support
   - Even a nod of the head

4. Allow both parent and teen input into decisions/solutions. By soliciting information from the other, this indicates both of you are important and that you want to consider each other’s opinions. Remember all decisions and solutions have more than one alternative or perspective.

5. Solve solvable problems: Use soft startup, repair, and compromise.
6. Overcome Gridlocks- Problems that occur frequently. Recognize the patterns and try to correct the problems using the skills outlined in the mini-lecture. Remember that usually the problem is connected to very personal things (for example, dreams, goals) and that’s why the other person can’t let it go. You must learn to compromise and support each other.

7. Create Shared Meaning: Do things together; talk to your child/parent (i.e., How was your day, let’s do something together more than watching TV). Each event has some importance and will mean something to both the parent and teen. Think about what it means to be a mom/dad/teen and convey that to each other.
Appendix 7F

Goal 7: We’re Fighting, Again?

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>Activity</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoyed the Tug of War activity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I enjoyed the Obstacle Course.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I enjoyed the Negotiation Game.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I enjoyed the Role-plays.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I enjoyed the Overcome the Obstacles activity.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Before the Session</th>
<th>After the Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand how ineffective communication can influence continuous fighting.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how I play a role in decreasing the number of arguments between my parents and me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how to make-up after an argument.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can identify when my parents and I are in a cycle of continuous fighting.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand why conflicts occur between my parents and me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>