

Session Five

Empathy and Nurturing Self

Goals		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To welcome parents to Session Five. 2. To reinforce parents' efforts in developing self-nurturing attitudes. 3. To increase parents' knowledge of basic human needs. 4. To increase parents' ability to develop empathic parent-child relationships. 5. To increase parents' positive perceptions of their child. 		
Activities	Time	Materials
5.1 Welcome & Check-In	15 Minutes	Parent Handbooks, * flip chart/clipboard, magic markers
5.2 Nurturing Yourself and Basic Needs	55 Minutes	Parent Handbooks, clipboard/flip chart, magic markers
Break Time – 20 Minutes		
5.3 Empathic Parent/Child Relationships	55 Minutes	Parent Handbooks, clipboard/flip chart, magic markers
5.4 Home Practice and Closure	5 Minutes	Parent Handbooks

* Flip chart if you're conducting a group program - clipboard if you're conducting a home visit.

Activity 5.1 **Welcome & Home Practice Check-In**
Construct: **Empowerment**
Time: **15 Minutes**
Materials: **Parent Handbooks, clipboard/flip chart, magic markers**

Goal: To welcome parents to Session Five.

Objectives: 1. To validate personal and family changes.
 2. To reinforce efforts to establish healthy lifestyle patterns.
 3. To reinforce parents' efforts in promoting healthy brain development in their child.

Procedures:

1. Welcome the parents to the fifth session. Check in with the parents regarding their pregnancy.
2. Instruct parents to locate the **Home Practice Assignment** on **Page 31** in their **Parent Handbooks**. Review the assignment with them:
 - a. Review the information in **Chapter 8: Fetal Development** in your **Parent Handbook**. What is something new you learned?
 - b. Review the information in **Chapter 9: Brain Development** in your **Parent Handbook**. Did you learn something new?
 - c. Change three negative thoughts into positive affirmations. Write the affirmations in your Family Log.
 - d. Talk to your baby each day and massage your abdomen.
 - e. Write in your Family Log about changes going on with you, your baby, your family.
3. Allow participants the opportunity to discuss problems or successes encountered in doing the Home Practice Assignment.
4. Ask participants to share any new thoughts, perceptions or changes they have regarding themselves and their pregnancy as a result of last week's session.

Notes and Suggestions:

Reinforce parents' efforts in changing lifestyle patterns that could be detrimental to their baby's development.

Activity 5.2 **Basic Needs and Nurturing Myself**
Construct: **Empathy, Self-Awareness**
Time: **55 Minutes**
Materials: **Parent Handbooks, clipboard/flip chart, magic markers**

Goal: To increase parents' abilities to recognize and meet their needs.

Objectives: 1. To increase parents' knowledge of the basic needs.
 2. To increase parents' awareness of the relationship between needs and behavior.
 3. To help parents develop a plan to get their needs met.

Procedures:

1. This lesson will focus on recognizing needs and ways parents can get their needs met.
2. Brainstorm a functional definition of the term **NEEDS**. Write down the key points on the flip chart.
3. Next, brainstorm a functional definition of the term **BEHAVIOR**. Write the key points on the flip chart.
4. Offer the following definitions of the aforementioned two terms and compare similarities:

NEEDS The basic drives of human beings and all forms of life that dictate and influence behavior.

BEHAVIOR Actions taken to get basic needs met.

5. Needs can be thought of in six general categories. We have different needs at different times, but they fall into one of six categories. We can easily remember the categories by thinking of the word **SPICES**. Have parents give examples of needs children have in each area. Have them also identify the needs adults have in each area.

SPIRITUAL The need for belonging and membership. The need to believe in the power of goodness. Membership in a family is a spiritual experience.

PHYSICAL The need for food, sleep, exercise, sex, air, water.

INTELLECTUAL The need for stimulation of new ideas or thoughts.

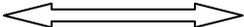
CREATIVE The need to express one's inner self. Creative needs are expressed in areas like a person's appearance, dress, dance, poetry and cooking.

EMOTIONAL The need for love, praise, security, trust, and other basic emotions.

SOCIAL The need for friendship and companionship.

Note: Sex is a physical need of adult human beings for the purpose of procreation. Not all people have to have sex, but the species needs sex to reproduce itself.

6. Once again, write down the word **BEHAVIOR**. Write the word **NEEDS** next to it. Draw a line with double arrows showing the interdependency between the two terms.

BEHAVIOR  **NEEDS**

Activity 5.2 Basic Needs and Nurturing Myself

7. Explain that all behavior is purposeful; that is, to get some need met (i.e. If we are hungry, we eat). Needs dictate behavior; behavior is the function to get needs met. Discuss with the group if they can think of any behavior they have that didn't fall into one of the six basic needs areas.
8. The prerequisite to being aware of someone else's needs is being aware of and getting one's own needs met. Getting one's needs met is the best way to nurture one's self.
9. Have parents complete the exercise in **Chapter 10** in the **Parent Handbook** titled, **Getting My Needs Met**. Mention the importance of parents getting their needs met.
10. When completed, ask parents to share their responses.

Notes and Suggestions:

1. The need for parents to get their needs met must be examined in the context of ensuring children also get their needs met.
2. Being a prenatal parent requires special attention to the needs of the developing child.

Break Time – 20 Minutes

Have snacks and beverages available. Bring parents/partners together for bonding and fun.

Activity 5.3 **Empathic Parent/Child Relationships**
Construct: **Empathy**
Time: **55 Minutes**
Materials: **Parent Handbooks, clipboard/flip chart, magic markers**

Goal: To understand the importance of empathy in parenting.

Objectives: 1. To increase parents' awareness of the importance of empathy in nurturing parenting.
 2. To increase parents' abilities in helping prenatal children get their needs met.

Procedures:

1. Empathy focuses on four specific issues:
 - a. The importance of empathy in nurturing parenting.
 - b. The importance of teaching children to care for self and others.
 - c. Understanding the basic needs we have as human beings, and the importance of getting our needs met as men and women so we can be nurturing dads and moms.
 - d. The importance of helping children get their needs met.
2. Write the word **EMPATHY** on the flip chart so parents can see the word.
3. Brainstorm with the parents what the word means.
 - a. Empathy is the ability for one person to recognize the emotions, needs and desires of another person and to take an appropriate response.
 - b. As it relates to nurturing parenting, empathy is the ability to perceive the emotions, needs and desires of a child; and to be able to respond in a nurturing way, keeping the positive welfare of the child the focus.
 - c. Empathy, simply, is the ability to care for and about another person.
4. Empathy in nurturing parenting has three components:
 - a. Empathy has to do with **the way parents discipline their children**. The way children are treated shapes the way children will respond to others in distress. In our program, examples of empathic, non-violent disciplinary strategies are being presented.
 - b. A second part of empathy has to do with **the way parents respond to the emotions of a child**. Empathic responses honor the feelings and let the child know their feelings are accepted.
 - c. A third part of empathy is **the ability of parents to be aware of children's needs and to help children get their needs met**.
5. Have the parents locate the information titled, **Developing Empathy** in **Chapter 11** in the **Parent Handbook** and use this as the basis for instruction. Review the ways parents can help children develop empathy.

Activity 5.3 Empathic Parent/Child Relationships

6. Review the categories of basic needs: **SPICES**. Empathy is not only being aware of the needs of their children, but also being able to help their children get their needs met in a nurturing way. Brainstorm the following questions:
 - a. How do prenatal babies get their needs met?
 - b. What happens when prenatal babies don't get their needs met?
 - c. What responsibilities do prenatal moms have in developing a healthy lifestyle? What happens if they don't?

7. Helping children get their needs met is one of the primary responsibilities of parenting. Children whose needs get met usually develop healthy, social personalities. Children whose needs are routinely unmet suffer the effects throughout their life. Discuss the following:
 - a. **Spoiled child:** One who constantly demands, whines, shows unreasonableness, hoards things, is clingy and generally is a pain to be with. Spoiled children develop as a result of the inability to trust their environment; inconsistent wishy-washy expectations from parents; and a lack of structure.
 - b. **Overly dependent child:** One who has been "smothered" with love. Parents do everything for them and their incompetence in getting their own needs met forces their dependence on others.
 - c. **Aggressive child:** Has to fend for himself; often lacks warmth; generally has received harshness and aggression from parent interactions.

8. Focus on the fears and practices of spoiling children. Ask each parent to respond to the following questions:

I think you can spoil a child by _____.

As a child, the one person who "spoiled" me was _____ by doing _____.

9. Review the information in **Chapter 12** in the **Parent Handbook** titled, **Myths and Facts About Spoiling Your Children**.
 - a. "Spoiled child" is a term used to describe a child with poor impulse control, one who is disrespectful and demanding, and one who throws temper tantrums when he can't get his own way.
 - b. "Spoiled" behavior is learned. One goal of nurturing is to help parents learn proper ways to help children get their needs met and grow up healthy.
 - c. Babies can never be spoiled. They are needy, dependent people who need constant care from others.

10. Review the purpose of behavior: to get needs met. It is when children don't get their needs met in healthy ways that "acting spoiled" can occur.

Activity 5.3 Empathic Parent/Child Relationships

11. Share with the parents how children learn to become spoiled. After each point, have parents brainstorm why this behavior will spoil children.
- a. Parent does everything for child.
 - b. Parent anticipates child's request so child never has to ask for anything.
 - c. Parent and child spend all their time together.
 - d. Parent is the only one who is with the child all day.
 - e. Children are only held when they cry.
 - f. Parents set inconsistent limits.
 - g. Parents blame children for being demanding.

Notes and Suggestions:

- 1. Encouraging parents to recognize that spoiled behavior is learned and the parents can re-teach proper behavior is a primary goal.
- 2. Reinforce how dependent and vulnerable children are at the prenatal stage of development and in the first three years of life in getting their needs met.

Activity 5.4 **Home Practice and Closure**
Construct: **Empathy, Self-Awareness**
Time: **5 Minutes**
Materials: **Parent Handbooks**

Goal: To increase parents' ability to nurture themselves and their prenatal children.

Objectives: 1. To increase parents' empathic skills.
 2. To reinforce the need for an empathic response to children.
 3. To describe changes in self, baby, and family in the Family Log.

Procedures:

1. Instruct parents to locate the **Home Practice Assignment** on **Page 39** in the **Parent Handbooks**. Review the assignment with them:
 - a. Review the information in **Chapter 10: Needs** and **Getting One's Needs Met** in their **Parent Handbook**. Discuss with your partner/family ways you can get your own needs met.
 - b. Review the information in **Chapter 11: Developing Empathy** in the **Parent Handbook**. Did you learn anything new? Complete the exercises on **Ways to Model Empathy** on **Page 36**.
 - c. Review the information in **Chapter 12: Spoiling Children** in the **Parent Handbook**. What myths do you and/or your partner have regarding spoiling children?
 - d. Continue to work on changing negative thoughts into positive affirmations.
 - e. Talk to your baby each day and massage your abdomen.
 - f. Write in your Family Log about changes going on with you, your baby, your family.
3. End each session with a group hug. During the group hug, people offer support to one another, praise others for their sharing, and wish each other well.

Notes and Suggestions:

1. Address the importance of parents getting their own needs met as adults. Adults who take care of themselves by working on getting their needs met usually have more energy and empathy to help meet the needs of others.
2. Also reinforce the fact that pregnant moms have the single most important relationship with their baby.