

CYCLE ON "CREATING SAFE SPACES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE "

Workshops for mothers and fathers:

5th meeting:

Why it is hard to establish limits



The activities listed below are designed so that they can be easily implemented following this guide.

We have calculated the time in order to be able to plan the session (90' in total). Either complete the entire contents or just one of the activities.

The text for addressing participants is in italics.

For all the meetings, chairs should be placed in a circle, with no tables, leaving a large space in the middle where participants can move freely.

5th meeting:

Why it is hard to establish limits

MAIN GOAL OF THE MEETING

To assess the importance of establishing limits and explore strategies that help us manage them with conviction and love in a way that arouses trust

PHRASE OF THE DAY (this phrase will be hung on a mural and written in the languages of the participants)

In this contemporary culture in which technology, consumerism and comfort in online spaces are fulfilling emotional needs and exchanged feelings, parents must ensure their children and teenagers are able to discover emotions through all the interactions we can offer them as a family. We will not stop looking at them, hugging them, playing with them, listening to their doubts, discussing any disagreements, learning together or respectfully using a sense of humour to revert situations.

MATERIAL

A player, sheets of white paper (eighth-sized), 2 sheets of one colour and 2 sheets of another, several ballpoint pens and two thick markers, blue-tac or masking tape, 15 cards of one colour and 15 cards of another, a flip chart or board and cards with the description of small situations to be represented (the size of one card must be like one third of an A4 sheet), a hat, a scarf and a cap.

GREETINGS AND WELCOME (15')

On arrival, we will proceed as on the previous days: We will greet everyone, ask how their week has gone and whether anyone wants to share anything, or what they remember from the previous meeting. We can also read the phrase of the day and see whether anyone is missing. *When someone from the group is missing, does it feel like when a teenager doesn't show up for lunch on a special occasion? Why do we feel like this (in one sense or another)?*

Ask everyone to think about how they feel, about their mood. *We should listen to ourselves, and how we feel inside before starting the usual activities. Without saying anything to anyone, we listen to our body, whether anything hurts, anything that is most tense, whether we feel calm, tired, bored, angry, disgruntled, inquisitive, happy or any other emotion.* Then hand out a piece of a sheet of white paper and a ballpoint pen to everyone. Each individual must write down a word that represents how they feel (I feel... / as if I were...). Then ask that everyone group into pairs (a letter A or B can be allocated to each person before asking them to look for someone with the same letter). Each pair must share their mood and the word and, from there, choose a new word that encompasses the mood of both participants. Then, ask them to form just two groups (for example, all the As on one side, and all the Bs on the other). Hand out a coloured sheet and a thick marker to each group. Each group must choose a new word after having shared the words of all the pairs and must write it down in large, clear letters on the coloured sheet. These words will be shown and the sheets hung on the wall.

RELAXATION (5')

We will proceed a little differently to previous days. *Today, special attention will be given to identifying the parts of the body that feel most tense and trying to relax them whenever we breathe out. We will not do the exercise of closing the fist and releasing it, but instead we will concentrate on relaxing every part of the body.*

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY (10')

Introduction: Present the goal of the meeting. *Today we will reflect on what limits mean, why they are so important and why is it that we often find it hard to establish them.* We will start by asking ourselves the difference between what is a rule and what is a limit.

Procedure: Go back into pairs (these can be the initial ones) and hand out two coloured cards to each one. One rule must be written on the each card of one colour and a limit on each of those of the other colour. Collect all the cards and make them visible to everyone, classified according to whether they are rules or limits. When classifying them, ask everyone whether it is a rule or a limit. This will enable them to reflect on the nature of each one.

Conclusion: Rules can be very different from one family to another and allow a certain amount of flexibility. Limits, however, are reference points that must be very clear and have to do with danger (of others, of oneself, of things), respect, and the cultural and personal values of the family. For example, a rule could be "we go to bed at 9 p.m. in our house". This rule may vary when children are older: "We go to bed at 10 p.m. in our house". And perhaps at the weekend or in the summer or when we go to our grandparents house, this rule might become more flexible. The limit, however, would be "you must sleep the amount of time you need to feel good" or "you can't sleep for less than 8 hours", etc. This sets the barrier of flexibility up to where it becomes a rule, and it means that neither we nor others take something the wrong way. There are few limits and them must be left clear.

MAIN ACTIVITY (35')

Introduction: *With this activity, we will represent everyday situations that may arise at any time in any household, and we will observe them and think about them. For example: When we tell our children that they must be home by a certain time and they object, the conversation we might have when we realise that our son has not slept at home the night after going out, the dialogue we might have when we see that they systematically refuse to collaborate in household tasks (sweeping, washing dishes, hanging out clothes, etc.) or when they ask us for a mobile phone when they're not old enough.*

Procedure: *Role plays (props can be handed out, such as a hat, a scarf or a cap).*

- 1) First, ask whether there are any volunteers to represent a situation with the collaboration of someone else. Alternatively, if no one wants to volunteer, proceed as described below.
- 2) Form groups of three people (technique to be agreed on), hand out different cards with a situation that must be worked on in the group. Two members of the group will do the role play and the other will observe how each one speaks and the impression that each role play gives. Finally, they will discuss the observations made with the group members. Once complete, another situation can be worked on but group members will change role. Then ask one group to do the role play of one of the situations rehearsed in front of the entire meeting and then discuss it among everyone. We will allow 15 minutes for work in small groups and 20 minutes for work as a whole group.

REFLECTION SPACE IN A CIRCLE (15')

We will proceed as on the previous days.

This circle will rotate to the right and will think about why it is sometimes hard to establish limits or set certain rules. First allow enough time so that the group members can say whatever they want freely. If no one says anything, do not rush into saying anything. If, after a few minutes, the group remains in silence, some of the following questions could be posed:

- Why is it so hard to think about this question?
- Do we want to do things differently to our parents? How did they do it?
- When we remember things that we really didn't like or that made us suffer, do we instantly agree with our children and forget our responsibility?
- Do we still remember how angry we felt when we were teenagers and think that they must feel very angry towards us too?
- Are we afraid that they will stop loving us? Does being annoying make us feel very uneasy?
- What happens when we disagree with our children?
- What happens when we stand our ground with regard to a limit that must be respected? How do we defend this limit?
- Is what we saw the previous day useful for establishing limits strictly yet calmly and with understanding?
- When we establish a limit, could this be a perfect time to help them think? What could we help them think about?
- Is going on and on or giving a lecture the same as helping them think? Why?
- Does it help them think when we shout or threaten?
- How can we help them think?

SUGGESTION: Show images of the brain (see attached material) in which it can be seen how it becomes blocked with shouting or tension. Take the opportunity to relate this to why we propose a few minutes of relaxation at the start of each meeting.

Final reflection: *As the phrase of the day says "In this contemporary culture (...) technology, consumerism and comfort in online spaces are fulfilling emotional needs and exchanged feelings". With this in mind, it is extremely important to be there, to be present. And a good way of being present is by establishing clear limits. The moments of confrontation that this may involve are a very valuable times for communication to convey our values, to help them mature emotionally, and to help them think. However, if a son or daughter ever ignores the family rules and the limits we have established, we will always be available so that the relationship can be redirected.*

ENERGY BOOSTING ACTIVITY (7')

In this meeting, we will replace the energy boosting activity with a repetition of the activity carried out at the start. Think again about how we feel now that we are finishing. Hand out blank paper and a ballpoint pen to each individual and a coloured sheet to each of the two final groups. Hang these sheets with the resulting word next to the words found at the start. Compare them and reflect on the similarities and differences.

ENDING ROUND (3')

- Explain the topics we will discuss at the coming meetings: "What we can do when we see that our children are in toxic relationships" and "how we can prevent risky behaviour and act accordingly". Indicate that everything we have been working on so far will be very useful for thinking about these topics.
- *As usual, remember that it is important not to lose the flow of the workshop and that you must attend. Being able to attend is a privilege. If, in spite of everything, you are unable to attend, you must inform us (give a contact phone). Should any problems arise, think about whether you could count on someone to come in your place so that you don't miss it.*

TOTAL TIME: 90 MINUTES



Case 1:

Clara says that she's going out with her friends this evening and that she'll be back late but not to worry.

Which answer would you give if you were in her parents' place?



Case 2:

Julia, who is 13 years old, complains to her parents that everyone in her class has a mobile phone and that she is the only one who doesn't. She tells them that she's really embarrassed that her mum is in the WhatsApp friends group. She says that they've set up another group without her mum, but that she doesn't find out about a lot of things and that they ignore her because she's not in it. To round things off, she tells them that they're pathetic and that they're the worst parents in the world.

Julia's parents think that having a mobile phone provides access to social media and that this is very risky. They have joined the family movement that promotes an alliance for teenagers not to have a mobile phone until they are 16 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUWgCRWb8-w>).

How do you think the conversation between Julia and her parents would go?



Case 3:

Paul's father tells him that he does very little to help at home and that he should remember that he doesn't live in a hotel, that there is someone here who sweeps, who cleans, who shops, who cooks, who does the washing and hangs out the clothes, etc.

Paul stands up to him and tells him that he does other things, that he already has enough work from school and how do they expect him to pass if he's doing housework? He also says that, out of all these jobs that he (the father) mentions, he doesn't do any and that they are mostly done by his mother and grandmother.

How would the conversation between Paul and his father go?



Case 4:

"Ivan, I see your bed is made and I don't think you've just made it. Could you tell me where you spent the night and what time you got home?"

Ivan shrugs his shoulders and doesn't answer his mother.

How do you think the mother could have a conversation with her son? What would she say to him?