

SESSION 4 SUMMARY FOR PARENTS

EXPRESS THOSE FEELINGS!

MAIN POINTS YOUR CHILD LEARNED TODAY

This week your children learned about expressing their feelings in healthy and positive ways. We discussed the fact that all feelings need to be expressed and that ignoring them does not make them go away. Rather, it just stuffs them deep inside where they will struggle to get out. We learned that the results of trying to keep our feelings locked inside (headaches, stomachaches, and misplaced anger) can be avoided by paying attention to our feelings and expressing them in appropriate and healthy ways.

We also discussed the fact that although all of us have the same feelings, we don't express them in the same ways. We encouraged them to find the ways that work the best for them. Possibilities for expressing feelings were presented using the following objects:

Pillow—Hit it when you are angry; cry into it when you are sad.

Telephone—Call someone you trust and talk about your feelings.

Notebook—Journal your feelings; write a poem.

Stationery with envelopes—Write a letter about your feelings and give it to someone you trust.

Drawing supplies—Drawing or scribbling helps get your feelings out.

Box of tissues—Sometimes you just need to cry!

Running shoes—Doing something physical helps get your feelings out.

Large red heart—Talk to someone you love about your feelings. Ask for a hug.

Finally, we also made it clear to the kids that the need to express their feelings does not give them freedom to engage in a “feelings free-for-all.” There are inappropriate and unhealthy ways to express feelings that must never be used:

- It is unhealthy to express feelings by hurting another person or property. Throwing or breaking things, or hitting or saying hurtful things to someone else is never OK!
- It is unhealthy to express feelings by hurting ourselves. Using alcohol or drugs, getting physically sick, or thinking about suicide is never a good way to handle feelings!

You can reinforce this concept at home by making this rule part of your family life:

I must *never* express my feelings by hurting another person, hurting myself, or breaking things. I can *find a better way* to handle my feelings!

BIBLE EMPHASIS

Today we introduced a new Bible verse:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything present your requests to God. And the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6, 7 (NIV, condensed)

This verse teaches us that it is natural to feel worried and anxious about many things in our lives; all of us do. God knows that, and teaches us to come to Him with those feelings. Knowing that God will be with us and asking Him to help brings peace.

DO-AT-HOME ACTIVITY

Make a Family Feelings Box. Gather as many of the items listed above (or pictures of the items) as possible and place them into a box. Whenever any family member expresses their feelings in inappropriate ways, direct them to the Family Feelings Box to choose a healthier way to get their feelings out!

In addition, be aware of *preventive* measures you can take to keep feelings from erupting in unhealthy ways. Plan times alone with your children to talk about anything they want to talk about. Remember to accept what they share; don't use this time to reprimand. You could also go for walks, play active games more often, help them build relationships with other caring adults, etc.