

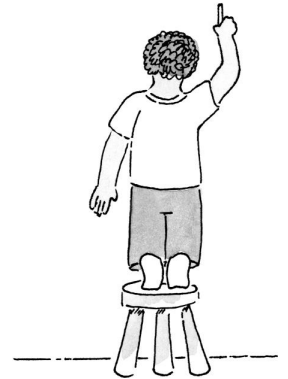


Livingston Youth and Community Services

Grade 3: Parent Assignment #5 - Discussing Feelings

No easy answers

Remember that you can't solve every problem in your child's life. Parents want to fix things for their children and make them happy. But in most cases there are no quick fixes or simple answers. This is true for children, teenagers and adults. You can help your child a whole lot just by listening and caring. Your child will learn that it's okay to talk to you about feelings and difficulties, and that even if you don't have all the answers, you will offer unconditional love. Often children just need to talk, and don't expect solutions to their problems. If you can keep the lines of communication open from the time your child is very young, you'll be able to help guide them in years to come. The way you talk and listen to your child now can affect how your child talks to you—now and in the future.



Respecting feelings—even the uncomfortable ones

When a child can't talk about feelings of sadness or anger, those feelings don't just go away. They get bottled up until eventually they spill over in some other way. The child may be unkind to a younger brother or sister, or may bully the other kids at school. Or the child may become sad and withdrawn, unwilling to socialize with other children. Children who can't express their feelings in a healthy way will find other ways to cope with those feelings. As a child grows older, those bottled-up feelings will continue to cause pain. The older child may turn to alcohol, other drugs and gambling as a way to relieve the pain. It's healthier for the whole family when your child is able to talk freely about feelings, so that those feelings can be expressed and out in the open rather than bottled up inside. When you listen to your child, respect their feelings, and talk to them. They'll learn that it's okay to have uncomfortable feelings and problems. They'll understand that these are just a part of life.

Building strong bridges

Talking about feelings is one of the best ways to reach out to your child. You'll create patterns for communication that will last through the teenage years and beyond. When problems do come up, you and your child will have one big advantage—your communication bridges will already be firmly in place. As your child faces more grown-up challenges, they'll know that it's okay to talk honestly about feelings. It's okay to feel sad, confused, and vulnerable at times. Your child will learn that you're willing to listen and understand. When a child can talk about feelings and problems with an adult who cares, that can make all the difference.

Tips on Discussing Feelings

Use "I" messages. "I" messages don't blame or put down.

- They describe what is wrong.
- They say why it bothers the parent.
- They share how the problem makes the parent feel.

For example:

A "You" message might be—"Go play. You're being a pest and your noise is giving me a headache."

An “**I**” message explains the parent’s feelings—“When I come home tired from a long day, I get frustrated when things are noisy. Please play quietly in your room for awhile.” Whether the parent is upset because of the child or something else, it is important for parents to explain their feelings to help the child see how their behavior affects other people. When parents are pleased or proud of a child, they should tell and show the child how they feel. The child’s sense of self-worth grows stronger with encouragement and appreciation.

“**I**” messages aren’t just for parents and children. When adults have problems or misunderstandings with one another, using an “**I**” message can be surprisingly helpful in finding solutions.

Creating Understanding

Children don’t always understand what their parents are thinking or doing or why they are thinking or doing it. This is probably not news to anyone. It is important, though, for children to understand how their parents feel when they act a certain way—happy, loving, angry, tired, or sad. Children also need for their parents to know how *they* feel. The hardest feelings for children to understand are the negative ones. They may think that they have caused their parents’ sadness or anger. These feelings may be hard to discuss, especially if you weren’t allowed to talk about your own feelings as a child. But learning to express feelings without put-downs, belittling others, or sarcasm helps children explore their own feelings. Most of us *feel* much more than we show. And few of us explain to others how we feel and why. And too many times, we express the negative emotions more easily than we share positive ones.

Source: <http://www.guidancechannel.com>

Assignment

Ask your child to review the day’s lesson, and handouts with you. Discuss their feelings about the lesson, and any issues that may have come up for them that day in school.

Choose one or more of the following questions to start a conversation about feelings. It is helpful for you to first share your feelings, and then ask your child to share theirs.

1. What makes you feel very happy? Can you tell a story of a time when you made somebody else happy?
2. Everyone feels afraid sometimes, even grown-ups. Can you tell a story of a time when you felt very afraid?
3. What is one thing that you worry about a lot? Why do you worry about it? What is the best thing you can do when you’re worried?
4. What is one thing that makes you very angry? What do you do when you’re angry? Is this a good thing to do, or is there something else you could do when you’re angry?
5. What makes you sad? What is the saddest story you know? What makes you laugh the most? Why is that so funny?



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Student's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Briefly describe your discussion on feelings _____

Was this lesson helpful? Yes/ No

Please explain _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____



Raffle Entry

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Student's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____

School: _____ Grade 3

Please complete this sheet and return to LYCS, PO Box 822, Livingston, NJ 07039,
Fax: 973-992-9318, email: lycs@livingston.org, or leave at reception in school