

# Enhancing Father's Outcomes: A Parental Awareness and Skills Curriculum

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Acceptance: What does it teach us? Why do we fight it?</b>	<i>-Our problems have more to do with the crisis inside us than the conflict in front of us.</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discuss/review group dynamics and rules for members.</li> <li>-Getting to know each other through brief introductions.</li> <li>-Introduce topic: Acceptance</li> <li>-Practice acceptance techniques</li> </ul>	<b>Strategy:</b> Explore things we <i>choose</i> to accept and things we feel <i>forced</i> to accept.
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>Group Interaction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each participant ‘weighs-in’ with the group and shares their first name, reason for coming to the group, what they want to learn.</li> <li>• Therapist reviews the rules of group disclosure, confidentiality. Disruptions (interrupting, cell phones, food, profanity, racism)</li> <li>• Note that some topics can create difficult feelings.</li> <li>• Group members are asked to be aware of others who might be struggling with something and to be supportive.</li> <li>• Facilitator can also model a response: (e.g. ‘Help me understand what is going on’)</li> <li>• Saying a problem out loud actually reduces anxiety, lessens the power of an internal conflict, opens a discussion of support and solutions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Topic: Acceptance: Why fight it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator asks group members to name something that was difficult to accept in their own lives recently. Name a conflict over the past year.</li> </ul> <p><b>It has been difficult to accept</b> _____.</p> <p>(e.g. the loss of my job, my ‘x’ re-marrying, my mom’s illness)</p> <p><b>It has been good/easy to accept</b> _____.</p> <p>(e.g. being sober, changing a bad relationship, gaining my freedom)</p>	<p><b>Note to Facilitator:</b> Although this is a running group with topics that can be addressed in no particular order, it is important to recognize that <i>acceptance and change</i> are ‘where the wheels turn’. Most of us could guess acceptance and change are interconnected – whatever we do in our lives that involves growth, must involve change and acceptance. The issue for most of us is finding the proper balance of both. Change that feels “too much too fast” can lead to emotions like frustration, anxiety, anger, and fear. Accepting a situation that is unhealthy and needs to change (drug use, family violence) can lead to apathy, helplessness, isolation, depression and resentment.</p> <p><b>Talking Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work (losing a job, searching for one, dissatisfaction)</li> <li>• Family(illness, divorce, marriage, children)</li> <li>• Personal (relationship, moving, legal problems)</li> <li>• Probation (the system, personalities, fears)</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Role Play: Choose three participants-</b></p> <p><i>Client A:</i> It's all on me now..my 'x' wants payments for the kids and she won't even let me see them. I'm so screwed.</p> <p><i>Client B:</i> That sucks.</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> (to client B) Sounds like you sympathize with what he/she is going through. Say more about what 'sucks'.</p> <p><i>Client B:</i> Well there's nothing he can do. Nothing is ever good enough.</p> <p><i>Client A:</i> Yea, Everyone wants money I don't have. What's the point of making any; or even trying to get a job? Soon as I do, it's gone anyway.</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Sounds hard to accept, at least for now.</p> <p><i>Client A:</i> What do you mean?</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Feelings like anger, frustration and helplessness are hard to accept. But they are temporary.</p> <p><i>Client A:</i> No. She'll always hate me. It will always be like this.</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> That part is up to her. Not in your control. But how you feel about it is up to you?</p>	<p><b>Discussion Point:</b></p> <p>Accepting certain problems and certain feelings as 'temporary', keeps them from controlling the rest of our day or our lives for that matter. In fact, it helps us control the negative emotions that surround it. It is often the first step in a finding a solution.</p>
<p><b>Active Learning</b></p>	<p><b>Transition: Facilitator guided moment of acceptance.</b></p> <p>Just for a moment  Close your eyes.  Take a deep breath  Clear your mind.  Now, think of the problem you spoke at the beginning of the session.  Accept this situation as how things are right now  Accept the feeling  Accept that it is 'temporary'.  You don't have all the answers  You don't need them right now  You will figure out what to do  Accept that there is a solution  Maybe it is a simple  As simple as  Changing your mind  Changing how you feel  Take another deep breath.  Open your eyes.</p>	<p><b>Visualization Technique:</b></p> <p>Sentences read in short even pulses. Use an easy tempo. Take note to watch the faces of the participants as they deal with feelings and internal conflict.</p>
<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p>	<p>Today, the use of our acceptance as a tool for change was talked about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can accept our problems as temporary.</li> <li>• We accept positive and negative things all the time.</li> <li>• Accept that some things are beyond our control.</li> </ul>	<p>The Last Word</p> <p>Acceptance is a powerful emotional tool.</p> <p>We tend accept things more easily if they match our deeper beliefs and attitudes.</p> <p>See you Next Week!</p>

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Beliefs: Where do they come from? Where are they leading us?</b>	<i>'Our beliefs are sometimes older than we care to remember.'</i>																											
<b>Goals</b>	-Discuss/review group dynamics and participation -Participants brief introductions. -Introduce concept of beliefs -Practice different kinds of beliefs	<b>Strategy:</b> Explore the importance of beliefs, where they come from and how they influence decision making.																											
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>Group Interaction: (optional review if good group continuity)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants share name, reason for coming, what they want to learn in the group</li> <li>• Therapist reviews the rules of group disclosure, confidentiality. Disruptions (interrupting, cell phones, food, profanity, sexism)</li> <li>• Note that some topics can bring up difficult feelings.</li> <li>• Group members are asked to be aware of others who might be struggling with something and to be supportive.</li> <li>• Facilitator models typical group response. (e.g. 'I know what that feels like...').</li> </ul> <p><b>Topic: Discovering Beliefs</b>          What to believe - Money, Job, Family, Relationships          (No more than a one/two word response)</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Beliefs about \$</b></th> <th><b>Taught By</b></th> <th><b>Strength (1-5)</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hard work</td> <td>Father</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never enough</td> <td>Spouse</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Root of all evil</td> <td>Church/Pastor</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can't buy love</td> <td>The Beetles</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Love Beliefs</b></th> <th><b>Taught by</b></th> <th><b>Strength (1-5)</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dangerous</td> <td>Spouse</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overwhelming</td> <td>g-friend</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commitment</td> <td>Grandparents</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Get the Idea?</i></p> <p><b>Basic Beliefs:</b>          What happens when our basic beliefs are extreme?          (mostly positive or negative)</p> <p><b>Have group vote on the following statements:</b>          Most people are liars/tell the truth</p>	<b>Beliefs about \$</b>	<b>Taught By</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>	Hard work	Father	4	Never enough	Spouse	3	Root of all evil	Church/Pastor	5	Can't buy love	The Beetles	2	<b>Love Beliefs</b>	<b>Taught by</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>	Dangerous	Spouse	3	Overwhelming	g-friend	2	Commitment	Grandparents	5	<p><b>Note to Facilitator:</b>          So many things influence our attitudes and beliefs. Culture, gender, institutions (work and religion), close relationships (Parents, Spouse), even our biology has programmed us to believe certain ways. What is so interesting is that we often select intimate partners on the basis of common attitudes and values. Yet, we may find that even the people closest to us sometimes don't share all our basic beliefs. Putting the past to work, we can find out where some of our beliefs come from. This exercise creates a tolerance for the beliefs of others. From simple attitudes about work, kids or relationships-to bigger beliefs about spirituality and life.</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Set-up columns/headings</li> <li>2) Have group pick a topic (\$, sex, family, jobs)</li> <li>3) Record each member's short responses in columns</li> </ol> <p><b>Be sure to mention:</b>          No need to justify beliefs. Not for us to judge.          For personal insight and group understanding.</p> <p><b>Talking Point:</b>          We rely on our beliefs to tell us how we feel about life situations. Sometimes our belief is unclear, unreliable.</p> <p>-Picture a three legged table          If we lean on it... We just might tumble. Many times our beliefs, planted in childhood and readily</p>
<b>Beliefs about \$</b>	<b>Taught By</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>																											
Hard work	Father	4																											
Never enough	Spouse	3																											
Root of all evil	Church/Pastor	5																											
Can't buy love	The Beetles	2																											
<b>Love Beliefs</b>	<b>Taught by</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>																											
Dangerous	Spouse	3																											
Overwhelming	g-friend	2																											
Commitment	Grandparents	5																											

	<p>My family is healthy/messed-up. Relationships work out mostly/ hardly Forgiveness is a strength/weakness. Men are kind/insensitive Women are nurturing/controlling</p> <p>How does this affect our attitudes toward life in general?</p>	<p>accepted into adult hood, are just as unstable.</p>
<p><b>Active Learning</b></p>	<p><b>Transition: Beliefs in conflict</b></p> <p>Exercise: The Alligator River Story: Jasmine lived on a river bank. She was married and had two children. She fell in love with Raul who lived across the river. Although she loved her family, she couldn't help her feelings for Raul and one day they set a meeting. Raul hired a riverboat captain to take her across Alligator river. Half way across the dangerous river, the captain asked Jasmine to have sex with her. She refused and he told her if she didn't, he would throw her into the river. Jasmine did not know if he would hurt her or not, so she consented. When she reached Raul safely, she told him what had happened. Raul told her he never wanted to see her again. Jasmine felt t hat Raul had betrayed her. When she returned home, she told her brother, Nigel, what the captain had done and what Raul had said to break her heart. Nigel went to Raul's house and physically attacked him; injuring him seriously. Jasmine laughed when she found that Nigel had avenged her.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Points:</b></p> <p>Who was the hero of the story?</p> <p>Who was the offender in the story?</p> <p>Who was the biggest victim?</p> <p>With which character did you most identify with?</p>
<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p>	<p>What did we find out about beliefs today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Some are stronger than others.</li> <li>-We <i>learn them</i> from different people/places.</li> <li>-Some are positive and others negative.</li> <li>-Some are strong, others seem changeable.</li> </ul>	<p>The Last Words:</p> <p>Today, we learned about each other's beliefs.</p> <p>Our deepest beliefs were handed to us as kids.</p> <p>These beliefs often frame how we do our adult lives.</p> <p>We became a little more aware of how beliefs have affected our current life situations.</p> <p>See You Next Week!</p>

<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Accountability: Is it like Responsibility?</b>	<i>“It’s not hard to do the right thing. What is difficult is determining what the right thing is. However, once we really know what is right, The hardest thing...is <u>not</u> to do it.</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discuss/review group dynamics and developing participation in group</li> <li>-Participants get to know each other through brief introductions.</li> <li>-Introduce Emotions</li> </ul>	<b>Strategy:</b> Differentiate between: Being accountable- Counting on ourselves. Being responsible- Others counting on us.
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>Group Interaction: (optional review if good group continuity)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants share name, reason for coming, what they want to learn in the group</li> <li>• Therapist reviews the rules of group disclosure, confidentiality. Disruptions (interrupting, cell phones, food, profanity, sexism)</li> <li>• Note that some topics can create difficult feelings.</li> <li>• Group members are asked to be aware of others who might be struggling with something and to be supportive.</li> <li>• Facilitator can also model a response. (The last time I felt that confused, talking about it helped)</li> <li>• Saying your problem out loud in group - reduces anxiety, lessens the power of conflict, opens a discussion of support/solutions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability: How we avoid it-</b>          Before we look at accountable behaviors, let’s explore some old familiar ways of avoiding the right thing to do.</p> <p><b>Unfair fighting tactics:</b>  <i>Blaming</i> - If you weren’t so ____, then I wouldn’t ____!  <i>Defending</i> –I’m not a bad person. You always blame me!  <i>Justifying</i> – You hurt me first. You started it; I finished it!  <i>Dismissing</i> – I don’t care what you think!  <i>Aggressive</i> – I’m going to smack you if you don’t shut up!  <i>Passive Aggressive</i> - I guess you can’t trust me then!  <i>Manipulative</i>- Just leave me. Everyone else does.  <i>Minimizing</i>- You’re not that hurt....</p>	<p><b>Note to Facilitator:</b>          Let’s be honest. <b>Accountability is not fun. It is equal parts shame, empathy and responsibility. Often we can get caught in a wrestling match between feeling guilty and feeling angry. This struggle really gets in the way of acting responsibly. When shame is too strong, it shuts your empathy down. In a way, we can’t even feel our impact on another person. In this state of mind, we often won’t change our own behavior and could even hurt someone else. It is not surprising that low levels of accountability can lead to trying to blame or control others in order to feel better ourselves.</b></p> <p><b>Instructions:</b>          Group members review the unfair fighting tactics, or, what <u>not to do</u> when being accountable.</p> <p><b>Other Distortions:</b>          You’re not perfect either! You’re not that hurt!          What about what you did! You brought it on yourself! That’s what you get for...          Pissing me off!          Being Stupid!          Mouthing Off!</p>
<b>Active Learning</b>	<b>Accountability –3 Steps</b> 1) Tell on yourself.	<b>Materials:</b> White Board

- 2) Listen to what the other person feels?  
(sad, disappointed, angry, withdrawn)
- 3) Say back to the person that you understand how they feel and you'd like to help find a solution.

**Thought-Feeling-Accountability Exercise:**

Conflict	Feeling	Hot Spot	Accountable 3-steps
Argument with boss over a mistake.	Frustrated Accused, Ashamed, Angry	Screw this... I quit!	1) Yes, I made a mistake. 2) I hear you.. You're upset/ disappointed 3) I'll do what I can to fix it, it matters to me too.
Conflict over \$ with spouse	Undervalued Controlled Selfish Helpless	I'll do Whatever I want with my \$	1) I know \$ is tight. 2) Sometimes we are going to disagree w/ each other. 3) I think we can figure this out together.

**Now:**

Using a group member's situation, fill out the table above.

What are some irresponsible behaviors that could come from 'standing on a hot spot'?

What are some responsible behaviors/outcomes from using the 3-steps to accountability?

Dry Erase Markers  
Red –Hot Thoughts/ Feelings  
Blue-Accountable Steps

**Instructions:**

- 1) Draw Table with four columns.
- 2) Use example to explain table.
- 3) Use a group member's example from the week.
- 4) Discuss outcome of group member's conflict.
- 5) Discuss outcome if they would have done accountability steps.

**Talking Points:**

The key to getting out of the 'hot spot' is to go back to the feelings list and try to replace it with something more negotiable. Anger or helplessness are things that we can feel, but they are temporary. Better to wait for these feelings to shift (Frustration, feeling undervalued). These feelings carry better information. Then make better decisions.

**Wrap-up**

Discuss:

- Accountability happens mostly inside us.
- There is a simple 3-step process to accountability
- Responsibility is how we act 'under the influence' of Accountability.

The Last Word:

In being accountable we set aside strong emotions.  
We turn-off unfair fighting tactics.  
We give ourselves the chance to act responsibly.

<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Emotions: Can we really choose how to feel?</b>																												
<b>Goals</b>	-Discuss/review group dynamics and participation -Participants brief introductions. -Introduce concept of beliefs -Practice different kinds of beliefs	<b>Strategy:</b> Explore the importance of beliefs, where they come from and how they influence decision making.																											
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>Group Interaction: (optional review if good group continuity)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants share name, reason for coming, what they want to learn in the group</li> <li>• Therapist reviews the rules of group disclosure, confidentiality. Disruptions (interrupting, cell phones, food, profanity, sexism)</li> <li>• Note that some topics can bring up difficult feelings.</li> <li>• Group members are asked to be aware of others who might be struggling with something and to be supportive.</li> <li>• Facilitator modeled response. (e.g. ‘I know what that feels like).</li> </ul> <p><b>Topic: Discovering Beliefs</b>          What to believe - Money, Job, Family, Relationships          (No more than a one/two word response)</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Beliefs about \$</b></th> <th><b>Taught By</b></th> <th><b>Strength (1-5)</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hard work</td> <td>Father</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never enough</td> <td>Spouse</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Root of all evil</td> <td>Church/Pastor</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can't buy love</td> <td>The Beetles</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Love Beliefs</b></th> <th><b>Taught by</b></th> <th><b>Strength (1-5)</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dangerous</td> <td>Spouse</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intense</td> <td>g-friend</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commitment</td> <td>Grandparents</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Get the Idea?</i></p> <p><b>Basic Beliefs:</b>          What happens when our basic beliefs are extreme?          (mostly positive or negative)</p>	<b>Beliefs about \$</b>	<b>Taught By</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>	Hard work	Father	4	Never enough	Spouse	3	Root of all evil	Church/Pastor	5	Can't buy love	The Beetles	2	<b>Love Beliefs</b>	<b>Taught by</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>	Dangerous	Spouse	3	Intense	g-friend	2	Commitment	Grandparents	5	<p><b>Note to Facilitator:</b></p> <p><b>Materials:</b>          White board          Dry erase marker</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b>          1) Set-up columns/headings          2) Have group pick a topic (\$, sex, family, jobs)          3) Record each member's short responses in columns</p> <p><b>Be sure to mention:</b>          No need to justify beliefs. Not for us to judge.          For personal insight and group understanding.</p> <p><b>Talking Point:</b>          We rely on our beliefs to tell us how we feel about life situations. Sometimes our belief is unsteady.</p> <p>-Picture a three legged table          If we lean on it....We might just tumble.</p>
<b>Beliefs about \$</b>	<b>Taught By</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>																											
Hard work	Father	4																											
Never enough	Spouse	3																											
Root of all evil	Church/Pastor	5																											
Can't buy love	The Beetles	2																											
<b>Love Beliefs</b>	<b>Taught by</b>	<b>Strength (1-5)</b>																											
Dangerous	Spouse	3																											
Intense	g-friend	2																											
Commitment	Grandparents	5																											

	<p><b>Have group vote on the following statements:</b></p> <p>Most people are liars/tell the truth  My family is healthy/messed-up.  Relationships work out mostly/ hardly  Forgiveness is a strength/weakness.  Men are kind/insensitive  Women are nurturing/controlling</p> <p>How does this affect our attitudes toward life in general?</p>	
<p><b>Active Learning</b></p>	<p><b>Transition: Beliefs in conflict</b></p> <p>Exercise: The Alligator River Story:  Jasmine lived on a river bank. She was married and had two children. She fell in love with Raul who lived across the river. Although she loved her family, she couldn't help her feelings for Raul and one day they set a meeting. Raul hired a riverboat captain to take her across Alligator river. Half way across the dangerous river, the captain asked Jasmine to have sex with her. She refused and he told her if she didn't, he would throw her into the river. Jasmine did not know if he would hurt her or not, so she consented. When she reached Raul safely, she told him what had happened. Raul told her he never wanted to see her again. Jasmine felt that Raul had betrayed her. When she returned home, she told her brother, Nigel, what the captain had done and what Raul had said to break her heart. Nigel went to Raul's house and physically attacked him; injuring him seriously. Jasmine laughed when she found that Nigel had avenged her.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Points:</b></p> <p>Who was the hero of the story?  Who was the offender in the story?  Who was the biggest victim?  With which character did you most identify with?</p>
<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p>	<p>Discuss with group-  What did we find out about beliefs today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Some are stronger than others.</li> <li>-We <i>learn them</i> from different people/places.</li> <li>-Some are positive and others negative.</li> <li>-Some are strong, others seem changeable.</li> </ul>	<p>The Last Words:</p> <p>Today, we learned about each other's beliefs.</p> <p>Our deepest beliefs were handed to us as kids.</p> <p>These beliefs often frame how we do our adult lives.</p> <p>We became a little more aware of how beliefs have affected our current life situations.</p> <p>See You Next Week!</p>