



## Parenting Group Day One

This group is designed to help provide support and create a positive parenting experience. We will use the principles of ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) to guide us throughout the sessions. These worksheets are for your eyes only! In other words, try not to share these with your kids.

The following exercise is designed to find a better understanding of what some of our judgments and critiques you make about your child, and the effect these have on your relationship with them. How does it affect you and the relationship when you dwell or get caught up in those thoughts? Think back over the past few days. Write below some of the thoughts you had about what was wrong with your relationship with your child. For homework, you will take a few minutes to complete this exercise.

<b>Thoughts about what is wrong with my child or our relationship:</b>	<b>How does my mood change when I get “caught up” or dwell in these thoughts?</b>	<b>When I buy into or dwell on these thoughts, what effect does it have on my relationship with my child?</b>



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The following exercise was adapted from *ACT with Love* as a way to identify areas of “DRAIN” or disconnection, reactivity, avoidance, when you are inside your mind, or when you are neglecting your values as a caregiver.

### Identify the DRAIN in the Relationship (*ACT with Love*, Ch. 2)

**D-** Disconnection, **R-** Reactivity, **A-**Avoidance, **I** - Inside your mind, **N-** Neglecting Values

**Disconnection:** How do I disconnect from my child (E.g., Do I get irritated, walk away, start working, etc.)?

**Disconnection:** How does my child disconnect from me?

**Reactivity:** How do I react impulsive or automatically, without stopping to consider what I am doing (E.g., do I yell, snap, storm off, say hurtful things, use corporal punishment, etc.)?

**Reactivity:**How does my child react impulsively or automatically?

**Avoidance:** How do I try to avoid or get rid of my feelings that I feel about my child and our relationship (E.g., Do I withdraw or stay away from my child, distract myself with TV, etc.)?

**Avoidance:**How does my child seem to avoid or get rid of his or her feelings about me?



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**Inside Your Mind:** How do I get trapped inside my mind (E.g., do I worry about the future, dwell on the past, relive old incidents, etc.)?

**Inside Your Mind:** How does my child seem to get trapped inside his or her mind?

**Neglecting Values:** What core values do I neglect, forget about, or act inconsistently with, when I am disconnected, reactive, avoidant, or inside my mind (e.g., do I lose touch with my values such as being loving, kind, caring, compassionate, supportive, etc.)?

**Neglecting Values:** What core values does my child seem to neglect, forget about, or not act consistently with?

**What personal qualities do you admire about your child?**

**When you are happiest with your child, what are you doing together?**



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**What did your child do that made those times enjoyable or happy?**

**Describe one of the most enjoyable days you've ever had with your child, where were you, what did you do, how did you interact, what sorts of things did you say to each other?**

**What are some things you miss about when your child was younger?**

**What do you see are your child's greatest strengths?**

**Can you contact any sense of warmth or appreciation for your child?**

**What happens when you take time to reflect on his or her strengths and positive qualities? Do you see him or her differently?**



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**Do you find it hard to acknowledge his or her positive attributes because you are so focused on what he or she has done wrong?**

**Record any past events that may have led you to where you are with your relationship with your child (e.g., “She broke my grandmother’s necklace that was special to me,” “He hit me across the face, and it scared me,” etc.)**

**What feelings or painful emotions have some of the events caused? (focus on the deeper emotions, past anger or sad)**

**Acknowledge that the past events have been hurtful, and that you have been hurt by some of these events. Now, think about how your child may have been feeling during those events. Record how he or she may have been feeling due to the events that led to the emotional event. If he or she gets angry, think about how difficult that feeling is to manage. If she hurts someone, does she feel guilty, and is she carrying that guilt?**

**Imagine that it is Graduation Day, and your child is walking across the stage. What do you want him or her to say about their relationship with their parents?**

**What personal qualities about you might they include when describing your relationship?**



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**What strengths do you hope they develop as young adults?**

**How do you want your relationship to look at that age?**

**What 5 things would you most want your child to say about you?**