

40.

Rules and Consequences

OBJECTIVE: Participants practice working together to make decisions about money.

TIME: 10 - 15 minutes

MATERIALS:

Cut out the topics on the handout and place them in an envelope or basket out of which class members can pick the topics.

Six Guidelines for Making Rules Handout

NOTE TO TRAINER:

This exercise works well with adults and children together.

TALKING POINTS:

Rules are important to help hold the family together. Rules guide the family by putting the values of the family into action. They help people to know what to expect so they can count on each other. When parents clearly say what they want and expect in the family by making specific rules, everyone can cooperate more easily and feel more in control.

ACTIVITY:

Distribute the handout on *Rules and Consequences*, and briefly explain the six guidelines for making rules that work well.

Ask everyone to get into groups of three to five. Mix men with women and children with adults. Ask one person from each group to come and select a topic from the envelope.

Ask each group to develop at least three rules, stated in the positive, for their topic.

Ask groups to report back to the large group. Then ask them to develop one reward or positive consequence for each rule followed. Then have them develop one negative consequence for each rule not followed. Remind them that the focus is on getting the job done and that part of the consequence is always to get the job done. Get reports back.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Ask individuals to share any surprises or insights they had about what they did.

3. Adapted, with permission, from Survival Skills for Healthy Families, a family education program developed by Family Wellness Associates. Copyright George Doub 2001.

HANDOUT: Rules and Consequences

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ALLOWANCES | GAS LEVEL IN THE CAR |
| PEOPLE SELLING DOOR-TO-DOOR | BORROWING MONEY FROM OTHERS |
| SAVING MONEY | PLAYING THE LOTTERY |
| BUYING CANDY & SNACK FOODS | KEEPING TRACK OF CASH SPENT |

4. Adapted, with permission, from Better Together of The Marriage Coalition. Copyright The Marriage Coalition 2003.

HANDOUT: Six Guidelines For Making Rules

1. MAKE RULES FOR WHAT YOU WANT, NOT FOR WHAT YOU DON'T WANT. For example, instead of “If you don’t do your chores each week, you won’t get your allowance,” say, “After you finish your chores each week, you will get your allowance.”

2. MAKE THE RULES SPECIFIC. Rules that are too general are confusing and harder to follow and enforce. What does “Spend money wisely” really mean? Perhaps it is, “When buying anything above \$20, always comparison shop in at least two other stores.” A clear, specific rule is a map to follow. It tells people what behavior you do want.

3. FRAME THE CONSEQUENCE OF RULES IN THE POSITIVE. Note the negatively stated, then positively stated consequence in #1 above. Reward yourself and others for good behavior. Remember, the purpose of a consequence is to teach rather than just to punish. People are more likely to follow the rule next time if the whole experience is a pleasant one and not the source of another fight.

4. CHOOSE REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO ENFORCE. It’s okay to take your time to decide on rewards and consequences. Consequences should be logical and reasonable outcomes of behavior. Consequences imposed in the heat of anger are usually the ones you won’t enforce or be able to live with; for example, “You’re grounded for a year!”

5. INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN IN MAKING RULES AND CONSEQUENCES WHEN APPROPRIATE. You will teach cooperation and thinking skills, and they will more likely follow the rules they helped make. Even young children can be encouraged to think about what rules are needed. Avoid doing this just after a child has broken a rule. Instead, do it at a family meeting. Parents need to reserve final say in the matter, but you can show your children that you will think about their points of view, and you can have some of the decisions reflect their wishes. This is where you teach them about trades and compromises, give and take.

6. TELL YOUR CHILDREN EACH RULE BEFORE THEY BREAK IT AND CHECK FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING. Say the rule, the reward for following it, and the consequence for not following it. Then, ask your children to say in their own words what you said.

5. Adapted, with permission, from Survival Skills for Healthy Families, a family education program developed by Family Wellness Associates. Copyright George Doub 2001.