



Session 6

Growing Together Through the Teenage Years

Handout Guide

Handout	Quantity Needed
Parent Surveys (feedback on the Keep Connected experience and how it has impacted them)	Licensed facilitators access a unique code for your group in the Feedback and Evaluation Resources section of the online Keep Connected Implementation Toolkit
Youth Surveys (feedback on the Keep Connected experience and how it has impacted them)	
Pit Stop Posters	1 copy of each poster
Family Handout 6.1 Main Ideas in the Keep Connected Workshops	1 per family
Family Handout 6.2 Your Relationship . . . When It's Time to Graduate	1 per family
Family Handout 6.3 Good Habits to Keep Connected Storyboard	1 per family
Family Handout 6.4a At-Home Activities Guide	1 per family
Family Handout 6.4b POST IT: Five Keys to Strong Family Relationships	1 per family
Family Handout 6.4c TALK ABOUT IT: Reflecting on Your Keep Connected Experience	1 per family
Family Handout 6.4d TRY IT: Family Meetings to Keep Connected	1 per family
Family Handout 6.4e TRY IT: Get Back on Track after Setbacks	1 per family



Main Ideas

Check two or three ideas that have stuck with you the most from Keep Connected.



- Kids do best when they have **strong relationships with parenting adults** through the teen years.
- But **those relationships change** through the teenage years.
- Five key actions help to keep these relationships strong.**



EXPRESS CARE

- All of us care** about each other in our families.
- It can be harder to express care as kids grow up. So we have to **find ways to adjust** so it works for everyone.
- Expressing care begins with **really listening to each other.**



SHARE POWER

- Sharing power can be hard** in family relationships. But it's important, particularly during the teen years.
- We **share power in different ways** for different issues.
- You can **turn power struggles into power sharing.**



PROVIDE SUPPORT



CHALLENGE GROWTH

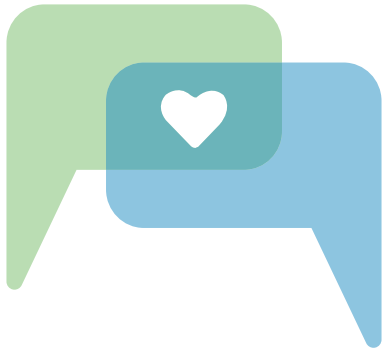
- In positive relationships, we **encourage each other** to grow in different parts of life so that we can each **be and become our best selves.**
- Challenge growth is best when it **focuses on someone's own goals or priorities**, not on things other people wish they would do.
- We grow most in the "Growth Zone."** That is we are stretched to grow, but also guided and supported so we can succeed.



EXPAND POSSIBILITIES

- As we grow up, **we discover new things about ourselves and each other.** We explore new ideas, have new experiences, and get to know people and cultures that are different from us.
- A great way to expand possibilities with each other is to **explore things you're curious about.**
- Having a **specific plan** to try new things can be a fun way to expand possibilities for each other.

Other Ideas: _____



Your Relationship

When it's time to graduate.

Think about what you've learned and experienced during Keep Connected...

...then think about what you'd like your relationship to be like when _____ is graduating from high school.

High School Graduate



Proud Parent

When your child graduates from high school, how do you hope you will:

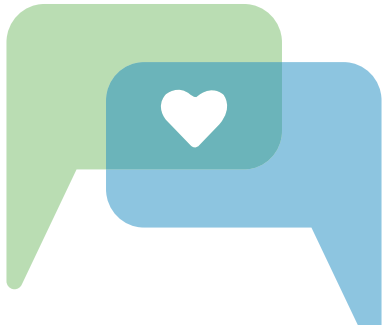
EXPRESS CARE with each other:

SHARE POWER with each other:

CHALLENGE GROWTH with each other:

PROVIDE SUPPORT with each other:

EXPAND POSSIBILITIES with each other:



At Home Activities

OVERVIEW: What Will Our Family Do?

If You Have:	Materials	Activity Name	Description	When Will Your Family Do This?
1 minute	Family Handout 6.4b	Post It: Five Keys to Strong Family Relationships	Post this guide somewhere all family members will see it. The refrigerator is a great spot!	
5-30 minutes	Family Handout 6.4c	Talk About It: Reflecting on Your Keep Connected Experience	Discuss these questions as a family to reflect on your experiences in Keep Connected. If you don't have much time, discuss one question at a time whenever you have a few minutes - in line at the store or on a car ride. If you have more time, discuss all the questions at once - maybe over a shared family meal or during a family meeting. You can also put these questions on a sheet of paper in your home - each family member can write their answers to them throughout the week.	
10 minutes	Family Handout 6.4d	Try It: Family Meetings to Keep Focused and Connected	Family meetings were introduced in Session 3. They can be an important routine to maintain to keep connected and to stay focused on your commitment. If you haven't gotten into the habit of having them, try doing it now. If you already created a plan for family meetings, revisit this worksheet to see if there is anything your family would like to change about how you conduct your family meetings.	
5 - 15 minutes	Family Handout 6.4e	Try It: Get Back on Track after Setbacks	This family activity gives you a chance to reflect on obstacles that may have gotten your family off track on developing the "good habit" you committed to doing. Use it to build a new plan for staying on track.	
10 minutes	Internet-enabled device	Online exploration	Visit www.keepconnected.info to explore extra resources on family relationships.	



POST IT

5 Keys

to strong youth-parent relationships

Keep Connected is based on Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework, which is shown here. Each action can be done by both young people and adults in relationships. *Keep Connected* focuses on strengthening these kinds of relationships in families. In addition, other relationships also matter in young people's lives, including relationships with teachers, friends, youth leaders, mentors, and many others.

Elements

Actions

Definitions



EXPRESS
CARE

“Show me
that I matter
to you.”

- Be dependable
- Listen
- Believe in me
- Be warm
- Encourage

Be someone I can trust.
Really pay attention when we are together.
Make me feel known and valued.
Show me you enjoy being with me.
Praise me for my efforts and achievements.



SHARE
POWER

“Treat me with
respect & give
me a say.”

- Respect me
- Include me
- Collaborate
- Let me lead

Take me seriously and treat me fairly.
Involve me in decisions that affect me.
Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.
Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.



CHALLENGE
GROWTH

“Push me to keep
getting better.”

- Expect my best
- Stretch
- Hold me accountable
- Reflect on failures

Expect me to live up to my potential.
Push me to go further.
Insist I take responsibility for my actions.
Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.



PROVIDE
SUPPORT

“Help me
complete tasks
& achieve goals.”

- Navigate
- Empower
- Advocate
- Set boundaries

Guide me through hard situations and systems.
Build my confidence to take charge of my life.
Stand up for me when I need it.
Put in place limits that keep me on track.



EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES

“Connect me
with people &
places that broaden
my world.”

- Inspire
- Broaden horizons
- Connect

Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.
Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.
Introduce me to more people who can help
me grow.



Reflecting on Your Keep Connected Experience

These questions are designed to help you reflect back on the five keys to parent-youth relationships that you've discussed through the Keep Connected workshop series. As a family, talk about them as a way to solidify and build on your experience.



EXPRESS
CARE



SHARE
POWER



CHALLENGE
GROWTH



PROVIDE
SUPPORT



EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES

Pick questions that everyone is interested in. If one question doesn't grab you, try a different one.

ANOTHER IDEA

If you've gotten to know other families through Keep Connected, plan to get together soon to talk about these questions and share other ideas and stories.

1. Read through the descriptions of all five keys above. What is **one thing that most resonated with you about each key**?
2. What did you learn during these workshops that made you **really appreciate something about your family** that you hadn't thought about before?
3. Is there something you learned about during the workshop series that you would **like to learn more** about? How might you explore it further?
4. What are some things you hope we can **keep doing together** as a family to keep connected during middle school and high school?
5. Were there **other families** in the workshop that you'd like to stay connected to when the series is over? What could you do to make sure you stay connected?
6. Some of the best ways to keep connected are to **set some habits or routines that you do together**. These might include family meals, a family meeting, regular family outings, or regular get-togethers with friends. If you tried some of these things, which ones do you think would work best for your family?



TRY IT

Family Meetings to Keep Connected

Family meetings were introduced as a way to share power in session 3. They are also a good routine to keep connected after the workshop series. They also help you stay focused on your commitment—and other commitments you might make.

Use this worksheet to figure out what you want to do to get started with family meetings. (You can adjust it later, if needed.)

Why Have Family Meetings?

Family meetings can help your family:

- Stay connected & have fun.
- Practice sharing power.
- Plan & coordinate.
- Solve problems together.
- Reduce stress & conflict.

1. Why do you want to have family meetings?

Families have meetings for different reasons.

Here are some of them:

- Connect and enjoy time together
- Coordinate activities, schedules, homework, chores
- Honor their culture, heritage, or spiritual practices
- Learn together (and from each other)
- Plan for the future, such as holidays
- Solve problems together

Our top three reasons for having a family meeting right now are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. Who will participate?

Family meetings work best when **everyone in your household** is invited to participate. (Even young children like to be included.)

Most families find that it works best **not to force people to come**. Instead, work to make the meetings enjoyable so everyone wants to participate.

Who will be invited?

-
-
-
-

3. When, where, and how often will you meet?

- Family meetings should reduce stress. Most families start by trying to **meet weekly** so it becomes a habit.
- Find a time that works for everyone. If you can just get together for 10 minutes, start with that.
- Meet in an **enjoyable place**.

When:

Where:

How often:



TRY IT

4. What style of meeting works for your family?

Does your family work best with a clear structure and specific rules? Or is it better to be more flexible and relaxed? (If things always feel chaotic, it can help to have a clear plan.)

Our family will work best if meetings (pick one):

- Have clear rules and plan
- Are informal, relaxed

5. What will you do during your meetings?

Some things families like to do in their meetings include:

- Connect: Every meeting should begin and end with something meaningful and/or fun. This can include the “Highs and Lows” activity, a religious or cultural ritual, or a Talk About It question from the at-home activities.
- Learn: For example, do Keep Connected take-home activities or other activities from www.keepconnected.info.
- Coordinate: Sync up schedules, chores, and activities.
- Plan: Think about and plan upcoming activities, birthdays, or vacations.
- Solve problems: Everyone helps solve a problem the family faces together.

Our family meetings will include the following topics (start with 2-3 things, then add if you like):

- Connect & celebrate
- Religious or cultural practice
- Coordinate schedules
- Plan upcoming activities
- Learn together
- Solve problems
- Other _____



TRY IT

6. How will you share power in your meetings?

Here are examples of how to practice each part of sharing power in your family meetings:

- **Be respectful:** Give everyone a chance to talk. Pay attention when they are talking. Take their concerns and opinions seriously.
- **Include me:** Have everyone be part of decisions that affect them.
- **Collaborate:** Instead of blaming each other, work together to solve problems.
- **Let me lead:** Give each person a chance to make decisions and take the lead during meetings. This might include rotating who leads each meeting.

What will your family do?

To be respectful?

To include everyone?

To collaborate?

To let everyone lead?

7. How will you keep track of what you do and decide?

Decide how your family will do the following. Keep track of who is responsible for each action.

1. **Keep track:** Write down the decisions you made so you can check them later. Some families post decisions on their refrigerator as a reminder.
2. **Sync calendars:** Talk about what's on everyone's agenda. Make sure the things you agree to are on calendars.
3. **Set future topics:** Some families post a sheet labeled "Agenda" on the refrigerator. Any family member can add topics when they think of them.

Keep track:

How?

Who?

Sync schedules:

How?

Who?

Set future topics:

How?

Who?



TRY IT

Get Back on Track After Setbacks

Common Obstacles to Maintaining Good Habits:

- Distractions
- Other priorities
- No time
- Too hard
- Forgetting
- Conflicts

You're going to have setbacks in your efforts to keep connected as a family. Other things will distract you. Conflicts will make it less fun to be together. You might just get bored or lose interest.

Bring your family together for a family meeting. Check in with highs and lows. Then use this worksheet to "diagnose" where you are and what you might do to reconnect and get back on track.

Steps:

1. Write on a sheet of plain paper your commitment to keep connected (from Session 6). Confirm that the commitment is something that people still believe is important and valuable to them. (If it's not, that may be the issue. You'd want to come up with a different focus then.)
2. Give each person 2-3 objects (pebbles, checkers, dominoes, buttons, or wooden blocks) that can symbolize obstacles to maintaining your commitment to keep connected.
3. Say that we're not going to point fingers or blame people for losing the focus on our commitment. Rather, we're going to figure out what obstacles got in the way. Then we'll figure out new ways to overcome them.
4. Have people brainstorm some of the barriers that came up. As people identify these barriers, have them place an object on top of the sheet of paper. Decide if they fit one of the common categories of barriers (box on right) to maintaining good habits.
5. When people run out of obstacles they can think of, notice how much harder it is to keep the commitment (written on the paper) in front of you.
6. Decide together which are the main 2-3 obstacles that get in the way. Identify specific things you'll try to overcome these obstacles. Write them down, and build a plan for doing them. In particular, focus on things you can do this time that you haven't tried before.
7. Set a time to come back (in about a week or two) to see how it's going.