



In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth

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In addition to this facilitator guide, you will need the following to lead these sessions:

- The accompanying **PowerPoint deck**.
- Participant handouts, which are in a separate **Family Workbook**, which families should receive in advance of the series. It includes material for the whole workshop series.
- Materials for the **Keep Connected Pledge and Plan** are provided separately. Four options are provided, depending on the project your organization selects. Families should be provided with the guide and materials for the project your organization has selected.

Overview

This *Keep Connected* workshop focuses on **challenging growth and providing support in families** (the third and fourth of the five keys to strong parenting adult-youth relationships). Both youth and parenting adults explore the areas in which they challenge each other to grow, where they need support from—and give support to—each other. They will learn about practical ways to work in the “Growth Zone” that can motivate them to stretch and learn in order to achieve goals together.

Learning Objectives

Participants will . . .

- Examine where it is **easy and hard to balance challenging each other to grow and providing support**.
- Understand challenge growth works best when it **focuses on someone’s own goals or priorities**, not on things other people wish they would do.
- **Learn about the Growth Zone**, the intersection of Challenge Growth and Provide Support where youth and parenting adults are challenged enough to be motivated and also guided and supported to succeed.
- Explore how they can **challenge and support each other around a “hard thing”** that each person wants to work on.
- **Commit to at least one activity** they will do together to practice Challenging Growth before the next session.

Activities at a Glance

Session 3

In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth

Total
Time:
**60
minutes**

Parenting Adult Session (30 minutes)	
1. Launch Your Meeting Platform	10-15 min <small>before session</small>
2. Welcome and Introductions	3 min
3. Highs and Lows	8 min
4. The Goldilocks Problem: Challenging Growth and Providing Support	8 min
5. The Challenge of Challenging Growth and Providing Support	9 min
6. Transition to the Family Session	2 min
Youth Session (30 minutes)	
1. Launch Your Meeting Platform	10-15 min <small>before session</small>
2. Welcome and Introductions	2 min
3. Highs and Lows	7 min
4. Tic-Tac-Toe: Too Hard, Too Easy, Just Right	10 min
5. Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!	10 min
6. Transition to the Family Session	2 min
Family Session (Youth and Parenting Adults Together) (30 minutes)	
1. Families Reconnecting	3 min
2. Exploring the Growth Zone	10 min
3. Challenging Growth and Providing Support Around a “Hard Thing”	10 min
4. Keep Connected Between Sessions	5 min
5. Wrap Up	2 min

Facilitator Planning Worksheet

Use this set of worksheets to prepare for leading the sessions. Take notes that help you remember how you want to approach each section. Add notes for local contextual information or stories. Use this to make the sessions really work for you. Eventually, you will be able to lead the session with just these notes and the slides.

Activity	Facilitator Notes	Materials, Slides, Handouts, and Tech	Time Needed/ Est. Start Time
PARENTING ADULT SESSION			
<p>1 PRE-SESSION: Launch the Platform</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Set the stage for building relationships; confirm everyone’s tech.</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Relaxed, informal conversation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webinar platform (e.g., Zoom) SLIDE #2 	10 – 15 minutes before start time
<p>2 Welcome and Introductions</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Help participants relax and begin to get to know each other.</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Ice-breaker discussion</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLIDE #3, #4, #5 	3 min
<p>3 Highs and Lows</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To connect with each other through their experiences of the week</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Individual sharing</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLIDE #6 	8 min
<p>4 The Goldilocks Problem: Challenging Growth and Providing Support</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Identify priorities for parenting adults in where they seek to challenge growth and provide support</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Mapping goal areas based on how parents approach them with challenge and support</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLIDE #7, #8 Handout 4.1 	8 min
<p>5 The Challenge of Challenging Growth and Providing Support</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Share key information on the topic</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Brief presentation and whole-group discussion</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLIDE #9, #10, #11 Handouts 4.2, 4.3 	9 min
<p>6 Transition to the Family Session</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To integrate with youth</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Informal</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLIDE #12 	2 min

Activity	Facilitator Notes	Materials, Slides, Handouts, and Tech	Time Needed/ Est. Start Time
YOUTH SESSION			
<p>1 PRE-SESSION: Launch the Platform</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Set the stage for building relationships; confirm everyone’s tech.</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Relaxed, informal conversation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar platform (e.g., Zoom) □ SLIDE #14 	10 – 15 minutes before start time
<p>2 Welcome and Introductions</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Help participants relax and begin to get to know each other.</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Ice-breaker discussion</p>		□ SLIDE #15, #16, #17	2 min
<p>3 Highs and Lows</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To connect with each other through their experiences of the week</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Individual sharing</p>		□ SLIDE #18	7 min
<p>4 Tic-Tac-Toe: Too Hard, Too Easy, Just Right</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To experience the different levels of motivation based on the level of challenge they experience in an activity.</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Play online game with different challenge levels</p>		□ Access https://freetictactoe.com	10 min
<p>5 Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To reflect on (and thank) those who have provided a balance of support and challenge</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Create mini-posters that say “thanks!”</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLIDE #19, #20 • Access http://poster-gen.com/poster-generators 	10 min
<p>6 Transition to the Family Session</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Integrate youth and parenting adults</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Informal discussion</p>		• SLIDE #21	2 min

Activity	Facilitator Notes	Materials, Slides, Handouts, and Tech	Time Needed/ Est. Start Time
FAMILY SESSION			
<p>Families Reconnecting</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Share insights from the separate sessions (especially youth posters)</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Share youth posters; discussion</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide #24 with Youth posters integrated 	3 min
<p>Exploring the Growth Zone</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To introduce the “growth zone” concept to families</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Brief presentation, discussion, and worksheet</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide #25 • Handout 3.4 	10 min
<p>Challenging Growth Around a “Hard Thing”</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Focus on one area where each family needs others to challenge growth</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Craft activity to support personal sharing and commitments</p>		<p>In family kits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber bands • Permanent markers 	10 min
<p>Keep Connected Between Sessions</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Introduce the activities to be completed between sessions</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Families select activities to do</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLIDE #26, #27 • Handout #3.5 	5 min
<p>Wrap-Up</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> Introduce the next session and confirm the logistics.</p> <p><u>Method:</u> Brief send-off</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLIDE #28 	2 min

Follow Up to the Session

- Within one day of completing the session, **give Search Institute feedback**. You will receive a \$5 gift card for each feedback survey you complete. [Here is the link.](#)
- Send the poster each young person created** from “Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!” to their parenting adult.
- Send a text message or an email** in a few days to participants. Thank them for coming. Remind them about the Family Pledge and Plan to Keep Connected (to be completed by the next session), the follow-up activities, and the next session.
- Set yourself a schedule for preparing for the next session.**

Preparation Before the Session

1. Prepare to Facilitate the Session

- a. Read all the way through the session carefully so you understand the full flow, the goals, and all the activities and elements. Imagine the families you will be with and how they will respond to the session.
- b. Carefully review the session, taking notes that will help you remember each section and how you will facilitate it. Flag sections you want to emphasize or refine based on the interests and needs of the families participating.
- c. Review all the slides to be sure they maintained formatting on your computer. Adjust them as needed.
- d. Gather all the supplies you need.

2. Prepare the **interactive features** for the session or plan for alternatives (some of which are listed below).

- a. Confirm that SLIDE #8 includes the areas of life where people may have goals or talents. Adjust it to fit the families in your group or your program goals.
- b. Be sure you know how to use (and explain) the [ANNOTATION feature¹](#) in ZOOM for the Parenting Adult session (activity #2). As alternatives, you could:
 - Set up a Zoom White Board or Google Doc, or another program that allows you to create a table with three options for each category. Have parents put a mark in the appropriate column for each. (These may feel more complicated to parents who have not used technology as much.)
 - Have families send in chat the number of the row of the topics they feel each way about. So, you might first ask: Which topics do you tend to be high on challenging growth but low on support. Put the number of those topics in the chat. (Participants would then type, for example, “1, 3, 4.” Then you would ask, “What topics do you tend to be high on providing support, but low on challenging growth?” etc.
 - Set up three polls that ask each question separately, like the first alternative. (If you have more sophisticated polling software, you could ask multiple choice questions about the items.)
- c. Be sure you know how to use [the Breakout rooms²](#) for the Parenting Adult Session.

¹ More information on Annotations: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005706806-Using-annotation-tools-on-a-shared-screen-or-whiteboard#h_b125534d-7755-4b66-859d-9120cf22abaa

² More information on Breakout Rooms: <https://blog.zoom.us/using-zoom-breakout-rooms/>

- d. Try out the **online Tic-Tac-Toe game** on <https://freetictactoe.com> for the youth session. Be sure you're comfortable guiding youth in using the site for the activity.
 - e. Test the PosterGen site (<http://postergen.com/poster-generators>) site for the youth session. It sometimes gets busy and will not create the posters. The session design includes an alternative option, so if you test it and discover that it is slow, consider jumping immediately to the alternative, rather than spending session time trying to figure out the poster generator.
3. **Connect with families** (via text, phone, or email, depending on their preferences):
- a. See how they're doing. Follow up on anything significant that you know was happening in their lives. Share something you're excited about personally. Take a minute first to connect.
 - b. Confirm their participation.
 - c. Be sure they have their Keep Connected materials, including the Family Workbook and the Keep Connected Pledge and Plan for Families (aligned with the pledge activity you are using). If they don't, arrange for them to get what they need before the session.
 - d. Encourage them to watch these two short videos, which focus on the two keys to strong relationships in advance of the session:
 - "Challenge Growth" video www.KeepConnected.info/challenge-growth
 - "Provide Support" video www.KeepConnected.info/provide-support
4. **Do a dry run** through the session with your co-facilitator. Talk through any potential logistical snags and what you plan to do about them. Finalize your plans in advance of the session so you can **be fully present** as families log in for the session.
5. **Check your technology** to be sure everything works several hours before you are scheduled to begin.

Parenting Adult Session

1. Launch Your Meeting Platform (e.g., Zoom)

10 to 15 minutes before the start time

- a. As parenting adults sign in to the online meeting, greet them individually. Thank them for joining and participating.
- b. As others are joining, display SLIDE #2, which shows these conversation-starter questions:
 - If you could enter and win a competition, what competition would it be? (It doesn't have to be realistic!) What would you most enjoy about it?
 - What is one of the biggest goals that you or someone else in your extended family (now or in the past) has worked hard to meet? How did others support them?

Don't require people to answer, but encourage light-hearted conversation.

- c. Confirm that parenting adults have their workbook with them that you distributed previously. If needed (and it's possible), offer to send what they need for the session via email or as an attachment in the chat program or elsewhere in your webinar or conferencing platform.

2. Welcome and Introductions

3 minutes

- a. Display SLIDE #3. **Welcome participants** to the session. Introduce yourself briefly. Thank everyone for coming to the session, which focuses on ways we challenge each other to grow in our families and support them while they grow.
- b. Show SLIDE #4. Have participants **introduce themselves** by sharing their first name and then adding something they are really good at doing as the second name. (If they can alliterate, even better!) For example:
 - Marie "Machine work"
 - Bert "Baking"
 - Sandra "Socializing"
- c. Show SLIDE #5 of the **group expectations** that everyone agreed to in the first session. Ask parenting adults to reaffirm these ground rules for today's session.

3. Highs and Lows

8 minutes

- a. Remind parenting adults of the “Highs and Lows” activity from the previous session. Ask if anyone tried this activity with their family. How did it go?
- b. Remind them that each person is invited to share in one or two sentences a “**high**” and a “**low**” from the past week (SLIDE #6). But this week is going to be a bit different. Instead of a general “high” or “low,” we’ll each share the following:

- **High**—A goal (or something else you’re proud of) you met or made progress toward in the past week. It could be something serious, fun, or something you do every day. It could be personal, professional, or in parenting. For example, you might have made progress in being patient with your child.
- **Low**—An area of life where you’re trying to improve, but where you aren’t making the progress you’d like. It might be, for example, cleaning or organizing something in their home, a fitness goal, or finishing a big project at work.

Important Notes

- If **serious issues** come up, offer to follow up after the session.
- If **someone starts to problem-solve or tell other stories**, gently say that these are really important conversations, and you hope people will support each other after the session. However, the group needs to honor the spirit of the activity, which is for all to share and learn from everyone.

- c. Explain that each person will share, but you’re **not going to problem-solve or get into long discussions**. If there’s something that needs to be talked about, you will ask people to hold it until after the session so that everyone can participate fully during this time.

- d. **If your group is larger than about 6 people, separate into smaller groups in breakout rooms. (See box.)** Otherwise, Highs and Lows can take much longer and be intimidating for some participants.

- e. After clarifying that everyone understands the process, give them time to **share their highs and lows with each other**. Model by going first. (*You are encouraged to participate fully in the session without dominating it.*)

- f. As each person shares, thank them and allow the group to briefly celebrate or offer support. Then move to the next person.

If You Have More than 6 People

If you have more than 6 participants, form smaller groups in breakout rooms of 4-5 people each for this activity (if you have the available technology). If you do split the groups, provide an extra reminder that this is not a time for problem solving to ensure that both groups keep focused without active facilitation. While the two groups are sharing separately, provide time updates every couple of minutes so they can stay on track. For example, you could say something like, “We’re about halfway through our time. If half of your group hasn’t shared yet, make sure you’re continuing to share *brief* descriptions of your highs and lows.”

- g. When everyone who wants to share has done so, thank them for their openness. If you went into breakout rooms, bring everyone back together. Ask people to give a “thumbs up” if they found Highs and Lows to be a meaningful activity. Say that the youth will be using this same practice in their session.

4. The Goldilocks Problem: Challenging Growth and Providing Support

8 minutes

- a. Introduce the themes for this session: **Challenge Growth and Provide Support**. Explain that these two elements often go hand-in-hand, so we’ll explore them together. Highlight the key ideas on SLIDE #7:
- In positive relationships, we **push each other** to grow in different parts of life so that we can each **be and become our best selves**.
 - When we push each other to grow, it’s also important to provide support in different ways. We support or help each other **in different ways as we grow up**.
 - Challenge growth is best when it **focuses on our own goals or priorities**, not on things other people wish they would do. (This isn’t about “fixing” other people.)
 - Providing support focuses on how we give practical help to each other in solving problems and achieving goals.
 - **We improve the most in the “Growth Zone,”** where we are stretched to learn and try new things, but are **also guided and supported** so we can succeed. The Growth Zone is the intersection between Challenge Growth and Provide Support. It’s like the fairy tale about Goldilocks and the breakfast pudding: You don’t want it too hot or too cold. You want it just right.
- b. Ask participants to reflect on how they were challenged and supported when they were young. Ask, “What was a time you had a goal when you were young? Who supported you and got the balance right between support and challenge?” Can they remember examples when the balance was off—too hot or too cold?

Encourage them to share their thoughts out loud or add them to the chat.

c. Display SLIDE #8, which shows 12 life areas where people may have goals and/or talents. They are also shown on Handout 4.1 in the Family Workbook. Explain that these are some areas where parents may both challenge growth and provide support, and some may struggle to get the balance right.

Focusing on Program Priorities

If different topics fit your program goals or your families better, you may substitute or add them.

d. Show parenting adults how to **use the ANNOTATION³** feature in Zoom (or alternative—see preparation section). Ask them to put a star, checkmark, or other symbol from the annotation feature in the box that best represents how they think they have dealt with each topic in their family. They can also use Handout 4.1 for their own reflection. They can also add other topics if they choose.

- Too Hot (high challenge, low support)
- Too Cold (high support, low challenge)
- Just Right (high challenge, high support)
- Hasn't Come Up (low support, low challenge).

NOTE: The focus is **NOT on whether they have rules** for each of these areas, such as setting limits for technology use. The focus is on children learning and growing to be their best in each area with support from their family.

e. Give everyone time to rate the different topics. Then together **identify and discuss any patterns that emerge.**

- 1) Are there certain areas where most parenting adults tend to challenge growth without providing as much support (too hot)?
- 2) Where they tend to provide support without challenge? (too cold)?
- 3) Where do they balance the two?

Invite one or two parenting adults to share why they may gravitate toward one or the other. What might be some of the differences that lead to different approaches?

f. Then have parenting adults go into BREAKOUT ROOMS⁴ in pairs (with one trio, if needed). Before they break, give their assignment: Each share one area where

³ How to [use annotations in Zoom](#).

⁴ More information: <https://blog.zoom.us/using-zoom-breakout-rooms/>

they are **good** at balancing challenge and support and one area where they tend to get off balance. What's different?

- g. Give 5 minutes, then bring everyone together. Ask groups each to share one insight about how they integrate challenge growth and provide support.

5. The Challenge of Challenging Growth and Providing Support

9 minutes

- a. Share key background information on the two keys for this session: Challenge Growth and Provide Support. You may do this in one of three ways:
 - 1) Ask parenting adults to find **Handouts 4.2 and 4.3** in their Family Workbook. Give them time to read through the handouts, read them aloud, or have different volunteers read aloud different parts. Confirm their understanding, and talk through any areas where they may have questions or differences of opinion.
 - 2) Review the points on Slides #9 and #10 (which review Handouts 4.2 and 4.3) with a brief presentation.
 - 3) **Show and briefly discuss Search Institute's videos on these two topics:**
 - "Challenge Growth" video www.KeepConnected.info/challenge-growth
 - "Provide Support" video www.KeepConnected.info/provide-support
- b. Then show SLIDE #11, which highlights key actions steps from Handouts 4.2 and 4.3. Ask parenting adults to brainstorm how they might **apply these strategies to the topics** you talked about earlier in the session.
- c. Conclude by saying that challenging growth and providing support are important parts of our responsibility as parenting adults. But a hard part about challenging growth and providing support is to know if you're pushing too hard or not hard enough, and if you're providing too much support or not enough. We'll focus on that in the family session, and you'll practice some strategies that can help challenge growth while providing support more effectively.



6. Transition to the Family Session

2 minutes

- a. Say that you'll next combine the session with the youth to talk together about challenging growth and providing support in ways that respect parenting adults' perspectives as well as kids' perspectives, focusing on what we call "The Growth Zone," which is that "Goldilocks" place of not too hot and not too cold.
- b. Remind parenting adults of the logistics. Then make the transition, showing SLIDE #12, if you wish.

Youth Session

1. Launch Your Meeting Platform (e.g., Zoom) 10 to 15 minutes before start time

- a. As youth sign in online, greet them individually. Thank them for joining and participating.
- b. Display SLIDE #14, which shows these conversation-starter questions, and invite youth to answer the discussion-starter questions. Feel free to jump in, too:
 - If you could enter and win a competition, what competition would it be? (It doesn't have to be realistic!) What would you most enjoy about it?
 - What is one of the biggest goals that you or someone else in your extended family (now or in the past) has worked hard to meet? How did others support them?

Don't require people to answer, but encourage light-hearted conversation.

- c. If they haven't done so already, encourage everyone to **be sure their name is shown on the screen** and that their **camera is on** so everyone can see each other. Unless they have a lot of background noise, ask them to **keep their microphone on** (not on mute) to make for a more natural conversation.

2. Welcome and Introductions **2 minutes**

- a. Welcome the youth to the session, and show SLIDE #15 to introduce the session ("In the Zone: Challenge and Support Growth") and the two keys to youth-parent relationships: Challenge Growth and Provide Support.
- d. Show SLIDE #16. Have participants **introduce themselves** by sharing their first name and then adding something they are really good at doing (or something they really enjoy) as the second name. (If they can alliterate, even better!) For example:
 - Marie "Math"
 - Bert "Band"
 - Sandra "Socializing"
- b. Show SLIDE #17 of the group expectations that the youth created during the first session. Ask youth to reaffirm these ground rules for today's session.

3. Highs and Lows

7 minutes

a. Remind youth of the “Highs and Lows” activity from the previous session. Each person is invited to share in one or two sentences a “**high**” and a “**low**” from the past week (SLIDE #18). But this week is going to be a bit different. Instead of a general “high” or “low,” we’ll each share the following:

- **High**—A goal (or something else you’re proud of) you met or made progress toward in the past week. It could be something serious, fun, or something you do every day. It could be personal, professional, or in parenting. For example, you might have made progress on a school project. Who is someone that has supported you in reaching this goal or making progress?
- **Low**—An area of life where you’re trying to improve, but where you aren’t making the progress you’d like. It might be, for example, improving your free-throw shot in basketball or finishing your homework before dinner time. Who is someone you can turn to for support as you try to make progress?

b. Explain that each person will share, but you’re **not going to problem-solve or get into long discussions**. If there’s something that needs to be talked about, you will ask people to hold it until after the session so that everyone can participate fully during this time.

c. **If your group is larger than about 6 people, separate into smaller groups in breakout rooms. (See box.)** Otherwise, Highs and Lows can take much longer and be intimidating for some participants.

d. After clarifying that everyone understands the process, give them time to **share their highs and lows with each other**. Model by going first. (*You are encouraged to participate fully in the session without dominating it.*)

e. As each person shares, thank them and allow the group to briefly celebrate or offer support. Then move to the next person.

Important Notes

- If **serious issues** come up, offer to follow up after the session.
- If **someone starts to problem-solve or tell other stories**, gently say that these are really important conversations, and you hope people will support each other after the session. However, the group needs to honor the spirit of the activity, which is for all to share and learn from everyone.

If You Have More than 6 People

If you have more than 6 participants, form smaller groups in breakout rooms of 4-5 people each for this activity (if you have the available technology). If you do split the groups, provide an extra reminder that this is not a time for problem solving to ensure that both groups keep focused without active facilitation. While the two groups are sharing separately, provide time updates every couple of minutes so they can stay on track. For example, you could say something like, “We’re about halfway through our time. If half of your group hasn’t shared yet, make sure you’re continuing to share *brief* descriptions of your highs and lows.”

- f. When everyone who wants to share has done so, thank them for their openness. If you went into breakout rooms, bring everyone back together. Ask people to give a “thumbs up” if they found Highs and Lows to be a meaningful activity. Say that the parenting adults will be using this same activity in their session.

4. Tic-Tac-Toe: Too Hard, Too Easy, Just Right

10 minutes

- a. Have youth go to the **free online Tic-Tac-Toe game at <https://freetictactoe.com>**. (Put the link in the chat box so they can click on it. No one needs to register or pay for this site.) Each young person will play on their own against the computer, unless there is someone else on their computer with them. Then they can play together.
- b. Go to the site yourself to demonstrate, and switch your screen share to show this site. (You can change to full screen and change the sound using the gear in the upper right corner, if you wish.)
- c. Once all the youth have accessed the site, have them each **play the Tic-Tac-Toe game against the computer at the EASY level**. (It’s important to start with the easy level.) Play for 1 minute.
- d. Stop them after a minute. Ask what that was like for them. How did they feel as they were playing? Did they wish they could keep playing? Did they want to stop or keep going? Why?
- e. Then have them skip to the **EXPERT level and play that level** for a minute.
- f. Stop them after a minute. Ask what that was like for them. How did they feel as they were playing? Did they wish they could keep playing? Did they want to stop or keep going? Why?
- g. Then go to one of the levels in the middle, either MEDIUM or HARD. They can pick. Let them play for one minute.
- h. Stop them after a minute. Ask what that was like for them. How did they feel as they were playing? Did they wish they could keep playing? Did they want to stop or keep going? Why?
- i. Ask them to think about the three levels: Easy, Expert, and in between. What was their experience like at the different levels?
- j. Say something like: Obviously this was just a game. However, I wonder if we can learn some things about what motivates us from this activity. What might be

some of the **differences in how you were motivated** in these three different levels of Tic-Tac-Toe?

- k. What might have helped more as you were playing?
- l. As you're able, bring out these points, building on what youth say:
 - In the first level (easy), once you figured out the system, you **didn't really have to invest much energy in it**. It was easy to get bored. For most people that's not very motivating or helpful.
 - In the second round, the Expert Level, the challenge was **basically impossible** for most of us. It was easy to **get frustrated and give up**.
 - In the third round, most of us could figure out how to do better, which **motivated us**. But we didn't win all the time, so we weren't getting quickly bored. It was still a challenge, but it was doable.
 - In each case (particularly the harder ones), you might have had better luck if you had **someone else to give ideas** who had played this game a lot more than you had. Or maybe if there were more people playing together.

5. Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!

10 minutes

- a. Show SLIDE #19. Say that strong relationships involve people challenging us to work toward our goals and while also supporting us as we do so that we are able to stretch ourselves and achieve our goals. When it works well, we call it the **Growth Zone**, which we'll discuss more when we rejoin the parenting adults.
- b. Here are some parts of **challenging growth**:
 - Expecting each other to be their best.
 - Stretching each other to go further.
 - Holding each other accountable for our actions.
 - Helping each other learn from mistakes or setbacks.
- c. Some parts of **providing support** are:
 - Guiding each other through hard situations and systems.
 - Building each other's confidence to take charge of our lives.
 - Advocating or standing up for each other when we need it.
 - Setting boundaries and putting limits in place that keep us on track.
- d. Ask youth to think of some of their own goals and ways that the adult who is involved in *Keep Connected* with them has **helped them by both challenging and**

supporting them in reaching that goal. Show SLIDE #20 as an example. Have youth write a short, creative Thank You statement on paper that captures the three elements:

- Their goal
- How they provided support
- How they challenged growth

- e. Next, have youth go online to <http://postergen.com/poster-generators>. Have them select a style of poster to create. Then have them use that template to create a poster of their Thank You statement. Ask them to put their name at the bottom, if they are willing to share it.

NOTE: Do not have youth create an account or order the poster. They will not actually purchase it.

- f. When they have finished creating their Thank You poster, have them click GENERATE to create the image. Then right-click on the image. Select “Save As” and download it to their computer.
- g. Ask them to send their poster to you (in the chat or via email) to share along with the others from the youth during the family session. Confirm with each young person individually that they are okay to have their poster shown to the group in the family session and for you to send their poster to their parent after the session.

ALTERNATIVE OR BACK-UP OPTION

If the technology isn't working (sometime the PosterGen platform is busy), don't spend all your time trying to make it work. Have youth write their poster on paper or just make it in their favorite program on the computer. Then they can send it to you as a PDF or JPEG file. If they draw it on paper, they can take a picture of it with their phone and send that to you.

6. Transition to the Family Session

1 minute

- a. Show SLIDE #21. Say that they will next combine the session with the parenting adults. Explain the logistics of how they will combine.

Family Session

Preparation: Add images of youth posters from the “Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!” in the youth session to SLIDE #24 before the session begins.

1. Families Reconnecting

3 minutes

- a. As **youth and parenting adults** are getting settled, **display SLIDE #24**, which shows several posters that youth created during the “**Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!**” activity during the youth session, (Make sure to get permission from the youth before posting their posters.)
- b. Explain that parenting adults and youth have been talking separately about how we challenge growth and provide support.
 - In their session, the parenting adults talked about **areas where it’s hard and easy** to challenge kids to grow and provide support, and about finding the balance between challenging and supporting.
 - In their session, youth played online Tic-Tak-Toe to explore how **challenges do or don’t motivate them**. They also talked about **ways parenting adults and other family members challenge and support them in working toward their goals**. (Read some of the posters they created that you’re showing.)
 - Remind participants that these examples are ways young people appreciated others challenging and supporting them. Encourage families to continue using these strategies to challenge and support their young people. If the example came from a different family member or adult, encourage parenting adults and youth to discuss whether or not this method of support would be something they would want the parenting adults to try, too.
- c. *Now, we’re going to focus on how we support AND challenge each other to grow through our relationships. We’ll explore what we’ll call the Growth Zone.*

2. Exploring the Growth Zone

10 minutes

- a. Show SLIDE #25 and ask families to find Handout 3.4, “Understanding the ‘Growth Zone’” in their session materials. Explain each of the three columns. Use an analogy of strength training for a sport or basic fitness to make the following points. (If you have athletes in the session, you can “interview” them about the process.)



- Too easy: If you don't make any effort when working out, you won't see any results. You'll likely get bored and stop doing anything.
 - Too hard: On the other hand, if you try to lift far too much weight, you won't be able to move it at all. So, you won't see any progress either, and you'll get frustrated.
 - Just right: The best workouts happen when you're pushing hard—often with a coach who also pushes beyond where you're comfortable but not so hard that you give up. The coach often also teaches new skills and provides guidance.
 - Emphasize that the growth comes when the person trying to build strength is self-motivated (they have the goal) AND they have someone pushing them beyond what's comfortable. If you're working on something that's not a goal to you, you're unlikely to push hard or stay motivated for very long.
 - This "Growth Zone" doesn't just happen with physical fitness. It's also true for learning new things and working toward goals. The key to a strong relationship is to push each other (and ourselves) just hard enough to stretch without pushing so hard that the other person just gives up in frustration.
- b. Have family members think of other examples and add them to the chat box so others can see them. Continue until most people have a clear idea of what is meant by the "growth zone."
 - c. Have families each work together to answer the questions at the bottom of the sheet. They can draw from ideas that they discussed in the parenting adult and youth sessions earlier.

3. Challenging Growth and Providing Support Around a "Hard Thing" 10 minutes

- a. Have **participants get together with their own family.**
- b. Explain that each person has some area of life that they are working on that is hard for them. It takes **effort, commitment, and practice.** For some, it might be schoolwork or a new assignment at work. For others, it might be a health issue. We need each other to keep challenging us to grow in these areas that are important to us.
- c. Say: *One way to we can ask others to challenge us to grow is to **pick one "hard thing" as a focus**—something you really want to do, but you need others to help*

you grow in the “Growth Zone.” It might be you’ve talked about during this session, or it might be something else.

- d. Have each family member get from the Keep Connected supplies kit a **wide rubber band** (wide enough to write on at least with small letters) and a thin permanent marker that can write on a rubber band (such as a Sharpie).

Explain that rubber bands are a good symbol of the “Growth Zone.” They have to be stretched to be useful. Rubber bands only do their job of holding things together when they’re stretched—but not so far that they break.

That’s similar to what it means to challenge growth. By stretching each other beyond what’s easiest and most comfortable, we stimulate each other to learn and grow. If we try to stretch too far, we probably won’t break like a rubber band, but we *will* likely get stressed, and we won’t be motivated to grow.

- e. Have each person write a **word or two that describes their “hard thing”** on the rubber band. Encourage them to describe what they wrote to the other family member(s), either a parenting adult or a youth.
- f. Then have them **pass their rubber band to another family member**. On the back, this person should write on the other side in 2-3 words **what they are willing to do** to support and encourage their parenting adult or youth to grow in the Growth Zone. They might write, “Run with you,” if a person is going to get more exercise. They can then describe what they would do. If needed, the family can talk through other ideas to be sure that the ways they are challenging growth will be valued and helpful.
- g. Have family members **keep their own rubber band as a reminder** of the people who challenge them to work on their “hard thing.” (They might wear them as bracelets.) Ask them to decide how they’ll regularly check in as a family to see how each person’s hard thing is going and, when necessary, provide encouragement and assistance.



4. Keep Connected Between Sessions

5 minutes

- a. The final activity is to check in on the follow-up activities, beginning by asking about the what families did since the last session. **(It’s important to bring up the follow-up activities each time, even if you know that few had an opportunity to do much. It sets up an expectation that the activities are integral to the workshop series.)**

- b. Show SLIDE #26, which summarizes the follow-up activities from the session 2. Congratulate the families that completed at least one activity. Ask for their brief feedback on how it went and what they enjoyed. Say that you'll provide their feedback to Search Institute.
- c. In particular, discuss the **Pledge and Plan to Keep Connected**. Tell families that they'll be wrapping it up before the next session. They **will be asked to present their family pledge at the next session for the whole group**. (No one will be forced to present.) Find out how they're doing and what they are learning about their family. If some are struggling, plan to check in with them after the session so they will be ready.
- d. Show SLIDE #27, which shows activity options for the coming week. Ask families to look at Handout 3.5 at in their Family Workbook. It lists the potential follow-up activities. Invite families to choose the activities they would like to try in the coming week.
- e. Note that the workshops, by themselves, are not enough to translate the ideas into everyday "good habits" in our families. It's important to try them—and keep trying them— only help families keep connected if they try ideas at home. Some may not work. But others will be really enjoyable and helpful. They'll want to keep doing those activities so they can keep connected.
- f. Briefly **describe each option** for follow-up activities. (Brief descriptions of each are included on the handout.)
 - a. Have families turn back to PLANNER: What Will Our Family Do Together? (Handout 3.5). Have them checkmark their choice and write down when they plan to do the activities.

5. Wrap Up

2 minutes

- a. Show SLIDE #28. Remind them about the next session, which is called "New Possibilities for Our Family and the Future." It focuses on the final key for youth-parent relationships, creating a plan for maintaining relationships, and a graduation celebration where you will share your pledges with each other and with this group. **Remind them of the schedule and logistics**.
- b. Encourage families to start the **Keep Connected Pledge and Plan** in the next couple of days. If they need support to finish them, encourage them to contact you.

- c. These workshop series will be most valuable if they also take time together to do some of the “Try It” family activities and discussion-starter questions that are provided.
- d. Thank families for joining the workshop, and let them know of your availability between sessions if they want to talk.

Follow-Up to the Session

- a. Within one day of completing the session, **give Search Institute feedback on what worked**, what didn’t, and how the session could be improved. As a thank you, you will receive a \$5 gift card for each feedback survey you complete. **Facilitators can earn up to \$20 in gift cards** for giving feedback on all four sessions. Here’s the link: <https://tinyurl.com/yxkt5b7s>
- b. **Send the poster each young person created** from “Thanks for Challenging and Supporting Us!” to their parenting adult if you have permission from the young person). Comment on ways the child is contributing to the youth sessions, and thank parenting adults for their participation.
- c. **Send a text message or an email** in a few days to participants:
 - Thank them for coming.
 - Remind them about the Family Pledge and Plan to Keep Connected, the follow-up activities, and the next session.
 - You may also encourage families to **watch the video** (less than 2 minutes long) that ties to the theme of the next session:
 - i. [“Expand Possibilities”](https://keepconnected.searchinstitute.org/strengthen-your-family-relationships/expand-possibilities/)
(<https://keepconnected.searchinstitute.org/strengthen-your-family-relationships/expand-possibilities/>)
- d. **Set yourself a schedule for preparing for the next session.**