



SESSION 7-Zaagidwin-Love continued...

Objectives for this Session:

- To provide participants with effective communication strategies for the parent-child dialogue.
- To rediscover the joy of play with our children.
- To provide strategies that model fair play.

Materials for session:

- Aboriginal Games guest speaker
- flipchart, markers and pens or pencils
- materials to make the three games:
 - Bone and Toggle: stick, wooden spoon, old ruler, or chopstick, 3 to 5 pieces of string, shoe laces or leather lacing cut in 30 mm lengths and 3 to 5 rings, canning jar lids, large washers
 - Double Ball: 2 old socks or stockings, something to stuff the socks with like old socks balled up or a soft rubber ball and 2 sticks or wooden spoons
 - Deer Bone Dice: 8, 2-sided items like quarters, buttons or guitar picks
- Handouts: *Listen, Principles of Good Sportsmanship*

Here's an Idea...

The value of love suggests unconditionally loving ourselves and others. Negative childhood experiences lend themselves to feelings of shame, fear, and self-loathing. Adults who grew up with these feelings tend to, among other things, look outward for reasons to love ourselves. Learning to love unconditionally is a difficult task for many participants, but it is important to remind them that they can love themselves just as they are –warts and all. Parenting often reminds us of the yearnings we have to feel and express love. This is especially true for those participants who do not love themselves. Therefore, participants should be encouraged to think of safe ways to express love towards themselves and their children.

Check-In

FEELINGS: TALKING AND LISTENING

Today we are examining Grandfather Love. One of the biggest ways of showing love to your children is to listen to them. It is hard to truly listen to a child when they are telling you their feelings if you are busy fixing or attempting to rescue them from

experiencing their emotions. Realizing that poor listening skills lead to frustration on the part of children, this may help you provide a space for them to work out what they are feeling. Children are quite good at moving on to their next feeling provided their present emotion has been acknowledged. This activity will build on the skills introduced in the last session. There are four guidelines to remember when we are listening:

- Don't interrupt needlessly.
- Don't pass judgment.
- Don't ask too many questions.
- Don't give advice.



ACTIVITY:

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba's Family Service Program teaches that being listened to for seven minutes a day will help provide emotional and spiritual balance. In this session we are going to pair off and talk as fathers about a time you felt DELIGHT, ANGER and HELPLESSNESS (write these on a flip chart so that the participants can refer to them). When one is talking, the other is going to be **listening**. Give participants the handout *Don'ts of Listening*. Review with the participants that they will be practicing listening **without attempting to do anything** about the things that are being shared. Get the participants to pair off and begin sharing. When the sharing is over reassemble the group and debrief. How did that feel? Was it awkward? What was harder, listening or talking? Who prefers this type of listening? Who might you ask to listen to you? What did you like about being heard? Keep in mind the responses to the question "What did you like about being heard?" Are participants able to transfer that understanding to their children? The ability to empathize honours many of the Grandfathers: Love, Humility, Wisdom and Respect. Do participants think their children would like to be listened to in this manner? Are they able to imagine themselves listening in that way? What would they find hard about empathetic listening? Listening to your children's feelings is not really very different from listening to each other's feelings.¹ Facilitator should verbally list while they write out on the flipchart the following list:

- listen with full attention
- acknowledge their feelings with a word, (i.e. "okay...Mmmm...I see")
- give their feelings a name
- refocus them by providing a fantasy solution which encourages them to use their imagination

¹ Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish. How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk. New York, Avon Books, 1999.



“When I facilitated the program, I found participants were really open to connecting to me. I listened in a non-judgemental way and showed a keen interest in their experiences” John Howard Society *Respectful Fathering* facilitator

Facilitator should read aloud the following story to demonstrate how this technique works. Suppose you’re out driving with your child and it’s really hot. You’re child starts to complain that they are thirsty and want something to drink NOW - but it’s a good half hour until you get home and you have no change in your pocket to buy something. How might you as a parent be tempted to respond to this child’s complaint? Yelling? Here’s an example:

Johnny, “Dad, it’s hot and I’m thirsty – I want something to drink NOW!”

Dad, “HmMMM.....you sound really upset!”

Johnny, “Yeah...I’m hot and tired! I just wanna go home and drink something cold!”

Dad, “Yeah...wouldn’t it be great to get home and make a great big banana pineapple smoothie with chocolate sprinkles and a cherry on top!”

Johnny, “Mmmmm....I can hardly wait to get home.”

How did this parent demonstrate respect and love? What did the participants notice about this technique? What did the participants notice about the annoying behaviour of whining? This is an example of refocusing attention by providing this child with a fantasy. The dialogue may seem very foreign to many of the participants and they may express scepticism that it will work with their children. It may be necessary to revisit earlier activities to illustrate the harmfulness of alternative communication methods. Obtaining the goal of being a loving father takes practice, so encourage participants to try before they dismiss it. Divide the participants into small groups. Provide each group with some examples of behavioural situations that they previously listed during the **Ages and Stages** activity. Then, ask each group to communicate a solution to the problem using the skills they have just learned. Invite someone who’s comfortable to share their attempt with the larger group.



ACTIVITY:

After the break, the group will have the opportunity to continue to practice their communication skills as well as developing some fair play skills. We chose to highlight fun play for two reasons. Firstly, because the journey that participants have experienced to date can be both fatiguing and overwhelming. Secondly, we felt that it made sense that loving communication can also be displayed in the games we play with our children.

Competitive activity honours many of the Grandfathers - Respect, Humility, Honesty and Bravery. In order for the participants to help their children learn to play fair, it is necessary for them to understand how fairly they play games and sports. Facilitator



should handout the assessment *Principles of Good Sportsmanship*² as well as a pen to each participant. On the first line participants should identify their own behaviour and on the second line they should assess their children's behaviour. Provide sufficient time to complete the sheet.

1. *Identify Good Sportsmanship*: Hand out the list and get the participants to check off the skills they demonstrate and the skills that their children have exhibited during play. Facilitator may ask if there were any surprises. What do they notice about the check list? Are there similarities between the fathers and the children? Are there any differences?
2. *Teach Principles of Good Sportsmanship*: Ask the participants to look at the items they checked off in the handout. How can these skills be modeled and explained to their children? Why does fair play make sense? Is there a place for these skills in a highly competitive sport like Hockey?
3. *Teach them to encourage their Peers*: Once your children learn the meaning of fair play, they should be encouraged to practice these skills with their friends (i.e.: "good toggle catch", "you are a good double ball player", or "it's fun to play deer bone dice with you"). The fathers could try and practice positive affirmation or use encouragement with their children.
4. *Correct Poor Sportsmanship Immediately*: Point it out to your child and be specific. Label poor sportsmanship. For example, "When I see you hold the puck with your hand, I think that is breaking the rules". Teach empathy for others when you play sports. Using lines like "That hurts Billy's feelings when you laugh at him like that". By playing in a fun and loving manner, children will be able to accept your corrections and so learn to have fun without being a poor sport.

Short Break



ABORIGINAL GAMES

One of the best ways to show love for your children is to play with them. Kids absolutely love to play with others. If is possible, arrange for an Aboriginal Games Teacher³ to come teach the group. If you are not able to obtain a guest speaker for this session, the next activity will help you teach three traditional games together as a group. The games also teach participants and their children to re-connect with part of their

² Borba, Michele. *No More Misbehavin': 38 Difficult Behaviors and How to Stop Them*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2003.

³ The Province of Manitoba provides this service. In Winnipeg telephone 204.945.6830

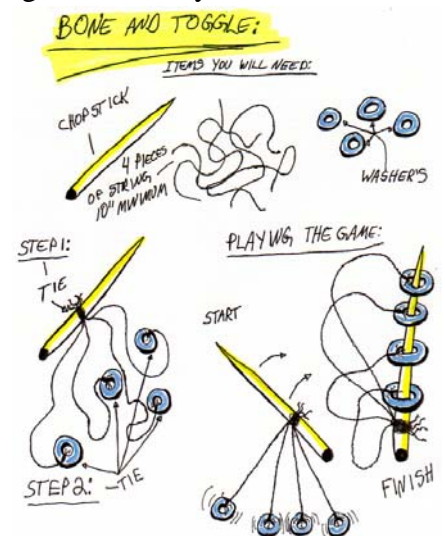
culture as well. The games will become useful during Session Thirteen during **The Great Feast!**

ACTIVITY:

If you cannot find an Aboriginal Games teacher in your community, you can teach the participants to make and play three games. The traditional method is listed at the end of this session if you want to refer to it, or explain it to the participants. The three games are: Bone and Toggle, Double Ball, and Deer Button Game. The following is a description of how to make these games with household items. After you have taught the participants how to make these games, you can encourage them to make them with their children at home. The children will be delighted to have a special game that they made with their father.

BONE AND TOGGLE

Items you will need: A stick from outside (you can also use a wooden spoon, an old ruler or a chopstick), three to five pieces of string cut in 30 cm minimum lengths (you can also use shoe laces or leather lacing), and three to five rings (canning jar lids, larger washers, or any ring shaped object that you can find or make). When finding rings you need to make sure that they fit over the end of the stick you have chosen. If you are using a stick you need to take all the bark off of it and widdle down one end until it is about the width of your little finger.



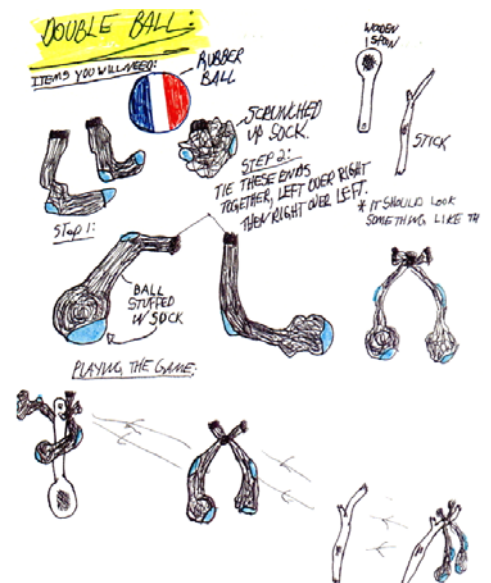
Step 1: Take the string and tie several pieces of it to the middle of your stick or wooden spoon. Make sure the string is around 10 inches long.

Step 2: Tie the other end of the string to your rings.

How to Play: To play the game, you hold the stick and swing the rings in the air and try to poke the stick through it, effectively catching the ring (or rings if you are good at it). This is a great game for five to seven year olds because it increases their hand eye coordination.

DOUBLE BALL

Items you will need: Two large old socks or stockings and something to stuff it with plus two sticks (or wooden spoons etc.). You can stuff the sock or stockings with either old socks or old rubber balls. Make sure that the stuffing you use is





heavy enough to throw but light enough not to hurt anyone. Making this game is really easy.

Step 1: Stuff each of the socks so that there is a mound at the end of each sock.

Step 2: Then tie the socks together.

How to play: To play this game take the sticks and use them to play catch, using the double ball. You can also throw the double ball at a target or into a laundry basket. If you are playing outside you can see how far you can throw it or even play catch over a fence.

DEER BONE DICE

Items you will need: 8- two sided flat objects with a marking on one side (you can use buttons, quarters or guitar picks) and a pile of beans, dry macaroni or any other common household item that can be used as a counter.

How to play: To play the game, place the beans in the middle of the table. One player holds all eight buttons in his/her hand and drops them on the table. The player then counts how many same sides turn up. If all eight objects turn up on the same side you take ten beans. If seven are the same, and one is different, you take four beans. If six are the same, and two are different, you take two beans. Throws of five, four or three mean that you do not get any beans. Play continues until all the beans have been won or continue to take beans from the other players until someone has all the beans.

Check-Out

