



Pathways to
Permanence 2

PARTICIPANT
RESOURCE
NOTEBOOK

Parenting
Children
WHO HAVE
Experienced
Trauma
AND LOSS

Session 6

Parenting
the Child of
Abuse and
Neglect

Parent's
Toolbox

SESSION 6

Parent's Toolbox



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LISTENING WITH YOUR HEART



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The goal of reflective listening is to better understand the person who is speaking. Reflective listening is attentive, respectful, and non-judgmental. Reflective listening allows the speaker to continue exploring their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. When a parent uses reflective listening, they are not only building basic trust with their child, but are also allowing their child to feel deeply understood and heard.

Three Basic Levels of Reflective Listening:

- Repeating or Rephrasing – Listener stays close to what the speaker is saying.
 - o Repeat back to speaker what you heard them say – “So you said...”
- Paraphrasing – Listener summarizes what the speaker is saying, and the meaning is inferred.
 - o Use phrases like, “I think I heard you say...,” then check it out by adding, “Is that correct?” or “Did I miss anything?”
- Reflection of Feeling – Listener emphasizes the emotional aspects of the communication through feeling statements. Listen for common emotional themes and reflect those back to the speaker.
 - o Use phrases like, “It sounds like you feel...because of....”

Practice Activity:

Speaker: Take 2 minutes to share something that happened this week that was frustrating.

Listener: Listen to speaker, and use reflective listening skills to reflect back to speaker what you heard.

“Listening well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well.”

~ John Marshall



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Developmental Stages of Understanding <i>Developed by Gayle Ward, M.A.</i>		
AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS	CHALLENGES
EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH LATENCY Birth - Three years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment, family relationships, trust, cause and effect, speech, self-control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> React to their feelings, but lack logical understanding. Primary challenge is establishing and maintaining attachment.
Four years - Five years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn family, gender, social roles, balancing dependence and independence. Process information by magical thinking, not logic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May blame themselves for moves and losses. Are capable of picking up negative attitudes and information from society at large.
Six years - Nine years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn that mastery, competence, peer groups are important. Move from magical thinking to more logical processing, but flip back and forth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May challenge the logic of the adoption story they have been told. Have clearer understanding of human reproduction, family roles, and genetics. Do not understand the legal system until after age 11, as it is too abstract. May think about adoption privately, often make up their own answers, and come up with strange or unusual conclusions.

Gayle Ward, M.A., is a foster care and adoption professional at Kinship Center in Salinas, California. She is an ACT facilitator.



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AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS	CHALLENGES
<p>PUBERTY THROUGH ADOLESCENCE</p> <p>Ten years - Twelve years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience the onset of puberty, for most. Human reproduction and sexuality are familiar to most. Become more aware that the circumstances of their birth parents may be in conflict with the values of their adoptive parents. • Continue to think in concrete ways, although abstract thinking is possible. • Have increased ability to be empathetic, which may cause concern about hurting adoptive parents feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are aware that the circumstances of their birth, or the life-style of birth family, is in conflict with the values of their adoptive family. • May become more judgmental of birth or adoptive parents and increase questioning of the decisions made about them.
<p>Thirteen years - Eighteen years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on separation and individuation, identity formation. • Development of abstract thinking and empathy continues. “Shades of gray” rather than “black or white” judgements are becoming possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience the extent of maturation of thought process which has a profound effect on how teens understand their birth parents and the circumstances of their adoption. • Begin to recognize adoption issues are critical to identity issues. • Begin to more fully consider how they <i>are</i> and <i>are not</i> like their birth parents. • Experience that conflict between the sexual values of the birth parents and adoptive families may become even more of an issue. • May associate birth parents with sexuality and adoptive parents with asexuality. • Experience the impact of societal myths and judgements about adoption. • May worry about leaving home.



SHARING DIFFICULT INFORMATION:

Words to Explain the “Hard Stuff”

Developed by Lynne White Dixon, L.C.S.W.

Difficult Circumstances

Words To Use

Prostitution

Preschool Years: *Your birth mother couldn't take care of you and keep you safe.*

Elementary Years: *Your birth mother had a hard time keeping a job to make money to care for herself and be responsible for you.*

Preteen Years: *Your birth mother got paid for having sex with men.*

Drug & Alcohol Use

Preschool Years: *Your birth father/mother took some medicine that wasn't from the doctor and it wasn't good for him/her. This medicine made him/her feel bad and he/she couldn't take care of you when he/she took it.*

Elementary/Preteen Years: *Your birth father/mother made bad choices, had problems, chose to use drugs or drink alcohol to feel better about his/her problems. Your birth father/mother used drugs or alcohol instead of talking about feelings.*

Physical Abuse:

Preschool Years: *Your birth father/mother did not take care of you the way parents are supposed to.*

Elementary Years: *You were treated harshly because your birth father/mother was out of control in handling his/her life (for example, drinking, money, etc). Your birth father/mother didn't learn to handle his/her anger growing up so when angry or upset he/she took his/her feelings out on you.*



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Sexual Abuse (occurred when child too young to talk)

Preschool: *Your birth father/mother was not able to care/keep you safe.*

Elementary: *Your birth father/mother made hurtful decisions (educate children about “good/bad” touch).*

Adolescence: *Your birth father/mother touched you in ways that were wrong. He/she was very selfish when he/she did that to you and was only thinking about himself/herself and not about you. He/she is totally responsible for what they did.*

Rape

Elementary: *Your birth mother did not know your birth father well (or at all). The relationship was not a happy one.*

Preteen/Middle School: *(Once child knows it “takes two” to make a baby.) Your birth parents did not make love, they had sex, even though your birth mother didn’t want to.*

(Don’t use word rape until you are certain the child understands the meaning.)

Incest

Middle School Years & Older: *Your birth father/mother grew up in a family that did not know how to show love in the right ways. Your birth parents didn’t know how to express love in a healthy way and because they lacked that understanding you were born.*

Reference

Keefer, B., & Schooler, J.E. (2000). *Telling the truth to your adopted or foster child*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

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