



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.*



Pathways to Permanence 2

Parenting Children WHO HAVE Experienced Trauma AND LOSS

Session 6

Parenting the Child of Abuse and Neglect

Parent's Toolbox

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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