

# CROSS-CULTURAL PARENTING PROGRAM

## FAMILIES WITH TEENAGERS: RESOURCE MANUAL FOR IMMIGRANT PARENTS AND TEENAGERS

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association



CIWA

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

### **Cross Cultural Parenting Program**

Program Coordination: Hamda Umar  
Curriculum Development: Natalia Roubaud  
Editing: Bridgette von Rothemburg

The Cross Cultural Parenting Program team would like to thank:

#### **Project Funders:**



Citizenship and Immigration Canada      Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

**Government  
of Alberta** ■



CIWA has made every effort to obtain copyright permission for material we have used in this publication. Please bring any omissions to our attention.

This resource is made available for non-profit, educational use. If you wish to use or adapt any of this material for this purpose, please attribute it to CIWA. For commercial purposes, please seek permission.

**Copyright © 2011, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association**

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association  
200, 138-4<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Calgary, AB  
T2G 4Z6  
[www.ciwa-online.com](http://www.ciwa-online.com)

# **CALGARY IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

## **VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**

### **VISION**

Empower Immigrant Women. Enrich Canadian Society.

### **MISSION**

To engage and integrate immigrant women and their families in the community.

### **VALUES**

Equality. Innovation. Empathy. Collaboration.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

## SECTION ONE: For Parents

### Chapter 1: The Teenage Brain and Development

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 1
- Physical and psychological development of the adolescent brain . . SEC1.1.1
- Development of the adolescent body . . . . . SEC1.1.2
- Critical periods . . . . . SEC1.1.3

### Chapter 2: Communication and Conflict

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 2
- Conflict . . . . . SEC1.2.1
- Having a relationship with your teenage child . . . . . SEC1.2.2
- Ways to communicate effectively . . . . . SEC1.2.3

### Chapter 3: Culture and Integration

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 3
- Immigrant teens between cultures . . . . . SEC1.3.1
- Acculturation styles . . . . . SEC1.3.2
- Cultural experiences . . . . . SEC1.3.3
- Attachment changes . . . . . SEC1.3.4

### Chapter 4 . Dating and Sexuality

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 4

### Chapter 5 . Peer Relationships and Social Influences

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 5
- Violence . . . . . SEC1.5.1
- Gangs . . . . . SEC1.5.2
- Bullying . . . . . SEC1.5.3

### Chapter 6 . Self-esteem and Mental Health

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 6

### Chapter 7 . Technology

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 7
  - Technology
  - What is online gaming?
  - Addictions
  - What can be done?

### Chapter 8 . Teens and Healthy Living

- Facilitator's Guide . . . . . SEC1.FAC 8



My values and moralityõ ... SEC2.5.2

Chapter 6 . Problem-solving and communication

Facilitator's Guideõ ..... SEC2.FAC 6

Conflictõ ...SEC2.6.1

Effective communicationõ .SEC2.6.2

Planning and prioritiesõ .SEC2.6.3

Chapter 7 . Taking control

Facilitator's Guideõ ..... SEC2.FAC 7

Identity and autonomyõ .SEC2.7.1

Educationõ ..SEC2.7.2

Time and Moneyõ .. SEC2.7.3

Chapter 8 . Resources for teens

Facilitator's Guideõ ..... SEC2.FAC 8

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to help parents and teenagers recognize the cross-cultural issues of teenage development. It educates about how and why things happen, and how to work through the process of teen development together, rather than against each other. Participants are taught to use the principles of positive communication and problem-solving. This manual is intended to educate both parties on the protective factors in youth, families, schools and communities. In the process, it provides usable skills for intervention that incorporate the development of assets and competencies in adolescents. These named assets are strengthened through education and practice in hopes of buffering youth against negative health behaviours, such as sexual promiscuity, substance abuse, poor dietary choices, inadequate physical activity and anti-social behaviour. A focus on cross-cultural perspectives is discussed in all sections of the manual to provide support for additional challenges faced by immigrant youth and their families.

The successful delivery of this program will require the facilitator to identify, but not isolate, at-risk youth and their families. The facilitator will build a community base for the support of this program, promote youth leadership and ownership of learned skills, account for gender in the delivery of sensitive topics according to cultural practices, and empower participants to become a source of information and guidance to others in similar situations.

**SECTION ONE** is for immigrant parents. It provides an informative roadmap to solve the most common problems with teens and discusses why these problems arise. It also provides suggestions for how to prevent these problems and to remedy them.

**SECTION TWO** provides teenagers with tools to better understand themselves, to identify the issues they are having with Canadian culture and society, and with their families. Teens are offered activities and exercises intended to teach problem-solving skills and raise their self-esteem. This section is based heavily on facilitation, as it is designed to be a set of experiential learning sessions rather than a typical **class**. Participants will be asked to participate in fun activities, engaging their bodies and minds to acquire transferable skills needed to deal with real world situations.

Throughout the manual, there is a focus on improving teenagers' self-esteem, as this is essential to the process of raising a happy, secure and peaceful teenager.

Before each chapter a brief **Facilitator's Section** gives suggestions to Cross-Cultural Parenting Facilitators for putting together a practical and interactive learning session. This section contains:

- Session objectives

- Chapter overview
- Suggested activities
- Other resources and more detailed information

The facilitator's notes are intended to build on the participant material, so that sessions can be tailored to the needs and knowledge level of any group.

We would like to thank numerous CIWA clients, immigrant families and teenagers who shared their life stories and opinions with us. They helped us develop the contents of this manual, by validating and implementing our recommendations. Special thanks go to CIWA counsellors, who are all first-generation immigrants, and who shared a wealth of professional and cross-cultural experiences.

The list of recommended resources, for parents and families, is provided at the end of Section One. The resources recommended for teens are listed at the end of Section Two.

# SECTION ONE: FOR PARENTS

# **SECTION 1: CHAPTER 1**

## **THE TEENAGE BRAIN AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

Participants will:

- Gain an understanding of the physical, mental and psychosocial development of teenagers
- Explore ways parents can educate their teens about development
- Gain an understanding of the differences between an average adult brain and an average teenage brain
- Gain an understanding of how to help teens develop in a healthy manner

#### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- Brain development and psychosocial development
- Critical periods
- Physical development by age

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Hold a group discussion: Parents' memories: what they were like when they were teenagers?
  - What were their challenges?
  - How did their parents react?
- Have a group discussion on the parallels between toddlers and adolescents.
  - How are they similar? How are they different?
- Ask parents to make a list of things they chose or did in order to meet their needs as an individual, for example, friends, food, clothing, education, occupation, etc.
  - What influenced you to make those choices?
  - How would their lives be different if they had made different choices?

This exercise will help parents see the importance of experiences. By doing one activity over and over, out of need or pleasure, the behaviour is reinforced, like the connections in the brain.

Toddlers and adolescents go through a parallel developmental process, trying to assert themselves as unique individuals, refusing authority and trying new behaviours.

## OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

### Key points about...

- Brain development:
  - During adolescence, major changes occur in the cognitive, social and personality perceptions of the individual.
  - The physical reorganization of the brain consists of pruning out unused neural connections and strengthening active ones. The self becomes important. Teens seek to assert their personality traits by establishing social relationships in groups. These groups impact all other aspects of development (physical, cognitive, social, and self).
  - The adolescent's experiences will determine which brain connections will remain or be discarded. When discussing situations with a teenager, the practice of reasoning through the situation and the use of logic and consequences will reinforce the use of these methods when the teen is faced with other situations.
  
- Critical periods:
  - Critical periods are appropriate times in the development of an adolescent for learning new skills and information because their brains are making these new connections.
  - Critical periods are influenced by the environment. If the environment is safe, development will happen naturally. If the environment is unsafe or hostile, development will be delayed or occur abnormally. For example, a child who lived in a country torn by war may learn to be aggressive or become afraid of authority figures.
  
- Physical Development in Adolescence:
  - Puberty occurs during adolescence. Although the body may develop at an expected rate, cognitive, social and psychological development may not occur at the same time. It is normal that a 15 year-old boy may be tall, muscular and have a deep voice, but remain interested in playing with friends rather than dating, or vice versa.
  - Regardless of cultural background, physical, emotional and psychological changes occur at this stage of life and this information is useful across cultures.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 1**  
**THE TEENAGE BRAIN AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Contents of this Chapter

- Physical and psychological development of the adolescent brain
- Critical periods
- Development of the adolescent body

Goals for this Chapter

Participants will:

- Understand how the teenage brain works and develops
- Learn about the differences between an adult and an adolescent brain
- Learn about ways to educate your teenager
- Learn about how to encourage overall healthy development of your teenager

1.1 Physical and Psychological Development of the Adolescent Brain

For many parents, it is hard to understand why their teenage child acts and reacts a certain way. To understand a teenager's actions, we need to look at how they think and why they think that way. Understanding the development and growth stages that a teenager's brain and body go through can help us understand a teenager's behaviour. This can lead us to effective ways to help them make better choices and be happy.

**Exercise 1.1 When you were a teenager...**

***Discuss***

- What do you remember about what you were like as a teenager?
- Do you remember any challenges?
- How did your parents react?

***Stages of Development***

As children grow into adults, they go through normal phases of change in their body, behaviour and personality. A child's first desire to be independent occurs during the toddler years. Children are stubborn, have tantrums and

strongly refuse anything they don't like. This normal development stage, or phase in a child's life, is called the %first autonomy phase+.<sup>i</sup>

### **Exercise 1.2 Toddlers vs. Teenagers**

- Compare toddlers and adolescents
- In what ways are they similar?

Autonomy means personal independence or freedom from being controlled. During adolescence, children go through a %second autonomy phase+. They have a normal need to assert their individuality and independence from their parents. This can result in very defiant, violent and disrespectful behaviour in teenagers, especially towards their parents. Parents are usually the main controlling force in a teenager's life. Negative behaviours can be very difficult for parents to accept and deal with.<sup>ii</sup>

Most rebellious teenage behaviour seems to be intended to undermine the authority of the parents, to make them %smaller+ so to speak. Though teens do not realize why they are doing it, teenagers going through the %second autonomy phase+ have a need to try and take power away from the authority figures in their lives. Teens need to exercise and grow their own autonomous selves in preparation for becoming adults.

This is a normal need that adolescents have, like eating and sleeping. The teenager's individual personality and the type of guidance, or lack of it, will determine what type of behaviour they will end up displaying. It is crucial to determine the correct type of guidance teenagers need to promote the healthy development of their autonomous self into a confident and balanced individual. We need to guide them in the right direction without them violently refusing us, or giving up on developing their own identity.

Let us take a look at the teenage brain and the physical development processes that take place during adolescence to learn more about the type of guidance that is most effective.

### ***The Teenage Brain***

Scientific developments in brain imaging (taking pictures of brain and brain activity) have made it possible to learn more about the physical changes in the brain during adolescence. Research has shown that different parts of the brain are responsible for different things. A certain part of the brain is responsible for reasoning and logical thinking. Planning ahead, comparing, and weighing consequences take place in this part of the brain.

A different part of the brain is responsible for emotional thinking. It is concerned with how you feel, for example sad, happy, hungry or sleepy.<sup>iii</sup>

In a well developed adult brain, the logical thinking part of the brain and the emotional thinking part work together to make reasoned decisions. This means a person will not make a decision based solely on emotions. Adults think logically about whether an idea is good or bad. However, do they make decisions based on logic alone. Adults consider how they feel about the options available and the consequences of each. These two parts of the brain communicate through special connections or channels. These brain connections undergo very significant changes during adolescence.

Like any part of the body, the brain goes through physical changes as a person grows from childhood into adolescence and from adolescence into adulthood. In the adolescent stage, the brain develops at a very fast pace, growing and changing significantly. The capacity of the reasoning part of the brain becomes much larger. Teenagers become capable of amazing thought, academically and socially. During this time, some of the unused connections in the brain are lost. Connections that are in continuous use become stronger and more efficient.

During this phase, when a teenager feels a very strong emotion (hormones increase the intensity of the emotion), the existing connections between the logical and emotional parts of the brain may fail. Because the logical part of the brain is %under construction+ or not completely developed, the emotional part of the brain is more likely to take over. This means that when teenagers are very emotional (excited, happy, sad or angry), they may make decisions based solely on their emotions. This is usually considered as impulsive or irresponsible behaviour.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Exercise 1.3 Personality and Influences**

- List the things that you have chosen in your own environment such as friends, diet, lifestyle and occupation.
- What influenced you to make those choices?
- How different would your life be if one day you made different choices?

### **1.2 Development of the Adolescent Body**

As our children grow into their adolescent years, their bodies begin to undergo significant changes because of puberty. Puberty is the stage during which a child's body changes and matures into an adult body. The changes take place at a very quick pace. This period usually starts at 7 to 13 years of age in

girls, and 9 to 14 years of age in boys. Hormones are special chemicals in the body that increase during puberty and bring about sexual maturation.

- **Boys:** Bones and muscles grow, and strength increases. Fat is lost in some parts of the body, such as the arms and legs. Broad shoulders may develop. Body odour becomes adult-like and acne (pimples) may appear. The voice deepens and hair begins to grow on the face, pubic area, underarms, and other parts of the body. At about 13 years of age, boys may start producing sperm and may ejaculate or have night emissions.
- **Girls:** Girls store more fats than boys. Their bodies develop wider hips and smaller waistlines. Both body odour and voice change. Pubic and underarm hair starts to appear and grow. They may also develop acne. Breasts also begin to develop. This usually occurs at 8 to 13 years of age. Around two years later, they usually start menstruating (having a monthly period). Menstrual cycles may be irregular for the first few years. Girls may miss monthly periods, occasionally. Irregular periods may last for as long as seven years after menstruation begins.<sup>v</sup>

The high level of hormones in teenagers' bodies (testosterone in boys, and oestrogen in girls) are often blamed in part for the mood swings and irrational behaviour of teenagers. Whatever the case may be, teenagers are in a very vulnerable position. At the time they are in need of asserting their independence and finding their autonomous self, physical changes in their mind and body are sometimes making them incapable of making good decisions. This means that there is a need to supervise their decisions closely and guide them along the way to make good decisions.

### 1.3 Critical Periods

Adolescence is a very critical time in an individual's life. It is the stage when people begin to truly develop a sense of self, who they are and what they stand for. At the same time, individuals are vulnerable to bodily changes and environmental pressures. This is the time when teenagers begin to adopt principles, values, and beliefs and make them their own.

As previously mentioned, the teenage brain undergoes very significant changes that can be thought of as reorganizing the connections of the brain. A person gains the ability to understand much more sophisticated and abstract concepts and ideas. How the brain is reconnected and which principles and values become part of the person depends largely on the influences that surround an individual as an adolescent and their relationships with those influences.<sup>vi</sup>

Adolescents, like children, do not learn by being told to do something; they learn by experience and example. When something is done in front of them in a consistent manner, they will copy that behaviour. For a teenager, the behaviours and habits that are consistently modelled and reinforced develop certain connections in the brain. New connections will develop specific to that type of behaviour. Parents are significant influences who determine largely how the teenage brain ends up being reorganized or reconnected. The reorganization will be based on the type of consistent behaviours that were modelled for them and the behaviours that they were encouraged to practice on a constant basis. Adolescents will usually become a reflection of the adults and role models in their life.<sup>vii</sup>

This is why the nature and quality of the relationships between the teenager and the significant adults in the teen's life are crucial. Even if the teenager rejects those adults and authority figures, the teen will still internalize and unconsciously adopt the modelled behaviours. This is due to how their brain connections are reorganized. Teenagers may even dislike and be dissatisfied with those behaviours, tendencies, mannerisms, and beliefs that have become part of them. Teenagers may be at conflict with themselves because of these modelled behaviours, therefore becoming unhappy adults.

We have discussed the need teenagers have for autonomy at this stage in their life. Combined with physical changes in their brain and body, this can cause erratic and difficult behaviours which can be dangerous to their wellbeing and future. Close parental supervision and involvement in the teenager's decision making is essential, while at the same time respecting the teen's need for autonomy.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 2**  
**COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

**SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Develop and understand effective communication methods with teenagers
- Explore ways parents can use communication to:
  - Model their values
  - Set rules
  - Encourage responsibility
- Explore ways to resolve conflict

**CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- Asking vs. telling
- Strategies for communicating effectively
- Dealing with conflict

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Hold a group discussion about the parents remembering what they used to be like when they were teenagers
  - What were their challenges?
  - How did their own parents react?
- Role play in pairs or small groups the following scenarios:
  - My teenager, who is in grade 11, tells me s/he no longer wants to go to school.
  - My 16 year old daughter comes home and tells me she has a 17 year old Canadian boyfriend
  - My 15 year old comes home drunk from a party

**OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

**Key points about...**

- Conflict:
  - Conflict stems from the differences between people. In any relationship, conflict can be seen as an opportunity to practice effective communication skills, to better understand the other person and to strengthen a relationship by reaching a consensus.

- Conflict is magnified by the fact that the parents' acculturation does not parallel that of their adolescent. Each will have different pressures and expectations placed on them by their circumstances. Their experiences and learning opportunities will vary.
  - Adoption of Western values is usually easier and more appealing for teenagers because they are at a developmental stage. Their self and personality are not yet fully defined.
- Asking vs. Telling:
    - Because some cultures emphasize obedience as a means of maintaining discipline, dissonance between parents and teens may occur in the acculturation process. Canadian culture and society respect teens' rights. Canadian teachers and teenage acquaintances will use "asking" rather than "telling" communication strategies. Immigrant teenagers are given new freedoms, which they may not experience at home.
    - It is important for parents to understand that in the Canadian context, changes may be needed in order for parents to be effective. While maintaining their most important values, they may have to discard parenting practices deemed ineffective or impractical by Canadian standards.
- Strategies for Communicating Effectively:
    - Communication is the basis of any relationship in a teenager's life. In the Canadian context, communication requires mutual respect and equal opportunity for both parties to express ideas.
    - Communication cues received from words and body language may have different meanings in different cultures. i.e. making eye contact to show interest (Western) vs. looking down to show respect (Asia)
    - It is important to prepare teenagers to understand social expectations when communicating with people from different cultures. Parents can aid in these situations by having a clear discussion of what is expected of teenagers when they are communicating with someone from the same culture vs. communicating with the average Canadian.

## SECTION 1: CHAPTER 2

### COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

#### PARTICIPANT'S NOTES

##### Contents of this Chapter

- Dealing with conflict
- Having a relationship with your teenage child
- Ways to communicate effectively

##### Goals for this Chapter

- Understand the importance of effective communication
- Find the best ways to communicate
- Explore how effective communication can be used to:
  - Model our values
  - Set the rules
  - Encourage responsibility
- Explore ways to deal with and resolve conflict

##### 2.1 Conflict

Conflict results when two people disagree and are unable to deal with their differences in a way that satisfies both parties. The more **different** the two parties are, the more severe the conflict tends to be. Conflict is common between teenagers and their parents, and other adults in their lives. They often disagree about what is acceptable and what is not. This usually results in arguments and/or fights. Sometimes, conflict results in extremely aggressive and hurtful actions and reactions on both sides.

In immigrant families, the difference or gap between parents and their teenagers can be even more significant. Immigrant teenagers will usually absorb their new culture more readily and easily than their parents, making them even more different from their parents. This can increase the source of conflict.

**Note: How and why immigrant teenagers assimilate to their new culture in a different manner from their parents will be explored in detail in Chapter 3.**

Conflict between teenagers and the adults in their lives makes this period very challenging and sometimes dangerous. The conflict can have permanent, negative effects on the lives of both the teenagers and their parents. The key is to find ways to resolve or deal with the conflict in a manner that will have a positive effect on the adult/teenager relationship.

## 2.2 Having a Relationship with Your Teenage Child

As discussed, closely supervising your teenage child and being involved in all aspects of your teen's life is extremely necessary. Most parents try to do this, but many times their efforts result in constant fights and general conflict with their teenager. Therefore, it is essential that parents create and maintain a good relationship with their teenager.

Creating and maintaining a good relationship with your teenager is the same as any other human relationship in your life. Mutual respect, remaining calm and using effective communication techniques are the keys to success in any relationship, whether it you are talking to a coworker, a spouse, or your teenager.

### **Respect**

In our interactions with the people in our lives, we all want to be treated with respect. Any form of disrespect, although it might not hurt us physically, hurts our dignity. Relationships where respect is absent or lost usually become frustrating and painful. At some point, the painful relationship stops existing.

Dignity is our sense pride and worth as human beings. Anything that is disrespectful to us and insults our dignity makes us question our worth as human beings. For adults, it is less likely that our self-esteem will be affected by disrespectful behaviour from individuals who are insignificant in our lives (e.g. rude driver who cuts us off and yells obscenities). If this behaviour comes from someone who is a big part of our lives (e.g. our boss, our friends, our brothers and sisters, our parents, our children) it can bruise our dignity and have negative effects on how we feel about ourselves.

This is why it is very difficult to remain calm when our teenage children are disrespectful. We love them and many times, we consider them our whole world. Their insults hurt us despite ourselves. Keeping this in mind, imagine what effect disrespect must have on the sensibility of a teenager whose self-confidence is only still in the process of being built. Parents are usually the most influential people in a teenager's life. Imagine the impact a parent's belittling words or behaviours have on a teenager's dignity. They can only be wounding and destructive, harming their budding sense of self.

Because we often see them as 'just kids', and although it is not our intention to offend, parents are sometimes not aware that certain types of behaviour insults our teenager's sense of dignity. An example of this would be dismissing something that the teen values as important as 'useless', 'stupid' or 'a waste of time'. As adults, if someone belittles or refers with disdain to something that is important to us, we are deeply offended. If that person is close

to us, we are deeply hurt. With teenagers, the situation is similar, but more intense. They think of themselves as %adults+ and have the need to be assertive. They crave respect for their choices and preferences (second autonomy phase). However, they are not adults, but nor are they children. They are in between. We need to keep this in mind when dealing with our teenagers. They like to be treated as adults because they are starting to look like adults. They think of themselves as %grown up+, but they still have the same needs that children have. They need structure, supervision and support.

In some cultures, maintaining a teenager's %obedience+ to adults is the number one goal for a parent. If the adult does not approve, the preferences, opinions or choices of a teen are viewed as irrelevant and even unacceptable. This is the norm in many cultures. It is not intended to hurt the child. On the contrary, it is meant to protect and guide her/him through strict control.

Children who grow up seeing this as %the way things are+ might not be as offended by their parents' expectation of compulsory obedience and dismissal of their personal opinions. Others may rebel against this. Either way, the result affects the teen's personal development. How the teen's brain becomes connected is also affected. Canadian culture fosters ideas of respect for a teenager's individuality and personal opinions. For example, it is quite acceptable for a native Canadian teenager to have some freedom to make decisions and choices on their own. They might say, %I'm going to the mall+ or %I'm going with my friends to see a movie+.

In the case of immigrant teens, there may be a vast difference between the cultural norms in their home, at school, and in the homes of their friends. This can be a significant source of even more conflict and disconnect between parents and their teenagers.

Parents might try to control their teenagers by requiring permission for any activity and prohibiting anything they do not approve of. In Canadian society, it is impossible to know what is going on or be present at every situation our children encounter. Often, we are unable to allow or prevent a situation from happening. We need to teach our children how to deal with certain situations themselves and make the right decisions. For this reason, forcing them to do the %right thing+ is not effective, because what happens when we are not there? We need our teenagers to buy into, or believe in, our reason for making a decision, to be convinced that that is the best thing for them. This is very hard to do because, as discussed in the previous chapter, the adolescent brain is still developing and teenagers are driven mainly by their emotions. It is crucial that we try not only to keep teenagers safe, but also teach them how to think and make decisions. This is one of the most important skills they need to develop while preparing for adulthood.

**So how do we get teenagers to buy into what we have to say? They must respect us. How do we get them to respect us? We must respect them.**

As discussed, teenagers learn by example and not by being told to do something. Young people, who act ~~%respectfully+~~ towards adults because they are afraid of punishment, are being forced to ~~%show+~~ respect. They do not show respect by choice, respect is not ~~%aspired+~~ in them, so they never truly respect adults. These individuals will in turn learn to expect ~~%respect+~~ only from those they can intimidate. If this behaviour has not been modeled for the child, the child will not learn how to gain the respect of others in any other way. Therefore, it is essential to model and treat our teenagers in the respectful manner that we want them to behave. **If we want them to address us and listen to us with respect, we need to address them and listen to them with respect. We must keep their dignity intact.**

Modeling a respectful manner, by addressing a teenager as an adult, will help the teen learn the ~~%skill+~~ to address an adult with respect. It will have a positive effect on the teenager's self-esteem and inspire true respect towards adults. It is important to respect a teenager's freedom to speak their mind and at least allow psychological independence. We want to avoid creating an environment where honest personal expression means getting in trouble, or involves dismissing, belittling or condemning the teen's ideas and feelings. This is to ensure we do not wound their dignity. We must also ensure they continue to communicate with us. If we respectfully listen to our teenagers, hopefully they will respectfully listen to us.

### ***Keeping Calm***

All that has been discussed so far is of course easier said than done. Sometimes, it is very difficult to listen respectfully to a teenager expressing that they think tattoos are ~~%cool+~~, or that they do not like religious practices because they are ~~%stupid+~~.

Remaining calm and not losing our temper is difficult. Like any other skill, it requires conscious practice and persistence. It is essential to work at remaining calm. Parents who can remain calm and keep emotions under control will be less likely to react in anger and say or do something hurtful. Hurtful words have a negative effect on the teenager's personality and self-confidence. They also damage the parent/teen relationship.

A parent modeling control, tolerance and love will teach a teenager how to react in stressful situations. The parent will also gain the teenager's respect. What a parent has to say will have a more significant impact on the teenager if it is said calmly. Adults are confronted with this same concept in our own lives. Take this scenario for example:

Cop pulls you over for failing to stop at a Stop sign

Angry Intimidating Cop	Calm Respectful Cop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You missed a Stop sign. Need to get somewhere fast or just can't be bothered to pay attention? Well, it's going to cost you. License and registration.</li> <li>Hands over ticket in a condescending way and walks off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hello Sir, I'm afraid you missed a Stop sign back there. It's very important to slow down. We have terrible accidents here because of people not stopping. May I have your license and registration, please?</li> <li>Hands over ticket, explains payment methods and wishes you a safe and good day.</li> </ul>
<p>Your Reaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angry and offended.</li> <li>Think of excuses to justify your behaviour.</li> <li>Resentment and diminished respect for cops.</li> </ul>	<p>Your Reaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bit angry, but mainly at yourself for not stopping.</li> <li>You are appreciative that the cop cares about people's safety and did not make the experience too unpleasant.</li> <li>You tell yourself you will never run a Stop sign again.</li> </ul>

When our teenagers express thoughts and ideas that are foreign and repulsive to us, it helps to remember that this is part of the phase they are going through. It is not necessarily something permanent. They are only now learning about the world. We want them to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts about what they see and experience. Therefore, our calm and controlled response is crucial to ensure they continue communicating with us.

Remaining calm is most difficult when our teenagers act disrespectfully towards us. They can push us as if testing the boundaries of how far they can go. In order to remain calm, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the following:

- Teenagers at this stage have a normal need to assert their independence.
- They are going through many developmental changes that significantly impact their mood and state of mind.
- Even though they look like adults, parts of their brain are still very childlike (remember when they were toddlers) and they are easily dominated by their emotions.
- At this stage, teenagers are learning how to deal with the world around them and they learn this from the significant role models in their lives

(parents). Every situation that calls for a reaction is a teaching or modeling opportunity.

### **Communication**

The basis for any relationship is communication. Our goal is to have good relationships with our teenagers, to remain close to them and guide them in an effective manner. Effective communication occurs when both parties are able to share and equally express themselves in an honest, respectful and empathetic manner.

Being empathetic means being able to understand and respect how the other person thinks and feels. It is seeing something through the other person's eyes without being judgmental. When we judge an idea as ~~%bad+~~ or ~~%wrong+~~, we are no longer ~~%communicating+~~ or sharing. Instead, we are having an argument or a debate where someone is right and the other is wrong. Only while effectively communicating will we have access to a teenager's open mind. Then we will be able to have an impact on how they think and have a permanent effect on their judgment and future decisions.

## 2.3 Ways to Communicate Effectively

Keeping in mind what has been previously discussed regarding respect and remaining calm when dealing with our teenagers, let us explore some practical communication methods to practice with our teens:

### **Get them talking**

Communicating effectively with our teenagers requires a lot of practice. It is essential to engage teenagers in conversation whenever the opportunity presents itself. Even if the teenager seemingly does not want to talk or resists conversation, eventually the teen will realize that the parent is a good listener. The parent is interested in and respects the teen's opinion. It is important to practice communication not only when there is a problem or an issue, but also when there is nothing in particular going on. Practical techniques to use are:

- Ask your teenager for their opinion about anything and everything and allow them the opportunity to talk without being interrupted.
- To keep the conversation going or to clarify, ask questions about what the teen has told you. Make sure the questions do not sound judgmental.
- Repeat what your teen has just told you and ask if you got it right. Always be respectful when referring to their opinions.
- Do not offer your opinion or judgment about their thoughts, but offer your own thoughts on the subject. Use this opportunity to communicate your own values.
- Do not argue about who is right or wrong. The idea is to share opinions. It is not a competition.

- Find a time of day and location that works for you and your teenager to talk at ease.

### ***Modeling Behaviour***

Having a teenage child can have a very positive effect on our own personal growth. As we discussed, modeling behaviour and not just preaching is the best way to get our children to do something. Remember, they learn by example not by being dictated to.

If we need to convince ourselves that we must start taking the necessary steps to become the person we always wanted to be, then becoming an ideal role model for your teen is probably the most persuasive argument. By becoming the best that we can be, we also become the best role model for our children. Before criticizing our teenager for raising their voice, not listening, or being inconsiderate, we must look at our own actions. Make certain that we are modeling the behaviours that we expect from them.

In an ideal world, a parent will be the person that a teenager looks up to and admires. The teen chooses to adopt the parent's behaviour and values gladly. This is not always the case, and many parents will say it is impossible to achieve. However, it is still worth the effort to try to become your child's hero. Continue communicating with your teen. Listen to what your child says about their needs, likes and dislikes. Strive to be the person you want them to be. Where possible, be open to making changes and adjustments. You can become your child's hero.

We all want our children to admit when they have made a mistake. To do this, we need to be able to model that behaviour for them. We all make mistakes. As parents, we have to be able to admit to our own mistakes and apologize for them when appropriate. This shows our teenager we are trying to do better.

The suggestions in this manual are not easy. Nor, will every parent be successful the first time trying them. The key is to be calm, caring and persistent.

Contrary to what some believe, modeling proud behaviour with our teens and having power struggles will not elevate a parent's status. A teenager must know that a parent is in control and will remain calm and collected. This makes children feel safe. It is not necessary for a teenager to feel dominated. From a child's point of view, when a parent apologizes for making a mistake, while showing self-respect, the parent's status increases. This kind of interaction is much more effective and significant than intimidation can ever be. It shows the degree of respect and esteem the parent has for the teenager.

### ***Conflict Avoidance and Resolution***

Conflict is hard to avoid when it comes to teenagers. There will always be points of disagreement and disconnect. When dealing with a problem with your

teen, it is important to communicate honestly and effectively. Setting the proper tone of the conversation can be useful. It will make both of you less defensive. Give your teenager something to keep in mind while talking. For instance, when talking about an issue, ask them to slow down and think about the possible repercussions of their words and actions. Let your teenager know where you are coming from. The following is an example of how a parent might begin a conversation with their teenager:

*I love you and always will, no matter what. I am your parent. I am responsible for you. I am supposed to guide you through life and teach you. That is OK because I have lived longer than you and I have more experience. It is okay to follow my guidelines because they are there to protect you and do what is best for you because I love you. Here are the rules...If you do not agree with them; I can discuss them with you. You and I can talk about what is acceptable. I am always here when you want talk to me about anything, if you need me to listen or answer your questions. Never be afraid to talk to me about anything.*

Saying something like this at the beginning of every dialogue about a problem will make your teenager more willing to listen. It will also help remind you that you want to be coming from a place of love. You are not allowing your anger about a problem to take over the conversation.

### **Asking vs. Telling**

Another technique that is effective, and commonly accepted in our Canadian society, is asking vs. telling. For example, "Can you please do this?" (Question mark) as opposed to "Do this." (Full stop). We do this, not to diminish the stature of the parent, but to show respect for the teenager. This approach demonstrates that you are counting on them to be responsible enough to follow what you are asking them.

It is like when a boss gives his employee instructions in the form of "Do this! Do that!" by ordering or telling the employee, rather than asking, "Can you please do this? Can you make sure that you follow this procedure?" The employee (or teenager) does not have an option. The teenager will be more responsive and happy to comply if asked, rather than told. This goes back to the concept of respect. In Canadian schools and other institutions, it is common for adults to instruct teenagers in an asking, rather than telling, tone. Teenagers become aware of and used to this communicative strategy and expect it at home. However, if the parent is always telling the teenager what to do, the teen becomes even more sensitive.

When discussing a problem, and after listening to what your teenager has to say in a non-judgmental and calm fashion, it is time to state your opinion and your decision on the issue. It is important that you understand your teenager's point of view and repeat what you have heard. This proves that you understand their concerns. Next, explain how you see the situation. Explain the basis for your

decision: *“Because I love you, and only want the best for you, my decision is as follows...”* It is important for a parent to clearly state the rationale and thoughts behind a decision. Do not tell your teenager that this opinion should be theirs as well.

Allowing yourself to give the teenager freedom to have their own thoughts and emotions is an important entitlement. Your teenager will feel respected, not trapped. Your teen will know that the parents are not trying to control their thoughts. Hopefully, if parents are effective in modeling their values, constantly and casually letting their teenager know what those values are, teens will internalize those same values and live by them as adults.

### **Consistency**

Consistency in parenting means following a certain way of doing things, no matter what. It is like trying to get in shape. When improving our physical fitness, we have to be consistent, exercising regularly to build physical conditioning. We know this is not always easy. This is also true when it comes to parenting strategies. Maintaining consistency as a parent is very trying on your patience. The very fast-paced nature of our lives today can intensify these difficulties. However, it is important to be as consistent as possible with your teenager. Remember that teenagers are still partly children. They crave structure and routine by nature. Teens tend to be less anxious in a more predictable environment.

Consistency is also important to keep in mind when it comes to making rules for your teenager. The rules you make should let your teenager know what your expectations are, what is acceptable, what is not acceptable. Along with the rules, or expected behaviours, go the consequences. Your teenager should know the consequences of following and not following the rules. It is very important to create clear rules. Give your teenager a clear picture of how we do things in this house.

Rules evolve. As a parent, you should adjust the rules as a result of dialogue and study, not on the spur of the moment. Your rules should be as simple as possible. Otherwise, your teenager may feel like they are navigating through life with a very complicated map. In your conversations with your teenager, give frequent, friendly reminders about the rules and the consequences that go with them.

### **Consequences vs. Punishment**

In Canada, many parents talk about consequences as opposed to punishment. Consequences are natural outcomes. They occur as a result of something happening. They can be negative or positive (a reward for a job well done). Punishments are usually designed to cause pain: emotional, psychological or physical. They are meant to hurt or humiliate. Many parents believe every child has weak spot. In other words, there is something you can

take away (phone, internet, going out) to hurt them. As parents, we should not want to hurt, or humiliate, our children. Hurting children is never for their own good. Punishments do not teach children and teenagers anything other than "If I do (or don't do) this, my parent will hurt me." These thoughts breed anger and resentment. Your teenager may obey you, but is likely acting out of fear and/or a desire to avoid being hurt. This is not a healthy way to develop a good relationship, especially if we remember the concept of respect.

A consequence, unlike a punishment, is designed to act as a lesson. In its best form, a consequence is a result or outcome directly related to the teenager's mistake. In the end, a consequence will help your teen understand why following the rules is important. Your teen will also understand the negative effects of not following the rules. Part of a consequence can be making amends. Making amends can help a teenager feel redeemed and helps move the focus away from the wrongdoing. We do not want our children to think of themselves as "bad people." We want them to believe that they can do better. Consequences are hard to come up with. It is a good idea to give yourself time to think about what is appropriate. This will also give you time to get over any existing anger. Implementing consequences is more involved and time consuming than doling out punishments, but in the long run worth the effort.

**Example: Consequence vs. Punishment**

Misbehaviour: Watching porn

Punishment	Consequence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yelling</li> <li>• Grounded for two weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish watching it with them.</li> <li>• Talk about the lives of the people on screen.</li> <li>• Tell them that you understand why they are attracted to this.</li> <li>• Assign a research paper on the effects of porn on individuals and society as a whole.</li> </ul>
<p>Lesson Learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My parent is willing to hurt me and does not understand what I am going through.</li> <li>• I better be more secretive about watching porn.</li> <li>• If I get caught, it will cost me two weeks.</li> </ul>	<p>Lesson Learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My parent understands me and why I want to watch this.</li> <li>• My parent wants to prove to me that watching porn can hurt me.</li> <li>• Porn can destroy lives.</li> </ul>

Many institutions in our world today ensure compliance through a system of penalties. It is worth thinking about how that makes us feel and whether this is the way we want to conduct our relationships with our children.

### ***Learning from Mistakes***

Things do not always go according to plan. Teenagers, like anyone, will make mistakes and do things they are not supposed to. Try not to be too disappointed or angry when they do. Mistakes, problems, challenges, or any kind of teenage trouble, are always opportunities to teach teenagers something new; something that they can use in the future. The key is to handle the situation in a way that ensures our teenagers come out on the other side having learned a life skill. Ensure that they do not just become more frustrated with themselves and us. Imagine where we would be without our mistakes and the lessons learned from them.

## **SECTION 1: CHAPTER 3**

### **CULTURE AND INTEGRATION**

#### **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Gain an understanding of the difficulties teenagers face while adapting to a new culture
- Understand the impact the parents' integration style choice has on their relationship with their teenager
- Examine ways parents can help their teenagers maintain their culture and traditions
- Have parents consider how cultural experiences influence the teenagers' view of their culture

#### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- Immigrant teens between cultures
- Acculturation styles
- Cultural experiences

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Discuss the following topics amongst the group:
  - How to give your child a true sense of identity within and outside your heritage community
  - How to give your child a great edge in the labour market through bilingualism or multilingualism
  - How to motivate your child to always want to learn more about your heritage, language and culture

#### **OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

#### **Key points about...**

- Immigrant teens between cultures:
  - Barriers confronted by immigrant youth include emotional, educational and cultural. These barriers affect the ease of acculturation.
  - Emotional barriers include lack of support system, low self-esteem, and culture shock. Educational barriers include inability to socialize with peers and teachers, acclimatizing to unfamiliar situations and school systems, language barriers, heavy academic workload (ESL).

Cultural factors include ignorance of Canadian expectations and insecurities about appropriate behaviours.

- Acculturation Styles:
  - Distinctions can be created between familial and individual acculturation. Each family member may choose a different style. The culture of the new country itself may require the family or individual to adopt a certain style (E.g. multiculturalism vs. melting pot).
  - If a variation occurs between the parent(s) and the teen, the family members may gradually separate, as their values no longer match.
  
- Cultural Experiences:
  - Having teenagers engage in traditional cultural experiences can reinforce their belief in, and internalization of, cultural values. They experience cultural values in a pleasant and social way. When teenagers engage in cultural activities that teach them about the world and their culture, they build a sense of pride. This sense of pride is based strongly on personal knowledge about their own heritage. They develop more cultural awareness and acquire values that will make them successful in Western society.

## SECTION 1: CHAPTER 3

### CULTURE AND INTEGRATION

#### PARTICIPANT'S NOTES

#### Contents of this Chapter

- Immigrant teens between two cultures
- Acculturation styles
- Cultural experiences

#### Goals for this Chapter

- Gain an understanding of the difficulties teenagers face while adapting to a new culture
- Understand the impact the parents' integration style choice has on their relationship with their teenager
- Examine ways parents can help their teenagers maintain their culture and traditions
- Have parents consider how cultural experiences influence the teenagers' view of their culture

We have talked about how to connect and communicate with our teens. Now we will explore some of the challenges they face as young immigrants. You will learn what problems to expect and how to deal with them.

#### 3.1 Immigrant Teens Between Two Cultures

Immigrant teens are usually expected to play several and varied roles simultaneously: the excelling student, the socially acceptable teen, a model immigrant, a dutiful son or daughter, and sometimes the official family interpreter. They often have to deal with issues too grownup for their age.

Like immigrant adults, our teens face many barriers. These barriers make the process of integration, or settling into their new environment, very difficult. With high expectations placed on them by parents, school, community and peers, in addition to all the physical and developmental changes they are going through, teens can find themselves under a significant amount of stress.

To help make the process for immigrant youth easier, it is important to have a clear understanding of the obstacles they must overcome while finding their place in Canadian society.

- **Emotional barriers:**

- Friends and extended family, who acted as their support system and/or a source of emotional fulfillment, are now absent.
  - Feelings of %not fitting in+ and being %different from everybody else+ can cause low self-esteem, isolation and loneliness.
  - The shock of suddenly finding themselves exposed to a new culture that they do not understand can make them confused, scared and anxious.
- **Educational barriers:**
    - The pressure to quickly comprehend and get used to a new school system.
    - Learning a new curriculum, trying to catch up in certain subjects and adopting new practices. For example, in some countries, students are not expected to write essays or use computers.
    - Learning English as a second language, while trying not to fall behind in other classes, involves a lot of extra schoolwork.
- **Cultural barriers:**
    - Teenagers may not know how to behave in a new culture. They are unsure about what is acceptable and what is not.
    - They have anxieties about saying/doing the wrong thing, and not being socially accepted by their peers.
    - They are acutely aware of the cultural differences between their new surroundings and normal family life, but don't know how to bridge, or deal with, that gap.

Cultural barriers are usually the most difficult to deal with. Unless you and your teen make a conscious effort to manage them, many teens end up being %orn+between the two cultures.

Depending on where they are and whom they are with, immigrant teens often feel the need to %switch modes.+ They change how they talk, act and react. Often, an immigrant teen's life/culture at home is completely different from their life/culture outside the home. To accommodate this dichotomy, the teen can appear to be two different people. However, many teenagers lack the skills to deal with this double life. They have trouble because the barriers are too great.

This can negatively impact the teen's ongoing process of creating identity and sense of self. Their Canadian culture persona is not acceptable to their family, and their ethnic culture persona is not acceptable to peers.<sup>viii</sup>

Dealing with this predicament can be a great source of stress for our teens. It also puts a great amount of strain on the parent/child relationship. It is important for parents to make a conscious decision about how they want their teens to deal with this issue. Each family is unique. In order to make a decision that works for the family, it is important to understand the different types of integration and acculturation styles.

Acculturation is when a person adopts a new culture, or parts of it, adjusting personal values to become part of, or integrate into, a new society.

### 3.2 Acculturation Styles

The three main styles, or types, of **acculturation** are:

- **Uni-cultural (One Culture) Style**

The immigrant family will try to raise their children according to the traditions and culture of their home country. They will try to protect their children from exposure to the host country's culture. The uni-cultural style can create parent/teenager conflict when the teenager wants to adopt aspects of their host culture. The uni-cultural style may make it difficult for the teen to lead a normal life outside the home. This style makes the teen continually feel like an outsider in the new society. There is no way to consolidate the parent's culture with the new culture. This style might put teens in the situation where they have to choose between the two cultures. This will have a significant influence on the teenager's entire life, especially on their relationships with parents.

- **Rapid Assimilation Style**

The immigrant parents will try to raise their children according to the culture of the new country. They will keep their own culture, traditions and values to themselves. This may be easiest for teens since they are allowed to do everything they need to do to fit in to their new environment. However, this will require that the parents surrender at least some of their personal values and culture. If the parents choose to privately hold on to some of their own values, they might find that over time they become alienated from their children. The parents' personal values and beliefs will become too different from their children's values and beliefs.

- **Bi-cultural Style**

The immigrant family will try to maintain their home culture as much as possible - in the privacy of their home and in their personal affairs. Outside the home, they will encourage their children to fit in to the host country's culture in their style of dress, behaviour and other areas. This is the hardest style to adopt because it requires a lot of parent/teen decision-making and communication regarding what is acceptable and not acceptable in the host country's culture. It becomes very challenging to ensure that the teens remain interested in their home country's culture while they are actively involved in adopting the new culture. This style can cause a lot of confusion. The rules are often not black and white since the family is not subscribing solely to one culture, or the other.<sup>x</sup>

The reason why a family immigrated, how different their culture is to the new culture, and how tolerant their values allow them to be of the new culture, will all influence the style of acculturation that a family might choose.<sup>x</sup> It is important to make a conscious choice about which style to adopt, to be aware of the difficulties we might face, and to be prepared. The style you choose will affect you and your relationship with your child. Teens will always see and be exposed to Canadian culture and family norms very different from those in their own home. This will cause them to compare and sometimes question what is taking place at home.

It is important to keep lines of communication with our teenagers open, especially with regard to this issue. Then we may know their thoughts and concerns. We, as parents, can address these concerns and make the best decisions for our children's, and our family's, wellbeing.

### **Exercise 3.2 - What are "Canadian" parents like?**

***If you ask your teen about the parents of non-immigrant peers, what answers do you think you will receive?***

- What do you think about your %Canadian+friendsqparents?
- What do you like/not like about them and their relationship with their children?
- What do you like/not like about their lifestyle?

***Would you be willing to ask your teen these questions?***

### **3.3 Cultural Experiences**

It is important for many immigrant families that their children are proud and feel attached to their cultural heritage. Culture and personal values are usually closely connected. Creating these connections can sometimes be a challenge. Telling or forcing our teenagers to %like+their cultural heritage usually does not work and might foster resentment.

Often, teens will see culture, traditions and religious practices as ~~un-cool~~. They might seem strange and embarrassing in the context of Canadian society. We can offer our cultural heritage to teens in a context that makes it seem advantageous for them. There are many different techniques to foster pride and attachment to cultural heritage in our teens:

- Find out (research if need be) and communicate the positive and interesting aspects of your cultural traditions in a consistent but casual manner.
- Communicate how having a different culture and language makes you culturally diverse and therefore interesting and unique.

- Emphasize how Canadian society as a whole is very interested in ethnic culture, food, music and dance by attending community events and other multicultural functions.
- Find out what your child values, thinks, and show your teen where similar beliefs and ideas are represented in your culture.
- Allow your teen to practice their cultural heritage in a Canadian context by taking part in extracurricular activities. These could include traditional dance, or being active in a youth committee in a cultural association or religious institution.
- Model tolerance when talking about Canadian culture. Your teen should not perceive that the family's culture is %against+ the larger society. Subscribing to a cultural heritage does not mean rejecting Canadian culture.
- Try to surround your family with people who show appreciation for your ethnic culture.
- Encourage your teen to invite friends over to learn about the family's culture. First, ask your child how to deal with friends. Respect requests and do not be offended.
- Teach by example. Show your teen how you lead a successful life as an active member of society. Show them that celebrating your cultural heritage only further enriches your life.

Getting your teen to truly appreciate their cultural heritage usually takes a lot of work and patience on your part. Keep in mind that we want our teens to associate only positive feelings with their cultural heritage. For example, they can increase their self-esteem through developing and sharing a talent, a sense of belonging, or spiritual fulfillment.

## **SECTION 1: CHAPTER 4**

### **SEXUALITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING**

#### **FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Discuss cultural differences in dating, relationships and sexuality
- Help parents understand the importance of sexual education
- Have parents understand their role, in the Canadian context, regarding relationships, dating and sexual education
- Help parents assert their family beliefs and discuss ways of sharing these with their teenagers
- Give parents an understanding of what their teens need to know and when
- Discuss characteristics of teens who abstain from sex

#### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- What is sexuality?
- The parent's role: The Importance of Talking to Your Teen About Dating, Sexuality and Contraception
- How to talk to your teen about sexuality and topics of discussion
- Sexual development of teenagers: What they need to know and when
- Encouraging abstinence in your teen by enhancing other aspects of their lives

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Have parents brainstorm about aspects of a person's sexuality.
- Have parents role play by asking and answering the questions suggested as topics of discussion with your teen+
  - Encourage honest answers and respond to any questions parents may have
  - Emphasize it is okay for parents to respond "I don't know" but that they can find out together with their teen
  - Show videos on sexual education

#### **OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

##### **Key points about...**

- What is sexuality:
  - Expressing individual sexuality is tied to culture, religion and personal values. Typical male and female roles and behaviours are usually connected to cultural traditions and lifestyles.

- Western culture tends to encourage free expression of sexuality, as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others.
- Sexuality is more than just gender and sex. It includes relationships, behaviours and attitudes that may change throughout a person's life.
- The parent's role: The Importance of Talking to Your Teen About Dating, Sexuality and Contraception:
  - Because the media in Western culture and peer pressure heavily influence teenagers' lives
  - The portrayal of sexuality in Western culture, as expressed through the media, emphasizes public displays of affection which may be interpreted as no need for abstinence or marriage
  - Teenagers get most of their information, or misinformation, from the media
  - Sexual health education provided in schools focuses mainly on the biological aspects of sexuality
  - Because of school policy, teachers avoid discussing their own religious or cultural values
  - School lessons do not usually dictate what behaviours teenagers should, or should not, engage in
  - Parents should discuss with teenagers the responsibilities that come with a romantic or sexual relationship and state clear expectations of what is acceptable behaviour for their teenager in this family.
  - It is the parent's role to teach their child the values and responsibilities attached to sexuality
- How to talk to your teen about sexuality and topics of discussion
  - Provide and share relevant factual, practical information
  - Share personal experiences to create a greater connection with your teenager
  - Assure your teen that their experiences, confusion and questions are common and are a normal part of growing up
- Sexual development of teenagers: What they need to know and when
  - Teenagers will explore aspects of their sexuality as a healthy way of forming their own identity
  - In asserting what is acceptable to their family and to them, they learn what sexuality means to them
  - Sexual health education is most useful when used as a preventative tool. It can start at any age, and open communication about sexuality between parents and children ensures a strong relationship where issues of any kind can be discussed confidentially and information can be obtained.

- The facilitator can access: <http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca/> as a source for further information, handouts, and videos, and to provide a reference for parents to explore with their teenager.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 4**  
**RELATIONSHIPS, DATING AND SEXUALITY**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

**Content of this Chapter**

- What is sexuality?
- The parents' role: The importance of talking to your teen about dating, sexuality and contraception
- How to talk to your teen about sexuality and topics of discussion
- Sexual development of children: What they need to know and when
- Encouraging abstinence in your teen by enhancing other aspects of their life

**Goals for this Chapter**

- Discuss what ~~sexuality~~sexuality refers to and how the concept differs from one culture to another
- Understand the importance of sexual education and talking to our teens about it
- Learn about the sexual education your children will receive outside of the home
- Understanding our role as the main educators about sexuality, for our teens
- Understand what our children need to know and when
- Explore ways of communicating with our teens about sexuality while asserting personal values
- Discuss how we can encourage abstinence by enhancing other aspects of their lives

**4.1 What is Sexuality?**

Sexuality refers to more than just the act of sex. Sexuality includes many concepts:

- Gender roles . What it means to be female or male and the ~~roles~~roles each has in a family and society
- Self-image . How we see and feel about ourselves and our bodies
- Physical changes and development . The natural bodily changes that occur with age
- Human relationships . The nature of our relationships with those around us, how we behave, and how we feel about others

- Sexual desires and preferences . Our personal tastes and orientation when it comes to romantic and sexual relations
- Reproduction . The biology of having a baby<sup>xi</sup>

#### **Exercise 4.1 - What is sexuality to you?**

Have parents brainstorm aspects of individual sexuality.

Sexuality is how we feel, think and behave in regards to our gender, relationships, bodies and sexual impulses. It is important to acknowledge that exploring one's sexuality is a normal and healthy part of being human.

This is a concept that is sometimes difficult to come to terms with when it comes to our children. The concept of sexuality becomes increasingly important as our children enter their teenage years because exploring their sexuality is part of developing their individual identities. It is important for teens to have a healthy concept of their own sexuality, as part of their overall wellbeing. Their sexuality should not become a source of negative feelings (e.g. shame, confusion, guilt, fear, disgust or regret).

All cultures explore sexuality in one way or another. This exploration differs from culture to culture. Factors affecting how sexuality is expressed include:

- Culture and social norms
- Religion
- Personal values

As immigrants, it is important to recognize that Canadian, cultural and social norms may be very different from our home country. The exploration and expression of sexuality in the family's new country will be different from what they are accustomed to.

As adults, our sexual identities are probably already fully developed. Immigrating to a country where sexuality is expressed in a very different way than our home country may have no effect on us. However, it will have an immense impact on our children, who are still in the process of exploring their sexuality and going through their sexual development stages.

Our teenagers' sexual identities are developing and they can be heavily influenced by the more public exploration of sexuality that occurs in Canadian culture. Being actively involved in your child's sexual education will ensure that your personal values and factual knowledge are a strong part of that education. Parents can ensure they have a significant influence on their teenagers' sexual

education and minimize their children's reliance on information from the media and/or peers.

#### 4.2 The parents role: The Importance of Talking to Your Teen About Dating, Sexuality and Contraception

In contemporary Canadian society, there are many sources of information about sexuality and sexual health:

- Mass media - television, movies, internet, radio, magazines, books & literature and music
- School - sexual education programs
- Community service providers . healthcare providers, community resources providing literature and counselling
- Peers . friends and siblings

The nature and quality of the messages and information that reach our children from any of these sources can differ greatly from one source to another. The majority of messages regarding sexuality delivered to our youth through mass media foster unrealistic, exaggerated, obsessive ideas. They encourage youth to strive to be as ~~sexy~~ as the characters being represented.

Schools in Canada offer sexual health education programs about the biological aspects of the reproductive system. Children learn the proper names for various parts of the body. They learn about their entitlement to privacy, and how to deal with inappropriate advances on their person. School programs also address pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and diseases, as well as protection against these. Students are taught about other dangers, including psychological and physical abuse by sexual partners. The curriculum stresses abstinence, or not engaging in sexual activity of any kind, as the best protection against these dangers. Students also learn about self-protection through contraception.

Value statements and moral messages offered by school sponsored sexual education programs are very limited:

- Promoting the individual's self-worth, respect and dignity
- Content is age-appropriate and taught in a culturally sensitive manner, while respecting individual sexual diversity, abilities, and choices
- Promoting sensitivity to, and awareness of, the impact individual behaviours and actions may have on others and society
- Equal access to relevant, appropriate, accurate and comprehensive information<sup>xii</sup>

A common concern among immigrant parents is that educating our children about sexuality and how to safely engage in sexual activity encourages

promiscuity. However, research shows that teens who are well informed about sexual health tend to postpone becoming sexually active until later in their lives.<sup>xiii</sup>

We cannot be with our children all the time. We have to give them the tools to make the right decisions when we are not around. These tools are knowledge (so they will always have the facts, and cannot be told otherwise), and an elevated sense of responsibility and self-worth (so they are able to protect themselves). Hopefully, by giving teenagers these tools through positive communication, they will conduct themselves in line with their family's values

Peers, and other individuals in a child's life, are also a source of sexual information and ideas about sexuality. From them, our children can receive very distorted and unhealthy concepts about how to explore sexuality. Teens will always talk to their friends, but they also need their parents. If their parents aren't talking to them to assess the information, or misinformation+they are receiving from other sources, then our teens have no alternative but to use this information to form their ideas and beliefs about sexuality.

It is clear that there are many sources of information and influential messages about sexuality. Some are good. Some are bad. Our children will be exposed to them (by surfing the internet and talking to their friends) whether they actively seek the information, or not. It is critical that parents act as mediators and that they become the principal source of reliable information for their children. It is also critical that parents be the main influence in their children's development of personal values and beliefs about sexuality. If parents do not help their children form these values, other influences will.

#### 4.3 How to talk to your teen about sexuality and topics of discussion

Talking to your children about sexuality can be very uncomfortable for both parents and children. It is vitally important to become comfortable with talking to your children. The more you practice, the easier it becomes.

Start talking to your kids about sexuality and their bodies at a very early age. This is the best solution. Your children become used to using you, the parent, as their main source of information, especially as they move into their teenage years. However, it is never too late to begin talking to your teen about sexuality. Anything is better than nothing at all.

Regardless the topic, having a conversation with your children, especially your teen, can be a challenge. It is important that parents establish themselves as their teen's best source and first contact for ideas, concerns and answers about sexuality. This means building a very trusting and open relationship with your child.

Children learn about sexuality from their parent in two main ways. First, is through observing behaviours and attitudes about sexuality at home. Second, is from talking to their parents about it.

Children learn about sexuality from their parents by observing

- The gender roles of females and males in the family
- The way that people touch other
- Acceptable, and unacceptable, behaviours and forms of expression (even if they are unsure about reasons)
- How to talk about the body and which words to use, or not use
- Relationships (e.g. a married couple)

Parents can communicate their beliefs and attitudes about sexuality just like other behaviours and values, by modeling them. By being a consistent parental role model, your teen will internalize your behaviours and values. This is why it is important for parents to do some work regarding their beliefs and values with respect to sexuality. Parents must decide what messages they want to give their children.

As parents, you want your children to grow up into healthy and happy adults. Parents are their children's primary role models. They need to be clear about their own ideas regarding family values, sexuality, and healthy sexual development. It is important to reflect on your own experiences. Look at which aspects of your own sexual development were positive and effective. Also, reflect on which aspects could have been done differently, to minimize confusion and make your own teenage years easier.

Over time, and after being exposed to a new culture and set of ideals, it is common for adults to adjust some of their values and beliefs. Parents might find that some of their ideas about gender roles and expectations in a family might be different from what was modeled during their childhood. These may even be different from what you have been modeling to your own children, so far. This is an opportunity to adjust what you are now modeling to your children. You want them to be better people. Use this opportunity to make adjustments in your own life, to be the person you always wanted and become a better role model for your kids.

Nevertheless, teaching by example only goes half way. Children need to know specific information. They should discuss their questions and concerns with an adult who can guide them. As a parent, it is very important to develop skills and learn techniques that enhance your ability to have an open dialogue with your teenager about sexuality. Here are some tips to help you talk to your teenager about sexuality:

- Accept that it may be awkward and embarrassing to talk to your teenager about sex. Do it anyway. Initiate conversations on a regular basis.  
*If you can tell your child that you are embarrassed, your child will relate to your feelings and be more accepting of the message.*
- Choose a quiet and relaxed time to have conversations. Make use of opportunities.  
*Never begin a conversation when you are rushed. Try to have these conversations in a casual manner with no immediate agenda. Car rides, doing chores, or walking are all good opportunities for such open conversations because direct eye contact is not necessary.*
- Become knowledgeable about sexual health and sexuality.  
*You do not have to become an expert, but inform yourself about topics your teen might ask you about. There are many books and other useful resources to help you. Find out about the sexual health education being taught at your child's school and build on that.*
- Along with facts, talk about feelings, relationships, and how other people are affected by them.  
*This will help children become more caring and less likely to experience regret.*
- If you are just beginning to talk to your teen, acknowledge that you are starting these discussions late or that you are changing your views, opening your mind.  
*Children are forgiving. They will appreciate your willingness to admit a mistake and they will learn a valuable lesson for when they make mistakes.*
- Try to make resources available in your home, where your children can get correct information.  
*If children have access to age appropriate books, they will read them, even if they will not talk to you. There are some good videos and websites as well. Be aware that some of these may not be suitable, or may not match your family's beliefs.*
- Answer questions simply, directly, honestly and without judgment.  
*If you do not know the answer to a question, say so, and tell your teen you will find out for them. You can also search for and find the answer together.*
- Try not to talk down to your child. Be a calm and understanding listener.  
*To keep communication open and ongoing, teens need to have their feelings and concerns validated and respected. Allow your teen the psychological freedom to have their own opinions of sexuality, regardless*

*of how disagreeable those opinions are to you. Respecting your teen's opinions and listening calmly will ensure your child continues to talk to you about issues. You will be in the know about what is going on with your teen.*

- Constantly communicate and model your values consistently. Expect your teen to challenge you.  
*Teenagers want to be independent and have their own identities. Parents want that too, but as a role model you must continuously say what you believe and model your values in your daily life. You have every right to maintain your values. If you object to your child having sex, as a parent, you must set the rules. Continue to keep communication open, as tough as it may be for you.*
- Try not to scare your teen into compliance through threats and ultimatums.  
*Anger and threats do not work. They only make teens secretive and create conflict. Instead, you can promote taking responsibility for actions. Guide your teenager by constantly informing them of the reasons for the values you follow. You also have to recognize that your children will make mistakes just as you did. That they can learn from their mistakes. You also have to make sure they know you love them unconditionally.<sup>xiv</sup>*

Try to utilize opportunities as they present themselves, so that conversations are more casual and less of a *chore*. Here are some topics you can try discussing with your teen:

### **Gender**

- What does it mean to be male or female?
- How are males and females different? Alike?
- How are males and females *supposed* to act?
- Is there a double standard for males and females? Should there be?

### **Appearance**

- What is attractive?
- Do people have to be young to be attractive?
- What messages are you sending in the way you dress?
- How do these messages affect your relationships with other people?

### **Relationships**

- What makes a good relationship?
- How are relationships different? (boyfriend, parent, child, business)
- How should people show affection?
- How can people resolve disagreements?

### **The Family**

- What makes a family?

- What rules does your family have about privacy?
- What responsibilities does each family member have?

### Sexual Communication

- What attitudes do people have about: talking about sexuality? Sexual slang? Physical affection?
- Why do people often laugh and make jokes about sexuality?
- What is sexual harassment?

### Life Choices

- What do people think about teens and sexual behaviour? Abortion? Contraception? Homosexuality? Choices in adulthood? (staying single, getting married, parenthood)

### Exercise 4.2 – Talking to your teen about sexuality

Role-play by asking and answering the questions above. Try using the statements below:

Conversation Openers	Conversation Closers
What do you think?	You are too young.
That's a good question.	That's none of your business.
Tell me what you know about that?	Where did you hear that?
Do you know what that word means?	If you say that again, I'll
Help me understand how you're feeling.	I don't care what your friends are doing.
Let's look that up online.	That's only for boys (girls)
I'm really happy you told me about that.	We'd talk about that when you need to know.

### 4.4 Sexual development of children: What they need to know and when

Here are some guidelines about what you can teach your children about sexuality, from middle childhood to adolescence, according to their sexual, physical and cognitive development stages:

#### Middle Childhood 6-8 years

Physical Development	Sexual Development	What they should know
Experience slower growth spurts	Begin to explore masculine and feminine aspects of gender identity.	Proper names of body parts and functions
Grow longer legs relative to the size of their bodies and	Curiosity focused play with friends of both sexes is	Details about how babies are made

begin to resemble adults more in this respect	common.	
Begin to grow more muscle and less fat	Masturbation becomes more about the pleasurable sensation.	Details about where babies develop in the mother and where they come out
Increase in strength	Begin to develop a sense of privacy.	The difference between the reproductive system and the digestive system
Lose baby teeth and adult teeth come in	Begin to ask questions about the things they hear about; pregnancy, menstruation, sexually transmitted infections/diseases (STIs & STDs)	Menstruation and night emissions as normal healthy processes that girls and boys go through when they are older
Better able to use more small and large motor skills for activities like sports and dance		Basic information about body changes that take place during puberty

### Late Childhood 9-12 years

Physical Development	Sexual Development	What they should know
Experience significant growth spurt characterized by significant weight gain, height and increase in size of other body parts	Are curious about love and sex	More detailed information about bodily changes during puberty
Will enter puberty . their bodies will begin to look like adult bodies	Same sex friends are very important. Peer groups are very important when it comes to tastes and preferences.	Basic information about STIs & STDs and pregnancy
Skin becomes more oily and may develop acne	Interest in the opposite sex is more social than sexual.	How to be critical of distorted ideas the media promotes (e.g. the "perfect body")
Will sweat more and might develop body odor	Interested in knowing more details about sexual topics such as STIs, pregnancy, etc.	How to talk about the way sexuality is portrayed in the media
Hair begins to develop in different areas of the body	Are often interested in how the media portrays sexuality.	How to talk about the way sexuality is exaggerated in some forms of media and the participants are exploited and robbed of their dignity
Girls could begin menstruating and boys will begin to have night emissions in a year or two		That a teenager does NOT have to be sexually active

### Adolescence 13-18 years

Physical Development	Sexual Development	What they should know
Bodily changes due to puberty continue at a fast pace but then slow down	Dating, intimacy, relationships are explored	Detailed information about STIs and STDs and unwanted pregnancies
Increase in sex drive due to hormones	Peer acceptance continues to be very significant	Proper information about contraceptives, how to use

		them and their potential failure
	Become more demanding of their freedom and sense of autonomy	Proper information about emergency contraception
	Interested in having sexual experiences	How substance abuse will impair their judgment and could be the cause for life altering mistakes
	Sexual orientation emerges	Differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships
	Relationships begin to occur but are usually short-lived	Skills to use in relationships, such as negotiation, refusal and breaking away skills <sup>xv</sup>

#### 4.5 Encouraging Abstinence in Your Teen by Enhancing Other Aspects of Their Life

Most parents want their teens to abstain from sexual intercourse because of cultural and religious beliefs, or simply as the best and healthiest course of action for them at this point in their lives.

Research shows there are certain personality traits and characteristics shared by youth who voluntarily abstain from sex. Parents can teach, model and encourage these life-skills and tendencies at home. You can enhance your teens' quality of life as a whole and make your children into the kind of people you want them to be. Teens who voluntarily abstain from sex commonly share the following traits:

1. Have focus on long-term goals
2. Willingness to postpone current pleasures for larger future rewards
3. Perseverance, as in the ability to stick to a task or commitment
4. A belief that current behaviours can affect the future
5. Impulse control, including ability to control emotions and desires
6. Resistance to peer influence
7. Respect for parental and social values
8. Sense of self-worth and personal dignity<sup>xvi</sup>

Teens learn these life skills by being active both inside and outside of school. Academics, sports, arts and community involvement help teach and reinforce all of these life skills. These activities teach discipline and commitment.

They also increase self-esteem, keeping teens actively engaged and occupying their time effectively. You can help your teen develop long-term goals and think about their future plans by offering casual and subtle suggestions. Help them do research and act as a sounding board when they are deciding what to do. Stand by their interests and decisions whenever possible. These suggestions take a lot of time and effort and can be costly. However, it will be time, energy and money well spent.

For resources on sexual health, information and support please refer to Chapter 10 . Resources for Parents.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 5**  
**PEER RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES**  
**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

**SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Discuss the idea of peer orientation and the significance of attachments
- Discuss why teens engage in violence
- Create an awareness of the existence of bullying and discuss its effects
- Create an awareness of the existence of gangs and their effects on youth

**CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- Peer relationships and attachments
- Violence
- Gangs
- Bullying

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Discuss family attitudes towards violence:
  - What are appropriate ways for solving a problem in your family?
  - Between adults?
  - Between children?

Have parents discuss the differences, if any.

- Have parents list the names of two or three of their teenager's good friends.
  - Do they know who they are? Have they talked to them? Do these friends share their family values?
  - This is a good activity for parents to realize the importance of maintaining good connections with their teenager, including knowing their child's friends.
- Have parents brainstorm reasons why teenagers might find joining a gang appealing.
  - Have parents think about how these same needs can be met through more healthy relationships with family, friends, etc.

**OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

**Key points about...**

- Peer Relationships and Attachments:
  - It is important for parents to understand the significance of attachment in youth. Attachment is an effective method of socialization. Considering the emotional stage teenagers are going through, it is important to consider the social connections your teenager is making or strengthening. Teens base their connections with peers on feelings of being cared for, responsiveness and mutual understanding. Attachment can become quite secure. The danger is in whether the relationship is productive, helpful or beneficial to your teenager. If not, their peer relationships can be quite harmful (e.g. participating in sports vs. joining a gang). Parental presence, communication and caring, can help teens develop more secure and positive attachments with their family and peers.
- Violence:
  - Violence is a learned behaviour. Some youth may see it as a conventional way to gain power and social status. Some may use violence as a compelling way to achieve their goals.
  - The media and various social contexts (family, neighbourhood, school, peer) are factors that play a major role in the development of youth violence and delinquency.
- Gangs:
  - Gang composition varies. In gangs, previously alienated teenagers find refuge, acceptance and increased social status.
  - Gangs appeal to social minorities who feel marginalized because of culture, language, race, and/or social status. Gangs fulfill the basic human need for acceptance. They give their members a sense of community when it is lacking elsewhere.
- Bullying:
  - Bullying is a pattern of persistent aggression towards a child. Peer rejection usually follows. Bullying is linked to long-term problems for the victim. Suicide can be one.
  - Bullying happens because of power imbalances between the bullied child and the bully.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 5**  
**PEER RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Content of this Chapter

- Peer relationships and attachments
- Violence
- Bullying
- Gangs

Goals for this Chapter

- Discuss the idea of peer orientation and the significance of attachments
- Discuss why some teenagers display violent behaviour
- Learn about bullying, why it happens and its effects on teens
- Discuss what a parent can do if their child is being bullied, or is a bully
- Learn about gangs, what they are and why teens join them

5.1 Peer Relationships and attachments

Our teenagers' peers are their friends, classmates, and other youth who they interact with at school, work or in other social settings. At this developmental stage, peers and peer acceptance are very important influences on adolescents' tastes and preferences. Sometimes, peers can significantly impact important decisions teens make about their lives.

Peer pressure is when peers influence a child or teen into making a decision, or taking part in an action. Peer pressure can take many forms, from persistent invitations to take part in a negative behaviour, to daring someone to do something. Peer pressure can also include suggesting or openly threatening exclusion from the group, if the individual does not comply.

Peers are the most significant individuals in a teen's life. Teens who are too eager to please their peers easily succumb to peer pressure and often make decisions that are detrimental to their lives. It is important that a teen's most significant attachments are not to their peers, but to their parents.

Teenagers must form attachments or special connections with significant people in their lives. They receive a lot of their orientation, or teachings about the world, from these key people. There are many different types of child-parent attachments. Depending on how parents respond to their child's needs, these attachments can be healthy, or not.

Attachments change as children move into adolescence and begin to develop their own identity and sense of autonomy. At this stage, it is important for parents and their teens to reinforce, or reestablish their connection, or attachment. Parents do this by responding to their teen's unique needs in a proper way.

In some cases, the parent may be unavailable for the teen. Parents who experience life stress, difficulties communicating, or conflict due to acculturation issues and cannot connect with their teen will develop an attachment void. As with any void, it must be filled. In this case, teens will most likely attach themselves to their peers. Their parents become the people who do not understand the teen. Usually, the teenager will not listen to the parents, unless forced to do so.

This is not to say that teens should not have close relationships with their friends. On the contrary, developing social skills and learning how to have relationships with different types of people is very important for a teen's healthy development into adulthood. However, a friend should never take the place of a parent, as a teen's main role model. Parents should know their teenager's friends well. Parents need to be aware of the types of influences their teens are being exposed to.

### **Exercise 5.1 Your teen's friends**

List the names of two or three of your teenager's best friends.

- Do you know who they are?
- Have you talked to them?
- Do these friends share your family values?

In an ideal world, your teenager will have internalized their values and ideas based on strong attachments to you, their parents, and they will choose their friends based on those values. The types of friends your teen chooses will fit well with the family's dynamics and their friendships will further reinforce the family's values.

Some friendships form because of a disconnect between the teen and the family. This kind of friendship can pull the teen further away from the family, especially if the teen forms a strong attachment to this new friend. In the case of immigrant families, this situation occurs when the teen is having trouble communicating and connecting with parents. This is when peer orientation takes place. The teen will begin to internalize their peer's values and ideals, not the family's.

This is a very common occurrence in North America, as teens are increasingly more attached to their peers than their families. In the case of immigrant teens and their families, this can be very detrimental. The disparity between the family's culture and the values their teen internalizes, through peer orientation, can cause the family unit to disintegrate.<sup>xvii</sup>

## 5.2 Violence

One of the most disturbing and extreme forms of teenage behaviour, or ~~acting-out~~, is violence. Violence is a learned behaviour. This means that children learn violence by being exposed to it, living with it. Exposure to violence includes watching an important adult in their life react violently to a situation and, witnessing or being a victim of abuse. It also includes excessive exposure to violence through the media, which can be interpreted as promoting the idea of obtaining power through aggression.

Teens become violent in an attempt to gain power and control over their environment. They feel an inability to obtain it by any other means. The following are some examples of why teenagers can become violent:

- **Feeling powerless, unappreciated and ignored:**  
*Violent behaviour gives them power over others, through fear, and they get everyone's attention.*
- **Extreme frustration and anger:**  
*Not being understood, respected, or having their feelings validated.*
- **Feelings of humiliation and loss combined with a desire to retaliate:**  
*A teen, who has been deeply hurt, may fantasize about revenge and eventually act on those impulses.*
- **Depression and psychological illnesses**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Availability of weapons<sup>xviii</sup>**

Teenagers, both male and female, engage in different types of violent behaviour. Examples of violent behaviour include physical aggression, and verbal and psychological abuse. Violent behaviour may take any of the following forms:

- Aggression towards peers or family members (either verbal or physical)

- Extreme temper tantrums
- Playground fights
- Cruelty to animals
- Vandalism
- Starting fires
- Verbal abuse
- Self-mutilation<sup>xix</sup>

It is all too easy to spare our sympathy for teenagers who engage in violent behaviour. Teens react violently due to factors in their lives that have brought them to this point. However, it is very important to believe they have positive potential.

### 5.3 Bullying

**Bullying** is purposely performing an act that is meant to hurt someone, and where the person being hurt is weaker or has less power than the aggressor. Anyone who is aggressive, or violent towards another, is a bully. The victim, or the person being attacked, is being bullied.

Bullying takes place in schools, from elementary to high school, across Canada every day. Bullying is a form of violence and as such is also a learned behaviour. It is instigated by the need for power and control. Bullying can take a variety of forms:

**Verbal:** Name-calling, insults, ridicule, threats

**Social:** Rejection, exclusion, gossip, slander, group teasing

**Physical:** Bodily harm, taking away or damaging property

**Cyber:** Using the Internet or text messaging to send hate mail, threats, damaging videos and pictures, or spreading gossip.

There are many reasons why bully behaviour develops. Here are some examples of possible factors:

- Psychological and/or physical abuse
- Exposure to excessive violence through media and video games
- Lack of supervision when interacting with peers
- Difficult temperament, attention problems, hyperactivity

- Family stress
- Lack of positive role models
- Inconsistent consequences
- Past experiences of being bullied
- Neglect, rejection, marginalized feelings

Bullying habits can vary between boys and girls. Boys tend to be more direct. They instigate physical attacks, take personal property and yell at their victims. The majority of girl bullies tend to be more indirect. Girl bullies deliberately cause feelings of rejection, through subtle insults and attacks on another girl's appearance, and/or by spreading rumours. Whatever the type of bullying, it is usually hard to detect. Teens will bully when there is no supervision. When the bully and victim are alone, bullies threaten their victims to keep secrets. It is important for parents and teachers to be on the lookout for signs of bullying and their victims.

### Warning Signs of Bullying

Victim	Bully
Ripped clothing	Lack of empathy or caring if someone is hurt
Missing items	Extra money or items
Headaches, bruises and bodily injuries	Dismissing torturing someone as "just a joke"
Making up excuses to avoid going to school	Aggressive and intimidating behaviour with peers, friends and siblings
Becoming angry and violent at home	Laughing when others get hurt
Extreme generosity giving away their belongings	Angry and aggressive behaviour towards parents, teachers and other adults
Wanting to take a weapon to school	
Withdrawal, sadness, despair, depression	

Bullying has lasting effects on both the victim and the bully. Teens who are bullied can carry psychological scars and low self-esteem into their adult years, preventing them from achieving their full potential. Child or teen bullies may become adult aggressors. In extreme cases, bullies become involved in criminal activity including sexual assault and random acts of violence. Often, bullies become "addicted" to feelings of "power" that come from intimidating a victim. Without guidance, such an "addiction" can have long-lasting psychological

effects on a bully's perception of reality. These individuals end up with a distorted image of themselves and the world around them.

To effectively stop bullying, adults must get actively involved and take the necessary measures to stop the abuse. Many kinds of bullying, such as bodily harm, stealing, slander and psychological torture are criminal offenses, punishable by law.<sup>xx</sup> Parents should be aware of this.

If your child or teen is being bullied, the school must be informed and action must be taken to stop it. Victims of bullying are often afraid to tell their parents or teachers. They are afraid of further ridicule, or that the bullying may become even worse. However, with proper help from the school, and by empowering and teaching your teen how to handle the situation, the bullying can be stopped. Here are suggestions to offer teens about how to prevent bullying:

<b>Do...</b>	<b>DON'T...</b>
Stand proud and powerful	Think it is <del>un</del> atting to ask for help
Make eye contact	Suffer in silence; silence will allow it to continue
Tell the person who is bullying you to STOP	Put yourself down, ever! You are not a loser and everyone does NOT hate you
Walk away	Fight or name call because you are better than that
Get involved in many groups and activities	
Ask adults for help and keep asking until you get it	
Avoid unsafe situations. It is never worth getting hurt	
Try to stay calm	
Use your problem-solving skills to assess your choices and make the right decision	
If need be, defend yourself, but at the first opportunity find help <sup>xxi</sup>	

Many bullied children tend to be shy and introverted. They grapple with self-esteem issues and have under-developed social skills. It is important for parents to focus on not only dealing with the bully, but also on helping the victimized child build confidence and increase self-esteem.

Parents who suspect their own children are teen bullies need to strive to help them develop a sense of empathy for, and caring about, the suffering of others. Here are some tips on how to achieve this and prevent bullying:

**1. Be a positive role model**

Recognize your role in modeling positive relationships. Set a good example and reinforce positive behaviour when you see it.

**2. Communicate**

Teenagers who exhibit bullying behaviour need to be able to talk about their own experiences. During a quiet time of day, establish an open friendly, non-threatening line of communication.

**3. See the teen inside the bully**

Often, a teenager who exhibits bullying behaviour has been the victim of bullying in the past. In a non-judgmental way, try to find out what the teen is feeling, and if something has happened to produce feelings of vulnerability.

**4. Teach empathy**

Read stories about bullying, identify how each child feels in the interaction. Help your teen see the victim's point of view, how hurtful and damaging bullying can be.

**5. Do something fun together**

Fun activities and positive attention can build confidence, positive brain connections, and encourage empathy and compassion for others.

**6. Teach leadership**

Provide activities and opportunities that channel energy into constructive leadership situations.

**7. Make amends and be friends**

Teach the teenager ways to make amends for past behaviour. For example, offer apologies, or do something helpful or nice. Help them connect with others who have the same interest in play and learning.

**8. Set consistent consequences**

Send a clear message that bullying is unacceptable. Implement relevant consequences with instructive activities, like reading, to redirect negative energy.

**9. Work together**

Parents, caregivers, communities and schools must work together to prevent and stop bullying. If you think a teen is exhibiting bullying behaviour, contact the school and ask parents to monitor the situation.

<b>5.4 Gangs</b>
------------------

A gang is an organized group of adolescents and/or young adults who rely on group intimidation and violence, and commit criminal acts in order to gain

power and recognition and/or control certain areas of unlawful activity.<sup>xxii</sup> A youth gang is made up primarily of teenagers or young adults. They are known and identify themselves as a group. They usually have a name. They are involved in delinquent activity and violence.

Gangs have similar characteristics to a family.<sup>xxiii</sup> Certain members take on similar roles to a family. For example, there may be a caregiver, a provider and a leader. Members are supposed to support each other. Youth who feel isolated in society because of their race, language or background, or who are alienated from their families and lack a sense of belonging, can be attracted to joining a gang as a means to fill these needs.

There are various reasons why teens join youth gangs. Some members seek excitement; others are looking for prestige, protection, a chance to make money, or a sense of belonging. Youth who are at risk of joining gangs, or are already involved in gangs, tend to be from groups that suffer from the greatest levels of inequality and social disadvantage. They tend to have previous involvement in delinquency and drug use.

Gang activity and violence is becoming more and more of a concern in larger cities such as Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.<sup>xxiii</sup> Canada has 434 youth gangs with roughly 7,000 members nationally. For the country as a whole, the vast majority of youth gang members are male (94%). Almost half (48%) of all youth gang members are under the age of 18. In Alberta, there are 42 known youth gangs, with 668 members.<sup>xxiv</sup>

A joint Canada-U.S. study provides important evidence about the relationships between gangs, guns and drugs in Toronto and Montréal. A total of 904 male students (grades 9 to 12); school dropouts and young offenders were interviewed. The results indicate that:

- There is a correlation between gang presence in schools and the availability of both guns and drugs in schools.
- 18.7% of boys (ages 14 to 17) in Montréal, and 15.1% in Toronto have brought a gun to school.
- School dropouts involved in drug selling are at higher risk of being involved in gun-related violence.<sup>xxv</sup>

It is important that our youth receive the emotional support and sense of belonging they need from their family. This reduces the risk of them seeking it elsewhere. Close supervision of friends and social activities is important to make sure teens are not being lured into gang involvement.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 6**  
**SELF-ESTEEM AND MENTAL HEALTH**  
**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

Session objectives

- Parents will gain an understanding of the concept of self-esteem and why it is important for teenagers
- Parents will gain an understanding of what can raise and lower self-esteem and how to help their teenagers develop a good self-image
- Parents will discuss the incidence of depression in teenagers and explore its effects
- Parents will gain an understanding of the importance of intervention when a teenager presents mild or clinical depression

Chapter overview

- Self-esteem
- What is depression?
- How to help teens with depression

Suggested activities

- Have parents discuss what makes them feel good and what lowers their self-esteem.
  - Do they know what works for their teenagers?
- Have parents think of examples of how their self-esteem affects the choices they make and their behaviours.
- Have parents brainstorm reasons why the incidence of depression in teenage girls is higher than in boys.
  - One key factor is that girls tend to ruminate.<sup>xvii</sup> They are constantly concerned with questions like, "Why do I feel this way?" Whereas boys will use distraction as a means to cope with their feelings. For example, playing a video game.<sup>xviii</sup>

Other resources and information

**Key points on...**

- Self-esteem:

- Self-esteem is the image a teen has of themselves. This image changes as the teenager faces challenges and either overcomes, or is overcome by, them.
  - Immigration issues greatly affect self-esteem: language, culture, peers and family, put many new pressures on teenagers to meet certain goals, to behave a certain way and to develop a sense of belonging.
  - Self-esteem is fragile for any teenager. As immigrants, there are extra challenges added to developing the self and asserting themselves as individuals. Teens may experience conflict with family members regarding values, cultural practices and traditions.
  - Parenting styles will greatly influence how easy, or difficult, it is for a teenager to meet many challenges: adjusting to their changing body, gaining autonomy, establishing social connections and preparing for a complex social and work life.
- What is depression?
    - Depression is a clinical condition that is found in children and youth, as well as adults.
    - Depression requires intervention to prevent complications or further life-long problems.
  - How to help teens with depression:
    - Parents have to use effective communication methods. They must pay attention to not only the words the teenager uses, but also the way the teen talks. Parents should also focus on the feelings behind the words and their teen's body language.
    - Talking about feelings: Parents should inquire about their teen's mood and accept the validity of everything the teen feels, regardless of how invalid these emotions may seem to the parent.
    - Ensure your teen has access to the information they need. Help-lines and crisis lines will provide a safety net and create a support network for your teenager.

**SECTION 1 : CHAPTER 6**  
**SELF-ESTEEM AND MENTAL HEALTH**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Content of this Chapter

- Self-esteem
- Depression
- How to help teens with depression

Goals for this Chapter

- Gain an understanding of the concept of self-esteem and why it is important for teenagers
- Gain an understanding of factors that can raise and lower self-esteem and how to help our teenagers develop a good self-image
- Discuss the incidence of depression in teenagers and explore its effects
- Gain an understanding of the importance of intervention when a teenager presents mild or clinical depression

6.1 Self-esteem

Teenagers are in the middle of a struggle. They are neither children, nor adults. As they adjust to their physical and mental changes, they also face confusion trying to meet pressures from parents, peers and society. At this age, teens are vulnerable to changes in self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the image a teen has of themselves. It is affected by how comfortable they feel in their environment and with themselves. While achievements will boost their self-esteem, failures will lower it. Teenagers need to be reminded that parents are there to provide support and guidance. They need to know that as immigrants, they will face challenges adapting to a new culture and ways of living.

Because of cultural barriers (language, religion and clothing), immigrant teenagers tend to feel different from others, or alienated. These teenagers need to learn to deal with disappointment, criticism, and challenges in a constructive and healthy way.

Parents can help teenagers learn important coping life skills by:

- Taking time to talk and listen about what makes people unique and why these differences are good
- Promoting a healthy lifestyle, encouraging participation in sports, music, community events and other activities teens enjoy
- Providing healthy foods and supporting a balanced diet
- Setting good examples by being positive and active
- Helping them set goals, encouraging consistency and recognizing their efforts and achievements

It is normal for teenagers to experience confusion and refuse to conform to certain values or behaviours. For example, a Canadian immigrant teen will probably want to try dating, but this may conflict with the tradition of arranged marriages from their home country. Parenting style and cultural clashes can often cause conflict in parent-teen relationships. However, a parent can maintain authority, respond to their teenager's needs and keep two-way communication open. The parent/teen relationship will be stronger and have less conflict than in a relationship where the parent is demanding and does not respond to the needs of a teenager.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Higher self-esteem not only makes for a happier teen. It also lessens the likelihood the teen will get involved in drugs, or engage in other risky behaviours. Before looking at why this is true, it is important to look at everyday experiences of teenagers with healthy self-esteem. There are four main components:

**Significance:**

Teens need to feel important. They need to be appreciated, encouraged, loved and respected by family and friends. This gives them a positive self-image. Neglect, rejection and isolation cause teens to feel unwanted. They feel like there must be something wrong with them, resulting in low self-esteem. Teenagers who do not feel significant in the lives of the people close to them might seek appreciation elsewhere, such as a gang.

**Competence:**

The teen has the ability to perform tasks well and to achieve goals. A teen may fail at a problem in school, or in his personal life. He may sometimes give up and indicate that he doesn't care. However, teens usually do care, and that failure, although they may not show it, affects how they see themselves and their self-esteem. Failure stifles motivation, and success promotes it.

Ways to foster the feelings of competence are:

- involvement in extracurricular activities in the teen's area of interest

- helping them develop planning skills to achieve goals in school, sports or other organizations
- giving them the tools to overcome obstacles

Becoming an expert at something, or having a significant talent in a certain area (academics, sports, art, music, leadership in a club) leads to a sense of mastery. It is important that teens get involved in something they are interested in and passionate about. This will tend to be what they are most talented in and it will teach them a lot about themselves.

**Power:**

Teens need to feel they have a say, or the ability to exert some control, over their lives and their environment. As they are building their identity and autonomous self, teens may feel powerless if they are not able to make any decisions. This powerlessness is very dangerous, as teenagers will sometimes seek power over others through peer pressure, bullying and violence. Feeling powerless will inevitably lead a person to become frustrated and have low self-esteem. Encouraging teenagers to take responsibility is a positive way to build character and teach them how to make good decisions.

**Virtue:**

Virtue is how good a person is, as measured by their own values and cultural beliefs. Being good or worthy can make people feel spiritually fulfilled. They feel they have done well according to the principles and values they truly believe in. Doing what you believe in your heart is right allows you to focus on doing good and can release negative emotions (blame, guilt). Gaining spiritual fulfillment by performing a good deed for its own sake is a very powerful way of raising self-esteem. It focuses a teen's energy on achieving excitement through doing something positive.

Having a positive self-image and high self-esteem are essential to a teenager's happiness. Low self-esteem can lead to very serious problems such as anxiety, substance abuse, defiance, depression and other behavioural and emotional problems.<sup>xxviii</sup>

6.2 Depression
----------------

Depression is not just a bad mood or sadness. Depression is a serious condition that must be treated in order to avoid permanent and far-reaching negative impacts on the teen's life. Teen depression can result in tragic outcomes such as homicidal violence and suicide, preventing the teen from achieving their full adult potential. Depression is treatable and many things can be done to reverse it.

The main cause of depression is low self-esteem. Other possible reasons include chemical imbalances in the brain and behavioural and psychological illnesses. Depression destroys the essence of a teenager's personality causing an overwhelming sense of sadness and despair or anger. Teens who are depressed will not come forward and ask for help. It is crucial that adults around them be vigilant about behaviour changes and signs of depression.

Depression is more common than we tend to think. Only about 20% of teens who are depressed receive treatment. It is sometimes hard to spot the symptoms of depression because normal teenage behaviour can be so erratic and dramatic. It is very important to keep in mind that depressed teens may not necessarily appear sad or withdrawn. Look for signs of depression in your teen's overall behaviour and any significant changes:

### Signs and Symptoms of Depression in Teens

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger, or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Restlessness and agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

In general, dramatic, long-lasting changes in your teen's personality, mood, or behaviour are signs of a deeper problem. It is crucial that you as a parent don't ignore these signs.

Many adults go through depression. However, it is important to recognize that depression can look very different in a teenager.

Adult Depression	Teen Depression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sadness and gloominess</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritability, anger, hostility</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawn from everyone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prone to angry outbursts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of interest in doing anything</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inexplicable body pains such as headaches and stomach-aches</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme sensitivity to criticism</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawal from some people, but not from everyone. Teens will keep some friends around if they have them.</li> </ul>

If depression is not detected and treated, it will most likely have very negative effects on a teen's life.

### **Effects of Untreated Depression**

- **Problems at school**  
Depression can cause a teen to feel exhausted and unable to concentrate. They may miss school. They may not be able to pay attention in class and so may experience general frustration with school work. This can negatively affect their academic life.
- **Running away**  
Many depressed teens run away from home, or talk about doing so.
- **Substance abuse**  
Teens may resort to drugs and alcohol to numb their emotional pain.
- **Low self-esteem**  
Depression can exaggerate feelings of rejection, shame, guilt, ugliness, insignificance and failure, dramatically lowering self-esteem.
- **Eating disorders**  
Teens, especially girls, can develop eating disorders (Anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, yo-yo dieting) when they are depressed. This is a way of trying to cope with their distorted self-image and low-self-esteem.
- **Internet addiction**  
Excessive use of the computer, internet, and video games can be a means of escape from the real world if a teen is depressed. This will only isolate them more. It can distort their self-concept sense of reality even more.
- **Self-injury**  
Teens who purposely inflict any kind of pain or injury on themselves are always suffering from some kind of depression.
- **Reckless behaviour**

Teenagers who are depressed will be more likely to engage in activities that are dangerous due to their subconscious low self-esteem and disregard for their personal safety. Reckless driving, unsafe sex, excessive drinking and drug use are likely signs of depression.

- **Violence**

Bullying and aggression can cause depression in children and teens. Some teens can become violent and even homicidal if they develop feelings of self-hatred and a desire for revenge.

- **Suicide**

Teens who are very depressed may think, talk about, or make %attention-getting+ attempts at suicide. These should always be taken seriously regardless of whether the teen really intends to go through with it.<sup>xxix</sup>

**If you think your teen is having suicidal thoughts or seems to have lost interest in life, it is crucial to seek professional help.**

### 6.3 How to help teens with depression

If you think your teen is depressed, it is very important to take immediate action. Keep calm and try not to display any signs of desperation or worry. Begin by talking to your teen about what they are feeling and going through. Here are some tips for talking to depressed teens:

- **Offer support**

Talk to them often and assure them that you are there for them anytime and unconditionally.

- **Be gentle but persistent**

Encourage them to tell you what they are feeling. Avoid interrogating them or pushing them too hard. Rather than demanding information, try using a casual, loving and reassuring approach.

- **Listen without lecturing**

Try to listen without interrupting. Let them talk until they are finished. Once they are finished, prove to them that you understand what they have said by repeating what you have heard. Tell them you feel for them. **Resist the urge to lecture them on how they are hurting themselves and that they should not feel that way.** Do not be judgmental and try to remain calm. Losing your temper and telling them what they're feeling is wrong will make them think that you do not understand and they will shut you out.

- **Validate feelings**

It is crucial that you let your teen know that they have the right to feel the way they do and that their feelings are valid. Their feelings should not be made to seem trivial. If their feelings are not validated, they will become frustrated. This will negatively affect their. They will feel %stupid+for feeling the way they do. They will feel alone because their parent does not understand them, and at the same time upset for not being able to get over it.<sup>xxx</sup>

If your teen insists that there is nothing wrong, but you still feel that there is something, continue to look into the matter. You may want to get a professional opinion by going to your family doctor. Consider seeing the doctor in private to discuss the situation. A family doctor can rule out medical problems. If need be, your family doctor can refer your teen to a specialist, such as a child psychologist or psychiatrist. If you do not feel that your family doctor has done everything possible to help your teen, seek a second opinion. Other family services providers in your community can also offer resources and information about where to go for help with your teen's depression.

Depending on the individual situation, there are several treatment options available for teen depression. Medication, such as antidepressants have become increasingly popular, even for children. It is very important to be aware of any side-effects the medication may cause. Side-effects include:

- **Effects on developing teenage brain** – The effects antidepressants might have on a teen's brain are not entirely known. There is a concern that they could interfere with the rewiring and reconnecting process that is taking place in the teen brain at this stage.
- **Physical side-effects** – Antidepressants will often cause physical side-effects: dizziness, loss of balance, dry mouth, and lack of energy. These side effects are especially noticeable at the beginning of treatment and when discontinuing use.
- **Emotional/Behavioural side-effects** – Increased irritability, increased thoughts of suicide and suicidal behaviours, increased withdrawal, increased anxiety, panic attacks, difficulty sleeping, increased aggressiveness, irrationality, hyperactivity, these are all possible side-effects of antidepressants that are not the right fit for the teen. A professional must closely monitor the usage of antidepressants. Always inform your doctor or specialist about any changes or concerns you might have.

Emotional and psychological therapy and counselling are less risky forms of treatment for less severe cases of depression. However, therapy can be more costly and time consuming. Nevertheless, try to choose the treatment option that

will help your teen deal with the root of the problem rather than a quick fix. If this issue is not resolved, it can affect the your teen for the rest of their life.

While a teen is going through treatment for depression, a parent can offer support in the following ways:

- **Be understanding**  
Try to be patient. Find ways to deal with the stress caused by your teen's difficult behaviours. Remind yourself that your child is suffering.
- **Encourage physical activity**  
Exercise is an effective way of relieving symptoms of depression. Exercise helps to get rid of excessive toxins in the body and improves physical conditioning. Simple things like walks and bike rides can make a big difference.
- **Encourage social activity**  
Enjoying constructive social activities can help your teen have a more positive outlook, improve self-esteem and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Make suggestions and facilitate participation in extracurricular and fun activities with friends.
- **Stay involved in treatment**  
Monitor your teen's treatment. Ensure your teen is following medical instructions properly. Medications need to be taken exactly as directed in order to avoid complications. To ensure improvement, it is crucial that teens attend therapy sessions as scheduled. Report any concerns and changes to your doctor immediately.
- **Educate yourself on depression**  
Learning about depression and what to expect will help you be less anxious about the whole situation. You will have a better idea about the condition and how to cope with its various aspects.<sup>xxxi</sup>

## **SECTION 1 : CHAPTER 7**

### **TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA**

### **FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the implications of technology currently available in mainstream Canadian society
- Have parents acquire an understanding of internet, computer games, video games, television and texting addiction
- Discuss effective ways of finding alternative activities

#### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- Technology and media
- What is online gaming?
- Addictions
- What can be done?

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Have parents brainstorm ways they can supervise responsible use of technology.
  - Suggestions include:
    - Keeping computers and televisions in common areas
    - Check content and ratings of games
    - Spend time with teens to look at and discuss content with them
    - Share your opinions about what you observe
    - Only provide age appropriate games
    - Ask your teen about their favorite games
- Create an educational display: ask participants to bring new and old technologies to the session. Discuss the impact of various technologies on the family's lives, focusing on immigrant families.
  - How has technology evolved?
- In pairs, or small groups, have participants describe, draw or write how technology relates to other aspects of modern life. Is it necessary? Why or why not?
  - Make sure to highlight the positive and negative aspects of technology
- Watch a popular music video or a short section of a popular teen TV show with the parents. Practice a discussion about the words and images portrayed as if they were talking to their teenagers.

## OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

### Key points on...

- Technology and Media:
  - Modern technology provides more than just entertainment. Familiarity with computers, cell phones, fax machines, etc is a requirement for many jobs.
  - Television and the internet are two of the biggest sources of information for teenagers. However, the information they provide is not always appropriate for all ages, nor compatible with all cultures and sets of family values.
  
- What is online gaming?
  - An online game is a video game that your teen can download and then play on the internet with people from all over the world.
  - Online games often involve role-playing. This can become addictive, especially when there is no structure for its use.
  - Providing structure and guidelines for using online games can be more effective than banning their use altogether. If used properly, some consoles can also be educational.
  
- Addictions: Environmental influences may make your teenager gravitate towards gaming. If there is no emphasis on, or access to, alternate activities the teenager will lack motivation to participate in activities that require getting over barriers of social isolation and lack of self-esteem. <sup>xxxii</sup>
  
- What can be done?
  - Promote other activities: outdoor, social, sports. Make other activities a priority for your teenager.

## SECTION 1 : CHAPTER 7

### TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### CONTENT OF THIS CHAPTER

- Technology and media
- What is online gaming?
- Addictions
- What can be done?

#### GOALS FOR THIS CHAPTER

- Understand the implications of technology currently available in mainstream Canadian society
- Have parents acquire an understanding of addictions to computer games, video games, television and texting addiction
- Discuss effective ways of finding alternative activities

#### 7.1 Understand the implications of technology currently available in mainstream Canadian society

**Technology** refers to anything from a calculator to a computer, created to make life easier, or provide entertainment. In Canada, technology is readily available, increasingly complex and highly popular, unlike other countries where technology may be less so. Technology is a modern necessity and is everywhere, from simple forms like the timer in your home's heating system, to computers that perform very complex operations effectively and at exceptional speed. Technology includes televisions, stereos, cell phones, MP3 players, portable video game players and laptop computers, to name a few.

**Media** refers to forms of mass communication, such as newspapers, magazines, books, movies, radio, the internet and television.

Media includes all forms of entertainment and communication available to youth, from video games to television shows, movies to magazines. Popular culture dictates the media. Media conveys the values of the popular culture through pictures, themes and characters. The media feeds society images and ideas often creating stereotypes like the "perfect" woman or man, the ultimate villain or hero. How these stereotypes look and behave is often unrealistic. They can create unhealthy standards by which to measure oneself. Unfortunately, youth are very impressionable and the stereotypes promoted through the media can influence them heavily.

Unfortunately, these stereotypes may conflict with an immigrant teenager's family values. For instance, some video games portray women as sexual objects and men as rugged, rude figures who problem-solve by using violence.

In Canada, movies and video games receive a content rating that suggests age appropriateness. Using this information, parents can choose whether the content is appropriate for their child. Furthermore, parents can:

- Play the game or watch the show with their child to better assess if it is suitable.
- Talk about the content of the game and ask questions such as:
  - Why do you think so ?
  - What would happen if so ?
  - How do you feel about so ?
- Explain what you believe and why. Try to avoid forcing your opinion on your teenager.
- Discuss stereotypes, violence, sexuality and the difference between reality and fantasy, as portrayed in the media, with your teenager.

## 7.2 What is online gaming?

One popular, and particularly dangerous, form of video game is online gaming. Online gaming involves using a personal computer, connected to the internet. Players take on a role and play the game with other people, who could be anywhere in the world. Online gaming is usually very time-consuming because game rules require players to dedicate significant amounts of time and energy to complete levels or gain points. These are role-playing games where your teenager can take on the life of another character and escape from real life. They can obtain a false sense of accomplishment by successfully advancing in the game. Parents should be aware these games can be very addictive in nature.

## 7.3 Addictions

An addiction to technology, like television or computer games, is similar to being addicted to cigarettes. The person has to have it, no matter what. They become obsessed and can think about nothing else. Addiction also involves using, or doing, progressively more and more of the addictive substance, or behaviour.

Youth can become easily addicted to technology, particularly video games and online gaming. Teenagers can lose track of time and become more

preoccupied with achieving in the game, rather than in their daily life. Teenagers who are shy and have social problems tend to be particularly attracted to this type of recreation. They escape the real world, where life is difficult and a sense of personal identity is hard to manage. In the online gaming fantasy world, your teenager can choose to become a heroic figure and pretend to accomplish great things.

The violence depicted in some video games may cause your teenager to be more aggressive. Video game violence can also desensitize a teenager's thoughts and feelings towards aggression. <sup>xxxiii</sup>

Teenagers can become addicted to just about any type of technology: cell phones, television, chatting online. With the increased popularity of cell phones among Canadian teens, the number of text messages the average teenager sends has also increased. It is more and more common to see a teenager completely preoccupied by their cell phone, almost every minute of the day, no matter where they are - in class, on the bus, at home, on the street. This preoccupation tends to steal their ability to live life in the moment. They become distracted from the here and now. It often seems that our teens are not fully present in whatever it is they are doing.

Excessive television watching reduces a teenager's ability to concentrate for long periods of time. Their attention span becomes shorter and they become bored by anything that is not visually stimulating and/or moving at a fast pace, like books. An inability to concentrate discourages activities that require patience and creativity such as reading, making crafts, designing, etc.

#### 7.4 What can be done?

Parents must be aware of the dangers of technology. They have the responsibility to provide their children with tools to use technology effectively, and teach them to develop critical thinking skills. Parents should remind their teenagers that media portrayals of people are often unrealistic. Teenagers should remember that not every boy or girl is meant to look like, or be as popular as, their favorite pop culture character. Parents can also make rules about the use of technology - setting time limits and limiting content. You can also make it a requirement for your teen to fulfill all other responsibilities (homework, chores) before playing their games or watching television.

Technology can be a very powerful tool. It can promote learning, encourage creativity and provide fun, healthy entertainment. Non-violent games can also teach children skills about languages, music and active living. Technology and media can be wonderful resources for both parents and immigrant teenagers if used properly.

## SECTION 1: CHAPTER 8

### TEENS AND HEALTHY LIVING

#### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### Session objectives

- Gain an understanding of the necessity for a holistic approach to healthy living
- Discuss with parents the importance of:
  - Diet, exercise and hygiene
  - Relationships, the family and support systems
  - Identity and autonomy
  - Individual adoption of values and morals
  - Education and life-long learning
  - Life skills, healthy choices and behaviours

#### Chapter overview

- Essential ingredients for a healthy adult

#### Suggested activities

- Discuss what is healthy living?
- What are some habits and skills that make YOU a successful adult?

#### Other resources and information

#### Key points on...

- Essential ingredients for a healthy adult:
  - There are disparate ideas about what makes a successful adult. With participants, clarify those aspects that will help their children become healthy and successful in a Canadian context.
  - The focus of this chapter is on total health. It is important to nurture and care for the teenagers' spirit, mind and body: their emotional, psychological and physical well-being.
  - Good health comes from healthy habits. It includes a proper diet and sleep, but also emotional awareness. Many healthy habits stem from the benefits of exercise and education. Teenagers will become capable of making healthy choices in their life. Surrounding yourself with people who also subscribe to an active and healthy lifestyle is a big factor in achieving and maintaining good health. It is essential to point out the

importance of parents, and other adults in the teen's life, modeling desired behaviours.

## SECTION 1: CHAPTER 8

### TEENS AND HEALTHY LIVING

#### PARTICIPANT'S NOTES

##### Content of this Chapter

- Essential ingredients for a healthy adult

##### Goals for this Chapter

- Understand the implications of making choices on healthy living.
- Have parents acquire an understanding of factors or ingredients for a teenager's successful transition into adult life.
- Discuss effective ways of promoting good health in teenagers.
- Have parents acquire an understanding of how to model an active and healthy lifestyle.

##### 8.1 Essential ingredients for a healthy adult

As teenagers reach adulthood, their bodies and brains need the nourishment of a healthy diet. Their bodies need exercise to grow strong and healthy. In order to remain healthy during puberty, teens need to develop good personal hygiene.

Meeting the teenager's physical requirements is not the only factor in their successful transition into adulthood. Healthy relationships, both within and outside the family, provide support for their social and emotional needs. Asserting individual needs and wants will determine the teen's identity and personality. Adolescents define their own autonomy as they begin to see themselves as individuals. In this way, teenagers begin to see themselves as unique and become responsible for their own choices.

Psychological autonomy means that your teenager will acquire personal definitions of moral standards and values. Their values, their sense of right and wrong will come from internalizing personal choices (based on their wants and needs), and not from external influences, such as parents.

Education plays a very important role in teenagers discovering their values and acquiring a moral compass. Formal education (school and university), helps teenagers understand concepts, find a career or trade to their liking, and begin professional life. Informal education (life experience), provides teens with the life skills they need to be successful in meeting expectations, their own and others.

It is important to remember that immigrant teenagers face more than their share of challenges. Many struggle with adopting new values, a new language and possibly a new way of life. They especially need continued encouragement from parents to build self-esteem and become successful.

It is essential for parents to guide their teenagers' learning. Help your teen plan ahead and set priorities. Promote their healthy growth into a successful adult. Teenagers need to learn how to balance the stresses of everyday life and to think before they act. These things will help them successfully meet challenges in a new culture and country.

Allow your teenager to give input in choosing activities. These activities will become more meaningful to them because they will have made the decision to engage in something they like. Respecting your teenagers' decisions is critical in allowing them to form their identity, not as separate from the family, but as a unique part of it.

And so, as discussed previously, healthy ingredients for teenage development include:

- Diet . A growing body needs a balanced diet
- Exercise . Strengthening bones and muscles allows teens to feel energetic and develop a healthy body image
- Sleep . Proper sleep habits allows teens to manage stress, concentrate better and stay active
- Boundaries . Although many teenagers may express their dislike for rules, guidance from parents, and other adults, is essential. Simple things such as curfews, chores and routines can make a big difference in relationships and help teens form healthy habits.
- Education . It is important for teens to exercise their brains. Allow them meaningful opportunities (in school and clubs) to participate in activities that challenge them and keep them learning new skills, including how to be independent and productive, such as money management.
- Healthy relationships . As teenagers grow into adults, they need guidance and skills to build healthy relationships with friends, peers and others. Respect and communication should define all their relationships. Remember, teenagers learn these skills from observing the interactions of those around them.

- Choices . Teenagers need opportunities to make meaningful choices, solve problems and take responsibility. These opportunities can be at home, in school or in the community. Providing controlled choices will make them feel respected and cared for by their parents.

Parents must remember that teenagers rarely learn by listening. They need practical experience. Lecturing about healthy choices and habits will not be enough, in most cases. Parents can help their teenagers by encouraging relationships with active people and participation in the community. Parents should also engage in a healthy lifestyle themselves. This last suggestion goes back to being a good role model. Teaching your teen will be most effective when you show that you live by your words. Try creating a supportive environment, where active and fun activities replace boring exercise routines. Cook meals together using healthy ingredients. Talk about your cultural values, body image and real life challenges. Problem-solve with your teen. Help them make important decisions in their life instead of making decisions for them.

Healthy living is about finding balance. It is about engaging in activities that are fun and improve your health. Teens prefer active learning and need rewarding and attainable goals to reach their full potential in life.

## **SECTION 1 : CHAPTER 9**

### **THE FATHER'S ROLE**

### **FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the importance of the father's unique role in the life of an immigrant child
- Understand how cultural expectations of the father's role will change family dynamics
- Discuss relevant stress factors that immigrant fathers face
- Understand communication between fathers and teens
- Explore the difference in relationships between fathers and sons, and fathers and daughters

#### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- The father's role in the family
- Risk factors and challenges for immigrant fathers
- Father-Teenager communication
- Fathers and sons
- Fathers and daughters

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- Describe what a father must or should do, and what they should not do.
- Describe some of the things a father can do for children in a family that a mother cannot do.
- Describe what you think a Canadian father is like.
  - What qualities and skills do these men have?
  - Are they the same as in other countries?
  - What are the differences, if any?

#### **OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

##### **Key points on...**

- The father's role in the family:
  - Exploration and clarification of the father's role in a household will greatly assist the family in understanding roles for each member.
  - Determine how the father's role has changed since moving from their home country to Canada. Are expectations in the two countries different?

- Perceptions of parenting roles are culture dependent. Society, relatives, and especially parents play key roles in determining what a mother or a father looks like. In Canada, immigrant children may discover different kinds of fathers. This could change the teenagers' expectations of their fathers' role.
- Risk factors and challenges for immigrant fathers:
  - Parents will come to understand the added stress placed on teens by the challenges they face as new immigrants.
  - It is important to explore the social pressure immigrant families may experience while adapting to Canadian culture. In Canada, parents are expected to be breadwinners. Fathers are also expected to help provide basic care and cognitive stimulation for their children.
  - Family members may expect egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles in the home because Canadian culture promotes equal opportunity for both parents to work.
- Father-Teenager communication:
  - Fathers who dedicate more time to nurturing activities with their children and teenagers may become more accepting of their behaviours.<sup>xxxiv</sup> They know their children as individuals, understand their needs, and are aware of their developmental stages.
- Fathers and sons:
  - Because they are the same gender, it is important for fathers to be an available and positive role model for their son(s). Sons need to see the kind of man their father wants them to be. Fathers are the primary male figure in a son's life. Fathers help sons learn about a man's familial duties and responsibilities, their role in the household and in relationships with the same and opposite sex. For example, a son may learn how to treat a wife properly by observing his father and mother.
  - A son may also feel more comfortable talking about puberty, sex, and relationships with his father, rather than with his mother - if the father/son relationship permits, the father presents himself as available, and the son feels the father is a reliable source of information.
- Fathers and daughters:
  - Father/daughter relationships are important because daughters learn about gender-roles by observing their fathers. If the relationship is good, a daughter comes to appreciate those qualities in her father that make him successful. She will look for those same qualities in future relationships with members of the opposite sex.
  - From her father, a daughter may learn about affection, aggression, negotiation and gender appropriate expectations. Fathers can also influence their daughters in making healthy choices regarding sexuality, autonomy and priorities in life.

## **SECTION 1 : CHAPTER 9**

### **THE FATHER'S ROLE**

### **PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

#### Content of this Chapter

- The father's role in your family
- Risk factors and challenges for immigrant fathers
- Father-Teenager communication
- Fathers and sons
- Fathers and daughters

#### Goals for this Chapter

- Understand the importance of the father's unique role in an immigrant child's life
- Understand how cultural expectations of the father's role will change family dynamics
- Discuss relevant stress factors that immigrant fathers face
- Understand communication between fathers and teens
- Explore the differences in relationships between fathers and sons, and fathers and daughters

#### 9.1 The father's role in your family

The father's role in the family can differ significantly from culture to culture, especially in terms of responsibilities and relationships with other family members. Paternal and maternal roles are very different and the mother's role is usually very clear. Mothers are nurturers and essentially will do anything to keep the family healthy and happy. Ensuring the family's well-being includes taking care of their children's physical and emotional needs, supporting family members in their education and work, running the household and making a living. The family's well-being also relies on the mother maintaining her own personal well-being.

The father's role can be much less clear, especially in terms of the degree and type of involvement in child-rearing and running the home. Different cultures may have differing views of what a typical father looks like, but this is not to say that all fathers from a certain culture are alike. Each culture has commonalities in how it defines a father's role.

In many cultures, the father is the head of the family. All other family members are subordinate to him. The father may discipline family members by using physical force. His sole, or main, responsibility is to provide financial support for his children's development. Canadian society tends to look at the father's role differently. In Canada, fathers and other family members are expected to be actively involved in family life. As immigrant families face the challenges of employment and education, traditional female and male roles must often change in order to take advantage of opportunities. Typically, immigrant fathers become more involved in child-rearing activities when the mother becomes employed. This is particularly true when extended family members remain in the home country.

Many immigrant fathers face the challenge of accepting change in their traditional role as primary breadwinner and decision-maker. In immigrant families, mothers and older children are often relied on to provide financial support. Immigrant fathers can take advantage of these situations by taking on the very important role of educating their children. Fathers can help provide for their children's emotional needs, as well as their basic ones.

Immigrant fathers, and their families, need to understand that moving to Canada involves making changes to many deeply rooted perceptions, habits, and ways of viewing the world, all of which impact child-rearing. As immigrants, it is important to clarify your beliefs about fathers and their roles. These beliefs should be based on past experience and knowledge about the new culture.

### **Exercise 9.1 'Who is a father?' vs. 'Whom should a father be?'**

a) Write 5-6 words that express ideas to complete the following phrase:

A father is .

b) Write 5-6 words that express things only a father can do for their children by completing the following phrase:

Only a father can

Notice that everyone might have different answers, and there is no perfect list of what a father should or should not be. Doing his best and giving himself credit for a job well done is what helps a man become the best father he can be.

### **9.4 Risk factors and challenges for immigrant fathers**

Often, a teenager's emotional and physical health is a reflection of the quality of their relationships with those closest to them. Understanding that

fathers face pressure in adapting to new household roles is key to strengthening relationships within the family.

It is helpful to explore some of the challenges faced by immigrant fathers, their effects and strategies to overcome these challenges:

- **Underemployment or unemployment** . Many cultures emphasize the father's role of as primary provider. Some fathers may view underemployment or unemployment as failing their family. It is important to recognize that Canadian society encourages both fathers and mothers to share in the responsibilities of providing for the family and child-rearing.
- **Social isolation** . Whether because of language or culture, the immigrant father must cope with adapting to a vastly different society. In focusing on employment, and the financial needs of the family, the father may forget to make time to talk to the people around him. The stresses of immigration are common shared experiences. Discussing problems and concerns can be helpful and healthy.
- **Barriers to support services** . In general, finding support services is challenging for many new Canadians. Fathers, in particular, may not feel comfortable accessing these services. Many cultures view this as a sign of weakness or defeat. However, immigration affects all family members and each member should seek needed help to ensure the success of the family unit.
- **Role reversal** . At one time or another, many immigrant families will experience role reversal. If, for instance, the mother is working and the father is currently unemployed, the father may become the primary childcare provider. It is important to remember, that although fathers may find this hard, they possess the potential to help their children through difficult transitions. Fathers are valuable in helping their children with developmental changes and the immigration process.

These challenges can cause stress for the father and consequently for the family. It is important that fathers realize that building family and community support networks, accessing services to meet challenges, and finding the positive aspects of role reversal allows them to become emotionally available to their children. Being emotionally available is in itself a protective factor against negative teenage behaviours.

### 9.3 Father-Teenager communication

For a successful father-teenager relationship to exist, fathers should always remember to be the kind of person they want their teen to be. Especially

in situations where conflict exists, fathers must respond with respect and use positive communication skills to avoid further damage to the relationship.

Some suggestions are:

- **Do not minimize the problem** . When your teen approaches you about a situation, try to avoid seeing it as unimportant or unnecessary. Remember that to your teen this same situation may seem like a matter of life and death. Acknowledge your child's feelings and try to understand their reasons for finding this situation important. Having their father's emotional support and guidance can prevent teens from feeling misunderstood or isolated.
- **Do not tell your kids what their feelings should be** . Respect the fact that your teen may see things differently. Instead, model sympathy and a positive attitude for problem-solving. Teens need to learn to solve problems independently. They need to learn to control their feelings and think realistically about situations. It is important that parents avoid making their teens feel like their emotions are wrong.
- **Do not offer false reassurances** . When problem-solving with your teen, avoid promising things that are out of your control. Maintain a realistic attitude about how other people may react and consequences of decisions made. Remind your teen about things they cannot control.
- **Do not blame your teen for the problem** . As your teen begins to express their feelings, avoid interrupting them with ideas about what they should or should not have done. Try to understand their actions, listen and empathize. Allow them to express their views and move towards solving the problem, rather than focusing on what they could have done.

#### 9.4 Fathers and sons

Being a father provides unique opportunities to teach your teenaged son important life skills. Making the most of these opportunities allows him to learn about the kind of man he should be. Find activities and events that will create positive and lasting memories. Show your son how a father should behave towards his family and others. Cultural activities that teach your teenager about his heritage can be a good way of sharing your cultural values and expectations. You may find that there are ups and downs in the relationship. One day, your son may be eager to spend time with you, and the next he may prefer to go out with friends.

Establishing a satisfying and meaningful relationship, where thoughts and feelings can be honestly and clearly expressed is most important. Then, when a

crisis or problem occurs, you and your teen can rely on a foundation of communication and trust.

Creating a strong bond before problems happen will dispel typical teenage attitudes like, ~~my~~ father doesn't know, doesn't want to know or doesn't care. It is okay to argue, but a father must always model the kind of person he wants his son to be. Many teenagers will resent authority figures. If one method of parenting is not working, try something else. Ask your son to make responsible decisions. Give him respect and freedoms in return. Remember to create clear boundaries and rules. If you make a mistake, it is okay to say ~~Sorry~~. Your son will learn to take responsibility for his actions and admit his mistakes.

Remember that immigrant teenagers not only experience the challenges of immigration, but also many physical changes. They will not always be ready to share when you are. Be sure to express your willingness to talk when THEY feel ready.

#### 9.5 Fathers and daughters

Similar to fathers and their teenage sons, the relationship between a father and his daughter provides unique learning opportunities for teenage girls. Think of your family as the training ground for your child's future relationships. Understand that cultural values, beliefs and practices, and most importantly, relationships between family members shape the types of relationships teenagers will seek as they grow older. Teenagers learn skills through observation, and girls are no exception. From their father, girls can learn the importance of compromise, commitment and consideration in relationships.

While participating in meaningful activities with their father, a daughter develops knowledge and expectations about men and relationships. Fathers can teach daughters about respect, affection, and negotiation. Girls observe what they see happening around them. This shapes their perception of what is normal and acceptable. If a father is not respectful or fair, the daughter may learn that these are unacceptable or undesirable traits in their relationships with other males.

Fathers can also teach their daughters how to regard themselves as individuals and as women. If a father does not promote equal opportunities between men and women at home, his daughter is learning important values about family life. She may accept or refuse these values in later relationships.

Self-esteem is of special concern with girls. Consumerism in Western culture, often targets young women and promotes achieving physical beauty through the use of products. Fathers can have a unique role in dispelling this myth. Through advertising and media, society sends the message to young girls that being ~~sexy~~ is extremely important. A father can show his daughter that

meaningful friendships and relationships with the opposite sex are not based on physical beauty.

The quality of the relationship between a father and daughter can improve her self-esteem and confidence, and also encourage her to make positive choices in life. As she experiences proper affection, she learns about self-respect and traits she respects in the opposite sex.

Girls who have low self-esteem may find themselves engaging in risky behaviours. As a father, a good way to boost your teenaged girl's self-esteem is to engage in healthy activities. These activities should encourage your daughter's feelings of being loved, valued and contented with herself as a woman. Fathers can help teenaged daughters develop healthy self-esteem by interacting with them in social activities. During social activities, daughters can express their feelings and develop a sense of trust in their fathers. As fathers may not be used to these interactions, they must remember that young girls feel great cultural pressure. Daughters need guidance and support as they develop a sense of identity. The simple act of giving your daughter a hug should not be underestimated. Affection and conversation are usually effective ways of bonding with young women.

In conclusion, the father-daughter relationship has the potential to protect a girl emotionally, physically and psychologically, as no other relationship in her life can. This alone demonstrates the responsibility that comes with fatherhood. As a strong courageous and protective father, your daughter will learn to respect you and make healthy choices in life. As a woman, she is likely to choose a boyfriend or husband based on the qualities she sees in you, her father.

Some simple things you can do:

- Spend time together . Find something you both like doing and make it special. It can be as simple as having lunch together, or just taking the time to have a conversation and listen to her.
- Stay involved . Ask about her friends, school and life. Listen and avoid judging. Validate her feelings and try to understand why she feels the way she does. Attend events and participate in activities together.
- Be a role model . Teach your daughter life skills and positive behaviours by practicing them yourself. She is watching and learning from your actions.
- Recognize your daughter's strengths . Avoid comparing her to others. Value her as the unique individual she is.
- Teach her to solve problems . You can't always be there for her, so teach her about setting realistic goals, prioritizing and engaging in meaningful activities. Help her by doing these things with her.
- Help her focus . Help your daughter develop her talents and interests, instead of focusing on her physical attributes. Be selective with your

compliments (focus on character rather than physical attributes) and be aware of what you are encouraging.

- Be firm but respectful . Set clear boundaries and rules to help guide her through her teenage years.

## **SECTION 1: CHAPTER 10 RESOURCES FOR PARENTS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- Identify individual needs for services and information
- Acquire a general knowledge of how to get information
- Discuss some of the services available in the community

### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

- Resources for parents

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- If facilitation of both the parent and teenager group is simultaneous, the facilitator can bring both groups together for this session.
- The use of a guest speaker for a particular topic may be useful in this session.
- The facilitator can give a brief explanation of the resources presented at the end of Section One and Section Two of the manual.

Reaffirm what has been learned. Have participants break into their respective family groups. Both parents and teens should spend time talking and sharing information learned in previous sessions.

- The facilitator acts as coach to support the family through this process.

This activity will allow participants to practice learned skills, particularly effective communication.

### **OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

#### **Key points about...**

- Resources:
  - Ideally, as the program progresses, the facilitator should gather information and resources the participants identify as ~~needed~~+or ~~interesting~~+
  - The facilitator should make a conscious effort to present updated and tailored materials to meet the needs of the group.

- The accuracy of the information contained reflects information as presented by the agencies. This resource manual is not responsible for the quality of the services offered and does not provide this list with the intention of endorsement. Furthermore, this list is by no means comprehensive. Each agency may offer services not itemized here and there are many more services available within the city of Calgary. Exclusion of other services does not imply a lack of approval.

**SECTION 1: CHAPTER 10**  
**RESOURCES FOR PARENTS**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

The following list is presented as a source for further information as well as a way to receive assistance for specific areas in the city of Calgary.

**Abuse/assault**

- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse      7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 320 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.calgarycasa.com](http://www.calgarycasa.com)      403-237-5888
  - CCASA offers Counselling, support and information line, public, police and court education.
- Calgary Police Service      Non-emergency calls: 403-266-1234
  - [www.calgarypolice.ca](http://www.calgarypolice.ca)      Emergency calls: 9-1-1
- Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter Association
  - [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com)      403-234-7233
  - Safe and secure accommodation including food, clothing, and referral services for women and children fleeing domestic violence.
  - Men's counselling, outreach and follow up services available.

**Addictions**

- Alberta Health . Addiction and Mental Health (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC))      1005 17<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.
  - [www.aadac.com](http://www.aadac.com)      1-866-332-2322
  - Addiction focused information, support and counselling available.
  - Day treatment programs available.
- Alcoholics Anonymous
  - [www.calgaryaa.org](http://www.calgaryaa.org)      403-777-1212
  - Self-help program based on the 12 Steps. Various locations.
- Distress Centre      300,1010 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S.W.
  - [www.distresscentre.com](http://www.distresscentre.com)      403-266-1601
  - Information and support. Crisis line, teen line and referral line available.

**Basic Need Assistance/Welfare/Transportation**

- Alberta Employment and Immigration
  - [www.employment.alberta.ca](http://www.employment.alberta.ca)      403-310-0000
  - If you qualify, you could receive income support, financial help and health benefits through Alberta works.
- Calgary Food Bank      5000 11<sup>th</sup> St. S.E.
  - [www.calgaryfoodbank.com](http://www.calgaryfoodbank.com)      403-253-2055
  - Emergency food hampers available, seven depots throughout the city available for pick-up points.

- Calgary Transit 224 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W.  
  - [www.calgarytransit.com](http://www.calgarytransit.com) 403-262-1000
  - Low income monthly transit passes available.
- The Mustard Seed 102 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.  
  - [www.theseed.ca](http://www.theseed.ca) 403-767-2400
  - Advocacy, recreation, education, employment, health and wellness, housing and shelter services.
- Women in Need Society (WINS)  
  - [www.womeninneed.net](http://www.womeninneed.net) 403-255-5102
  - Thrift stores in diverse locations. Family resource centres and free goods referral program.

### **Education**

- Bow Valley College 332 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.  
  - [www.bowvalleycollege.ca](http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca) 403-410-1400
  - English as a Second Language programs.
  - Continuing education, certificate and diploma programs available.
- Calgary Achievement Centre for Youth 200, 315 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.  
  - [www.cacy.org](http://www.cacy.org) 403-268-3666
  - Provides youth ages 15 to 24 with a variety of services including education, employment, child care, information and referrals.
- Alberta Learning  
  - [www.albertalearning.ca](http://www.albertalearning.ca) 1-800-661-3753
  - Provides access to Alberta curriculum as followed by all educational institutions in the province. Listing of educational institutions by city including the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District.
- Calgary Public Library  
  - [www.calgarypubliclibrary.com](http://www.calgarypubliclibrary.com) 403-260-2600
  - 17 locations throughout the city. Various programs and services offered.

### **Emergencies/Health/Clinics/Hospitals**

- Hospitals:
  - Alberta Children's Hospital 403-955-7211  
2888 Shaganappi Tr. N.W.
  - Foothills Medical Centre 403-944-1110  
1403 29<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.
  - Peter Lougheed Centre 403-943-4555  
3500 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E.
  - Rockyview General Hospital 403-943-3000  
7007 14<sup>th</sup> St. S.W.
- Alberta Health Services . Health LINK  
  - [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca) 1-866-408-5465
  - Information on health topics and hospital services.

## **Employment/training**

- Alberta Employment and Immigration
  - [www.employment.alberta.ca](http://www.employment.alberta.ca) 403-310-0000
  - Career information and referral services.
  - Information on employment standards.
- Calgary Achievement Centre for Youth 200, 315 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.cacy.org](http://www.cacy.org) 403-268-3666
  - Immigrant Youth Outreach Project . assistance for youth ages 16 . 24, new to Canada, experiencing difficulty with school, work and other problems.
  - Young Adult LINC . beginner and intermediate classes for youth ages 18 - 24.
- City of Calgary, Community & Neighbourhood Services . City Links 311 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.calgary.ca](http://www.calgary.ca) 403-974-3112
  - Career planning and job search assistance for men and women facing employment barriers.

## **Family violence**

- Family Violence Info Line
  - [www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca](http://www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca) 403-310-1818
  - Support and information regarding family abuse.

## **Immigrant Services**

- Calgary Chinese Community Services Association 1, 128 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. S.W.
  - [www.cccsa.ca](http://www.cccsa.ca) 403-265-8446
- Calgary Immigrant Women's Association 200, 138 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.ciwa-online.com](http://www.ciwa-online.com) 403-263-4414
- Centre for Newcomers 125, 920 36<sup>th</sup> St. N.E.
  - [www.centrefornewcomers.ca](http://www.centrefornewcomers.ca) 403-569-3333
- Immigrant Services Calgary 540, 910 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W.
  - [www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca](http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca) 403-265-1120

## **Legal services**

- Calgary Legal Guidance 100, 840 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W.
  - [www.clg.ab.ca](http://www.clg.ab.ca) 403-234-9266
  - Free and confidential legal advice, information and referrals.
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary 600, 1509 Centre St. S.W.
  - [www.elizabethfry.ab.ca](http://www.elizabethfry.ab.ca) 403-294-0737
  - Immigrant law support.

## **Literacy**

- Calgary Learning Centre 3930 20<sup>th</sup> St. S.W.  
  - [www.calgarylearningcentre.com](http://www.calgarylearningcentre.com) 403-686-9300
  - Family literary programs

### **Mental health**

- Alberta Health Services . Access Mental Health  
  - [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca) 403-943-1500
  - Information provided for mental health concerns and appropriate services.
- Canadian Mental Health Association 400, 1202 Centre St. S.E.  
  - [www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca](http://www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca) 403-297-1700
  - Advocacy, information and outreach support.
- Hull Child and Family Services (Bridging the Gap) 800, 1520 4<sup>th</sup> St. S.W.  
  - [www.hullservices.ca](http://www.hullservices.ca) 403-216-0660
  - Support for youth and young adults ages 16-24 with mental health concerns.

### **Recreation**

- Calgary Public Library  
  - [www.calgarypubliclibrary.com](http://www.calgarypubliclibrary.com) 403-260-2600
  - 17 locations throughout the city. Various programs and services offered.
- Calgary Recreation (Fee Assistance) 3-1-1  
  - Available to Calgary residents in financial need: discounted access to recreation facilities and programs.
- YMCA of Calgary . recreation/facilities & volunteer opportunities  
  - [www.ymcacalgary.org](http://www.ymcacalgary.org) 403-531-1660
  - Health, fitness and recreation programs. Various locations.
  - Volunteer opportunities in the areas of leadership and recreation. Fee assistance available.

### **Sexual Health Education**

- The **Sexual and Reproductive Health Program** of the Alberta Health Services has an education team that provides services to parents, schools and community groups, on many sexual health related topics. The education programs are provided free of charge. To arrange a program, or to request more information on a specific topic, call (403) 955-6515 or go to [www.teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca)
- **Community Health Centres** have Public Health Nurses who are active within their communities and schools. They provide services, as well as information, counselling and referral regarding birth control, STIs, pregnancy options, and pregnancy and parenting. Some Health Centres may also have Family Planning and STI clinics. A listing of Community Health Centres and services provided by the Alberta Health Services can be obtained by calling their

information line at (403) 943-LINK (5465) or through their website at [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca) Programs & Services/Calgary or [www.informAlberta.ca](http://www.informAlberta.ca).

- **Sexual Health Access Alberta** offers services, information and counselling on sexual and reproductive health issues. To find a local affiliate near you go to [www.sexualhealthaccess.org](http://www.sexualhealthaccess.org). In Calgary, call (403) 283-8591. Your local schools provide sexual health instruction based on Alberta Learning's curriculum. The curriculum can be accessed through [www.learning.gov.ab.ca](http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca). Your local community health centre may have a **Community Services Directory** (often available through the library) which lists community organizations, health and social agencies.
- Your community may have a **Family and Community Support Service** (FCSS) that may be able to direct you to other local agencies or resources, or help set up local partnerships that focus on prevention of family problems and enhance social well-being and health. To find out about your community's support services look at the Blue Pages of your local telephone directory.

### **Sexual Health Education Websites**

#### **Alberta Health Services** (*Canadian*)

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth)

Information and pamphlets on a variety of sexual health topics and resources.

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth/questions/questionbox](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth/questions/questionbox)

An on-line mailbox for your questions about sexual health topics. Answers are posted within 1-2 weeks.

#### **Canadian Federation for Sexual Health** (*Canadian*)

[www.cfsh.ca](http://www.cfsh.ca)

Articles about talking with your teenager about sex, links to many resources, and guidelines for finding credible websites.

#### **Teaching Sexual Health Website** (*Canadian*)

[www.teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca)

A sexual health website, based on Alberta Learning Curriculum, developed for classroom use by teachers. Includes sections for parents and students at all grade levels.

#### **Sexuality and U** (*Canadian*)

[www.sexualityandu.ca/parents/talk.aspx](http://www.sexualityandu.ca/parents/talk.aspx)

Information about puberty, talking about sex with your child, STIs and contraception.

#### **Kids Health** (*USA*)

[www.kidshealth.org/parent/growth/index](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/growth/index)

Articles on communicating with your teen, puberty and surviving adolescence.

### **I Wanna Know**

[www.iwannaknow.org/parents](http://www.iwannaknow.org/parents)

Information on being an askable+parent, links to teen sites about puberty, STDs, abstinence, decision-making and condom use.

### **Inner Learning Online (USA)**

[www.innerbody.com](http://www.innerbody.com)

Colourful anatomy pictures and text.

### **PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) (Canadian)**

[www.pflag.ca](http://www.pflag.ca)

Information, resources and support for parents of lesbians and gays.

### **Some of the following are available at the Calgary Public Library - For Teens:**

***Doing it right: making smart, safe, and satisfying choices about sex***, by Bronwen Pardes (2007).

***Hang-ups, hook-ups, and holding out: stuff you need to know about your body, sex, and dating, for girls*** by Melisa Holmes (2007).

***My body, my self for boys***, and ***My body, my self for girls***, by Lynda Madaras (2007), 613.955 MAD.

***Our bodies, ourselves: a new edition for a new era***, by the Boston Women's Health Book.

***Sex for guys***, by Manne Forssberg (2007).

***Sex, puberty and all that stuff: a guide to growing up***, by Jacqui Bailey (2004).

***The "what's happening to my body?" book for girls***, and ***The "what's happening to my body?" book for boys***, by Lynda Madaras (2007).

***This is my body: a film by high school girls***, by the National Film Board of Canada

### **For Parents**

***Boy crazy! : keeping your daughter's feet on the ground when her head is in the clouds***, by GIA Charlene Gianetti (2006), 306.708352.

***Preparing your son for every man's battle: honest conversations about sexual integrity***, by Stephen Arterburn (2003) (For Christian parents).

***The real truth about teens & sex: from hooking up to friends with benefits – what teens are thinking, doing, and talking about, and how to help them make smart choices***, by Sabrina Solin Weill (2005).

Internet: **Teaching Sexual Health Website**, [www.teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca)  
A sexual health website based on Alberta Learning Curriculum. Includes sections for parents and students at all grade levels.

*You will need a valid library card to borrow these resources.*

### **Shelter**

- Calgary Alpha House Society 203 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.alphahousecalgary.com](http://www.alphahousecalgary.com) 403-234-7388
  - 24 hour shelter for males and females over the age of 18 under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter Association 403-234-7233
  - [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com)
  - Residential services provide secure accommodation. Counsellors available.
- Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society 403-670-0467
  - [www.discoveryhouse.ca](http://www.discoveryhouse.ca)
  - Secure accommodation and support for women with children who experienced domestic violence.
- Inn from the Cold 106-110 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.innfromthecold.org](http://www.innfromthecold.org) 403-263-8384
  - Temporary overnight shelter. Emergency family shelter for families.
- YWCA 320 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.ywcaofcalgary.com](http://www.ywcaofcalgary.com) 403-263-1550
  - Shelter, affordable housing, health and recreation, education and employment, counselling, referrals and advocacy services.

Suggested reading list for parents:

Some of the following are available at the Calgary Public Library

1. Michael Bradley. *When Things Get Crazy With Your Teen+*. McGraw Hill, 2008.
2. Laura S. Kaustner, Jennifer Wyatt. *Getting to Calm. Cool-headed Strategies for Parenting Tweens + Teens+*. [www.parentmap.com](http://www.parentmap.com)
3. *Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Fathers*. Public Health Agency Canada and Calgary Immigrant Aid Society. Training Manual for Human Service Workers. A project prepared by Calgary Immigrant Aid Society with funding by Health Canada Community Action Program for Children and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, National Projects Fund by Dawne Clark, Ph.D. and Rena

Shimoni, Ph.D., Mount Royal College and David Este, Ph.D., University of Calgary. October, 2000.

4. %Helping Immigrant and refugee students succeed: It's not what happens in the classroom+November 2009. [www.healthinschools.org](http://www.healthinschools.org)

5. Gordon Neufeld, Gabor Maté. Hold On To Your Kids+ (Vintage Canada Edition, 2005).

6. Adele Faber, Elaine Mazlish .How To Talk So Teens will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk. Collins, 2005.

7. Michael Riera. Staying Connected to Your Teenager. Perseus Publishing, 2003.

8. Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott. Positive Discipline for Teenagers. Three Rivers Press, 2000.

9. Michael Riera. Staying Connected to Your Teenager: How to keep Them Talking to You and How to Hear What They're Really Saying. Perseus Publishing, 2003.

10. Documentary %Growing Up Among Strangers+, produced by **Aspen Family Resources**, Calgary.

# SECTION TWO: FOR TEENAGERS

## SECTION 2: CHAPTER 1

### THE TEENAGE BODY AND BODY IMAGE

#### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### Session objectives

- Participants will gain an understanding of puberty
- Discuss the differences between boys and girls
- Gain an understanding of the differences within each gender
- Understand the concept of body image
- Discuss the impact of body image on self-esteem
- Discuss ways to improve their self-image and their self-esteem
- Explore the effect of immigration on self-esteem

#### Chapter overview

- Puberty
- Self-esteem
- Immigrant teens

#### Suggested activities

- Show videos on puberty and development
  - <http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca/index.htm>
  - [http://www.sexualityandu.ca/home\\_e.aspx](http://www.sexualityandu.ca/home_e.aspx)
  - <http://www.innerbody.com/>
- Sharing circle . Ask each participant to share what they like the most and least about themselves
- Compliment shower . Participants form two parallel lines. Each participant gets the chance to walk between the two lines while blindfolded. As the blindfolded participant walks between the lines, the other participants whisper one compliment each. For example, ~~y~~ou are very helpful ~~y~~ou are very funny ~~y~~ou have a beautiful smile
  - This exercise helps develop a healthy self-concept and self-esteem as the individual focuses on the qualities that others admire.
  - The facilitator should encourage compliments based on behaviour, rather than on physical attributes.
- Ask participants to keep a journal, at least for the duration of the program. Ask them to write about the feelings and changes that they go through each day. In their journal, they can also write about what they have learned.

The facilitator can also suggest that they write about:

- One or two things they did very well that day
- People who were helpful
- Things they have learned about themselves or others

Have a brief group discussion on the challenges that their parents and caregivers face. How do their parents overcome challenges? Would the participants do anything different if they were in their parents' place?

The facilitator should emphasize the importance of self-esteem and tie material in future chapters to this theme. Self-esteem is a key component in the healthy development of all teenagers and a very important tool for building resilience in immigrant youth.

Other resources and information
---------------------------------

- Key points about puberty:
  - Focus on questions teenagers may have because individual comfort and knowledge levels may vary. An open conversation about physical development is a good starting point and provides the facilitator with an opportunity to discuss brain development and emotional control.
  - Teenagers will develop the capacity for abstract thought during puberty, however emotional responses rather than logical ones are more common because neuronal development is still taking place and the frontal lobe and prefrontal cortex (advanced cognition) are not as strengthened as the limbic system (emotional brain).<sup>xxxv</sup>
- Key points about self-esteem:
  - It is important to remember that bodily changes closely affect a teenager's self-esteem. The timing of changes varies widely. Variations in the onset of adolescence can affect the way teens see themselves relative to their peers. In many cases, parents or adults may also change their expectations regarding their child's behaviour. For example, a 14-year-old who looks as physically developed as a 17-year-old may be expected to exhibit more mature behaviours. In general, girls mature at an earlier age than boys do. Boys who have earlier growth spurts may be more likely to become involved in boy-girl relationships at an earlier age. They may have more self-confidence than later-developing peers. In girls, earlier maturation is considered to be more stressful. Their body image does not match that of any of their peers. These girls may emerge as more independent, popular with the opposite sex, and seek sexual experiences at an earlier age.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

- Key points about immigrant teens:
  - If immigration happens at a later age, particularly during the teenage years, challenges with language and culture may be more pronounced. Families may face more challenges as the teenager may try to fulfill the need to fit in by experimenting with things that are not acceptable to their parents. A teenager's acculturation will happen at a faster rate than their parents. There may be a separation in values and ideals, effectively changing family dynamics. Conflict may occur and may lead to a breakdown of the family if not dealt with in an effective way.<sup>xxxvii</sup>
  - Teenagers should be encouraged to understand not only their own challenges but also the challenges their parents face. Communication skills are the most effective conflict resolution tool. They allow parents and teens to develop an understanding of each other's values and opinions.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 1**  
**THE TEENAGE BODY AND BODY IMAGE**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Being a teenager is not easy. It is probably the hardest thing you will ever have to do. Parents and teachers want you to grow up and be responsible, but sometimes you may feel they keep treating you like a child. This may happen because they may not be aware of the challenges you are facing!

This program will help you and your family find better and more effective ways of communicating, solving problems and being successful in this new country. But first, let's look at what your body is going through. This way we can understand how much of the changes you are going through are just a normal part of growing up.

Guys and girls are different, we all know that. Part of growing up is learning about the people around us. In order for us to have healthy relationships, it is important to understand the differences, and the commonalities, between the sexes.

We have a mental picture about what others see when they look at us. This is our body image. When you look at yourself in the mirror – what do you see? What has changed in the last 5 years?

A pretty good answer is my body. The reason behind it is puberty. Regardless of culture, language or gender, puberty brings about changes in your body and the way you think. Your brain also develops and grows to its adult size. You must remember that growing is a life long process and it is normal for people of the same age and gender to grow at different rates.

**1.1 - Puberty**

Puberty includes changes in height and weight, increases in muscle and fat, growth of heart, lungs and brain. It includes changes in metabolism (the rate that food is converted into energy) and nutritional needs. Perhaps the biggest and least talked about change is sexual maturation.

For boys a typical sequence may be:

1. Testes and scrotum begin to increase in size
2. Pubic hair begins to appear
3. Penis begins to enlarge
4. Voice deepens
5. Hair begins to appear under the arms and upper lip
6. Sperm production increases, and nocturnal emission (during sleep) may occur
7. Pubic hair becomes pigmented

8. Prostate gland enlarges
9. Sperm production becomes sufficient for fertility
10. Growth rate decreases
11. Physical strength reaches peak

For girls a typical sequence may be:

1. Non-pigmented pubic hair appears
2. Elevation of breasts and rounding of hips, armpit hair appears
3. The uterus and vagina, and the labia and clitoris increase in size
4. Pubic hair grows slightly and becomes more pigmented
5. Breasts develop further, nipple pigmentation begins, areola increases in size
6. Growth spurt reaches peak and declines
7. Menstruation occurs
8. Capable of conception up to a year after first menstruation

As your body changes so will the way you look at yourself. Having a positive body image means being content with the way you look and being pleased about the things your body is capable of and accepting its limitations. It is normal for you to occasionally find it tough and emotional to deal with these changes. After all, this is your body and you have to become used to it. It will take time to adjust. Educating yourself about what is happening is the best way to understand and know what changes to expect. Books and videos at the library, trusted adults (parents, teachers and coaches) and appropriate internet sites can provide you with the right answers. Friends will not always be able to give you the right answers. They may be as confused as you are about what they are going through.

## 1.2 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the image you have of yourself, not just your body, but of whom you are as a person. During the teenage years, you may find that your level of self-esteem moves up and down as you face challenges. One of the biggest challenges in life is moving to a new country; learning a new language and culture.

Self-esteem is equally important for men and women. A boy may not want to take his shirt off at a swimming pool because he thinks he is not as muscular as other boys around. A girl may not want to go to a party because she thinks she looks ugly in her new dress. Remember that even popular teenagers go through the same situations. Puberty will change their bodies too, and they too have to get used to them. Being the first boy whose voice is changing, or being the last girl to develop breasts, can be hard and it may make you feel different. Remember that growth happens at different rates for different people. Asking your parents, aunts, uncles or older siblings, when major growth spurts

happened to them will give you a good indication of your family's patterns. Many puberty changes are determined by your genes.

A good way to build your self-esteem is by recognizing your strengths. We are all different. Chances are that you are really good at something other people may not. Stay healthy to promote adequate development. Taking care of your body will make you feel strong, healthy and capable of learning new skills faster. Respect your body by practicing good hygiene— how will other people respect you if you don't respect your own body?

### 1.3 Immigrant teens

The teenage years are full of challenges and as an immigrant you face even more challenges. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Challenges are good learning opportunities. Language and culture in this new society are different, and your family may choose to maintain their original values and culture in the home. For you, this may create two different worlds. When in doubt, ask questions! Talk to your parents about your culture and teach them about Canadian culture. As a teenager, you will be exposed to society much more than your parents. Because you attend school, Canadian culture is in every aspect of your daily life. Your parents may not be as aware of everything as you, for example, the way other kids dress, the way they talk, the religion they practice and the way they look. You will probably realize quite quickly that you are different in some or most of these aspects. Understanding Canadian culture takes time and differences are good. If everyone looked and dressed the exact same way, life would be boring, and there would be nothing to learn from other people.

As you become aware of your uniqueness, you should also understand that all teenagers are confused about their bodies. The people who understand you best are your family and friends. As you define your identity, you may face challenges because your parents or your community may not want or believe the same things. The best way to deal with challenges is by talking about them, instead of avoiding them. In future chapters, we will discuss skills to use to communicate effectively. Just remember that nobody is perfect. Be yourself, and surround yourself with family and friends who want the best for you and who love you for who you are.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 2**  
**STEREOTYPES, THE MEDIA AND WESTERN CULTURE**  
**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

Session objectives

- Gain an understanding of the concept of stereotypes
- Discuss fashion as a cultural factor
- Talk about what are seen as popular behaviours
- Discuss morality and values as portrayed in the media and how they may be different from those learned from parents
- Discuss expressions of sexuality in popular culture
- Discuss the impact of readily available technology and messages regarding stereotypes, sexuality and values

Chapter overview

- Fashion and popularity
- Morality and values
- Expressions of sexuality
- Technology and the media
- Racism

Suggested activities

- Watch short segments of two or three popular television shows (if unsure, ask participants what they watch). Discuss how characters on TV are portrayed, such as: a bully (strong, big, usually male), a grandmother (old, kind, wears glasses), a best friend (funny, helpful, sometimes not very smart), a villain (mean, looks funny, ugly or scary, not well-liked), and teenagers (getting into trouble, smart, young, good looking, healthy).
  - The facilitator can point out that people can be stereotyped based on their age, sex, job, culture, race, looks, position in the family or other factors
  - The facilitator can guide a discussion regarding what people are learning about using stereotypes to judge people
  - Have teenagers list the dangers of stereotypes
- Discuss what are some things that Canadians find important? Do these ideas represent a stereotype? What typical behaviours regarding fashion, popularity and sexuality does the media promote?
- Ask participants to chose a popular or famous person. Based on their looks and behaviours, explain what stereotypes this person

represents. What are this person's values according to the media's representation of them?

- Discuss the pros and cons of technology
  - The facilitator can guide a discussion sharing statistics about addictions related to video games, the Internet and television use. Benefits may include: the amount of information that can be obtained, when properly used media, and easy access.
- Ask participants to think about historical events when a large population subscribed to a set of values or beliefs that were morally wrong. (For example: segregation in the United States, anti-feminism, anti-Semitism in WWII.)
  - Ask participants to think about why these values, which we now believe to be wrong, were widely accepted. How do these compare to contemporary cultural values in modern Western society (primarily consumerism and materialism)?
  - What effect do these values have on society? What problems do they cause?
- Now that the participants have an understanding of stereotypes and racism, ask them to discuss how they can help educate other people about racism and its effects?
  - A good suggestion is to start with friends and family; to promote acceptance and curiosity; avoid jumping to conclusions and making hasty judgments because of a lack of knowledge or understanding
- Discuss how participants could re-evaluate their own stereotypes?
  - Suggestions the facilitator can give are: asking questions, finding information about the culture and traditional practices, trying to understand why the behaviours and practices are important and meaningful to people from this culture

Other resources and information
---------------------------------

- Key points about fashion and popularity:
  - It is important to emphasize the increased stress that following fashion and seeking popularity may put on an immigrant teen's self-esteem and self-image. With all topics in this section, the cultural impact can be quite dramatic, particularly for individuals from cultures and backgrounds where there is little interest in materialism as a means of achieving social status. Immigrant teens may feel pressured into belonging to a specific group by adopting fashions that may affront their parents' belief system. Emphasize that ~~f~~ashion = popularity = happiness is a myth that does not

hold true, regardless of what is popularized by the media in Western culture.

- Key points about morality and values:
  - Values, specifically those regarding sexuality, independence and materialism, are the most likely source of conflict in immigrant families. Adopting these new values will depend on the acculturation strategy of individual family members. It is important to emphasize to participants how necessary it is to discuss not only the values they see in society, but also the values they see at home among family. This will provide members of the household, who are not as exposed to Canadian culture (i.e. stay-at-home mom, young siblings) with the opportunity to benefit from a parallel, if not equal acculturation process. This will create a greater understanding of each family member's needs and beliefs.
- Key points about expressions of sexuality:
  - Stereotypes regarding sexuality abound in many cultures. It is important to understand how they may impact a teenager's self-image. This is particularly true for teenagers who may be confused by radically differing sets of beliefs about sexual expression, and typical gender roles.
- Key points about technology and the media:
  - Teenagers are exposed to the availability of different means of communication, technology and media. It is important to remember that teenagers will, in general, possess a greater knowledge of the use of these devices than their parents will. Therefore, critical thinking skills will provide the greatest protection regarding technology and the media.
- Key points about racism:
  - Canada has a legal framework that includes laws and policies to ensure equality. Because Canada is a multicultural country, and due to the presence of global conflict, many minorities find themselves judged by the media's portrayal of their culture.
  - In 2005, 47% of Canadian citizens were of an ethnic origin other than British, French or native-born Canadian<sup>xxxviii</sup>. It is very important for teenagers to develop cross-cultural abilities. To be successful in Canada's multicultural environment, immigrant teenagers must become culturally aware and sensitive to the needs of people around them. They need the ability to communicate and respect the values of other cultures and not impose their beliefs on others.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 2**  
**STEREOTYPES, THE MEDIA AND WESTERN CULTURE**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Critical thinking is one of the most important skills an individual should develop. It is the ability to decide for yourself what to take of the information around you, based on what is best for you and what fits with your values. Making these decisions is not always easy. What may seem the most popular may not always be the best option. For instance, in your school, it may seem like the best looking and most popular boys and girls all smoke. You have to learn to think about the consequences of making the decision to smoke in order to look cool or be accepted. Smoking will have negative impacts on your health, your relationships with your family and on others who don't smoke. You also need to consider the cost of such an addictive habit.

For now, let's focus on the influence that popular culture may have on the decisions you make.

**2.1 . Fashion and popularity**

Fashion refers to trends or styles that are popular in a culture. This can be the way people dress, the language they use and the way they behave with one another. Popularity, on the other hand, refers to people and styles which are admired or well-liked by large groups of people. Each generation may adopt particular fashions. In Western culture, fashion is clearly visible in movies and music and represented by icons from each decade. Who are the most famous celebrities now? How do they dress? What are the most popular movies and music?

Your friends may subscribe to a particular kind of dressing or hairstyle. This doesn't mean that fashion should define who you are. It is normal for most teenagers to try out new styles. Be aware that fashion can be misleading. Generally, people promote certain fashion styles, or try to make a certain item popular, in order to make money. They are not really thinking about your well-being. Often, popular figures perpetuate stereotypes about gender, age, race and culture.

**2.3 . Morality and values**

We can think of culture as a reference system people use to give meaning to their personal and collective experiences. It is important to explore the values of Western culture to better understand what things define the majority of people who live in this country.

Each culture places different weight or importance on particular values. Some cultures may place a higher value on family unity, while another culture may place a higher value on individuality.

In general, Western culture believes in freedom of expression, materialism, individualism and consumerism. People are free to show, publish and talk about whatever they believe in. We are bombarded with products that will enhance our social status. We are repeatedly shown by the media that fame, fortune and glamour are synonymous with happiness. Culture does not give commands, but it constantly whispers about our behaviour.<sup>xxxix</sup> This can be disconcerting at times. It may seem that opposing ideas are good and true. The media for instance, will push the idea that beauty is purely physical. The media will value certain characteristics like skinny and tall for beautiful women and muscular and rugged for beautiful men, when in reality 99.97% of the population does not look like this!<sup>xi</sup>

You must keep in mind that the purpose of TV advertisements is to try to make you believe that if you buy their product you will be more popular, better looking or smarter, which is not necessarily true. The values portrayed regarding beauty, popularity and sexuality among others, are not to be accepted as morally right because they are on television or because all of your friends are doing it.

#### 2.4 - Expressions of sexuality

It is worth noting that sexual expression in Western culture differs widely from other cultures. In Western culture, the importance of sexual expression is clearly represented by things such as clothing designed to emphasize sexuality and the prevalence of surgical procedures to emphasize the body's sexual features. Expression of sexuality in Western culture may also present challenges for immigrants to change their attitudes towards gender roles, and their cultural views regarding household tasks, family responsibilities, etc. Western culture tends to question rigidly defined gender roles. This may cause stress for immigrants who find it contrary to their beliefs and values (i.e. romantic relationships prior to marriage, men and women equally sharing housework and childcare duties) and who prefer to maintain sexuality as something individual and private, not to be discussed with others.<sup>xi</sup>

As you and your family are exposed to the overt expression of sexuality in Western culture, some aspects may seem either appealing or repulsive according to your family values. It is important to find a balance and practice tolerance towards others - strangers and relatives! Parents especially may not easily change their views and instead may choose to embrace their traditional values more closely as it makes them feel comfortable. Remember that the media tends to portray an exaggerated and romanticized version of sexuality. Your self-image should not be based on comparisons to idealized and unrealistic images of men and women.

## 2.5 . Technology and the media

Technology refers to anything and everything we have created to make our lives easier. Technology in the form of radio, computers, and television allows us to obtain information faster and in more convenient ways. The problem is that the information is not always true. Some say that the media promotes harmful stereotypes. When they become our only source of entertainment, embracing these stereotypes can change our habits .

Take the internet for instance. Anyone who has access to a computer may add information based on their beliefs. They may choose to promote anything from human rights to racist attitudes. Television may shower you with violence, sexuality and commercials selling you all kinds of things you probably don't need. Video games may take your attention away from academic and social pursuits. There are numerous dangers to the excessive use of technology, which we will discuss in a later chapter. For now, it is important to remember that technology if used properly can be a wonderful source of information. The internet for instance can help us learn new information in clear and effective ways. Television can bring us timely news and help us learn about the world. Video games can provide excellent opportunities for family time if chosen properly. In general, having a handle on the use of technology is considered an advantage in the job market. Thinking critically about what you are seeing is more than just an exercise; it is essential in maintaining a healthy self-image and a balanced life.

## 2.6- Racism

Racism is racial prejudice or discrimination. Race is defined as a group of people who share common physical features, culture or geographic origin. It is a description of individuals based on their shared features. It is important to learn about racism because it is usually tied to cultural or gender stereotypes. Racism is a social crime. Canada has laws to protect individuals against racist acts. Incidents believed to be motivated by racial discrimination should be reported to the authorities. Not all acts of racism are overt or visible; racism can happen in the form of biases, jokes, unwanted comments and even institutional policies. Victims often do not know what to do when faced with racism. Racism can become a form of harassment and if not stopped can escalate into serious crimes resulting in violence, vandalism, physical assaults, and destruction of property. Reporting racist incidents to the police is the responsibility of the victim and witnesses; not reporting such incidents only guarantees that the behaviour will continue and possibly escalate.

In 2007, the Statistics Canada publication *Police-reported hate crimes in Canada* identified racial or ethnic biases as the most common motive for hate crimes. About one third of all hate crimes were perpetrated by youth<sup>xii</sup>. Having biases and judging people based on stereotypes is a serious problem. It narrows

our perception of people. It prevents us from seeing members of a culture as unique individuals. It sets us up for failure in forming meaningful relationships with people from other cultures. Racism is based on stereotypes. These stereotypes are learned from and perpetuated by the media, our friends, peers and family.

Racism is a misconception between people of different cultures. It continues to happen because one or both people refuse to see the other culture as equal and valuable. In many cases, this happens because of a lack of knowledge of the other culture and the reasons behind their behaviours. Ignorance of cultural practices and resentment towards other cultures is a learned behaviour. Racism works both ways. As immigrants, we may have a mental picture of the way Canadians are, what they like and how they behave. In reality, not all people belonging to a culture will behave exactly the same way or believe in the same things.

Racism must be confronted and dealt with to prevent it from happening again. It is your right to be treated justly and respectfully. If it happens to you, or you see it happen:

- Document the event . write down details of the incident, people present, time and place. Keep evidence or pictures of any injury or damage to property.
- Report the incident . if there is a physical assault, damage to property or violence of any kind, report it to the police immediately. If the incident happens at work or school, also tell a supervisor, teacher or person in authority at the place it occurred.
- Make a complaint - if necessary, you can make a Human Rights Complaint. In this case, the Alberta Human Rights commission or the Canadian Human Rights Commission can be contacted ([www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca) or [www.chrc-ccdp.ca](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca)).

## SECTION 2: CHAPTER 3

### FRIENDS AND PEERS

### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### Session objectives

- Participants will gain an understanding of relationships and their impact on their family and personal lives
- Explore the characteristics of cliques and understand their social function
- Participants will gain an understanding of dating patterns and cultural characteristics of relationships and their implied expectations
- Explore the significance of bullying and harassment and its impact on developing self-esteem
- Discuss the existence of gangs; explore their characteristics and the impacts on gang members, their families and society.
- Discuss the connection between family violence and violence in youth.

#### Chapter overview

- Cliques and reputations
- Dating
- Bullying and harassment
- Gangs and violence

#### Suggested activities

- The use of videos or a guest speaker may be particularly effective in this section. It may allow for a wider perspective on the topics surrounding relationships and peers (for example, a police officer for gangs; a counsellor for healthy relationships and dating)
- Ask participants to describe a group of people they know who could be a clique. What do they look like? What do you assume about people who belong to this group? Ask participants to think about the limitations cliques can have.
  - A cliques can be described as a group of youth who wear similar clothes, speak and behave the same way, and may be characterized by a particular fashion style (eg. emmo, preppy, goth, stoners)
- Ask participants for their opinions on dating. Ask them about their parentsqopinions on dating. Have they asked their parents or are

they making assumptions? Who else have they talked to about dating?

- Ask them to look through magazines, movies, books, and the Internet and find a dating couple. What image does this couple give about dating? Do you agree? How is dating different in your culture?
- Think of a couple you admire (mom-dad, uncle-aunt, or neighbours). What makes their relationship successful and what creates problems. If you cannot think of many things, ask them when you get the chance!
- Provide current statistics on bullying and have a discussion about its prevalence. Talk about how the reactions of onlookers and supporters can improve or worsen the situation.
- Define a gang. What kinds of activities do they do? Who can join? Why would someone want to join a gang?
- The facilitator may research the %Robbers Cave Experiment+by Muzafer Sherif, et. al. (<http://www.experiment-resources.com/robbers-cave-experiment.html>, or <http://psychclassics.asu.edu/Sherif/>). Provide a brief description to the participants and discuss the behaviour shown by the experiment's participants.
  - What behaviour is similar to gang behaviour?
  - Why did it start? What events strengthened those behaviours?
  - Why did participants behave this way?
  - The facilitator can use this example to reinforce the idea that peer influences are not always clearly visible to individual group members and that those influences can be misleading and create antisocial behaviours between groups.
- Discuss with participants the prevalence of violence in the media. Ask them to share what they have learned about violence from these sources. What about children's cartoons? How do characters solve their problems? Is there a better way?

#### Other resources and information

- Peer relationships in the teenage years take precedence over familial relationships. At a national level, an average 86% of youth (15-19 years of age) regardless of their background (Caucasian vs. foreign born) rate friendship as very important and influence of friends is high with immigrants being slightly lower in percentage for the second question (85%)<sup>xliii</sup>. It is vital that the facilitator not minimize the importance of these relationships. Instead, emphasize how important it is that friendships are healthy and constructive.
- Key points about cliques and reputations:

- Cliques are different from mere groups of friends. Cliques are exclusive. It is not uncommon for clique leaders to perform ~~makeovers~~ on new members and to influence change in their behaviours so that they ~~belong~~ to the group. Some cliques can be overtly hostile, actively engaging in bullying or criminal activities.
- Cliques affect the reputation of their members because uniform behaviour is required of their members. Members are usually judged according to stereotypes.
- Cliques can easily turn on a member because of perceived disobedience of either the rules or leaders. The former members may feel rejected, alone and vulnerable.
- Key points about dating:
  - In Western culture, dating or ~~going out~~ is seen as the traditional way of developing intimate heterosexual relationships. In middle and late adolescence, it becomes the focus of interactions with the opposite sex. It is important to remember that contrary to popular belief, these relationships are not transitory and unimportant. They are important for the teenager's self-image and self-esteem. They can cause great damage if teenagers have bad experiences. It has been documented that friends may coerce peers into dating relationships where they may experience unwanted contact or forced intercourse as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. In Canada, and the United States in particular, dating tends to play a more dominant role in adolescent peer relationships than in other countries<sup>xliv</sup>.
- Key points about bullying and harassment:
  - It is important to emphasize that bystanders can stop bullying. About 70% of students will report observing bullying and remaining silent. Teenagers have to be taught to think ethically, but they will only do so if they care. Empathy is a skill that can break the cycle of violence. Reinforcing the idea that caring for each other's welfare is the biggest thing that can create a safer environment for everyone. Throughout this section, the facilitator should emphasize the concept of empathy.
  - All forms of bullying are damaging. Cyber-bullying is especially harmful as it usually happens in places where youth would otherwise feel safe. It creates more anxiety because it may seem anonymous. It causes longer lasting damage because videos, comments or texts can remain visible for longer periods of time and to more individuals. Cyber-bullying is illegal. In many cases, Internet and wireless service providers can trace the source of the

message. Any other forms of violence or threats that cause fear in an individual are also illegal and can be reported.

- Key points about gangs and violence:
  - Gangs, like cliques, are tight groups of individuals. They are usually defined by: the use of symbols to determine membership, a marked involvement in crime and an exaggerated pride in membership. More generally, a gang is a group of individuals who join together for antisocial reasons. Reasons for joining a gang may vary. Gang availability, protection, seeking friends, lack of supervision, and lack of awareness of negative aspects of being a gang member are all factors that may influence a youth's decision to join a gang. Indicators of the presence of gangs may include specific economic and cultural conditions (i.e. poverty in a neighbourhood and/or a sudden influx of members from the same culture within a specific geographical area where there are inadequate social services to assist the population). Factors that support youth identification with current members of gangs include shared experiences, like immigration. These ties lead to the gang members having more influence over the youth than parents. Teens may hold the belief that they share many more things in common with other gang members and are better understood by them. Increased vulnerability of immigrant adolescents may lead to maladaptive behaviours like violence or lawbreaking as they assert their identity under negative influences of peer gang members<sup>xlv</sup>.
  - The facilitator can make use of current statistics and resources available from their local police force.
    - <http://www.getalife.ca/index.html>
    - <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/index-eng.htm#r3>
  - Violence may or may not be related to gang activity. Family violence is usually related to poor supervision and substituting effective social bonds and controls with television and other forms of media. Parental absence, divorce and stressful life events are associated with higher delinquency rates. But as the family is not the only source of social interaction, it is important to emphasize that exposure to gangs and violent behaviour in a neighbourhood may complicate and reinforce the pre-existence of violent behaviour. In these instances, neighbourhood initiatives can enhance resilience in children and youth<sup>xlvi</sup>.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 3**  
**FRIENDS AND PEERS**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Relationships are an important part of growing up. Healthy friendships can introduce you to new people, new interests and new activities. Relationships can make you feel good about yourself and help you discover who you are. There are many kinds of relationships, not all are healthy. All of them can teach you something about yourself if you are willing to learn. If you stay involved in activities you like, you will find yourself surrounded by people who share your interests. If you keep your social circle open and diverse, you will widen your outlook on life and feel confident in a wide variety of situations.

**3.1 Cliques and Reputations**

Cliques are specific groups of friends. To belong to a clique, you need to follow specific group behaviours or rules. For instance, we all know who the popular kids are. Do they have a clique? In order to belong to their group, do you need to dress, speak, or do certain activities (eg. play sports)? Unlike other groups of friends who have common interests that are normal and healthy, cliques usually have leaders who determine who can join. In order to join, you may have to adhere to a strict code of conduct. Instead of focusing on people sharing their values and beliefs, cliques usually focus on maintaining a certain kind of social status.

Belonging to a group is good. It is normal to find people you want to share things with. It can help you learn about relationships and closeness to others. A group can give you support. Within the group, you can share your ideas and discover important things you have in common with others. Cliques usually ask you to do just the opposite. By following a leader, you may be asked to participate in activities that you don't agree with (eg. bullying or smoking). It is important to remember that if you belong to a clique, few people outside of the clique will see you as an individual. You will be judged based on the values of the group, which may not reflect your own. If you chose to belong to a clique, your reputation and character will be marked by the actions of the group. It is important to decide if your belonging to this group and being stereotyped is more important than being seen as a unique individual. Speak out for what is important to you. Respect your own opinions and assert your rights by showing responsible behaviours.

**3.2 Dating**

Like other things in your teenage years, dating is a subject that will come up again and again. Youth is a time to get in touch with your values, interests and beliefs. Your choices matter!

Dating can be a challenging topic to discuss with parents, but avoiding it will not make things better. Choosing to avoid it will only delay conflict, and probably worsen the situation. Western culture may bombard you with sexual images that are linked with dating, however, there is so much more to healthy dating than sexuality. Friendship, relationships, self-esteem, communication, responsibility, emotional awareness and sexuality are all linked to dating.

Physiological and psychological changes will bring about an awakening of sexual impulses, curiosity and perhaps anxiety about opposite-sex peers. At first, it may be more comfortable to participate in group activities with both boys and girls. As you develop a stronger sense of self, you may feel more comfortable in individual relationships, where you may not only feel sexual attraction but also mutual trust, confidence and genuine friendship.

Western culture sees dating as a step into developing adult relationships. Taking it for granted that you should be dating (it's normal for some people to not want to date at an early age!) or that your parents will be comfortable with the idea may create unnecessary tension. Cultural values will determine how dating is viewed in your family, and what your parents may see as appropriate or inappropriate. If you are not sure about your parents' opinions, or what they expect from you - ask them. Tell them about what you see and what you believe about dating. Try to reach an agreement on what should be acceptable for you, now that your family is in Canada.

### 3.3 Bullying and harassment

Bullying is when one person hurts or threatens another in their peer group. This means that most bullying happens between people who are roughly the same age. It is a form of violence in which one person will try to demonstrate their power over another person. There are many kinds of bullying: physical, sexual, verbal and cyber. In all cases, the intent is to emotionally put down the other person through intimidation and aggression. If it is constant, it becomes harassment and the bullied person feels angry, sad, lonely and/or depressed.

Bullies choose targets who are smaller, younger, from another race or culture, or are different in some other way. There are two main types of bullying: direct (eg. hitting, kicking, insults, racial or sexual harassment or threats) or indirect (eg. gossiping or spreading rumours).<sup>xlvii</sup> Bullying happens not only because of the characteristics of the individuals but also because bystanders and observers may do nothing when they see it, essentially giving the bully more power and opportunity to continue the cycle. Bullying is not acceptable. It is against school rules and the law.

Many times we do things because it is the way we have always done them. As children, we learn most of our communication and problem-solving

skills from our family interactions. It is no surprise that most children who bully report that their family feels less cohesive and more hostile. There is a high tolerance for aggression and harsher discipline. Children who are bullied say their families are very stable but do not encourage autonomy or negotiation. Sometimes they may see their parents as overprotective.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Because we have always done something a certain way does not mean that we can't change, especially if someone is hurting us or we are hurting someone else. Bullying can lead to disciplinary problems in school. Being bullied can lead to severe health problems. If you see bullying, put a stop to it:

- Refuse to join in teasing someone
- Tell a teacher, parent or other adult - you are not snitching. you are taking a stand against bullying
- Encourage the bullied person to talk to an adult and offer to go with them
- If your friend is a bully, encourage them to do something better with their time and refuse to join in hurting others

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology. This can be through text messages, chat rooms and websites. There are many ways that people can bully others online:

- Sending e-mails or messages containing insults or threats
- Spreading hateful comments through e-mail, messaging, blogs or websites
- Stealing passwords and assuming someone else's identity
- Creating websites to target specific people

Similar to other forms of bullying, there are things you can do to stop cyber-bullying if you see it happen:

- Leave the site or stop the activity (i.e. chatting)
- Block the sender and don't reply to the message
- Save the message and forward it to your Internet service provider
- Tell an adult you trust and show them what you have seen

Know that you have the power to stop bullying. Most youth respond better to their peers than they do to adults, so if you speak out against bullying, chances are you can stop it.

### 3.4 Gangs and violence

Gangs may be seen as an extreme form of clique. Gangs are different from cliques in that they are involved in criminal activities. Many youth join gangs thinking they provide safety, friendship and acceptance. The truth is that gangs have more rules than your parents or household ever will. In order to belong to a gang, members must adopt a new culture or way of being. Gang culture includes communication styles, clothes, hairstyle, tattoos and joining in illegal activities. Obedience is mandatory. Disobeying the gang's code of conduct, or refusing to

participate in their activities, are considered punishable acts, in some cases by death. Gangs promote strict adherence to their code as a duty to the other members. In 2009, in the city of Calgary, the Calgary Police Service estimated that:

- Gang member recruitment starts as early as age 12
- Gang members have a life expectancy of 20 years of age
- Most live in constant fear and wear bullet proof vests for protection
- Gang members face an average of 4 criminal charges
- Gang members are 75% more likely to be victims of violence than the average citizen
- 20% of homicides are gang related
- 86% of gang members who were attacked knew their attacker<sup>xlix</sup>

Violence becomes a regular part of gang life, but violence is found in other places as well. In Western culture, violence is prevalent in the media. It is glorified in movies, video games and television. It may be portrayed as a way to assert power, gain status or solve problems, with physical violence for males and other forms of violence within a relationship for women. In reality, using violence as an early problem-solving strategy can be an indicator of future problems in adulthood. These individuals may encounter family violence, crime involvement, drug involvement, low education, and poor socioeconomic status<sup>l</sup>.

This is why it is so important for youth to have a variety of tools to use when dealing with conflict. As we will see in Chapter 6, if conflict is dealt with in positive ways, it can be a great learning opportunity.

Family conflict and violence can influence the way we look at our relationships and the way we interact with our relatives. They may also influence our future relationships. If we as children learn that a husband or wife shouts at their spouse when frustrated, or physically hurts them when angry, we are more likely to seek relationships of a similar nature. Even if we don't agree with the behaviour, we may mimic it, because it is the way it was always done. We don't know what else to do when experiencing intense emotions like frustration and anger. It is important to be aware that family violence is a cycle that must be broken through education and developing new skills. Like any other kind of violence, there are better ways to deal with problems. Clearly communicating our thoughts and ideas is the most effective way to prevent problems, before they create conflict.

## SECTION 2: CHAPTER 4

### HEALTHY MIND AND HEALTHY BODY

#### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### Session objectives

- Discuss the necessary components of a healthy lifestyle
- Participants will learn about eating disorders, their prevalence, and their harmful effects on individuals and their families
- Participants will discuss the presence of addictions in youth, the behaviours that may lead to them as well as the consequences of the behaviours
- Participants will gain an understanding of stress as a problem for teenagers and hold discussions on depression and suicide
- Participants will discuss possible ways to prevent health concerns and maintain a healthy mind and body

#### Chapter overview

- Healthy living
- Eating disorders
- Addictions
- Stress and depression

#### Suggested activities

- Participants can draw a picture of a healthy teenager (it could be themselves or someone they think is really healthy)
  - Participants can discuss what makes them healthy. It is important for the facilitator to encourage participants to broaden their view, to not only include physical health but also mental health.
- As participants gain an understanding of eating disorders, the facilitator can lead a discussion on why participants believe they happen.
  - Discussing their prevalence in men and women will be important. Using current statistics (obtained from the local health authorities) can be useful to dispel myths about who develops eating disorders and why.
- Participants can have a discussion about how much is too much and how can people tell when they are addicted to a substance.
  - The facilitator should allow teens to talk about myths and be ready to explain the truth about addictions. The facilitator should also supply current statistics of addictions in youth.

- Allow for discussions about current trends, binge drinking and the use of alcohol and other substances to reduce stress, manage emotions or deal with difficult experiences.
- Ask participants to discuss what stress means to them and what it looks like. Ask each participant to think of stressful life events. Have the group brainstorm possible solutions for dealing with each event.
    - This exercise will give the facilitator the opportunity to point out that there is usually more than one good solution to every problem. The facilitator can explain that, sometimes, other people can help us find those solutions. They may see things more clearly without having emotions cloud their judgment. They may help us avoid making a hasty decision based on emotions, not reasoned thought.
  - A guest speaker: a nurse or mental health expert could be invited to answer specific questions teens may have about real life situations.

Other resources and information
---------------------------------

- Key points about healthy living
  - The Canada Food Guide and provincial initiatives such as %Healthy U+from the Alberta government are good referral sources. They also publish accessible and age appropriate materials that can be used to supplement the program.
  - It is also important to remember that peers are the biggest influence on whether a teen chooses to become involved in a particular activity. Teenagers who participate in this program can in turn influence their peers to remain active, make healthy choices and engage in positive activities.
  - Healthy living is about making positive lifestyle choices in every aspect of your life, from diet to regular medical checkups. Although this program section focuses mainly on diet and exercise, other factors such as healthy relationships, education and community involvement are essential elements of a healthy lifestyle.
- Key points about eating disorders
  - Eating disorders tend to be more prevalent in Western culture because contemporary Western media encourages women to feel dissatisfied with their weight and shape. Because the media emphasizes physical beauty as a means to achieve popularity and status, youth who are constantly exposed to unachievable physical standards can develop eating disorders.
  - It is important to address the issues of self-esteem, the unrealistic expectations that youth feel society places on them, and that they place on themselves. Explore stereotypes of fat and skinny people, as portrayed in the

media. Discuss whether these stereotypes and standards are not only unrealistic, but also unnecessary. They can be an added stress for many youth, if taken seriously. Many factors such as what goes on at school, socioeconomic status and exposure to the media can contribute to the increased incidence of eating disorders in young people. Therefore, the facilitator should highlight that many young women and men who suffer from eating disorders also suffer from low self-esteem and that this tends to be the biggest predictor of mental health disorders regarding body image.<sup>iii</sup>

- Key points about addictions
  - It is important to realize that as teenagers transition from childhood to adulthood, exploration of behaviours becomes required in certain circles. Friends and peers will encourage behaviours that are not only unacceptable to society, but also to parents and caregivers. Drinking, smoking and certain drugs are present in the school system as early as the elementary years. These behaviours may become acceptable to teenagers because their perceived effects are seen as cool, acceptable and desirable. They show their disregard for authority and achieve a higher social status. Many teenagers are misinformed about the effects of such behaviours. They may believe that activities such as binge drinking and occasional smoking (or drug use) are not damaging and can by no means cause addictions. In reality, these behaviours can cause serious addictions. Drugs contribute to illness, and risky behaviours such as unsafe sexual practices, accidents and violence that can have harmful, long-term outcomes. Dependency risk increases if drugs are used to deal with emotions or experiences.<sup>iii</sup>
- Key points about stress and depression
  - Most teens choose to deal with stress in one of three ways: assimilating (adopting) the behaviour that is causing stress; accommodating (accepting) the actions of others, but not necessarily engaging in the actions; and avoiding (moving away from) the behaviour or people that are causing stress by denying that it exists<sup>iv</sup>. Strategies to cope with stress are usually chosen based on previous experience, cultural values and perceived severity of the loss, threat or challenge that is being faced. However, each style has dangers and benefits attached to it, which are dependent on the situation and the desired outcome. Teenagers, who choose to assimilate, may adopt counterproductive behaviours that could be damaging to their health and relationships. However, just the opposite outcome is also possible for assimilators. They could assimilate behaviours that are

healthy and positive, such as joining a sports team to be with friends. Similarly, accommodating behaviours may create a passive acceptance of either good or bad behaviours that could influence later choices in life. Lastly, avoiding may influence choice of relationships, limiting the teenager's understanding of issues and problems in the larger community.

- Choosing any of the above-mentioned styles can also cause more stress for the teen. The outcome of decisions made may influence a teenager's social status with peers. If stress increases unchecked, that is to say, if there are no supports available, the teenager may face unmanageable levels of stress. If the coping style chosen turns out to bring about distress in relationships and unexpected changes in lifestyle, again the stress level may be unmanageable. Decision-making skills, critical thinking skills, encouraging informed decisions and creating a strong support network may in fact decrease stress in teenagers.
- Unfortunately, in Western culture, suicide is not uncommon for teenagers to escape stress. Culture itself seems to play a role in making it more prevalent. Western culture places strong emphasis on achieving physical beauty as a means to attain power, fame, and social status. Many teenagers feel pressured by peers and the media to conform to standards that to many, because of their genetic makeup, and situation in life, are unattainable.
- Depression and suicide can be proactively countered by: providing education about emotional expression; emphasizing the importance of mental health; and developing critical thinking skills to help teens deal with matters they are exposed to by peers and the media.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 4**  
**HEALTHY MIND AND HEALTHY BODY**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

**4.1 Healthy living**

Life in Canada offers many opportunities to discover new talents that you possess. Part of the challenge is keeping your mind and body healthy so you can achieve your full potential. Healthy eating, for instance, is a simple choice that can strengthen your immune system, give you energy to learn and be active, and promote the healthy growth of your body. Staying active is also necessary for healthy growth, managing stress and preventing disease as you grow older. Challenging yourself to take care of your own mind and body will also improve your self-esteem, your performance in the things you do and give you a general enjoyment of life. Some simple things you can do are:<sup>iv</sup>

1. Find Canada's Food Guide and check out the recommended servings for your age ([www.healthcanada.ca/nutrition](http://www.healthcanada.ca/nutrition)).
2. Check out the labels of the food you buy and choose foods that are lower in saturated fat, have no trans fats, are low in sodium (salt), and sugar. Make sure they contain some fibre.
3. Limit your intake of junk food, and if you like snacking, pick something healthy instead.
4. Ask your family to join you in having healthy eating habits. Share family meals, always eat breakfast and avoid skipping meals. Shopping for healthy foods and offering to prepare healthy meals can model healthy eating to your family members, and ensure that you have a say over your diet.
5. Avoid using drugs (including alcohol, tobacco and caffeine!)
6. Stay active! Choose an activity that keeps you attentive and motivated, something that is fun and that you can do with friends or alone, as you prefer.
7. Remember that big changes don't happen overnight and that you should set realistic goals as you get used to new habits.
8. Keep yourself interested, change activities, try new things and do activities that you find rewarding.
9. Keep it safe, stay hydrated, wear proper equipment, go with someone, and don't exceed your limits.
10. Asking family members to join you in healthy, fun activities will make it easier for you to also change your habits at home.
11. There is something you can do for every season; if you stay warm, even winter activities can be something to look forward to!

**4.2 Eating disorders**

Now that you know more about a healthy lifestyle, it is also important to remember that maintaining a healthy weight means balancing diet and exercise. Being overweight can cause just as many health problems as being underweight. Western culture tends to idealise physical beauty. Women should be skinny and small. Men should be muscular and strong. These images can be damaging, as mentioned before. Youth with low self-esteem, who are constantly bombarded by these images that don't seem to fit their reality, may feel that an extremely strict diet and/or rigorous exercise routines will give them the looks they desire. This is unrealistic and simply untrue.

Eating disorders are more extreme than going on a diet or making sure you exercise everyday. They are extreme eating behaviours. For some, these habits are more important than relationships, family or any other activity. For example, a young woman might refuse to go out with a friend because she feels she needs to workout to burn the calories from a piece of candy she just ate. Current statistics show the number of people suffering from eating disorders at one to two out of every hundred students.<sup>vi</sup> Some common eating disorders include: bulimia, anorexia, and binge eating. All eating disorders include excessive concern about weight, a drastic change in eating habits, and misconceptions about body image (i.e. seeing oneself as fat when looking in the mirror, but in reality having a normal, healthy weight; or becoming underweight).

### **Bulimia**

Bulimia nervosa, or just bulimia, is characterized by a combination of attempts to reduce eating (starving oneself) followed by binge eating (usually junk food) followed by the need to compensate by purging (forced vomiting, use of drugs or laxatives) in an attempt to prevent weight gain. This has serious repercussions on a person's digestive system. The consequent stomach acid damage the esophagus, tongue, mouth and teeth. The body tries to compensate by absorbing nutrients as quickly as possible, followed by periods of starvation. And so, bulimics may in fact remain at a normal weight and sometimes will actually gain weight.

### **Anorexia**

Anorexia nervosa, or anorexia, is characterized by an extreme fear of gaining weight. Anorexics become obsessed about restricting their diet (the variety of foods they eat), and then place extreme restrictions on their food intake (the amount of food they eat). It is not uncommon for anorexics to engage in excessive exercise as they try to burn the calories they have consumed. They may also use purging in the initial stages. Anorexics will change their eating and dress habits to prevent other people from noticing any changes in their behaviour.

### **Binge eating**

Binge eating is regularly consuming large amounts of food (usually junk food). Unlike bulimia, people who binge eat are not concerned with compensating and will gain weight rapidly without concern for their health.

Although the media in Western culture seems to encourage women to become dissatisfied with their bodies, it is not uncommon for men to also fall prey to these same eating disorders. School environment, peer pressure, low self-esteem, unsupervised exposure to media, and lack of participation in healthy activities are common in people who suffer from eating disorders.<sup>lvi</sup>

It is normal for adolescents to have concerns about weight and body image. When these concerns take over as the most important thing in the teen's life, an eating disorder is likely to develop. Eating disorders are considered mental health problems. They require immediate professional intervention. Once again, it is extremely important for teens to develop high self-esteem, healthy lifestyle habits, and critical thinking skills to judge media content. By educating our friends and family members, we can help prevent our teens from having a distorted mental picture of themselves.

#### 4.3 Addictions

Everyone faces challenges and major set backs in life. As an immigrant, it is not easy starting over in a new country, making friends, learning a new language and understanding a new culture. Disagreements with family members can be difficult to deal with. Keeping emotions bottled up can lead to unhealthy behaviours such as making friends with people who can negatively influence you and refusing help from relatives who love you. Peer pressure can also mislead you into believing that experimenting with certain behaviours can be fun or cool. It may seem hard to believe that using drugs only once, or only occasionally, could lead to addiction. The possibility is real. Drugs change your brain chemistry and can create feelings of pleasure or satisfaction. Your brain learns to like these feelings. In fact, you can quickly and easily get to the point where you begin to crave them. Most people with addictions convince themselves that they won't get hurt and that they can stop using drugs any time. In reality, the addict's brain chemistry is so altered that it actually asks for more drugs. Your brain will create cravings or bodily sensations that can only be stopped by taking the drug, making it very hard for you to just stop.

Legal drugs, like caffeine, are addictive, but readily available in Western culture. Other addictive substances are regulated by law (alcohol, cigarettes, prescription drugs). Many more are illegal to buy, sell or consume (marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, acid).

There is no good reason for a teenager to need drugs, other than those prescribed by a medical doctor. If you experience stress, there are better ways to deal with your feelings. Taking risks with drugs is dangerous and can destroy

people's lives, not just your own, but also the lives of the people around you who love you and want to see you grow healthy and realize your true potential.

#### 4.4 Stress and depression

As an immigrant teen, you will find that other people (peers, relatives, and teachers) and institutions (school, government) expect different things from you. The pressures you face as you learn new skills, a new language, and how to adapt to a different lifestyle may cause stress and frustration. Stress is a feeling of being overwhelmed by emotions. We can't seem to do things that are expected of us. Talking to someone about your feelings will help, because stress is caused by internal emotions and trying to achieve goals is easier if you have support.

Different things that stress you can be handled in different ways, and that is okay as long as you stay true to your values. Keep in mind your mental and physical health and consider how these things may affect not only you, but also your friends and family.

When you disregard staying true to your values, you create stress and conflict. The conflict may be with others, but is also within you. Having feelings of guilt or failure can lead to excessive stress levels, depression and seriously affect your life, your relationships and cause further health problems.

Some ways to effectively deal with stress include:

1. Normalize stress . everybody feels it. Chances are you are not alone. Recognizing this helps end feelings of isolation.
2. Identify . What particular thing is stressing you out more than other things? Identifying the specific pressure can stop you from feeling overwhelmed.
3. Organize . Target things that stress you out early. For instance, if you have a big paper coming up in school, start early to avoid feeling stressed later. Always work on things from most stressful and important, to least stressful and important.
4. Know what works . Make a list of things that help you relax and fit them into your schedule when stress builds up. It will help you clear your head and deal with stress better.
5. Set yourself up to succeed. Make realistic goals, give yourself time and forgive yourself for mistakes. Focus on progress and improvement and remind yourself of your past successes when things get rough.

Dealing with stress is very important. Otherwise, it can create further health problems, such as drug and alcohol use to cope with depression.

Depression is a constant feeling of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Everybody experiences ~~feeling down~~ or ~~feeling blue~~ when things don't go well. Generally, people with depression experience intense feelings of sadness, worthlessness and helplessness for an extended period of time (more than two months). They will seem detached from reality, disinterested in things around them. They may feel tired and sad all the time, cry for no apparent reason, be unable to concentrate or make decisions, experience changing sleep patterns (too much or too little) and have thoughts of suicide.<sup>lviii</sup>

It is important to know that if you, or a friend, feels depressed, you are not alone. Depression is common in teens. Continuing to think of how sad you, or your friend, feels will only make it worse. Talking to someone who will listen and care will help you.

Constant headaches, body pains, feelings of irritability, and not finding things fun anymore can also be signs of depression. Another warning sign, and one that should never be taken lightly, is thinking and talking about death and suicide.

People who consider suicide usually do so because their feelings become so intense and overwhelming that they can't think of any other way of getting over their depression. There is always a better solution. Depressed people have difficulty finding solutions because of the strong emotions clouding their judgment.

In order to help prevent depression, ask for help anytime you feel stressed. You may not feel like seeing or talking to anyone, but isolating yourself can make you feel worse. Stay busy with activities that make you feel good. Remember that although you are a unique individual, many teens experience stress and feelings of depression. Avoid using drugs and alcohol to cope with stress. Keep your body healthy with diet and exercise. Talk to your parents and friends about depression. When you come across friends who feel stressed and depressed, don't take on the challenge of trying to get them through it by yourself. This may make the situation worse for both of you. Instead, encourage your friend to talk to their family and seek professional help. Stick by your friend and provide support. Listen to them and speak up if your friend starts talking about death or suicide.

## SECTION 2: CHAPTER 5 CULTURE AND THE FAMILY FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

### Session objectives

- Participants will explore the values of their culture of origin. They will identify similarities and differences from those of their own family.
- Participants will get an overview of the development of morality through the exploration of their own values.
- As participants work through scenarios, they will practice tolerance and develop curiosity as skills in the discussion with peers. Their peers may differ in their choice of values and the importance placed on each.
- As participants work on value clarification they will gain a basic understanding of the role of values in conflict, which will be further explored in the following chapter.

### Chapter overview

- My family and our culture
- My values and morality

### Suggested activities

- Watch a video such as *Growing Up among Strangers* by Aspen and Butterflytyphoon Pictures. Hold a discussion regarding the experience of the youth in the video.
- Have the following discussion with participants: List 5 values you believe are the most important to your parents and compare them with your top 5 values. Are they the same or different? Why? If there are differences, where do they come from? How did they happen?
- Work through the following scenarios to explore the meaning of morality and define some of the participants' values.
  - There is no single correct answer, as people will base their responses on their personal values. The facilitator should encourage curiosity in participants, to explore why answers are the same or different.
  - The facilitator should ask participants to explore what values are at play. Ask participants to think of the pros and cons of each decision.

- Ask participants to reflect on the decisions they made. Are they consistent with their list of values from the previous activity?
- Depending on the time that can be allotted to this activity, the facilitator can pair participants who had opposing views and ask them to take 2-3 minutes each to state their points and try to convince the other person to change their mind.
  - This is a good exercise in conflict resolution as it proves how hard it is to change someone else's mind when their decision is value based.

### Scenarios:

#### Johnny

Fifteen year old Johnny recently arrived in Canada. His father is frustrated and angry, as he has been unable to find a job that will provide sufficient money to pay for the family's basic needs. Johnny's mother is depressed, cries all the time and always feels too tired to take care of Johnny's four year old sister. May has been very sick lately and needs medication the family can't afford. Walking home from school one day Johnny sees a man getting out of his car. The man accidentally drops his wallet on the sidewalk and without noticing walks away. Nobody else has seen this. Johnny bends down to pick the wallet up and sees several \$100 bills sticking out of the wallet. Johnny knows his family needs the money badly. What should Johnny do?

#### Laura

Laura has just turned 17. She has finally been invited to a party where all the pretty and popular girls will be. Jason, Laura's crush will also be there. Laura believes that this is her chance to make friends with everyone and become popular. When she arrives at the party, all the popular girls are drinking alcohol, smoking pot and being overtly sexual. One of the popular girls hands her a beer and tells her Jason has been looking forward to hanging out with her and having a good time. Laura is confused. She knows that her parents would disapprove of her being at this party. What should Laura do?

#### Shaista

Shaista is fourteen. She is constantly arguing with her parents about everything: clothes, music, the friends she has. She wants to wear make-up, short skirts and shorts and sexy tops, just like her friends. Her mother is decidedly against these and tries to tell Shaista that there are other ways to express herself and that she does not have to dress like her friends to be part of the group. Shaista points out that the other mothers don't mind. Why can't her mother be more supportive and let Shaista wear whatever she wants? What should Shaista do?

#### David

David and his friends are doing badly in math. David's parents are not happy with his grades, but he just doesn't like math and has a very hard time completing the homework. One day, one of his friends comes to lunch with a piece of paper. He

shows it to them and tells them that as the teacher was leaving the room, he managed to steal a copy of their upcoming midterm. They can work on the answers and ace the test. What should David do?

#### Other resources and information

- Key points about ~~My~~ family and our culture
  - The exploration of cultural values as it pertains to family unity is important for any teenager. Many times, because they are at a critical stage in their physical and mental development, teenagers have not taken the time to think about their family's moral code. Teens may find they know their family's expectations but perhaps have not explored the reasoning behind their parents' and relatives' decision-making processes.
  - Western values, as discussed in Chapter Two, will serve as a contrast in this section. It is important for the facilitator to remember that acculturation rates for teens are much faster than for parents and older relatives. Teens need to be reminded of these differences.
  - The facilitator should attempt to shift any feelings of frustration into curiosity. Encourage teenagers to not only question their family's cultural practices, but also those of Canadians.
- Key points about ~~My~~ values
  - Exploring personal values and value clarification will assist teenagers in developing a sound moral compass. Without a moral compass, teens will not have the guide they need to lead them through the conflicting societal values they face everyday. Pluralism (different people with different beliefs in the same society) is unavoidable in Canada. Teens must be aided in developing strong personal morals, which will benefit them in their participation in Canadian society and will stimulate understanding and integration of key values from their own family and culture of origin.<sup>lix</sup>
  - Creating understanding and empathy for the feelings and intentions of others are key components in developing interpersonal problem-solving skills.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 5**  
**CULTURE AND THE FAMILY**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

5.1 . My family and our culture

Values are the backbone of culture. Values are the things we believe to be important, such as honesty, family, money, education. Although many cultures value the same, or very similar things, the importance placed on them changes, not only from culture to culture, but also from person to person. This is why it is important to explore the values of your family. This will help you understand what their culture means to them. As you name the values that are important to your family members, you will find many similarities with your own values, and also some differences. You will find that when values are different or opposite, conflict and disagreements may occur. The most important thing you should know about values is that with time, people take their own values for granted. Values become part of who a person is. People identify themselves in terms of their values. Sometimes, they hold on to these values even though they are no longer practical or useful . especially in a new context/country. For example, individuals may generally choose to retain their traditional dress but find that it is not suitable during Canada's cold winters. On the other hand, it may be very good for a person to hold on to values they hold dear and that make them feel good about themselves (honesty), even if people around them don't seem to share this value.

All immigrant families and each individual family member will face this challenge. Every immigrant will go through a struggle of adopting (practicing the new value), accepting (acknowledging that it happens but not practicing), or avoiding (denying the value and refusing to accept or adopt it). Values are a big part of culture. To many people, changing one's values means changing a big part of themselves. This takes more time for some people than others. Many individuals choose to avoid new values and never change. Consider that the longer you do something, the better you get at it, and the less you think about it. This is the relationship between people and their personal values.

Culture is heavily influenced by our ethnic origin. It is the combination of values that influence the way we live, dress, talk and behave. Although culture is a social idea, it helps to understand that countries and cities are commonly seen as a place where culture is shared. In countries where there is little immigration, most people will unquestionably share the same culture. But immigrants, look, dress, talk and behave differently. Furthermore, newcomers may have different or opposing values to those of their new country, so which values are correct?

There is no right or wrong answer. However, living in a different culture will place pressures on families to change, accept, or refuse values as they encounter them. There is no simple guide to which values should be adopted,

accepted or avoided. These decisions are up to each individual family to find a balance, not only between their family and Canada, but also between individual members of the family. What is key, here, is understanding that regardless of what people say or do, values can only be changed if you believe in them. Forcing someone to adopt values will only result in conflict. This is why, Canada as a country, practices tolerance. Canada promotes the belief that regardless of your values, if we are all respectful of each other's beliefs, our differences in opinions will result in a rich diversity of ideas and perspectives, providing a multitude of solutions to problems that enriches Canadian society.

## 5.2 My values and morality

As we have mentioned, values are based on the beliefs that are important to us. Our core values are usually acquired through experience and observation as children. In the teenage years, exploring values is important in forming your own moral compass. Moral development is not only knowing your values, but developing the conviction to act on them in your everyday life. This comes to be expected of young people as they gain responsibility at home and in the community. Moral judgment is determining what is to be gained and/or lost in a given situation, by considering the interests and feelings of everyone involved. Moral judgment is expected of you as a teenager because it is a stepping stone to becoming a successful and responsible adult. Developing this morality is greatly influenced by your family, your peers, and the diversity of your life experiences.

Living in a new country complicates the process of developing personal values. You will be faced with a wide variety of ideas, conflicting pressures and influences (media, peers, relatives). As a teenager, you may begin thinking of your own future, the meaning of your actions and you may become concerned about the outcomes of your actions. Some of your values will change throughout your life. However, many of your basic values, ones you will hold for the rest of your life, are determined now during adolescence. At this time, you are also learning about the world and becoming educated. Your behaviour is expected to shift from that of a child to that of an adult. Cultural values and religious values will also influence your moral development.

It is important to know that your moral compass is your guide to behaviour . your guide to life. If you don't take the time to explore your own reasons for owning certain values, you may find yourself adopting behaviours and values that are harmful to you and others. Many social crimes like racism, discrimination and exploitation of minorities, have their basis in erroneous values acquired by people perpetrating the crime. In their minds, their actions are in line with their values and their behaviour is justified. Here are a few examples of superficial moral compass development: refusing to employ a person from a different culture because they believe they are incapable of performing the job; ignoring and

failing to help a person with a disability because they ~~don't~~ understand what is happening, paying lower wages to immigrant workers to save money.

Understanding moral values does not guarantee that people will act in accordance with them. Many times what you view to be right depends on your self-concept and your sense of identity. Asking the people around you, including your parents, for explanations of their personal values will guarantee that even if you ~~don't~~ agree with them, you will at least be more tolerant and understand why they hold those values dear.

Discovering and knowing what is personally important to you is essential. The process of deciding what your values are is usually referred to as values clarification. This process involves making decisions between alternatives. The choices can be complicated, especially when you find yourself having to choose between two opposing values that are equally important to you.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 6**  
**PROBLEM-SOLVING AND COMMUNICATION**  
**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

Session objectives

- Participants will gain an understanding of conflict and its causes
- Participants will understand personal styles of dealing with conflict. Through the use of scenarios, they will explore the significance of their personal style in dealing with conflict.
- Participants will explore the components of effective communication and discuss specific expectations in communication in a cross-cultural context.
- Participants will learn problem-solving skills and gain an understanding of their application in real life situations.

Chapter overview

- Conflict
- Effective communication
- Planning and priorities

Suggested activities

- Work through the following conflict scenarios in small groups. Use your knowledge of styles people are using. Be prepared to explain the reasoning behind your solution. How would you handle the situation? What or who is causing the conflict? What do people involved need?
  - A student in your class has the reputation of being a ~~yesq~~ yes person. Every time the teacher asks them, they willingly take on projects and new responsibilities. This student has a very good reputation with the teachers. You know that this student is not actually finishing the tasks himself, and that he always talks other students into doing the work for him. The other students agree because they want to be on good terms with this popular kid, but not because they like him. One of these students comes to you for help; she wants advice about what to do.
  - Another student is bothering a friend of yours. You see other students watching but not doing anything. Your friend looks scared but he is also getting angry. He looks like he is about to hit the other student.

- You just got your science test back only to discover that you received a poor grade! Now you're furious . especially because you studied more than ever before!
- You are writing your final math exam and feel distracted by a kid behind you who is taping his pencil against his table. You look around and tell him, "Please stop". The teacher comes towards you and takes your paper away, telling you that you will receive a failing mark for chatting.
- When you come home from school, your mom is very upset because she thinks you broke her favorite vase without telling her about it. She automatically grounds you. You know it was actually your brother who did it.
- You and your best friend have plans for the weekend, and you have been looking forward to hanging out together all week. On Friday afternoon, your friend tells you that you'd have to do it another time because he is doing something with someone else.
- A classmate has asked you for the twentieth time to borrow a pen. Every time you lend her one, you don't get it back, so this time you say no. She gets angry and starts to yell at you.

- Have a discussion with participants about the following: The goal of conflict resolution is to solve problems before they lead to violent behaviour, whether verbal or physical. What strategies can people use to accomplish this?
- Have participants work in pairs and share a short story while sitting back to back. Discuss how eye contact and body language are important in communication.
- Challenge participants to work in small groups to develop an activity for one of the other groups that makes use of effective communication skills.
  - This activity makes use of communication skills within the group as well as planning skills. It will also help clarify the material and provide participants with an opportunity to practice what they have learned so far. The facilitator should encourage all group members to participate to the best of their ability.
- In small groups, ask students to come up with a scenario where a teenager fails to plan ahead. What would be the consequences? Would everything have been easier with the use of a simple plan? What should be the priorities in the scenario and why?
  - One such scenario could be: Think of a student who is given a big project to complete on the weekend. When Friday comes, the student decides to go out with friends, play video games or watch television. Thinking that he can complete his homework on Saturday, he promises to meet with his friends again on Sunday. When Saturday comes, the student's parents ask him to do chores around the house and participate in family activities. The student returns home late in the evening thinking that the homework has not been started but that he still has Sunday. When Sunday comes, the student feels tired and wants to relax. He thinks of completing the homework later the same day. First, he will meet with his friends and have some fun. He is talked into going to the mall to watch a movie and hang out. He returns home exhausted and anxious because Monday is fast approaching and he has not even started his homework. He finally opens the books to start his homework. He realizes that the project is going to take much longer than expected and he needs some materials for it that he has not yet even considered. His mother reminds him that he needs to go to sleep early to be ready for school tomorrow. He gets irritated and replies that he is old enough to decide when to go to bed.

Other resources and information
---------------------------------

- Key points about conflict
  - Conflict is present in all aspects of a teenager's life. In this section, conflict is presented as a problem-solving model. It will be developed further in the discussion of emotions in Chapter Seven. Conflict resolution involves many skills, including communication and planning. The sections below create a foundation for communication and planning skills. They are building blocks for

developing or strengthening resiliency in youth. These skills help teens develop awareness of concepts, promote self-regulation of behaviour and provide a battery of skills that can be adapted and used in every part of their lives.

- Key points about effective communication
  - In this section, effective communication emphasizes body language. It outlines some of the most common differences in cultural expectations for demonstrating attention and understanding. Regardless of a youth's background, it is important to make them aware that behaviors (gestures) are perceived differently from culture to culture.
  - Actively remind participants to practice the skills they have learned in the safe environment of their group. This may help them to adopt and use their new skills in the broader context of society. The facilitator should not discourage teens from observing existing cultural practices at home. Participants should come to the understanding that expectations regarding their behaviours change when relating to people outside the home.
- Key points about planning and priorities
  - Planning and setting priorities is a required skill for successful adulthood in the Canadian context. It also enhances resiliency as it promotes continued healthy brain development and the functions that use logic<sup>lx</sup>. The problem-solving model in this manual promotes good planning. Participants will be introduced to the concepts of thinking carefully, taking others involved into consideration and generating multiple solutions. Participants will be encouraged to regulate their emotions by using logic and considering potential consequences. The facilitator should emphasize the fluidity of problems and their solutions. Remind participants that problem-solving, at its best, includes flexibility in both the planning and action stages. Participants need to learn spontaneity and how to deal with challenges as they present themselves.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 6**  
**PROBLEM-SOLVING AND COMMUNICATION**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

**6.1 Conflict**

If you think back to every relationship you've ever had, you can probably think of a disagreement or a fight within that relationship. When there are differences of opinion or thought, conflict results. Many times, we see conflict as negative. To protect ourselves and keep the relationship on good terms, we sometimes choose to avoid conflict. However, conflict can be an opportunity to explore and understand differences . to get to know the other person better. You can strengthen relationships by respecting differences in opinion and working towards a common goal. There are many styles people use to deal with conflict. One method already mentioned is ~~avoidance~~ where we pretend nothing is happening. A second style is ~~accommodating~~ where you give-in to the solutions or demands of the other person, even if you don't like them. Other styles include ~~collaborating~~ and ~~compromising~~. Collaborating involves looking for a win-win solution. Compromising is developing a solution in which both parties give and take. Still another style is ~~competing~~ where you want to win a discussion or conflict no matter what.

Think of an example where both you and your friend really want the last apple in the store. If you avoid conflict, you would say, "You have it; I didn't really want it anyway." Many people choose this style when the relationship is more important than the outcome or the solution. If you accommodate, you may say, "I really want it, but I think you want it more, so you have it." In this case, the relationship is important but you do care about the outcome. Collaborating would be you saying to your friend, "What do you want the apple for? I want the peels for an experiment and you want to eat it because you are hungry. So, I take the peels and you eat the rest, we both get what we want." This style may be chosen because we place high importance on both the outcome and the relationship. Compromising is different. In this case, you would say something like, "You get it this time. I get it next." You lose something and also gain something because next time, it will be your turn to get the apple. Competition involves winning a conflict despite the relationship. You may say, "I will have the apple and I don't care about what you want!"

Conflict is not always as simple as deciding who gets the apple. It becomes more complicated when values are involved. Because values are very important, people feel the need to defend them. As a teen, you are in the process of defining your values. Some things that are important to you now, probably weren't so when you were five or six years old. Everybody has values and they affect all the decisions people make. That is why it is so important to see conflict as an opportunity to understand others better, rather than as struggle that will end with a winner and a loser.

When someone else's values are the opposite of ours, we may feel attacked and hurt or angry. If we don't choose a conflict style that suits our needs at the moment, we may end up making the problem worse. We can make things worse if: we get really

angry and start a fight (compete), or pretend it doesn't matter to us and feel bad about our decision (avoid); or, give-in to a decision that we don't feel comfortable with (avoid). Whether conflict happens with friends, relatives or strangers, properly dealing with the conflict is very important, particularly when our values are at stake.

Communication is the first step in dealing with conflict. Some useful skills when resolving conflict include:

- Use your own words to express how YOU feel
- Do something that helps you calm down physically, such as exercise
- Think of what you would do or say if you were the other person
- Discuss solutions and use your problem-solving skills
- Involve someone else who is not affected by the conflict
- Listen to the ideas of everyone involved

## 6.2 Effective communication

Effective communication is about being assertive, positive and clear when expressing your ideas. Being assertive, or confident when conveying your thoughts includes being respectfully aware of other people's ideas. Effective communication is about sending and receiving information, saying what we need to say, without letting our emotions take over. For example, if you feel upset at someone, trying to be too assertive could be interpreted as aggressiveness. You may say or do things that hurt or anger the other person. On the other hand, if you are not confident when communicating and become passive . not taking a chance to express your opinion - others may not take your input seriously and take advantage of you.

The great thing is that assertiveness in communication can be learned and practiced. It is about using your words, your body language and your listening skills to successfully get your point across while making an effort to understand the points of view of others involved.

Body language involves simple things like the way we use our hands, make eye contact, and shake hands. These gestures vary in appropriateness from culture to culture. The challenge is to learn and adapt to Canadian body language norms to successfully relate to others. One advantage that you have, as an immigrant, is that in a multicultural society, most people you meet will be curious about your traditions and practices. As you educate others about your culture, take the chance to learn about their world, too.

In general, Western culture highly values people with assertive communication skills. They are seen as strengths for building relationships. Assertiveness is also usually associated with high self-esteem and strong abilities. In the context of Western culture, assertive communication is related to maintaining eye contact to show interest in the other person. Use a medium tone of voice. Turn your body to face the person. Do not move around or fidget. Express your ideas in clear sentences that include courteous words, such as please and thank you.

Commonly, people in Canada expect that listeners will ask questions as needed, for clarification, and that freedom of expression will be respected regardless of whether individuals have opposing values. Effective communication can prevent many misunderstandings and conflicts, but it can also help you resolve those disagreements.

### 6.3 Problems and priorities

Planning is another skill that can reduce problems in the long run. We all face obstacles and challenges. If you develop an ability to evaluate options to make change for success, you will learn from problems, enhance your self-esteem and empower yourself to feel confident and independent. Part of problem-solving is making decisions, but making the right choice is not always easy. Following a simple problem-solving model can help target specific stages of the decision-making process, one at a time. The following steps can be used on your own, or with other people:

1. Name the problem: Complex, and simple problems alike, need to be defined. Clearly stating the problem will avoid confusion. Write it down if you need to. For example, %o have a problem making good use of my time.+
2. Name your target: Identify clear, specific and measurable goals to solve your problem. Set goals that can be achieved in steps. For example, instead of saying, %o need to read more.+You could say, %o need to read at least 30 minutes a day.+Write your goals to remind yourself of what your target is.
3. Keep your options open: Having optional solutions to tackle a problem will improve your chances of success. Think of the positives and negatives of each solution. When problem-solving with others, let everyone contribute. Ask for opinions from others if you feel stuck or can't think of more than one way of reaching your goal.
4. Be proactive: Before you put your options into action, think ahead and ask yourself questions: What are the positives and negatives of each alternative? Which ones are possible? Can the options be combined and/or changed? What possible courses of action will take less time? Think carefully. Don't set yourself up for failure, but leave room for mistakes. This step is important because it shows initiative and will save you time and distress.
5. Make a plan: Give yourself a timeline. Plan the steps that you will follow to achieve your goal. Set clear targets for each step along the way.
6. Check and re-check: If your plan is not working, don't despair. Modify it to meet your needs. Go back to previous steps and clearly state the things that are working and those that are not. Keep going until your goal is reached.

Following this problem-solving model not only helps you reach your goals faster, it also helps you organize them according to their importance. This is what is meant by setting priorities . or prioritizing. Setting priorities, or organizing tasks according to their importance, is a skill that will help you save time and help you achieve. When successful, prioritizing helps avoid stress by completing tasks in an ordered way. The idea behind setting priorities is to focus on tasks based on their overall importance, rather on what we want or desire (fun, rewards).

Western culture emphasizes individual independence. You will be expected to learn how to solve problems in a timely and effective manner on your own. The bonus is that

this is also a highly desirable and valuable skill that will give you an advantage in your work and personal life in Canada.

## SECTION 2: CHAPTER 7

### TAKING CONTROL

### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### Session objectives

- Participants will gain an understanding of the role of their emotions and feelings in their decision-making process
- Participants will be encouraged to create a framework for defining their identity and understanding this process as a stepping stone towards autonomy
- Participants will explore the meaning and importance of education in their future
- A brief overview of money and time management skills will be given to participants

#### Chapter overview

- Feelings and emotions
- Identity and autonomy
- Education
- Time and money

#### Suggested activities

- Working in groups of three or four, participants will create a brief commercial or play promoting peaceful conflict resolution. They will use their knowledge of conflict, communication and problem-solving and the role of emotions in conflict
- Have participants play a charades game using cards descriptive of emotions - use no words, only facial expressions and body language
- Have participants think of roles, qualities and characteristics that make them unique. Have them complete the following statement: "I am +"
  - This is about how participants see themselves. The facilitator can give an example using words such as: a boy or girl, a daughter or son, hardworking, friendly, funny, student, an immigrant from .
  - Ask participants about how their identity has changed in the past five years
  - Ask participants to work on a slogan or word that they identify with. Using words or drawings, have them design a tee-shirt, bumper sticker, badge or button that fits their personality
- Ask participants to say one or two reasons why education is important to them and ask them to share their education and career expectations/aspirations
  - The point of this exercise is to have participants think of possibilities and listen to their peers' ideas. Following this part of the exercise,

each participant should make a list of educational pre-requisites for their career of choice

- Have a brainstorming session where participants recognize sources of education (both formal and informal)
- Some examples are: Peers, media, parents, school, movies, friends. Ask participants to name some of the pros and cons of each source. For example: reliability, validity, credibility
- Ask participants to write down some of the things that they, or family members, have bought in the last year. Have them divide them into things they need for living and things they can live without
- Ask participants to make a rough budget for Michael in the story as if they were in his situation
- Ask participants to think of their average day (24 hrs) and to list how much time they spend doing each of the following: Personal care, eating and drinking, household activities (including taking care of relatives), work, school, leisure sports, and telephone or social media (telephone, e-mail, chatting or social sites)

#### Other resources and information

- Key points about feelings and emotions
  - The reason for including this section is to allow teenagers the opportunity to develop new thinking skills, to reinforce their confidence in using logic and reason in their everyday decision-making. There is a tendency to blame irresponsible behaviour on teen hormones. However, the average teenager can develop skills to manage emotions properly at an early age if they are allowed time and opportunity to practice. Regardless of cultural background, age or gender, hormones affect teenagers' emotions. However, different cultures have different expectations about how a teenager should express their emotions. Each unique individual has to find a balance between showing too much, or too little, emotion. Intensely responding to negative emotions and voluntary disengagement (denial) or involuntary engagement (rumination - where the teenager just keeps thinking things over and over), were found to be related to depressive symptoms and problem behaviour<sup>lxii</sup>. Some cultures, particularly those with a collectivist approach, where young children are highly valued and their familial importance emphasized, should consider the needs of each individual, for the benefit of the whole family. Many teenagers from these cultures find it difficult, or think it unnecessary, to express emotion. In Western culture, expressing emotion in a controlled way is expected and regarded as a sign of healthy self-esteem and self-awareness. Self-regulating emotions has also been linked to resilience in adolescents of at-risk populations. It is a resistance factor to self-protect from peers promoting deviant and antisocial behaviour.<sup>lxiii</sup> This means that they can better withstand peer pressure. It is a resistance factor, as well, so that teens in adverse conditions

(family conflict, poverty, immigration, etc.), who have this skill, can steer clear of misconduct problems.<sup>lxiii</sup>

- Identity and autonomy
  - While the motives for immigration vary, each immigrant youth is faced with the dilemma of developing a new identity in a new context . the multicultural Canadian society. Teenagerssq identification with their own culture, in particular, may suffer as they go through a crucial period of psychological and emotional development. In addition to the challenges they share with all adolescents, immigrant teenagers must face the challenges of immigration. These challenges include language and cultural barriers, isolation, discrimination, feelings of loss and lack of acceptance<sup>lxiv</sup>. Further cultural complications may create dissent between the teenager and the family. These complications are caused by disparity in gender roles, sexual expression, relationship patterns and privileges or responsibilities found between the culture of the family and that of Canadian society.
  - It is important that the facilitator encourage lengthy discussion about concerns and challenges. Immigrant teens need to realize that they are not alone in their effort to assert themselves as individuals. The facilitator should model tolerance of all ideas and cultural practices. Teenagers will need to practice this skill in the community and potentially in their homes. Remind participants that a supportive family network is crucial in their successful identity development. The facilitator is to provide information about counselling services, access to other support services, such as mentors, cross-cultural community events and any other resources as required.
- Education
  - Potential educational achievement is usually cited as a factor for immigration. Parents seek to provide better educational opportunities for their children. Adolescence marks the beginning of a socioeconomic career, where youth can acquire required occupational skills through education. Research on the effect of paid work during adolescence is mixed. Supporters suggest there is an increase in the teensq potential for socioeconomic attainment. Opponents emphasize that paid work takes time away from other activities devoted to promoting personal achievement. The facilitator needs to emphasize that school performance is shown to be negatively correlated to the number of hours worked, and that education will be regarded as more valuable than work experience in postindustrial societies<sup>lxv</sup>.
- Time and money
  - A brief overview of time and money management skills is offered as a conclusion to the manual. The facilitator will focus teenagersq attention on utilizing and applying all of the previous skills as outlined in the manual and building a solid base for their future!

- As the information provided is only an overview and is intended to stimulate interest in a very extensive subject, the facilitator can make use of a guest speakers or refer teenagers to seek more information through specialized programs and agencies:
  - <http://www.Momentum.org>
  - <http://www.yourmoney.cba.ca/>
  - <http://www.themoneybelt.qc.ca/home-accueil-eng.asp>

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 7**  
**TAKING CONTROL**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

Taking control is not about forcing your ideas on other people. It is about gaining their respect so that you can be trusted, so you can be independent in your decision making and choose the things that you think are best for you. Taking control is really about managing yourself. It is a process that takes time and dedication on your part. To gain your independence in making decisions, you have to show you are skilled in managing your emotions, you are focused on building a future for yourself, and you are able to use your time and money responsibly.

**7.1 Feelings and emotions**

What do people do when they get angry? How does this affect others? Does it help to solve the problem? What do you think are the best ways to handle anger? Anger is just one of many emotions, but it is a good example of how an emotion can change the outcome of a situation. Part of your natural and healthy adolescent development is the inevitable release of hormones. Hormones help your development into adulthood. They are also the cause of many changes in the way you think - chemical changes in your brain.

Nevertheless, your hormones are a poor excuse for expressing anger or bad management of a situation. The whole point of adolescent development is finding a balance between what you feel and what you think. If everybody around you allowed their actions to be driven by their emotions, can you imagine the chaos that would follow? As your brain develops in adolescence you have to make a conscious effort to manage your emotions. That is not to say that emotions should not be expressed. On the contrary, they have to be expressed appropriately so that you are able to remain healthy and communicate your ideas.

Finding a balance between what makes you happy and what needs to be done is a part of healthy development. A simple example may be choosing between doing your homework and watching television. If you allow yourself to be guided by the need for immediate gratification, you are ignoring the consequences of your actions and acting irresponsibly. It may seem like a good choice - in the moment - as it seems more fun, less demanding and easier. The choice is yours. Relatives, teachers and friends can only do so much to try to change your mind about things. You are the only one who can control your decisions. It is equally important to know that people cannot make you angry or sad. You choose how you feel. You choose how you behave.

Think about when you have a problem with a friend or classmate, what steps do you take to solve it? How is it different than solving a problem with a sibling or parent? Many times, we deal with our family problems differently, because we seem to get more emotional in our responses with people who we know can take our anger or frustration. You may hit your brother or sister to solve a problem, but that same problem with a friend may not be solved in the same way.

This is why consistently stopping yourself and realizing why you are choosing to act in a certain way is important. Emotions can get the best of you, but it is possible to respond in a different way. Challenging your own thoughts about the intentions of other people is like breaking away from stereotypes. It is as simple as stopping yourself from making assumptions and asking the other person why.

Most of the time, we are our own worst enemy because we give a negative meaning to somebody else's actions or words. We do this in the form of self-talk. These are the thoughts that begin going through your head in hope of finding explanations for the behaviour and words of the people around you. If your self-talk is negative, chances are you will start involving your emotions. You may feel angry, frustrated or sad and later act on those feelings. If your self-talk is positive, chances are that no conflict will happen. Look at the following story and think about what is happening with self-talk.

Farmer John was getting ready to plough his fields when he realized his plough was too old and it would take him forever to work through his entire field. He suddenly remembered that his neighbour Farmer Jake had recently bought a new plough. Farmer John can remember many occasions where he has lent a hand to Farmer Jake in the past; surely he will be willing to lend him his plough. Certainly, Farmer Jake has already finished working his fields so he won't mind a bit. And so, Farmer John sets out to walk a couple of miles to his neighbour's house. As he is walking he wonders if his neighbour is really done working his fields. Surely he will be kind enough to lend his plough even if he is not finished right? And if he refuses he will surely be selfish and unfair, because he can be a difficult man to deal with. He might be unreasonable and not want to let anyone use his plough for fear of it getting damaged. Farmer Jake can be so unreasonable some times; he is a bad neighbour and should think of sharing more often. He will probably not even open the door when he sees John coming so that he doesn't have to lend him his plough. As he is going through these thoughts in his mind, Farmer John reaches Farmer Jake's door and rings the bell. Farmer Jake comes out smiling. Farmer John gets furious and thinks, "you are probably enjoying turning me down", and so he says "I didn't want your help anyway, you can keep your plough to yourself for all I care" and begins to walk back home. Farmer Jake is confused and just stares at his neighbour.

Self-talk is what triggers our emotions. Once our brain goes into a defensive or attack mode, it is very hard to stop the chemical reactions that bring about your emotions. That is why it is so important to realize what you are telling yourself about other people and their intentions. You may be right, but you could also be wrong! For that reason, it is important to use your brain to control what happens to your body. The easiest way to do it is to catch that negative self talk and turn it into curiosity.

## 7.2 Identity and autonomy

Every teenager wants to be unique and seen as an individual. She wants to be respected and capable of making decisions and making choices in life. Defining your identity goes much deeper than just acquiring responsibilities. It is about having self-control, being socially and culturally competent and defining where you stand with your

family, your peers, school and the community. It is about knowing how to maintain and improve your self-esteem and being constant and realistic in your determination to work on all the previous areas.

As you progress through your teenage years, society expects you to make choices about your future and what occupation and role in society you want to achieve. You should see this not as an obligation, but a chance that society gives you to make choices in defining who you want to be in life. For many teenagers finding their identity involves changing groups of friends, trying out different activities and participating in different community activities until they find something they like. It is important that you do this in a responsible manner, learning from your failures and success alike. The biggest task you have as a teenager is accepting yourself as a worthwhile person, worthy of love. Only you can change the way you look at things. Your opinion of yourself is what matters most and it should not be defined by others. This is the time to define what you want of yourself. To define yourself, surround yourself with people who share your ideas, make you feel good about yourself, and accept you for who you are without forcing you to change. It is also important to understand that dependence on others is part of forming meaningful and lasting relationships. People, such as your parents or relatives, see it as their task to guide you as you find those things you want to do and define your identity. They are there to help you through your challenges and share your success. If you are willing, you will realize that gathering information about their experience as teenagers can save you a lot of time. Choosing your activities is closely tied to defining your values and your roles as related to others. Generally speaking, autonomy is earned as you prove you are successful, constant and secure in your different roles in life.

### 7.3 Education

Education in Western society is important for success. Many times this is one of the main reasons immigrant families choose to leave their home countries and relocate to a new country. Many parents come with the hopes that their children can have a brighter future, access to a good education and a better lifestyle. Education is not only about tests and grades, degrees and trades. The purpose of education is about acquiring knowledge of the world, enhancing your ability to make informed decisions and allowing you to contribute to society through meaningful employment. Education does not only refer to the formal education in by school; it refers to learning in general, about yourself and the things around you.

It is an expectation that in your teenage years you will explore career possibilities and develop your beliefs about the work world and skills for succeeding in it. Formal secondary and post-secondary education can help you establish a career path. Opportunities for constructive and appropriate work can also give you further knowledge of the work world and the possibilities that exist out there for you.

In 2008, statistics tell us that about 62% of males and 73% of females expected to graduate from university. That is in comparison to 21% of males and 16% of females who expected to attend vocational schools. Adding those numbers shows us that most

teenagers in high school (83% of males and 94% of females) expect to complete some form of post-secondary education<sup>lxvi</sup>.

Knowing that you would like to complete more formal education is not enough. Choosing an occupation can be made easier if you take some time to explore your options. Starting early can also make a difference. Many courses require pre-requisites that are met by your choice of classes in high school. As you plan for your future, it is important to be aware of the training required for different kinds of jobs that interest you.. Making use of career counsellors, interviewing people who work in the jobs that interest you and finding part-time employment in those same areas can help you experience firsthand the demands and requirements for certain professions.

Many teenagers share concerns about making the wrong occupational choice and being satisfied with their selection. Teens feel concerned about having to decide on an occupation with limited time remaining (high school years), committing to it and following through with the educational requirements. In Alberta, students in grade 11 or 12 receive a career unit in the required curriculum: Career and Life Management (CALM), which assists you in identifying your interests and how these same interests may relate to possible career preferences<sup>lxvii</sup>.

Help is available as you decide on an occupation for your future. Parents, teachers and counsellors in your school can be a good source of information. Many post-secondary institutions offer career fairs, where they showcase the educational options they offer and provide you with an opportunity to speak with people in those professions. The best way to decide on the wide variety of options that you may find is to dedicate some of your time to investigate how each career may fulfill your expectations.

#### 7.4 Money and time

Living a comfortable life and having a secure future takes knowledge of money management. This includes things like budgeting, banking, assets, credit and consumerism<sup>lxviii</sup>. The earlier you learn to handle money, the more likely you are to manage it properly. Understand your assets, the people or things that can help you generate money. Assets are useful or valuable qualities in a person or things that provide you with an advantage or resource. It's about using your skills the things you have and use to live every day, such as services and information, and the money you do have, to make the best of your situation, Another resource is the skills of others around you, your relationships with them who can assist you in your situation. .

*Think of a teenager by the name of Michael, who works part time at a pizza place. His assets include co-workers who are willing to help him and share information, his paycheck, and his family who helps support him. Furthermore, Michael is good at communicating with others. He feels good about himself and is always positive; he lives close to school and work and has supportive friends. He is also good with computers and enjoys using his skills to help others.*

All the things that are the disposal of these teen, be it friends, family, his location or his own skills and his income are assets that he can build on to create financial security. Knowing and using your assets is not enough; it also takes budgeting to make the most of your money. The goal of budgeting is to manage your money in such a way that your basic needs are met and you have room for your wants. A simple way to budget is to figure out ways to spend less and keep your expenses lower than your income.

*Going back to our story of Michael, he earns about \$100 dollars a week and he would like to buy some video games, but he knows he could use a new pair of shoes and a laptop for school. Budgeting can help him buy all of these things and he can save money in simple ways, such as making his own lunch instead of buying it. He can go out with friends to a park, instead of to the movies.*

You can use banks and credit to your advantage. Banks are a good way to keep your money safe. They are also useful for saving and investing and borrowing money through credit cards, lines of credit, loans and mortgages. Banks however may charge service fees, and so it is important that you ask questions when opening an account or asking for a loan. Compare accounts and take the time to find which bank best fits your needs. Ask other people around you, your family and friends about which banks are best and why. Credit is not a bad thing if you use it wisely; borrowing money that you know you will be able to repay can help you reach your goals faster. The danger is overspending money that is not really in your budget. Be aware that if you do not pay the monthly balance on your credit card, the interest rate is very high. Credit card bills can get out of control quickly if you charge more than you can pay each month and interest grows quickly.

*Michael has a plan to go to university; he has been hoping to save for it, but earning \$400 dollars a month doesn't seem enough. He finds himself spending most of it in clothes, school supplies and going out with friends. So Michael decides to ask friends and family about banks and how he can open a savings account., He decides on a bank close to his neighbourhood, because they charge no fees for students, they have a high interest rate for savings accounts and he has been offered a credit card and the possibility of a student loan for his post-secondary studies.*

The good use of credit is important as it can determine your ability to purchase property or borrow money in the future. Remembering that it can be easy to overspend is important, because your debt can build if you don't budget properly. The last important thing to remember is that Western culture thrives of consumerism. It is the idea that you will be happier, more successful or even popular if you buy, spend and consume goods. This idea affects everyone. We all like new things. We want the best for ourselves and are surrounded by an incredible amount of products that are easy to buy and use that in many cases are unnecessary. Being aware of our reason for spending money can help us focus on what really matters. Having a good life means being a smart consumer and having good spending habits. Think of your long term comfort as far as your expenses go. Learning to manage your money means you will have more of it later!

*Michael decides that the videogames can wait, since the shoes are something he really needs to be comfortable. He also prefers to start putting about \$30 away each week towards his education after high school and earn extra money from the interest paid by the bank. Knowing that he can borrow money in the future is good. As explained by his banker, he knows that paying it back can be hard if he also expects to buy a car, the laptop he will need and many other things he could need after high school. He decides to go home and make a list of his income and his expenses to see how to best use his money.*

Like your money, time is an asset that you can use to your advantage and learn to manage. Setting a routine for yourself can help you make the best use of your time. It is about finding the motivation to be aware of the things that you need to work on, and the things that you find enjoyable. Many things can be both enjoyable and help you make use good use of your time. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts and volunteering are good building blocks for your future. Many post-secondary institutions value them in their selection process.

Many immigrant teens find that they have either too little or too much free time on their hands. You may find yourself working to help your family financially. You may be in a situation where your parents and relatives are working and you feel free to do whatever you want. Routines can help break bad habits like spending too much time with your television, instead of your homework. Misuse of time sets you up for failure. As an adult, you will be responsible for your own actions. Canadian society places emphasis on making responsible use of your own time. For instance, it is seen as very disrespectful for a worker to show up late for a meeting. Similarly, in school you may notice that tardiness is not acceptable. It is expected that all students will be on time for the teacher to start the class. Being on time is seen as a way to show respect to others and show that you respect yourself, that you are interested and care about your education.

Time unlike money is not something you can get more of if you waste it. As you acquire more responsibilities you may realize that managing your time wisely will give you have more free time. Making a routine helps you organize yourself. Although there will always be interruptions, unplanned events and new tasks that come along, the point is to handle your responsibilities in a way that you do not cause yourself unnecessary stress. Create a routine of your average day using the following tips:

1. Find realistic and practical ways of solving problems (see chapter 6).  
Concentrate on one thing at a time.
2. Write ~~to~~ do+lists and set reasonable timelines
3. Keep the spaces where you live and work organized so you can find things easily. Have a place for each thing and put them back as you finish using them.
4. Start with things that you ~~need to do+~~, rather than things you ~~want to do+~~
5. When working with others, learn to delegate and ask for help
6. Use your ~~to not disturb+~~sign . make one, or just ask others to give you time alone when you need it
7. Schedule time to do nothing, when you fall behind it is nice to know you have extra time.

Remember that it is the trying that counts. Time management takes practice but it will save you from being irritable, stressed, tired and from losing sleep. So in the end, it is one more skill that can help you live a healthy life.

## SECTION 2: CHAPTER 8 RESOURCES FOR TEENS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

### Session objectives

- Identify individual needs for services and information
- Acquire a general knowledge of how to get information
- Discuss some of the services available in the community

### Chapter overview

- Resources for teens

### Suggested activities

- If facilitation of both the parent and teenager group is simultaneous, the facilitator can bring both groups together for this session.
- The use of a guest speaker for a particular topic may be of use in this session.
- The facilitator can make a brief explanation of the resources presented at the end of Section One and Section Two of the manual.
  - Reaffirming of the learning can be promoted by having participants break into their respective family groups and having both parents and teens spend equal amounts of time sharing the material they have learned in previous sessions in their groups.
  - The facilitator can move around the room coaching families in the process
  - This activity will allow participants to practice learned skills, particularly effective communication in a safe environment.
- Alternative reaffirming of the learning can happen by dividing teenage participants and parent participants into small peer groups. Have each small group present a section of the learned material in any way desired: standard presentation, play, commercial.

### Other resources and information

- Key points about resources:
  - Ideally, the facilitator should gather information from resources the participants identify as **needed** or **interesting** as the program progresses
  - The facilitator should make a conscious effort to present updated and tailored resources to meet the needs of the group.
  - The accuracy of the information contained reflects information as presented by the agencies. This resource manual is not responsible for the quality of the services offered. This list is not provided with

the intention of endorsement. Furthermore, this list is by no means comprehensive of all services offered by each agency or those available within the City of Calgary. Exclusion of other services does not imply a lack of approval.

**SECTION 2: CHAPTER 8**  
**RESOURCES FOR TEENS**  
**PARTICIPANT'S NOTES**

### **Abuse/assault**

- Bullying helpline (24 hours)
  - [www.B-free.ca](http://www.B-free.ca) 1-888-456-2323
  - Provides advice, information and support telephone help line.
- Calgary and Area Child and Family Services
  - [www.calgaryandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca](http://www.calgaryandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca) 403-297-2995
  - Child welfare services, emergency investigation and/or apprehension.
- Calgary Communities against Sexual Abuse. 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 320 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.calgarycasa.com](http://www.calgarycasa.com) 403-237-5888
  - CCASA offers Counselling, support and information line, public, police and court education.

### **Addictions**

- Alberta Health . Addiction and Mental Health (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) 1005 17<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.
  - [www.aadac.com](http://www.aadac.com) 1-866-332-2322
  - Addiction focused information, support and counselling available.
  - Day treatment programs available.
- Distress Centre 300 . 1010 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S.W.
  - [www.distresscentre.com](http://www.distresscentre.com) 403-266-1601
  - Information and support. Crisis, line, teen line and referral line available.

### **Birth Control/Pregnancy/Parenting**

- AHS . Sexual and Reproductive Health 403-943-1500
  - [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)
  - Best Beginnings Program . confidential support service for pregnant women with financial, health or social concerns.
  - Sexual and Reproductive Health . birth control information, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy test services.
- Calgary Sexual Health Centre 304 . 301 14<sup>th</sup> St. N.W. 403-283-5580
  - [www.calgarysexualhealth.ca](http://www.calgarysexualhealth.ca)
  - Free and confidential services for pregnancy testing, pregnancy options, birth control information, sexually transmitted diseases and sexual orientation information.
- (CBE) Louise Dean Centre 120 23<sup>rd</sup> St. N.W. 403-777-7630
  - [www.cbe.ab.ca/b418](http://www.cbe.ab.ca/b418)
  - Pregnant and Parenting School Program . sponsored by the Calgary Board of Education, grades 9-12.
- CCSD . Kara Life Centre 3615 Radcliffe Dr. S.E. 403-500-2066
  - [www.cssd.ab.ca](http://www.cssd.ab.ca)
  - Calgary Catholic School District . resource centre for pregnant and parenting teens up to age 19.

### **Education**

- Kids Help Phone
  - [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca) 1-800-668-6868
  - Anonymous and confidential, counselling (online and phone), information and referral services.
- Calgary Public Library
  - [www.calgarypubliclibrary.com](http://www.calgarypubliclibrary.com) 403-260-2600
  - 17 locations throughout the city. Various programs and services offered.

### **Employment/Training**

- Alberta Employment and Immigration
  - [www.employment.alberta.ca](http://www.employment.alberta.ca) 403-310-0000
  - Career information and referral services
  - Information on employment standards
- The City of Calgary, Community & Neighbourhood Services . Youth Employment Centre 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 315 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.nextsteps.org/yec](http://www.nextsteps.org/yec) 403-268-2490
  - Career planning and job search assistance for youth

### **Family Violence**

- Family Violence Info Line
  - [www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca](http://www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca) 403-310-1818
  - Support and information regarding family abuse

### **Health**

- Alberta Health services . Health LINK
  - [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca) 1-866-408-5465
  - Information on health topics and hospital services.
- Alex Youth Health Centre 1318 Centre St. N
  - [www.thealex.ca/youth](http://www.thealex.ca/youth) 403-520-6270
  - Health services (doctor, nurse, and counsellor), advocacy and referrals to basic needs services for youth 13 to 23.

### **Immigrant Youth**

- Calgary Achievement Centre for Youth 200 . 315 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.
  - [www.cacy.org](http://www.cacy.org) 403-268-3666
  - Immigrant Youth Outreach Project . assistance for youth 16-24 new to Canada experiencing difficulty with school, work and other problems.
  - Young Adult LINC . beginner and intermediate classes for youth 18-24.
- Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth 201 . 1112B 40<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E.
  - [www.calgarybridgefoundation.com](http://www.calgarybridgefoundation.com) 403-230-7745
  - Homework club . for immigrant youth with less than five years in Canada, several locations
  - Summer Literacy Program . English skills and assistance with cross-cultural difficulties.
- Calgary Chinese Community Services Association 1- 128 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. S.W.
  - [www.cccsa.ca](http://www.cccsa.ca) 403-265-8446
  - Children and Youth Services - tutoring, homework club, summer programs, and computer training among other services.



- Volunteer opportunities in the areas of leadership and recreation.
- Volunteer Calgary 1170-1202 Centre St. S.E.
  - [www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca](http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca) 403-265-5633
  - Volunteer opportunities in many areas of interest and throughout the city.

- 
- <sup>i</sup> Laura S. Kaustner, Jennifer Wyatt. *Getting to Calm. Cool-headed Strategies for Parenting Tweens + Teens+*. www.parentmap.com
- <sup>ii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>iii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>iv</sup> Ibid
- <sup>v</sup> Normal Growth and Development of Adolescents. Drugs.com. <http://www.drugs.com/cg/normal-growth-and-development-of-adolescents.html>
- <sup>vi</sup> Ibid
- <sup>vii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>viii</sup> Documentary *Growing Up Among Strangers+*, produced by Aspen Family Resources, Calgary
- <sup>ix</sup> Lansford, Deater-Deckard & Bornstein. *Immigrant Families in Contemporary Society*. Guilford, 2007
- <sup>x</sup> *Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Fathers*. Public Health Agency Canada and Calgary Immigrant Aid Society.
- <sup>xi</sup> Alberta Health Services
- <sup>xii</sup> Sexual Health Education in Schools: Questions and Answers (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) (2010). Sex Information and Education Council of Canada. [http://www.sieccan.org/pdf/she\\_q&a\\_3rd.pdf](http://www.sieccan.org/pdf/she_q&a_3rd.pdf)
- <sup>xiii</sup> What Parents Need to Know (2009) Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and Health Promotion. <http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca/parentstudent/pages/whatparentsneedtoknow.html>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Warren, A. & Wiedenkiller, J. (1999). *Everybody's Doing it!* Viking Penguin
- <sup>xv</sup> Hickling, M. (1996). *More speaking of sex*. Northstone Publishing: Kelowna, BC.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Psychiatric disorders.com. Violent Behaviour in Teenagers and at Schools. <http://www.usnews.com/health/blogs/heart-to-heart/2009/01/07/8-traits-of-teens-who-abstain-from-sex>
- <sup>xvii</sup> Gordon Neufeld, Gabor Maté. (2005) *Hold On To Your Kids+*. Vintage Canada Edition.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Psychiatric disorders.com. Violent Behaviour in Teenagers and at Schools. <http://www.psychiatric-disorders.com/articles/warning-signs/violent-behavior.php>
- <sup>xix</sup> <http://www.psychiatric-disorders.com/articles/warning-signs/violent-behavior.php>
- <sup>xx</sup> Watch and Listen: How to Recognize bullying behaviour, and what you can do to stop it. (2009) Children's Services and Education. Government of Alberta.
- <sup>xxi</sup> S-team Heroes. (2009) Children's Services and Education. Government of Alberta.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Montréal. Montréal Police Service. Provincial Action Plan on Street Gangs. Québec: Department of Public Security, National Coordinating Committee, 2004 [Meeting, Toronto, May 25, 2005].
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Canada. Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC). 2006 Annual Report on Organized Crime in Canada. Ottawa: CISC, 2006.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Public Safety Canada. Youth Gangs in Canada: What Do We Know. Astwood Strategy Corporation, 2004. <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/bldngevd/2007-yg-1-eng.aspx#b21>
- <sup>xxv</sup> Erickson, Patricia G. and Jennifer E. Butters. Youth, Weapons and Violence in Toronto and Montréal. Report prepared for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, Ottawa, 2006.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Bee, H. (2000). *The developing child*. (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Needham Heights (MA): Allyn & Bacon.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Janeway Conner, J, & Galambos, N.L. (1997). *Adolescence and Youth: Psychological Development in a changing world*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Vivo, Meghan. Nurturing Self-Confidence in Teens. An Interview with Jordana Metz. LCSW, M. Ed.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Smith, Melinda, M.A. and Barston, Suzanne. (2010) Teen Depression: Guide for Parents and Teachers. Helpguide.org. [http://helpguide.org/mental/depression\\_teen.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/depression_teen.htm).
- <sup>xxx</sup> University Health System. Tip for Talking to Depressed Teens. 2010. <http://www.universityhealthsystem.com/index.php/tips-for-talking-to-a-depressed-teen/>
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Smith, Melinda, M.A. and Barston, Suzanne. (2010) Teen Depression: Guide for Parents and Teachers. Helpguide.org. [http://helpguide.org/mental/depression\\_teen.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/depression_teen.htm).
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Kids Help Phone. (2009). Online Gaming: Child's Play or Obsession? A Kids help Phone Online Survey. Canada: Author.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Alberman, R. (2007). Fighting the war on indecency: Mediating TV, Internet and videogames usage among achieving and underachieving gifted children. *Roepers Review*, 29(2), 100-112.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Janeway Conner, J, & Galambos, N.L. (1997). *Adolescence and Youth: Psychological Development in a changing world*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> (Laura S. Kaustner, Jennifer Wyatt. *Getting to Calm. Cool-headed Strategies for Parenting Tweens + Teens+*. www.parentmap.com)

- 
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Janeway Conver, J. & Galambos, N.L. (1997). *Adolescence and Youth: Psychological Development in a changing world*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Berry, J.W. (2007). Acculturation Strategies and Adaptation. In Lansford, J.E., Deater-Deckard, K. & Bornstein, M.H. (Eds.), *Immigrant families in contemporary society* (pp.69-82). New York: The Guilford Press.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Department of Canadian Heritage. (2005). *A Canada for all: Canada's action plan against racism – and overview*. Canada: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Eckersley, R. (2005). Is modern Western culture a health hazard? *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 35, 252-258.
- <sup>xi</sup> Healthy U . Government of Alberta. (2007). *Healthy Eating and Active Living: For ages 13 to 18 years*. Alberta: Author.
- <sup>xii</sup> Huang, F. Y. & Akhtar S. (2005). Immigrant sex: The transport of affection and sensuality across cultures. *The American journal of Psychoanalysis*, 65(2), 179-188.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Walsh, P. & Dauvergne, M. (2009). Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2007. *Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X Juristat*, 29(2), 4-16.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Bibby, R.W., Russell, S., & Rolheiser R. (2009). *The emerging millennials: How Canada's newest generation is responding to change & choice*. Lethbridge (AB): Project Canada Books.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Janeway Conver, J. & Galambos, N.L. (1997). *Adolescence and Youth: Psychological Development in a changing world*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- <sup>xv</sup> Hitchcock, J. (2001). Adolescent gang participation: Psychological perspective. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 16(2), 33-47.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Janeway Conver, J. & Galambos, N.L. (1997). *Adolescence and Youth: Psychological Development in a changing world*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Lamb, J., Pepler, D. J., & Craig, W. (2009). Approach to bullying and victimization. *Canadian Family Physician*, 55, 356-360.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Stevens, V. De Bourdeaudhuij, I., & Van Oost, P. (2002). Relationships of the family environment to children's involvement in bully/victim problems at school. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 33(6), 419-428.
- <sup>xix</sup> Calgary Police Service (2009). Gang life is a death end: 10 straight facts on gangs. Retrieved April 5, 2010, from Calgary Police Service Web site: [http://www.getalife.ca/html/straight\\_facts\\_on\\_gangs.html](http://www.getalife.ca/html/straight_facts_on_gangs.html)
- <sup>i</sup> Ellickson, P.L. & McGuigan, K.A. (2000). Early predictors of adolescent violence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 90(4), 566-572.
- <sup>ii</sup> Wardle J., & Watters, R. (2004). Sociocultural influences on attitudes to weight eating: Results of a natural experiment. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 35(4), 589-596.
- <sup>iii</sup> Collins, M. (1991). Body figure perceptions and preferences among preadolescent children. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 10, 100-108.
- <sup>iii</sup> Alberta Health Services & Royal Canadian Mounted Police (2008). *Parent's Booklet. Kids and Drugs: a Parent's Guide to prevention*. Alberta: Author.
- <sup>iv</sup> Olah, A. (1995). Coping strategies among adolescents: a cross-cultural study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 18, 497-512.
- <sup>iv</sup> Healthy U . Government of Alberta. (2007). *Healthy Eating and Active Living: For ages 13 to 18 years*. Alberta: Author.
- <sup>vi</sup> The Nemours Foundation (2010). Teens health: Eating disorders. Retrieved May 6, 2010, from The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth Web site: [http://kidshealth.org/teen/food\\_fitness/problems/eat\\_disorder.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness/problems/eat_disorder.html)
- <sup>vii</sup> Wardle J., & Watters, R. (2004). Sociocultural influences on attitudes to weight eating: Results of a natural experiment. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 35(4), 589-596.
- <sup>viii</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. (2009). *It's your health: Depression*. Canada: Author.
- <sup>lix</sup> Berns, R. M. (2001). *Child, family, school, community. Socialization and support*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Fort Worth (TX): Harcourt college Publishers.
- <sup>ix</sup> Martel, M.M., Nigg, J.T., Wong, M.M., Fitzgerald, H.E., Jester, J.M., Puttler, L.I., et al. (2007). Childhood and adolescent resiliency, regulation, and executive functioning in relation to adolescent problems and competence in a high-risk sample. *Development and Psychology*, 19, 541-563.
- <sup>xi</sup> Silk, J.S., Steinberg, L., & Sheffield Morris, A. (2003). Adolescents' emotion regulation in daily life: Links to Depressive Symptoms and Problem Behaviour. *Child Development*, 76(6), 1869-1880.

- 
- <sup>lxii</sup> Garner, T.W., Dishion, T.J., & Connell, A.M. (2008). Adolescent self-regulation as resilience: Resistance to antisocial behaviour within the deviant peer context. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 36, 273-284.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Schmidt, J.A. (2003). Correlates of reduced misconduct among adolescents facing adversity. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32(6), 439-452.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> Stodolska, M., Yi, J. (2003). Impacts of immigration on ethnic identity and leisure behaviour of adolescent immigrants from Korea, Mexico and Poland. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 35(1), 49-79.
- <sup>lxv</sup> Staff, J., & Mortimer, J.T. (2007). Educational and work strategies from adolescence to early adulthood: Consequences for educational attainment. *Social Forces*, 85(3), 1169-1194.
- <sup>lxvi</sup> Bibby, R.W., Russell, S., & Rolheiser R. (2009). *The emerging millennials: How Canada's newest generation is responding to change & choice*. Lethbridge (AB): Project Canada Books.
- <sup>lxvii</sup> Alberta Learning. (2002). Career and life management: *Rationale and philosophy*. Edmonton, AB: Author.
- <sup>lxviii</sup> Momentum. (2009). *Financial literacy: money management education for people living on low incomes*. Calgary: Author.