Family Education & Support  
Youth Program

Name of the Topic Area:  
Session Four – Owning & Understanding Symptoms & Behaviors

Duration:  60 Minutes

Module learning objectives:  
Participants will be able to:

1. Identify behaviors that cause potential problems.
2. Identify that certain types of behaviors (laziness, being late, getting upset easily) might be mental health problems.
3. Identify what could really be going on, such as medication side effects.
4. Identify certain types of behaviors and feelings, when these behaviors and feelings occur the most, and what happens after them.

Methodologies:

1. “Ooops! I did it again” and “What could be going on” handouts.
2. Use poster sized post-it paper.
3. “All about me” and “A Kid’s Guide to Asking Questions”
4. “Self-Awareness Log” worksheet.
5. About Medicines” handouts.
6. CD player with music that is popular to the group.
7. Sentence completion exercise.

Facilitator’s Actions:

1. Facilitate discussion to help members generate a list of behaviors and feelings get in their way. Write these down on chart paper.
   a. One way to approach this is to ask members “What kinds of things seem to get you into trouble? What are you doing when people are asking you to stop doing that…” etc.
   i. Facilitate discussion on what else could be going on with some individuals that lead to these problematic behaviors. Use “Ooops! I did it again..” handout.
   ii. Acknowledge that sometimes we may behave badly intentionally as well.
   iii. Let the members know this group is not about giving permission to display inappropriate behavior. It is about educating them on possible reasons for behaviors they have
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had great difficulty reducing even though they have tried repeatedly to do so.

iv. Then in the future, if they are being reprimanded for one of those kinds of behaviors, perhaps they will remember this exercise. They can think this behavior is extra challenging for them to change. They aren’t bad, and they will keep practicing reducing the behavior. And they can talk to their parent / caregiver about this situation (because their caregivers learned about these behaviors in their concurrent session!)

b. Facilitate discussion on symptoms that members may experience and what could be the reason for some.
   i. Use “What could be going on…” handout. Explain to members that sometimes these feelings and behaviors might occur because of other reasons, such as mental health problems and medication side effects.
   ii. Generate discussion on when members should ask for help. How do they do this? Who do they talk to? When?

2. Facilitate discussion about relationships members may have now or may have later with professionals who help them, e.g. counselors, therapists, doctors, etc.
   a. Distribute handouts “All about me”, and “A kids’ guide to asking about medicines”.

3. Self-Awareness Log
   a. Using the self-awareness handout, ask members to brainstorm (in groups or pairs). Ask members to write down behaviors that get in the way. The first part of the log (behaviors) refers to the “Ooops I did it again” handout.
   b. Talk to them about their answers providing as much feedback as possible.
   c. Then, ask them to complete the second part “Feelings that get in the way”. This second part refers to “Having a lot of trouble with...?” handout.
   d. Again, ask for their answers and provide them with meaningful feedback.

4. Turn on the music, get up and MOVE!
   a. Each member takes turns leading the group with dance moves to popular music starting with brief dance intervals (e.g. 5 seconds) to longer intervals (e.g. 20 seconds). The facilitator should start this with a simple movement, e.g. moving an arm or leg up and down.
It may be that for each turn, the facilitator should continue to make simple moves in order to have the most basic movement of the group. (But you can be expressive in other ways, e.g. facial expressions, etc) This will set a precedent that members can choose to generate simple movements as well (so those with less developed dance techniques can feel safe to use more basic movements.)

5. Facilitate sentence completion closure activity. Each member states “What I liked most about today’s group was ______ because I ______.” The facilitator can model this for members by saying what you liked most and link it to your behavior or thoughts about it.

Materials:
1. Chart Paper & Pens, handouts, CD player and CD with contemporary music, assorted snacks and beverages.