



# **FamilyTALK:**

## **Making It Work**

### **Leader Guide MF2996**

### **Fact Sheet MF2995**

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# Theoretical Foundations

## 1. Family Strengths approach

Appreciation and affection

Commitment

Positive Communication

Enjoyable times together

Spiritual well-being

Effective stress & crisis management

# Theoretical Foundations

## 2. Symbolic interaction

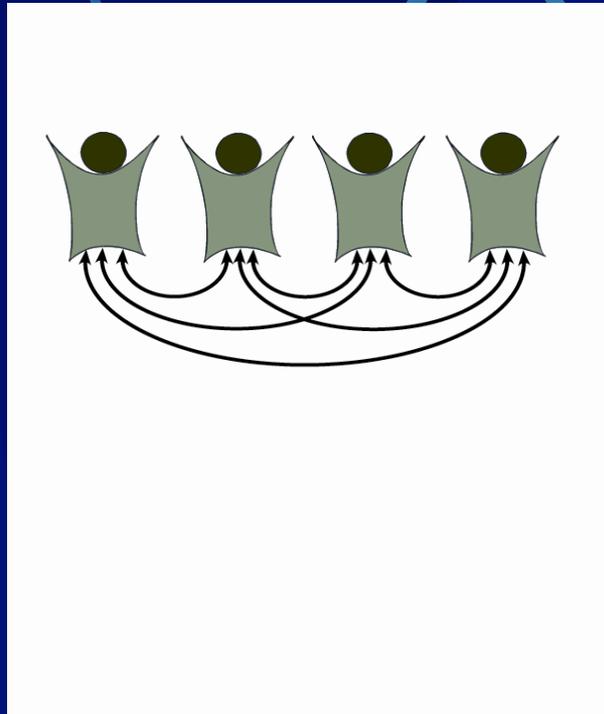
- \* Individual's construction of meaning in specific social settings or contexts
- \* Culturally shared symbols (objects, words, sounds, gestures, events)
- \* Dynamic interactions between persons

# Theoretical Foundations

## 3. Family systems approach

- \*Interacts with natural, human-built, and sociocultural environments
- \*Circular causality
- \*Whole is greater than sum of parts

# Whole is greater than sum of its parts (family systems theory)



# Communication

- Builds or breaks relationships
- Is a **process** in which each family member is both a speaker and listener at the same time

# **Basic Family Communication Principles in this lesson**

- Nonverbal behaviors powerful
- Effective listening/speaking skills important for better understanding
- Showing appreciation and having fun critical to strong families

# How do I get someone to communicate differently?

- The only thing you can change is how YOU communicate
  - How you listen
  - How you act
  - How you react
  - How you interact

# **Memories are powerful.**

## **(symbolic interaction theory)**

### Activity 1

- Ask participants to identify time(s) when satisfied with family communication
- Share stories
- ASK questions to facilitate learning:

What did you learn from these stories? What did you learn about family communication? What were things in common? What are messages sent when family members show appreciation to each other?

***“One of the easiest human acts is also the most healing. Listening to someone. Simply listening. Not advising or coaching, but silently and fully listening.”***

**Margaret J. Wheatley**

# Nonverbals are important.

(symbolic interaction)

## Activity 2

- Ask group to walk about with +/- nonverbals.
- Repeat with one on one communication.
- ASK questions to facilitate learning:

How did the speaker feel when listener looked away? How did listener feel when looking away? Why do you think you had these feelings? What would you like from a family who you want to listen to you?

# **Handling conflict in respectful ways is powerful.**

## **(family strengths approach)**

### Activity 3

- Share two messages in leader's guide.
- ASK questions to facilitate learning:

How did you feel when first message was read? Did you feel differently with the second message? What was the difference in the feelings? What was the difference in the words?

- *You NEVER pay attention to me at home. YOU come in the house after chores and go straight to the computer. YOU seem to care more about your silly computer than me. YOU really make me feel lousy.*

- *I get frustrated when we don't pay attention to one another. I really appreciate spending time together at the end of the day and talking about what has happened rather than going off and doing separate activities like you going to the computer and me cooking dinner.*

**YOU**

# The big R

# RESPECT

# Conclusion

- Family communication sets tone for family life!
- Always being respectful despite differences is CRUCIAL!
- Having fun together and regularly showing appreciation to each other protects family in stressful times!!

# Fact Sheet

- Tips for building communication skills in four short pages

# Evaluation

Most important questions (yes/no)

I am more likely to use positive nonverbal behaviors...to use effective listening speaking skills...to talk and listen respectfully when there is a disagreement...to show appreciation to family more often...to encourage enjoyable family activities.

# Two Surprisingly Simple Truths for Married Couples

- Happily married couples behave like good friends and show appreciation to each other.
- Happily married couples handle their conflicts in gentle, positive ways.

Gottman, Gottman, & DeClaire (2006)

# Three Ways to Respond to Bids for Communication

- Turning—toward responses.
- Turning—away responses.
- Turning—against responses.

# Enjoyable Family Times

- Enjoyable activities build positive relationships.
- Types of activities may change over time.
- Setting ground rules may be necessary to protect planned activities from turning into conflicts

*Thank you!*