

Active Parenting for Stepfamilies

Video 2 – Finding Your Way: Stepfamily Communication & Problem-Solving

The Purpose of this Video

This “Video Library” version of the group discussion program, Active Parenting for Stepfamilies, is designed for parents to view on their own or in groups when time does not allow for the full two-hour sessions. Because group viewing can be enhanced through discussion, the following questions will help a leader facilitate such a discussion. Most of the questions are aimed at helping parents apply the information in the video to their own lives, and they can be used as part of a large-group discussion or by having participants form pairs or small groups. Ask as many questions as time allows and, of course, feel free to add or delete questions as you think best for your audience.

Experience has shown that parents who read the accompanying Parent’s Guide (sold separately) will best be able to utilize the skills presented in the video.* However, when this is not possible, we suggest that you give each participant a copy of the enclosed “Program at a Glance” brochure. (Permission is granted to photocopy the brochures and this guide.)

Leading a Group Discussion

Introduce the video by asking a few questions, such as:

- The video we are here to see is about learning to communicate and winning cooperation with our children and stepchildren. Why do you think that this is so important in stepfamilies?
- What were some of the things your own parents did to block communication with you or open it up?

Play the video and follow with questions such as these:

1. What did you learn or find helpful in this video?
2. Did the story “The Lion’s Whisker” hit home for any of you? How?
3. How can you tell who “owns” a problem?
5. What are some communication blocks that you tend to use with your kids?
6. What are the qualities that you look for in a friend that make him or her a good listener and helper, especially when you want to share a problem?
7. What are the five steps of the Active Communication process?
8. We saw a vignette about the myth of instant love. Have any of you fallen for this myth, feeling like you and your stepkids should love each already?
9. How many of you have kids who spend time in your home and their other biological parent’s home? Do the transitions between homes go smoothly? What problems do you encounter?
10. What did you learn from the “Bedtime Routines and Words of Affection” enrichment activity? Will you give this idea a try tonight? What are some creative ways to express affection to kids?