

**The Parent's 20
Minute Guide
Synopsis – A Training
Guide for Coaches**

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Structure and Rationale of the Synopses

The 20 Minute Guide - The 20 Minute Guide© (including both a Parent and Partner addition) was developed by the Center for Motivation and Change as a guide for families who are dealing with substance problems in their loved ones. The guides were developed to encapsulate the basics of the Community Reinforcement and Family Training approach (CRAFT), one of the leading evidence-based approach for families, and offer practical exercises and strategies within this framework. The 20 Minute Guide also incorporates some communication strategies taken from Motivational Interviewing, another evidence-based approach for helping people change. The guides (which include 19 brief topics as well as worksheets for each) are a starting point for families in thinking about helping in ways they may not be familiar with, and that allow them to stay involved and connected to their loved one, take care of themselves, and help promote real change (whether that's getting their loved one into treatment, or just improving the family atmosphere). The 20 Minute Guide is intended as a beginning, an invitation to think about this struggle in new ways, a chance to feel more empowered to effect change, and a jumping off point to getting more help.

The Synopses – The synopses in this training guide are meant to be a tool for those coaching a family member in the use of the 20 Minute Guide material. Each of the 19 topics in the 20 Minute Guide is synopsized in one page. These synopses are designed to help in several ways, including a) acting as a guide for coaches to review the topic before speaking about it with a parent/partner, and b) as a training tool for new coaches in understanding **strategies** for helping a parent/partner navigate each topic. To this end, the synopses are arranged in 4 sections:

- 1) Overall meaning and intent of the topic – is a one paragraph concise summary, typically of both the written topic as well as the accompanying worksheet, describing the essential elements and content of the topic. This also includes mention of “intent”, so as to help the coach remember the rationale behind the ideas themselves, as the “spirit” of the topic is often as important as the content itself.
- 2) Potential parent/caller strengths relevant to the topic – this idea is consistent with the overall intent and spirit of CRAFT and Motivational Interviewing, which is to work both collaboratively and positively. Positive reinforcement for actions, as well as positive communication, are essential to engagement, both of the parent caller, as well as ultimately of their child, so that use and modeling of this affirmative approach as part of the coaching process is critical. In the context of each topic that a coach would be

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discussing with a parent, the synopses point out some potential areas where a coach could notice strengths that the parent/caller *already possesses* in this area, which is very affirming and encouraging for the caller typically, and provides a way to bond the caller and the coach as well.

- 3) Potential “red lights” - that may be displayed by the parent/caller. Consistent with the language and concepts in the MI/CRAFT model, the idea of positive communication is central throughout. Common language used to describe interpersonal connection through language here is to talk about “red lights” and “green lights” in communication. Essentially this is the idea that it is helpful to recognize cues from those you are communicating with (e.g. your child) to gauge whether they are listening and connected, or disengaged, not listening, and resistant. This idea of a “red light” can function in two distinct ways:
 - a) as *conceptual* pushback (don’t like/agree with the ideas) a coach may get from a parent-caller about the ideas being suggested in the 20 Minute Guide topic (“that positive reinforcement idea sounds like enabling to me”), or
 - b) as an area of parent-caller skill challenge or limitation, or a situation that the parent-caller might have a hard time with (e.g. they have very little insight into boundary issues; they are extremely angry at their child and want to blame them; they get no support from their spouse at all). All of these problems would make the skill or concepts involved in a topic be particularly challenging for that caller.

- 4) Turning red lights to green lights – this section of the synopsis is geared toward helping the coach talk with the parent/caller in such a way that they are more able to work with the topic. This can include two aspects:
 - a) process-oriented recommendations to use the LOVE skill set to listen to the caller as well as offer information. These are process suggestions for the coach on strategies to use in talking (e.g. “use Open-ended questions to understand why the parent feels this strategy is ‘enabling’”), as opposed to specific content suggestions.
 - b) content-oriented recommendations that specifically address the content of the parent/caller’s difficulties in a solution-focused way. While these are also best coached in LOVE terms, they are also content based and important in the process of turning red lights green and having the caller feel understood and reassured. This could include statements such as “there are overdose kits that can be very important to have in your house if they are available locally”.

Examples of “process” and “content”-oriented response to “turn red lights to green lights”

(taken from topic #14, “Helping: Parent Collaboration”)

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- Process recommendation: Use open ended questions (LOVE skill) to ask about the impact of not collaborating. Get caller talking about ways that it is not working and how it is affecting their child.
- Content recommendation: Encourage a specific 10 min a day check-in about all things related to addressing the problem as a united front. Discourage right before bed.

Section #1: Welcome

Overview and Why it Matters

The first section of the Parent's 20 Minute Guide contains 3 topics: 1) "Welcome to the Parent's 20 Minute Guide", 2) "How to Solve a Problem", and 3) "Practice, Practice, Practice! You Can't Get It Right Every Time".

The "Welcome" topic is an introduction to CRAFT and the 20 Minute Guide, and validates how complex substance use can be in the context of parenting a teenager. "Welcome" also highlights the challenges both children and parents face when substance use is in the picture, bringing the hopeful message that there is something parents can do to influence their family situation. The "Welcome" topic also introduces the Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) approach in helping loved ones with substance abuse, highlighting that CRAFT and the 20 Minute Guide include several key points:

- How to stay involved in a positive, ongoing way, as you take care of yourself.
- How to co-parent and collaborate as effectively and smoothly as possible.
- How to increase the behaviors you would like to see from your child and decrease the behaviors you would not like to see.
- How to talk to your child and others in life so that you are more likely to be heard.
- The importance of taking care of yourself along the way.
- PRACTICE: spending a little time each day to practice a new skill and having patience with yourself as you learn new things are important ingredients to change.

"How to Solve a Problem" presents straightforward behavioral strategies for how to systematically approach and deal with a problem or situation you would like to address. The 7 steps involved allow for brainstorming, trying, and refining the process based on how things go.

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“Practice, Practice, Practice! You Can't Get It Right Every Time” is a discussion of the critical importance of practicing the strategies contained in the 20 Minute Guide, as change doesn't happen on it's own OR overnight, and practice is essential for slowly getting better at these skills over time. Understanding the need for practice is also part of understanding the process of change as a *learning* process, not a snap decision, which also applies to family members making changes in substance use: its takes time, practice and learning (as well as problem solving!).

Topics in the “Welcome” section

1. Welcome to the 20 Minute Guide
2. How To Solve A Problem
3. Practice, Practice, Practice! You Can't Get it Right Every Time

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WELCOME: 1. Welcome to the 20 Minute Guide

Overall Meaning and Intent of the topic:

- Normalizes the wide variation in substance abuse problems in families, from mild to severe
- Discusses the fact that substance use can be linked to a variety of other emotional and psychiatric issues, further complicating the problem and management of it
- Normalizes and validates parent stressors in dealing with these issues
- Introduces the CRAFT approach, including:
 - How to stay involved in a positive, ongoing way, as you take care of yourself.
 - How to co-parent and collaborate as effectively and smoothly as possible.
 - How to increase the behaviors you would like to see from your child and decrease the behaviors you would not like to see.
 - How to talk to your child and others in life so that you are more likely to be heard.
 - The importance of taking care of yourself along the way.
 - PRACTICE: spending a little time each day to practice a new skill and having patience with yourself as you learn new things are important ingredients to change.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this topic:

- Parent/caller has some experience either with CRAFT or behavioral strategies (including having already read the Guide)
- Parent/caller has insight into the complicated nature of the problems substance use creates
- Parent/caller has openness and/or willingness to consider new ideas and ways of thinking

Potential Red Lights:

- Parent/caller has a variety of fixed ideas about “what needs to happen”, and is just seeking validation for those ideas
- Parent/caller has learned concepts/is attached to more traditional ideas about substance use, which are less collaborative and more punitive of hierarchical
- Parent/caller is only wanting resources/“answers” about “what to do”, and is not interested in learning for themselves or being part of the process of change in their household
- Parent/caller feels totally helpless/hopeless about being able to have any impact on their child (“I’ve tried everything”; “He’s too far gone”)

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate/normalize that new ideas are hard to take in and consider
- Use open-ended questions to understand their concerns, experience and fears
- Using “information sandwich”, point out data on how successful CRAFT approach has been for many families
- Suggest that they consider history of things not going well, and ask if they’d consider trying new ideas to see how they work

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WELCOME: 2. How To Solve A Problem

Overall Meaning and Intent of the topic:

- Finding helpful solutions for the problems callers are faced with is one of the reasons they are reaching out (liking improving communication, influencing their child's substance use).
- This chapter introduces CRAFT's seven steps for identifying problems, generating solutions, and evaluating how they work.
- The seven steps provide a strategy to systematically work through the process of defining problems in a helpful way, thinking about possible solutions, identifying barriers, and evaluating the effectiveness of the solutions that were chosen.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this topic:

- Identifying the areas in their life that they would like to address or improve.
- Discussing the different strategies they have tried in the past to address a particular problem.
- Identifying the things **that have worked** for addressing their problems in the past.
- Identifying the things that may have gotten in the way to implementing solutions in the past.

Potential Red Lights:

- "There is nothing I can do". Callers may feel defeated, believing that they have tried everything they could think of to address these problems up to this point.
- "I feel overwhelmed, there are just too many things going on". Callers may be trying to put out several fires at once and feel overwhelmed making it difficult to think of narrowing the problems down or defining them in a specific way.
- Change must happen fast. Some callers may have defined their problems in a useful and specific way, generated solutions, and already tried putting new strategies into play. Unfortunately, they may not have seen the benefit of these strategies right away.

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate that things can feel overwhelming at times and highlight that in these moments just stepping back to discuss the things they would like to see different can be a big first step.
- Using Open Questions ask the callers: What have they have tried to change in the past? What were the different strategies they used to try to change these things? How would they know that the strategies were working?
- Reflect their answers to the Open Questions above and validate their attempts to define the problem, find solutions, and think about how to evaluate the outcome of their efforts.
- Also ask the callers Open Questions: What are some of things they are doing that they would keep the same? What are some things that they would do differently when trying to address these problems?
- Validate brainstorming they are doing with you (the above Open Questions start the process).
- Consider whether self-disclosure would be helpful here (Ask permission to share your experiences; ones that relate to what they are saying and struggling with).
- Ask if they could change just three things what would they be?

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WELCOME: 3. Practice, Practice, Practice! You Can't Get it Right Every Time

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Guide: *Change Takes Practice...For Everyone*

- Normalize and generalize the need to practice skills learned in the Guide
- Increase appreciation that their own behavioral changes (e.g., how they communicate, how they take care of themselves) will be new and require focus and consistent attention until they become a habit
- Increase their ability to relate to their child's change process and the many steps it takes to change a behavior
- Educate about the power and positive effect of "keeping track" of behaviors and change across time.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Guide:

- Showing tolerance or patience for self that they are trying something new, that it might take another few tries, that it's normal/okay for them to be on a learning curve still making mistakes
- Showing tolerance or patience for partner in trying something new/practicing
- Recognizing getting better at any of the CRAFT skills over time with practice
- Noting practicing (in front of mirror, with a friend, on paper, etc.)
- Noting that these skills don't necessarily come naturally, need adjustment period and practice (to develop greater facility)

Potential Red Lights:

- Personal traits that get in way of empathy for need to "learn" (e.g., history of things coming easy to them and having child with learning disabilities or issues they do not relate to)
- Lack of awareness of effect of psychiatric issues, learning issues and trauma...on ability of their child to learn or be open to new skills
- Tendency to be impulsive or anxious (e.g., the need to get a quick fix)

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Ask Open ended questions such as "what are some things in your life you are better at now than you used to be?" Identify and affirm them for a skill or behavior change they had to practice to achieve in their own life (e.g., quitting smoking, starting to exercise etc)
- Validate that it is hard to understand this challenge of their child's as they have not had similar one.
- Validate that it is difficult to tolerate needing practice without seeing results right away
- Affirm any awareness they show about challenges they and/or child has that make it tough to practice and learn new skills
- "Offering skills"- use an information sandwich to disclose a habit you broke and all the practice it took

Section #2: Taking Care of Yourself

Overview and Why it Matters

The three topics in the “Taking Care of Yourself” section center around one of the toughest areas for a family member—especially a parent—of a substance using child: learning to shift from a sole focus on the child to a focus on themselves (including self-care, emotional needs and other relationships). These guides are not a recommendation to “detach”, but rather suggestions that they take care of themselves AND their child. The goal is to increase awareness that it is not an “either/or equation”, and that engaging/focusing on their own self-care will increase the quality of their lives and their ability to be effective with their child and the situation that they face.

Topics in the “Taking Care of Yourself” section:

1. This is Really Stressful!
2. Manage Your Emotions
3. You’re Not Alone: Reducing Isolation

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TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF: 1. This is Really Stressful!

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *The “oxygen mask”*

- Normalizes stress of being a parent to a child using substances or engaging in risky behavior
- Introduces self-care as an important idea and action for a parent to consider
- Suggests that self-care is critical for:
 - The long haul that this problem can be
 - Being as effective as possible as a helper
- Suggests beginning self-care and developing a plan to accomplish this goal

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Talking calmly on the phone
- Sounding clear, thinking clearly, explaining things clearly
- Remarking on any maintenance of normalcy (going to work, eating, making meals, caring for other family members)
- Making note of this being a long haul, recognition that a single back-step is not the whole story
- Highlighting any current self-care efforts (exercise, nails/hair, movie, reading, hobbies, etc.)

Potential Red Lights:

- “I don’t have time”. It can be very difficult for people to justify taking care of their own needs when they are frightened, angry, or overwhelmed or feeling guilty.
- Lack of skill. Some callers will have never really taken care of themselves (exercised, eaten well etc). They don’t have the habit or the skill and will need to invest in learning new things themselves
- Lack of awareness. Some people don’t even know they are neglecting themselves...because it has become such a habit.
- “While my child is struggling...how can I possibly focus on my needs”? (e.g., feeling like any self-care is selfish or neglectful).

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use Open Questions to ask: What were some of the things they did for themselves before this became the focus of their day? If it were possible to put something for themselves into the day, what would that look like? How do they think self-care could be useful in this situation?
- Reflect the caller’s answers to the open questions you ask. If they cannot answer, use Offering skills to encourage parent to start small. Finding even 15 minutes a day can really help.
- Use Offering skills to provide information that increases their awareness of options (i.e., going for a walk while you talk on the phone to a friend can accomplish two goals).
- Think about self-disclosure; how were you able to address self-care (Offering Skills).
- Help them identify simple things they can track and say yes to (e.g., sitting on edge of bed and breathing slowly for 5 minutes before you go to bed and before you get out of bed).
- Reflect back what the caller identified as being the potential benefits of self-care. Use Offering skills to suggest self-care may increase one’s ability to cope. Listen for ways they are breaking down emotionally (losing temper, crying when talking to loved one) and suggest that a little self-care might keep an even keel.

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TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF: 2. Manage Your Emotions

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Normalizes parent's negative emotions in reaction to child's behavior/situation ("of course you feel angry", "it makes sense you're feeling hurt")
- Normalizes (specifically) guilt and shame about situation ("what if it's my fault," "what will people think")
- Increases awareness of impact of being reactive, expressing negative emotions too much (e.g., getting negative response back, increasing defensiveness, increasing distance/conflict)
- Increases awareness that one can be calm, non-reactive AND effective/clear about expectations.
- Teaches potential coping skills to manage negative emotions (anticipate and plan, identify alternatives, taking time outs etc)

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Willingness to express negative feelings (how angry/irritated/annoyed/frustrated/disappointed/depressed, etc. their child makes them) **note, coach can praise the ability to recognize the feeling (even if negative) as a strength AND eventually note that the expression TO CHILD is not so helpful
- Recognition of how own or partner's negative feelings are valid, understandable
- Mention of how important it is to not express the negative feelings
- Discussion of how difficult it is to not express the negative feelings
- **Special mention = noting how child should not be made to feel guilty for having these problems/issues or how child should not feel responsible for parent's disappointment about child having these problems

Potential Red Lights:

- Too much anger or anxiety to resist acting on emotion (e.g., lack of control over emotional expression...losing temper, falling apart into tears)
- Difficulty understanding reasons for their child's use/behavior or low empathy
- Poor self-care resulting in low resiliency or frustration tolerance

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use self-disclosure (Offering skills) if appropriate and give examples of your own struggles, ways that you lost your cool, fell apart etc that you think would normalize their feelings
- Use Open Questions to help the caller identify times that things went right: When you think of the times you responded the way you wanted, what were you doing? What are the responses that you would like to change? How do they think you could respond differently?
- Reflect back their answers to the open questions you asked. You may want to reflect back ways that their emotional response to situations has resulted in communication set-backs or escalation in acting out/rebellion behavior from child.
- Validate how hard it is to keep your cool when so frightened or angry. Use Offering skills to steer back to self-care efforts to help build resiliency
- Use Offering skills to introduce the idea that asking for help and reducing isolation can be ways to keep perspective and have an outlet for emotional upset.

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TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF: 3. You're Not Alone: Reducing Isolation

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *"You Are Not Alone!"*

- Normalizes desire to isolate in response to family/child struggles
- Introduces getting support of others as a research-supported and important idea and action for a parent to consider
- Validates feeling exposed/embarrassed with sharing family struggles with others, and suggests doing that in a thoughtful way
- Suggests that support is critical for:
 - Developing and maintaining resilience to deal with the issues
 - Being as effective as possible as a helper
- Suggests establishing goal of 1X week social support activity

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Accepting help (even in small ways like others doing chores, etc.)
- Taking the step to use the support network and talk to you
- Mentioning talking to someone about real things (therapist, friend, family)
- Mentioning participating in any kind of group setting (church, book group, family gathering, self-help group, therapy group, community group)

Potential Red Lights:

- Significant amount of shame and embarrassment about the problem.
- Lack of social supports due to history of conflict (loved one has caused conflict in family) or withdrawal from others (others have pulled away or rejected)
- Lack of support due to social anxiety and/or shyness
- "I'm too busy"
- Lack of interest or energy to devote to this area of life ("at the end of the day I just want to be alone and quiet").

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Think about using self-disclosure (Offering Skills) around your own previous feelings of shame etc. and ways that you coped or have changed
- Validate and acknowledge that conflict with others (family and/or friends) often comes along with a substance problem.
- Use Open questions to ask: Who are the people they would consider to be the "safest" in their social group? What would it be like to start with one of these individuals? Reflect their answers and use Offering skills to suggest they can start small; don't need to dig into repairing big issues.
- If caller is anxious; use Open questions to explore options where they are comfortable. What have they done to cope with other life challenges in the past?.
- Use Offering skills to suggest the value of taking time (points made in session 1a).
- Use Open questions to ask if: What other things that they have dealt with in their life where they allowed social support. Ask: How do they think that related to their resilience?
- Use Offering skills (Information sandwich) to suggest support does not require spilling their guts.

Section #3: Communicating

Overview and Why it Matters

Communication between family members can be significantly affected by stress and highly charged emotional situations. The six guides in this section reinforce the idea that improving communication may be one of the most important steps for improving the situation with your child. Effective communication can create space for change and help tip the motivational seesaw towards change. The important points covered in this section are:

- Developing more effective communication skills can help you feel more understood and heard.
- Communication skills are critical for effectively implementing the helping skills covered in the guide.
- Communication skills include how to listen more effectively, offer feedback, and avoid conversational traps that can derail a discussion.

Topics in the “Communicating” section:

1. Pay Attention to the Lights!
2. Communicate with LOVE: Listening
3. Communicate with LOVE: Offering Information
4. Communicate with LOVE: Validating and Empathizing
5. The Seven Elements of Positive Communication
6. Avoiding Conversational Traps

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COMMUNICATING: 1. Pay Attention to the Lights!

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *Conversational Signals*

- The goal of good communication is to stay connected and keep the conversation moving forward.
- Keeping an eye on the different signals given during a conversation can help steer a conversation away from a path containing traps and destructiveness and towards a path that may be more effective and helpful.
- Ignoring red lights is a surefire way to have things go badly
- Examples of Green lights include a conversation in which your child is positively engaged with you, perhaps talking about some of the disadvantages of drug use, or the desire for things to be different.
- Examples of Red lights include arguments, yelling, your child going silent, or your child defending their drug use.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Parent awareness of the importance of communication in general.
- The parent having some recognition of conversations that went well vs conversations that did not go well
- Parent recognition of the role they may have played in a conversation's path..
- Mentioning the belief that changing how they talk with their child or other family members could improve things.

Potential Red Lights:

- Blaming the poor conversational outcomes on their child ("if they would only...")
 - Sense of hopelessness from parent about the strategy (e.g. "just talking nice isn't going to change anything")
 - Sense from parent of big emotional responses.... (e.g. "I get so angry, I can't talk with him anymore...")
- Situation where there is a total breakdown/lack of talking at all

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate how difficult conversations can be when strong emotions are present.
- Validate how difficult conversations can be when there is a long history of negative interactions about certain topics.
- Ask Open Questions to generate green lights in your caller: How would they like their conversations to go? What do they look for in good conversations? What are examples of good conversations they have had with their child? What are some things they miss talking about with their child/family member?
- Think about using self-disclosure (Offering skills) to highlight your own experience with difficult conversations.
- Use reflections to highlight the caller's responses to the open questions you have offered.
- Use Offering skills (Information Sandwich) to suggest practicing a safe discussion and holding back on the "things need to change around here" voice.

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COMMUNICATING: 2. Communicating with LOVE: LISTENING.

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Introduces some ingredients of helpful conversations: Open questions, Affirmations, Reflections, and Summaries).
- Open Questions are questions that call for some elaboration; they cannot be answered with one word (“yes” or “no”) and set a collaborative tone.
- Affirmations. Introduces the idea that listening for positives is an important component of change and helps orient people to noticing what is going right. This can help move a conversation away from negativity and increased defensiveness.
- Reflections. Also known as active listening, can include restating some or all of what an individual may be saying. Helps communicate that the listener is listening and provides a way to check if their understanding of what the speaker is saying matches what they are trying to communicate (i.e. both on the same page).
- Summaries help pull together the important things the speaker has said and communicate to them that they were heard. It also can help the speaker organize their thoughts as they get to hear what they were saying.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- The caller uses Open Questions, Reflections, and Summary statements during the coaching call.
- The caller affirms the strengths of their child and/or other family members.
- The caller describes some of the things that are going right or can describe some of the positive steps that have been taken.
- The caller is able to identify their strengths and positive steps they have taken (self-affirmations).

Potential Red Lights:

- The use of many closed questions during the call. The caller does not see anything positive in the situation. “Nothing is going right”.
- The caller finds it difficult to identify any of their or their child’s strengths.
- Caller feels affirmations are “enabling” and not “tough enough”

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate how difficult conversations can be. Ask Open Questions to generate green lights in your caller: How would they like their conversations to go? What do they look for in good conversations? How would they like things to be different?
- Use self-disclosure (with Offering skills) to highlight your own experience with difficult conversations and being able to listen to what your child was saying.
- Use reflections and summary statements to highlight what you hear the caller saying.
- Listen for the positives; Affirm the positives that the caller is demonstrating during the call (reaching out; being open). Identify moments that the caller highlights their child’s strengths.

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COMMUNICATING: 3. Communicating with LOVE: OFFERING INFORMATION.

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Highlights providing information as a key ingredient to parenting.
- Suggests people may not always respond favorably to hearing information or suggestions.
- Introduces the Information Sandwich as a useful technique for suggesting/providing information in a way that increases the chances it will be heard.
- Outlines the three-step process 1. Ask Permission, 2. Provide Information, 3. Check Back.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- The caller understands their role (positive, negative or both) in influencing their child's receptivity to suggestions or information.
- Caller demonstrates the use of specific steps in the information Sandwich (asking permission, checking back).
- Caller allows for disagreement or different views during the call.
- The caller acknowledges that their child may see things differently (a different view).
- The caller describes situations that they have provided options to their child; not imposing a "my way or the highway" stance.

Potential Red Lights:

- The caller blames their child for not listening to their suggestions; not hearing them.
- Caller believes there is nothing they can do to get through to their child.

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate how difficult it can be to discuss heated issues.
- Think about using self-disclosure (Use Offering skills: Ask Permission, Self-disclose, Check-back) to highlight your own experience with providing advice, suggestions, information.
- Ask Open Questions to generate green lights in your caller: What do they think gets in the way of being heard? What could they try differently?
- Use reflections and summary statements to highlight what you hear the caller saying.
- Listen for the positives; Affirm the positives that the caller is demonstrating during the call (reaching out; being open).

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COMMUNICATING: 4. Communicating with LOVE: VALIDATING AND EMPATHIZING.

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Introduces validating and empathizing as being the background music to communicating.
- Empathy is being able to understand things from your child's perspective; what it is like to walk in their shoes.
- Validation is the process of acknowledging his/her experiences (thoughts, feelings, actions).
- Both can be conveyed by your attitude and the tone and words you use to communicate.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- The caller talks about the situations from their child's perspective.
- The caller wonders what their child must be thinking or feeling.
- The caller describes how difficult this can be on their children or family members, or is otherwise showing empathy for their child or others.

Potential Red Lights:

- Difficulty acknowledging others experiences.
- Difficulty describing what may be going through their child's mind.
- Minimizing the importance of their child's perspective or experiences.
- Belittling, strongly criticizing their child's responses during interactions or perspective on the problem.

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate how difficult it can be to try to see things from their child's perspective; especially when they do not agree.
- Use reflective listening to respond to the caller's perspective of things; this can help model empathetic responses.
- Ask Open Questions to generate green lights in your coaching call: If they were in their child's shoes, how do they think they would view things? How do they think their child feels when discussing these issues with them?
- Think about using self-disclosure in the middle of an information sandwich to highlight your own experience with difficult conversations and being able to validate and empathize during conversations.
- Listen for the positives; affirm the positives that the caller is demonstrating during the call (trying to take a different perspective) or the times they validated their child or empathized with them.

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COMMUNICATING: 5. The 7 Elements of Positive Communication

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Learning skills to communicate more effectively in the context of family substance use struggles is very powerful in helping to move forward positively, as well as in all areas of life
- Describes 7 steps of positive communication that are geared toward maximizing the chance that the other person will hear and consider what you are saying (not necessarily agree!)
- In addition to the 7 elements, suggests a number of practical tips including:
 - Timing your communications
 - Practicing them ahead of time
 - Starting small...don't tackle the toughest communications first

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Parent/caller has an understanding that collaborative communication is important/helpful
- Parent/caller is already using some of these 7 elements on the phone call
- Parent/caller is already using some of these 7 elements in other situations they describe

Potential Red Lights:

- Parent/caller feeling that positive communication is “just being nice” or “just sugar coating things”
- Parent/caller feeling that this type of communication of “not authentic” or “manipulative”
- Difficulty being brief or specific because there is laundry list of things they are upset about
- Difficulty identifying understanding statements due to lack of awareness of child's reasons for behavior
- Difficulty taking partial responsibility due to lack of awareness or anger

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use Offering Skills to provide an information sandwich filled with education about the power of these skills in all areas of life
- Validate difficulty learning this as a new skill (“the best communicators struggle with this one”!)
- Use Offering Skills, information sandwich to educate on importance of breaking things into small, digestible chunks in order to help get green light on importance of brevity. Remind them that their child will simply stop listening to them if they go on too long or about too many things
- Use an information sandwich if you're comfortable with self-disclosure about your own progress/changes in communication using these skills...examples of the way you have used them to good effect etc.
- Validate difficulty taking partial responsibility and at the same time talk about power of defusing tension and also acting as good role model.
- Ask open-ended questions such as “what could be useful about trying these out with someone?”

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COMMUNICATING: 6. Avoiding Conversational Traps

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Outlines six common conversational traps; types of interactions that can derail effective discussions. **The Information Trap**; trying to make change happen by educating your child without getting an understanding of what they know already.
- **The Lecture Trap**; a stronger version of the Information Trap. Often a one-way communication. Can be perceived as talking at your child rather than talking with your child.
- **The Labeling Trap**; conversations that involve the use of names (i.e. addict etc) that turn into arguments about the name and not the behavior or actions.
- **The Blaming Trap**; conversations that focus on finding the person at fault.
- **The Taking-Sides Trap**; conversations in which the parent becomes the voice of change and the child defends his/her current behavior and may even argue for not changing.
- **The Question-and-Answer Trap**; conversations that can become interrogations, the parent asking many closed questions and the child given single word responses.

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- The caller recognizes having fallen into these traps in the past.
- The caller uses LOVE skills during the call (asking Open Questions; Reflections; Affirmations; Validation; Empathy).
- The caller describes attempts to communicate differently with their child.

Potential Red Lights:

- Caller using any one or many of these conversational conventions during the call (e.g. minimizing the importance of their child's perspective or experiences or using labels to describe their child).
- Caller taking issue with the idea that they need to do anything differently because it is their child's problem.

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Normalize that in fact we all fall into these traps in conversations at times.
- Validate that when a child is being secretive, angry, argumentative, dishonest etc, it can be very easy to fall into any one of these traps in an attempt to "break through"
- Ask Open Questions to generate green lights in your caller: What traps resonate with the caller? What do they think could have been done differently? What would a good conversation look like to them?
Think about using self-disclosure (in an information sandwich) to highlight your own experience with difficult conversations and falling into traps.
- Listen for the positives; affirm the positives that the caller is demonstrating during the call (using LOVE skills during your call; the caller describing attempts to communicate differently).

Section #4: Helping

Overview and Why it Matters

The Helping section's seven topics provide a range of tools for encouraging change in a child's behavior and motivation. Taking Care of yourself and Communicating are important foundations for sustaining change. The tools provided in this section will help readers understand motivation and how to more effectively respond to their child's behavior to help influence the process of change.

The Helping section highlights several key points:

- Motivation is not constant and can be different for different people.
- How to reinforce new and positive behaviors.
- How to deal with negative behaviors.
- How to understand and allow for ambivalence in your child.
- The importance of collaborating with your co-parent.

Topics in the "Helping" section:

1. One Answer Does Not Fit All.
2. Parent Collaboration.
3. Behaviors Make Sense...Even Your Child's.
4. Reinforcement: Your Love Matters
5. Natural Consequences: Allowing Them to Happen
6. Your Consequences: Making Them Happen
7. Warning! Ambivalence Is Normal.

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HELPING: 1. One Answer Does Not Fit All

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *Many Paths to Change AND Many Voices Advising*

- Conveys the idea that there are many positive pathways to change, and that success will be made more likely by understanding the uniqueness of their child and family
- Normalizes difficulty of hearing advice and opinions of many, including professionals with strong black and white opinions
- Strongly encourages parent to stay involved, not believe ideas that they need to step away, detach or otherwise let their child fend for themselves

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Mention of hearing different expert opinions of what they should do
- Noting an aspect of their situation that makes it more difficult/impossible to pursue a path of action others might take (child has a psychiatric diagnosis as well, child has been unresponsive to rewards/consequences in past, etc.)
- Mention of how they feel pressure to take a course of action but misgivings about their situation being a good fit for that path

Potential Red Lights:

- Parent has been exposed to very black and white suggestions or treatment in the past
- They may have significant amount of guilt (e.g., due to their own substance use history or behavior) or concern about things that their child has been exposed to (e.g., abuse, neglect) that they think are causing the problem. All leading to self-doubt and impulse to “fix it now”
- They may have few resources in community

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use validation to convey that it's understandable that black and white/all or nothing suggestions from others can feel powerful as they seem to fix the problem quickly
- Use reflection to convey understanding of the power of anxiety and fear that they voice. For instance, that it causes people to want quick fixes and clear answers.
- Use “information sandwich” to discuss relevant self-disclosure that while understandable, responding to this fear too quickly can often create more work or more problems down the road
- Role play being “the parent” and them being “the kid”: they tell you a problem and you give one and one only black and white answer; evaluate how that feels to them (defensive, judged etc)
- Listen for specifics about child and family (both strengths and vulnerabilities), reflect on and affirm these examples of “individual” issues (e.g.- great that you are aware your child's depression is an important factor to consider)
- Ask open-ended questions to help caller think about unique needs, e.g.- “what ideas you've heard have made sense to you? What qualities matter to you in someone to help your child?”
- Use Offering Skills to give info such as: “it is important to ask for feedback...but encourage a “scientific approach”. Gather the evidence and then step back and see what seems like the best fit for your child and your family. No need to immediately accept of any one suggestion.”
- Use offering to give info about resources if they would like them: Make note of online community resources if living in more isolated situation (e.g., rural environments)

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HELPING: 2. Parent Collaboration

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *Collaboration helps everyone*

- Normalizes difficulty of “getting on the same page” with co-parent at times, especially under duress
- Validates feeling that at times that the other parent is uncooperative
- States that there will be increased positive feelings if collaboration improves
- Gives permission to still disagree, but to work together even when there are disagreements

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Caller mentions of speaking/working with partner collaboratively
- Mention of communication with partner that went badly, but insight about how this isn't helpful
- Mention of taking care of the partnership in some way (with normal recreation/time together or specifically to work on their collaboration for this issue)

Potential Red Lights:

- Fully polarized relationships with lot of hurt and anger in the way of collaboration
- Strong differences in opinions about child rearing practices or thoughts about substance use problems
- Overwhelmed dyads (i.e., multiple jobs, other children, taking care of elderly parents etc) where there is little time to communicate)
- Non-traditional arrangements where multiple caretakers are involved (e.g., nannies, grandparents, neighbors etc)
- Divorced or separated relationships where child is moving between parents or there is history of conflict and lack of communication between parents

Turning Red Lights to Green Light Lights:

- Ask Open-ended questions to ask about the impact of not collaborating. Get caller talking about ways that it is not working and how it is affecting their child. Most people are aware of poor outcome and this can be good hook to encourage one small place to start collaborating.
- Use Offering Skills to check if they are willing to brainstorm with you “points of agreement”...and start there. If there are big differences, try to get them talking about ways that they connect with their partner in other areas (e.g.- work, hobbies, life goals). It will help cool them off and remind them of points of connection.
- Use Offering Skills to encourage a specific 10 min a day check-in about all things related to addressing the problem as a united front. Discourage “right before bed”. Brainstorm about opportunities to talk (over lunch break, driving to work etc).
- Validate difficulties communicating when there is distance/ conflict in a relationship, but highlight ways collaboration can help, and encourage them to find structured time to do this.

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HELPING: 3. Behaviors Make Sense – Even Your Child’s

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *There is an explanation*

- Your child is not likely crazy, bad, irrational, or trying to torture you!
- Introduces idea that behavior (including substance use) is motivated, not random or “bad” (though the effects are often bad)
- Knowing this can allow a number of positives:
 - Lets you learn other ways to reward/help him to compete with rewards of use
 - Lets you not take his behavior as personally... it’s about the rewards, not you
 - Increases your empathy for his behavior and him
 - Increased empathy increases collaboration in both directions

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Any insight noted about why their child is using or wants to use
- Recognition of patterns/predictability to child’s using **Special mention = effort parent has made to find ways to encourage/reward the non-using behavior that serves the purpose s/he thinks substance use is serving!

Potential Red Lights:

- Anger and judgment about substance use or behavioral choices resulting in difficulty with the concept that substances serve a purpose
- Lack of understanding about the effect of substances
- Estrangement or distance from child and not really knowing child well enough to be able to think about reasons he/she might be using

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validate anger about substance use and behaviors as a way to separate these feelings from strategic importance of finding alternatives to compete with reasons for substance use
- Use information sandwich to offer info that reinforcement builds self-esteem around healthy constructive behaviors
- Use Offering Skills to ask permission (e.g.- interested in hearing how other parents (and myself) have learned more about substances?) Encourage parent to read up...educate themselves about effects of drugs so that they have better sense of what child might be getting from use
- Ask open-ended questions such as “what would help you understand more about why he is using?” Encourage parent to ask child questions, be curious. You can be curious and not condone use all at the same time!

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HELPING: 4. Reinforcement: Your Love Matters

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *You Get More Bees with Honey*

- Introduces positive reinforcement (rewarding positive behaviors) as central to behavior change
- Contrasts this with detachment and punishment as less helpful approaches, and distinguishes reinforcement from enabling, which is rewarding (inadvertently) negative behaviors
- Explains that ultimate goal is establishment of self-sustaining positive behaviors that are rewarding in their own right, and which compete with the rewards of substance use
- Normalizes and validates built up negative parent emotions that may make it hard to focus on the positives when they occur
- Suggest several practical aspects or tips about using positive reinforcement:
 - Needs to be rewarding to the child themselves
 - Needs to be age appropriate
 - Needs to be both consistent and delivered in a timely manner

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Any recognition that their affection, attention, approval, or praise matters to the child
- Recognition of when/that their child does positive things
- Recognition that (even if difficult or feels impossible to them) giving praise would be a good idea *when child does something positive*. Recognition of benefits of positive reinforcement in their own lives

Potential Red Lights:

- Long-standing anger that has resulted in breakdown of any positive interactions
- Use of “shoulds” (e.g.- they should do things because they are the right thing to do, not because it is rewarding)
- Belief that their child “does not care about anything” and cannot be rewarded
- Belief that they have “tried everything”
- Belief that rewarding = bribery
- Has had messages to not “enable” in the past and confusion about concept
- Difficulty with compliments, affection, warmth etc.

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Validating and normalizing caller’s anger while reminding parent of power of positive reinforcement and need to compete with use. Note reinforcement for constructive behaviors can build child’s self-esteem
- Ask open-ended questions such as “how does positive reinforcement affect you in your life?”
- Use Offering Skills to provide useful metaphors that are good examples of how people learn...“you would never expect your child to sit down and play a Chopin Etude right out of the gates...they need to start with figuring out where to put their fingers, read music, practice dexterity, build up strength, learn to be musical etc. etc.” Relate back to what child is “learning” right now and encourage parent to be a good coach

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- Use Offering Skills to educate about difference between rewarding constructive behavior vs enabling
- Empathize with challenges of giving compliments, praise, or affection and then talk about power of building closeness and warmth wherever possible, and that they might feel better too.
- Use Offering Skills to share an example you're comfortable with about how you worked on positive reinforcement and what has been useful about it

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HELPING: 5. Natural Consequences: Allowing Them to Happen

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *The world is a good teacher if we let it be*

- Introduces flip side of positive reinforcement, which is allowing for naturally occurring negative consequences
- Distinguishes between three responses to negative behavior:
 - allowing for natural consequences (recommended) – allows whatever negative results come from your child's behavior to occur without being blocked or diminished
 - punishment (less recommended) – an external consequence imposed by you the parent in response to their negative behavior
 - “enabling” – (not recommended) rewarding this negative behavior by helping to eliminate any naturally occurring negative consequences
- Validates the emotional difficulty of allowing for negative consequences
- Describes this method as the perfect complement to using positive reinforcement, and as a great way to allow your child to learn to act differently

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Parent's awareness of some natural consequences of child's use
- Parent's awareness that naturally occurring consequences are worth paying attention to and might have powerful effect, especially outside of parent-child relationship (e.g. between child and outside world)
- Parent already understanding the difference between applying a consequence and allowing one to happen naturally
- Parent making clear they understand differences between enabling, positive reinforcement, and natural consequences

Potential Red Lights:

- Lack of awareness and difficulty identifying potential natural consequences.
- Strong identification with caretaking role and difficulty imagining “not doing” everything for child
- Excessive fears about the impact of allowing natural consequences

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use Offering Skills such as information sandwich to see if caller is willing to brainstorm natural consequences or can give info that you notice about potential natural consequences that parent might be standing in the way of (remember to “sandwich” the info with permission and checking back)
- Validate the desire to be in a caretaker role as a way to talk about power and importance of “learning from experience” when it comes to feeling the costs of substance use
- Empathize with fear of bad things happening and check to see if parent willing to write down everything they are worried about when it comes to letting consequences happen and rule out ones that are unacceptable or unsafe. Remind them that there are small but potentially meaningful ones.

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HELPING: 6. Your Consequences: Making Them Happen

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic:

- Explains importance of 3 ideas related to negative consequences for negative behavior:
 - establishing clear and defined consequences (both positive and negative) for behaviors
 - having clear communication between parents and between parent and child about what those consequences will be
 - consistent and reliable follow-through on those agreed upon responses
- Underscores that consequences must be:
 - ones that parents are willing and able to deliver (not re-thought after the actions)
 - agreed upon ahead of time
 - matched appropriately to level of behavior (i.e. not over or under-consequence)

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Recognition that sending mixed messages to child has been/is a problem
- Noting that message to child about consequence plan ahead has not been clear in the past
- Noting that message about consequence plan in past has been made more as threat, not a fact
- Recognition that “consequence” to positive behaviors has not been made clear
- Recognition that everyone must be willing to follow through on consequences

Potential Red Lights:

- Belief that “no punishments matter” to their child and that nothing works
- History of difficulty collaborating with others involved (“my husband is way too harsh”)
- Being overwhelmed and having hard time with consistency
- History of making threats (“I’m going to kick you out” or “cut you off”) without holding to them

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use validation for previous efforts.
- Ask open ended questions such as “where do you think things broke down”, “Was it meaningful to child but not implemented consistently”?
- Empathize with challenges in parent collaboration. If appropriate, ask permission to offer a self-disclosure around how you and co-parent faced challenge in this area and refer back to importance of collaboration
- Use Offering Skills to brainstorm suggestions such as encourage tracking (e.g., “ok if I float an idea that’s worked for many parents? Maybe you could create calendar so that if you give a consequence you can keep track that you stick with what you say. How does that sound?”).
- Validate impulse to make big threats in effort to get child to change (fear, desperation, anger...all drive this impulse and are understandable). Make note that it is ok to change course and if parents starts sticking to consequences, credibility with child can be brought back.
- Use Offering Skills to provide info that kids actually crave structure in spite of what they say; that they need it ...even though they want to look like they don’t. Encourage parents to trust themselves and stick to structure that they think is best for their child.

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HELPING: 7. Warning! Ambivalence is Normal

Overall Meaning and Intent of the Topic: *Mixed Feelings Make Sense*

- Explains ambivalence as another part of reinforcement: your child uses for a reason, and will be giving that up in changing, which produces ambivalence/reluctance to change (they are losing something!)
- Describes ambivalence as normal part of changing *any* behavior
- This ambivalence comes out in conversations, what we call “red light” and “green light” talk, and needs to be listened for to reduce fights and struggles.
- Suggests LOVE communication strategies are helpful in dealing with ambivalence, but that the most basic strategy of not arguing with ambivalence is very helpful

Potential Parent/Caller Strengths Relevant to this Topic:

- Recognition that mixed feelings are normal, predictable, or understandable
- Describing communication that doesn't fight with ambivalence (e.g., not “taking the bait” of arguing on the side of making changes if child expresses ambivalence)
- Empathy for ambivalence/mixed feelings their child may have about changing

Potential Red Lights:

- Anger and judgment resulting in low tolerance for ambivalence
- Anxiety or fear resulting in desire for quick fix
- Lack of understanding of how habits change...thinking of substance use as something “different” (moral or simply bad judgment problem)

Turning Red Lights to Green Lights:

- Use validation and empathy to respond to feelings and desire for quick behavioral change
- Provide suggestions in the middle of information sandwiches: Suggest that the parent think of a behavioral change they have made in the past (breaking a habit or starting a new one) and think through all the steps it took to successfully make the change
- Ask permission to walk through a few scenarios with them...for instance: Suggest that they think of times that they felt backed into a corner by someone and how they responded (both outwardly and inwardly)
- Encourage them to think through recent conversations where they took a black and white stand and collect the evidence on how that went...did it move conversation along or shut it down?
- Good opportunity to use Offering Skills to -disclose if you relate to this struggle as a parent...and ways that you see things now