

## **SESSION TOOLS**

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## HANDOUT 4.1

# Avoidance, Withdrawal, and Physical Arousal Reactions

**Avoidance and withdrawal reactions** are things people do to keep themselves from experiencing these very upsetting reactions. They include:

- Avoiding people, places, or situations that remind you of what happened
- Trying not to talk, think, or have feelings about the traumatic event
- Experiencing restricted emotions, even feeling numb, to protect against painful reactions to memories or reminders of what happened
- Feeling distant from friends and family and find it difficult to trust anyone
- Feeling different from other people, like no one really understands you
- Withdrawing from other people
- Losing interest in pleasurable activities

**Physical arousal reactions** are physical changes that make the body react as if danger is present. These reactions include:

- Feeling irritable or on edge much of the time
- Getting angry easily
- Finding it difficult to pay attention in school, to concentrate on homework, or to remember things that you have read
- Having trouble sleeping
- Being jumpy or startling easily

## HANDOUT 4.2

# How to Support a Young Person

*(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)*

The first step in supporting someone who is facing a problem is to have a clear idea of what type of support would be most helpful to them.

Handouts 4.3 to 4.9 describe eight different types of support that people can give and receive in their personal relationships.

You can use these categories to thoughtfully consider the type of support that would be most helpful for a person you care about who is coping with a stressful situation.

Studies have shown that support is most helpful when it “matches” the type of problem that the person receiving the support is facing. Here are some examples:

- A person facing a difficult decision may benefit most from good advice.
- A person facing a discouraging situation may benefit most from expressions of concern, and from reassurance that he/she is up to the task.
- A person who is feeling lonely or bored may benefit most from companionship.
- A person who is worried and afraid may feel better after being distracted, such as doing something entertaining with friends or family members.
- And almost everyone feels better when others let them know that they are appreciated and cared for!

Handouts 4.3 to 4.9 that follow indicate categories of support that young people exposed to traumatic events and other stressful situations have found most helpful.

## HANDOUT 4.3

# Emotional Closeness

(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)

<b>Definition</b>	This form of support helps people to feel more understood, cared for and loved, accepted, trusted, emotionally connected, and secure. Emotional closeness is a very useful and powerful form of support that helps almost everyone, no matter what their circumstances! It may be especially helpful to people who feel lonely, downhearted, or disconnected from others.
<b>Examples of Needing This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I want to feel understood.</li><li>▪ I want to talk openly and honestly about my personal thoughts and feelings.</li><li>▪ I want to have confidence that my secrets are safe.</li><li>▪ I want to feel loved and cared for.</li><li>▪ I want to feel emotionally connected to someone.</li><li>▪ I want a hug.</li><li>▪ I want to feel accepted for who I am.</li><li>▪ I want to feel like I can really trust you.</li></ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I'm having a problem with one of my teachers at school that's been bothering me. Can we just talk about it without having you give me advice?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Spend some one-on-one quality time with them.</li><li>▪ Give them a hug, put your arm around them, or hold their hand.</li><li>▪ Tell them you love them, or that you care about them.</li><li>▪ Listen to them sympathetically, honestly trying to understand how they're feeling, without passing judgment or trying to give advice.</li><li>▪ Tell them you hope they feel better.</li><li>▪ Use your listening skills and let them "get it off their chest."</li><li>▪ Tell them about a time when you went through a similar experience (but only if you have!) to let them know you understand how they feel.</li><li>▪ Take them into your confidence by sharing something a little personal.</li><li>▪ Treat them with warmth and kindness.</li><li>▪ Write them a thoughtful card to show that you are thinking about them.</li><li>▪ Tell them you wish there was more that you could do to help.</li><li>▪ Perform a thoughtful act of appreciation, like buying or making them something special.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>

## HANDOUT 4.4

# Social Connection

(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)

<b>Definition</b>	This form of support provides companionship, opportunities for socializing, and opportunities for exchanging favors. It helps people to feel like they fit in, belong, and have things in common with others. Social connection helps people to feel less isolated, bored, or lonely, and can make life more interesting and enjoyable.
<b>Examples of Desiring This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I want to feel like I fit in.</li><li>▪ I want to feel like I belong.</li><li>▪ I want to feel like I have things in common (share common interests) with others.</li><li>▪ I want to do something fun with you.</li><li>▪ I want to feel that people want to be with me.</li><li>▪ I want you to keep me company.</li><li>▪ I want to do something fun with you to keep my mind off a problem.</li></ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I've got some free time now and I want to do something fun. Want to go see a movie or something?" OR, "The homework assignment looks pretty difficult. Do you want to study together?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Keep them company. Even performing everyday tasks together, like washing the dishes, doing yard work together, shooting hoops together, practicing an instrument, talking about a shared hobby, or working on homework together can generate lots of opportunities for exchanging this form of support.</li><li>▪ Develop a hobby that you both enjoy and can do together.</li><li>▪ When they are stressed, invite them to do something fun with you to get their mind off things.</li><li>▪ Talk about interests you share in common, such as sports.</li><li>▪ Invite them to go with you to the movies, a concert, or a soccer game.</li><li>▪ Help them to meet and make friends with some of your friends. Friends of the family are very important sources of support for many youths!</li><li>▪ Organize a party and help them invite their friends.</li><li>▪ Watch interesting programs on television that you can talk about.</li><li>▪ Share jokes and funny stories.</li><li>▪ Smile and greet them warmly when you see them, to let them know you enjoy their company.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>

## HANDOUT 4.5

# Feeling Needed

(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)

<b>Definition</b>	This form of support helps people to feel that they are important to someone. It helps them believe that their lives are meaningful and worthwhile because they see that they are making a positive difference in others' lives. It may also help to motivate them to do their best and not give up because others are depending on them.
<b>Examples of Desiring This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I want to feel needed.</li><li>▪ I want you to express appreciation for the things I do for you.</li><li>▪ I want to feel useful and productive.</li><li>▪ I want to do nice things for you.</li><li>▪ I want to feel like I've made a difference for the better.</li><li>▪ I want to feel like the world is a better place because I'm here.</li><li>▪ I want to help ease your burden, because I know what it's like to feel the way you do.</li><li>▪ I want to set a good example for others, and to share some of the useful things I've learned in the group. (That will help <i>me</i> to make something positive out of something negative.)</li></ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I think I've got the homework assignment figured out, so I'd be glad to help you if you want me to" OR "I have faced a difficult experience much like the one you're going through now--Do you want to talk about it?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Ask them to help you do something, then thank them sincerely for their help.</li><li>▪ Sincerely thank them for the things that they contribute to your family (or other organization), including things that are unique about them.</li><li>▪ Write them a note thanking them for something nice they have done for you.</li><li>▪ Tell them that you value their friendship.</li><li>▪ Compliment them by pointing out something good that their friendship provides for you. Let them know that they make a positive difference in <i>your</i> life.</li><li>▪ Trade favors with them: You do something nice for them, and they do something nice for you.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>

## HANDOUT 4.6

# Reassurance of Self-Worth

(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)

<b>Definition</b>	This type of support helps people to feel that they are competent, capable, and important. It can help to build and strengthen their self-esteem and self-confidence, so that they don't feel overwhelmed or give up when things get difficult or discouraging.
<b>Examples of Desiring This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I want you to help me believe in myself (to have confidence that I can handle a challenge I'm facing).</li><li>▪ I want to receive a sincere compliment every now and then.</li><li>▪ I want my abilities to be recognized and valued.</li><li>▪ I want to be praised for my accomplishments.</li></ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I've got lots of exams coming up this week and I'm worried about whether I will be able to get through it alright. Every now and then this week, will you encourage me by reminding me that I've been through this before and that I got through it OK?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reassure them that they've handled a challenge like this in the past (if they have!) and that they can probably do it again.</li><li>▪ Point out the skills and other resources that they have available (including their friends and family) to deal with a challenge they are facing.</li><li>▪ Compliment them on something worthwhile they have accomplished.</li><li>▪ Express sincere admiration for their talents and accomplishments.</li><li>▪ Treat them with respect.</li><li>▪ Cheer them on when they become discouraged or lack self-confidence.</li><li>▪ Encourage them to not give up.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>

**HANDOUT 4.7**

# Being There For Me If I Need You

<b>Definition</b>	This type of support helps people to feel reassured that others will step in to help if the need arises. This type of support may help people feel less vulnerable, and to feel reassured that they won't have to face their problems all by themselves.
<b>Examples of Desiring This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I want to feel that you will be there for me in case I need you.</li> <li>▪ I want to have confidence that I've got someone who will back me up.</li> <li>▪ I want to know that you'll do your best to protect me if there's danger.</li> <li>▪ I want to feel that you will be there for me, no matter what.</li> <li>▪ I want to feel that I can rely on you when things get tough.</li> </ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I'm in a group where I'm learning how to deal with my memories of what happened during September 11, and we'll be talking about what happened to us so that our memories will be easier to deal with. I may sometimes feel upset for a while, and so it will probably help me to spend some time with a friend just doing something fun to get my mind off things. Can we plan on doing something like going to a movie or a café?" OR "I'm going to be graduating next week, and I think that I'm going to really be missing my dad. Can I count on you to be there to talk to if I need it?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reassure them that you'll be there for them if they need you (and keep your word!).</li> <li>▪ Ask them to promise to let you (and/or appropriate others, such as a school counselor) know if a serious problem arises.</li> <li>▪ Point out that they don't just have to depend on themselves—they have others who will help if the need arises.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>

## Material Support

<b>Definition</b>	This type of support consists of physical materials that are either given or loaned. It can be a very useful (and appreciated!) form of support, especially for people who find themselves without the material means to carry out a task.
<b>Examples of Desiring This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I need some school supplies.</li> <li>▪ I need some school clothes.</li> <li>▪ I need special equipment for my science project.</li> <li>▪ I need a small loan for lunch money.</li> </ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I talked with my teacher about making a visual presentation about grief for the school lobby so we can help other students understand their symptoms better. We need some materials, like poster board and markers. Can you help me get them?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Give them, or help them earn, something they value, such as a bike or skate board.</li> <li>▪ Give them a book you think they will appreciate.</li> <li>▪ Give them a job that they can use to earn their own money.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>



**HANDOUT 4.8**

# Information (Feedback and Advice)

*(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)*

<p><b>Definition</b></p>	<p>This type of support helps people to draw on others' knowledge, experience, and perspectives when faced with a decision or other problem. New ideas, feedback, counsel, and guidance can be very helpful in sorting out what to do when facing a problem or decision. Although the responsibility for making the choice rests with the person whose job it is to handle the problem, advice can help him or her to make a more informed choice and to have confidence in that choice.</p>
<p><b>Examples of Needing This Kind of Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I want you to help me sort out this problem.</li> <li>▪ I want you to show me how to do something.</li> <li>▪ I want some good advice about an important decision I have to make.</li> <li>▪ I want you to inspire me by being a positive role model.</li> <li>▪ I want you to give me constructive feedback on how I'm doing.</li> <li>▪ I want you to let me know when I make a mistake.</li> <li>▪ I want you to help me figure out why I keep making the same mistake.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b></p>	<p><i>"I'm feeling confused over a disagreement I just had with my mother, and I can't decide if she's right or not. Can we talk about it and have you tell me how you see things?" OR, "I really want to ask Vesna on a date, but I want it to be something special. Got any good ideas?"</i></p> <p><b>Hints:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remember that the person may just want a listening ear (in which case <i>emotional support</i> is more appropriate), so make sure that they really want advice before you start talking.</li> <li>▪ Be sure to listen to them carefully first, so that you have a good grasp of the problem before making suggestions.</li> <li>▪ Remember that <i>you</i> don't have to know everything—help them identify <i>other</i> people whom they can turn to for advice, especially when the problem is a serious one.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask them what you can do to help.</li> <li>▪ Use your skills to help them see things from a different, more hopeful perspective.</li> <li>▪ Help them to break a big problem into smaller parts that are easier to manage. Then, help them come up with a concrete, step-by-step plan of what to do.</li> <li>▪ Help them to think up and practice new coping strategies that are more likely to bring them long-term satisfaction.</li> <li>▪ Show them, by "thinking aloud," how to solve a problem.</li> <li>▪ Set a positive example that will help to inspire them.</li> <li>▪ Help them identify <i>other</i> people who they can turn to for good advice.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>

## HANDOUT 4.9

# Physical Assistance (Acts of Service)

(Based on the social provisions theory of Robert Weiss)

<b>Definition</b>	This type of support consists of very practical, concrete assistance in performing some service or task. It can take the form of <i>helping</i> someone to do a task (like carrying the other end of a piece of furniture), or <i>doing</i> something for someone who can't do it him/herself.
<b>Examples of Desiring This Kind of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I need a ride to my friend's house</li><li>▪ I need help carrying these bags</li><li>▪ I need help moving some heavy furniture</li><li>▪ We need help fixing up our house</li><li>▪ I need someone to advocate for me when I talk to the judge.</li><li>▪ I need a ride to the doctor to see about my illness.</li></ul>
<b>Idea for an "I-Message"</b>	<i>"I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed right now by all the things I have to do. Can you help me by babysitting my little brother for an hour while I run some errands?"</i>
<b>Ideas for Giving This Type of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Do something thoughtful that shows you are thinking about them, like making their favorite dessert.</li><li>▪ Help them with their paper route.</li><li>▪ Help them find a summer job.</li><li>▪ Help them study for an important exam.</li><li>▪ Help them complete a homework exercise from this program.</li><li>▪ Help them finish their chores.</li><li>▪ Help them go shopping for clothes, school supplies, or other things they need.</li><li>▪ Help them complete a service project for their school, community club, scouting project, etc.</li><li>▪ Help them rearrange or decorate their bedroom.</li><li>▪ Read them one of their favorite stories.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Additional Ideas</u></b></p>