



PURPOSE OF GROUP: to learn about parenting styles & their effect on the child

MATERIALS NEEDED: print p. 3-4 of guide; have enough copies for each group member

1.

-Facilitator opens group by asking group members to give one word to describe their mother & father's (or guardian's) parenting style throughout their childhood.

-After each group member has had a turn, ask them to describe how their parents would have handled (or how they would have reacted in) the following scenarios:

- You got into deep trouble at school
- You stayed out all night with your friends
- You refused to do your chores
- You got straight A's on your report card
- You won a competition

-As group members will likely see, parents "parent" differently!

- Some parents are strict, while others are more laid-back
- Some parents are highly involved in their child's life, while others are largely absent
- Today, **group members will learn about four different parenting styles and how they affect the child**

2.

-Pass out handout, "**The Four Parenting Styles**" (print p. 3-4 of this guide).

-I recommend that the facilitator sits in the back of the room and asks a volunteer to be the “group leader” for this exercise/discussion. The group leader will read through the handout, and **their responsibility is to engage his/her group members in discussion** while doing so. The facilitator can interject, but it is best to let the group members take the discussion where they want to (unless it gets completely off-topic and unproductive). Tell the group leader that **their goal is to find out which style(s) of parenting their group member’s parents displayed when they were younger and how they were affected by it.**

3. After this discussion, facilitator comes back to the group members. You can ask the following questions:

- Do you know the parenting styles that your parents endured when they were children? How do you think that affected them in adulthood and as a parent?
- For those who have children, what is your parenting style?
- How would you describe the most effective parenting style?

4.

-Facilitator can conclude group by stating that research suggests that the authoritative style is the most effective parenting style.

-However, **parents do not typically fit under just one style**

- a. For example, parents that are generally authoritative may adopt the authoritarian style when they notice that their child is acting out and getting into trouble. Also, a parent that is considered authoritarian can also be nurturing at times

-If there is time, you can ask the group leader how it felt to lead group today. You can ask them if it was hard to keep group members on track, if they felt comfortable in the role, etc.

-You can also mention any observations you made while sitting in the back of the room.

- For example, you can talk about how well (or poorly) the group members communicated (i.e. did they interrupt or talk over each other?)

-Lastly, you can ask group members, “Who could you relate to throughout group?”

THE FOUR PARENTING STYLES

1. Authoritarian:

Parents:

- Parents set rules without negotiating & they punish without explaining why
- They don't give clear reasons for their demands (i.e. "Go to your room... because I told you to!")
- They are very strict and have rigid, high expectations
- They expect their children to be fully compliant with their rules, expectations, & demands
- They tend to be controlling & emotionally distant
- There is a lack of meaningful communication between the parent & child

Children:

- Children of authoritarian parents tend to be anxious, moody, withdrawn, & irritable
- They tend to have low-self esteem & poor social skills (and are more susceptible to bullying)
- They may have poor anger-management skills & show aggression
- They are typically well-behaved around authority figures

2. Authoritative:

Parents:

- Parents are nurturing & attentive
- They have firm, reasonable rules & give explanations as to why the rules should be followed
- They have high expectations but are supportive & responsive to their child's needs & abilities
- They allow their child to be independent
- There is meaningful communication between the parent & child

Children:

- Children of authoritative parents tend to be confident, mature, self-motivated, self-reliant, & responsible
- They tend to have high self-esteem, strong social skills, & strong leadership skills
- They tend to be academically successful & respond well to trauma

3. Permissive:

Parents:

- Parents are viewed more as “friends” than authority figures (often letting their child do what they want)
- They tend to be warm & accepting
- They exercise little control & have few or no rules (they are very lenient and try to avoid confrontation)
- They communicate with their child but let him/her make their own decisions (rather than giving guidance & direction)
- They can be easily manipulated by the child

Children:

- Children of permissive parents are typically impulsive, demanding, insecure, immature, & disobedient
- They often struggle in school
- They tend to display poor social skills
- They may show signs of aggression (with peers & with family members), lack empathy, and engage in delinquent behaviors

4. Uninvolved:

Parents:

- Parents have little interaction with child & are emotionally detached
- They might ignore the needs of the child (neglect)
- They let their child do whatever he/she wants (there is no “parenting”)

Children:

- Children of uninvolved parents are typically impulsive, undisciplined, mistrustful, & emotionally withdrawn
- They tend to have low self-esteem & are at risk for depression
- They often struggle in school and have a high risk of substance abuse & criminal behavior