

1.2 EXAMPLE | *Topic 4: Feelings*

1.2.1 *Case Example*

A counselor is working as a substance abuse specialist. As a part of her work, she does in-home visits with a family where the mother has just returned from a six-month substance abuse treatment program. While she was in treatment, her 8-year-old daughter was living with mom's sister, the daughter's aunt. The counselor is meeting with the mother and daughter, and together they will work on *Topic 4: Feelings*.

1.2.2 *Activity*

First, the counselor asks mom if she has spoken with her daughter about the daughter's feelings and experiences while mom was actively using drugs or alcohol. The counselor and mom discuss the importance of giving the child this opportunity, and as the "Information for Group Facilitators" indicates, the goal of sharing these feelings and experiences is to re-establish trust between mom and her daughter. The counselor and client brainstorm Nurturing Responses as discussed in the "Information for Group Facilitators." When the client feels she is ready, the counselor invites the daughter to join the discussion and activity.

The counselor introduces the idea of "difficult feelings," (i.e., feelings that are so big, we don't know what to do with them). The counselor then asks mom and her daughter to come up with a list of feelings that are difficult. They may come up with either two separate lists, or they could brainstorm a list of general feelings that are difficult and then each person takes a turn indicating whether she finds the feeling difficult. For example, if the list includes the feeling *scared*, mom can circle that feeling with a marker, and share: "Sometimes I feel scared of something new, like meeting someone for the first time." Then, both mother and daughter take turns giving examples of how they are affected by difficult feelings.

Either during this session, or later, the counselor asks the daughter to pick one or more of the feelings she had while her mother was actively using drugs or alcohol. The daughter draws how she felt or what she looked like during that time. The client, having prepared earlier for this discussion, practices the Nurturing Responses to her daughter.

Finally, mother and daughter create a list of feelings they both want to feel more of (e.g., excited, hopeful, happy). They also create a picture of what this might look like for their family. Later, the counselor and mom meet alone and process mom's experience of the activity, of listening to her daughter share, and of her own feelings that were touched upon in the activity.