



Guiding Good Choices in a Virtual World

Presented at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the National Prevention Network,
Resilience in Prevention: Opportunities to Adapt and Build for a Better
Tomorrow

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OUR PRESENTERS



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GUIDING GOOD CHOICES (GGC)

- 5-session program for all parents of younger adolescents, ages 9-14
- Social Development Model guides session content
- GGC improved adolescent health
 - Reduced alcohol, marijuana, cigarette use
 - Reduced symptoms of depression
 - Reduced antisocial behavior
 - Effects sustained for 4-6 years
- GGC also strengthened families: Better communication, closer relationships, less family conflict



FIVE SESSIONS

1. Getting Started: How to Promote Health and Wellbeing During the Teen Years
2. Setting Guidelines: How to Develop Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards
3. Managing Conflict: How to Deal with Anger in a Positive Way
4. Avoiding Trouble: How to Say No, Keep Your Friends, and Still Have Fun
(with adolescents)
5. Involving Everyone: How to Strengthen Family Bonds

* *Introductory session added when offered virtually*

SUPPORT FOR HIGH-QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION

- Structured training*
- Manualized curriculum
- Family guides with key concepts, exercises
- Session slide decks
- Videos that reinforce key concepts
- More online resources for parents

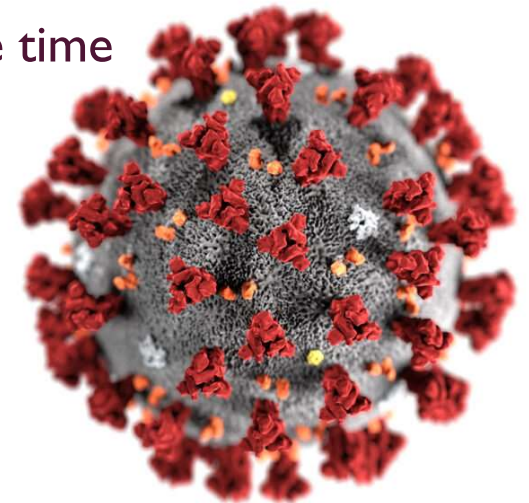
**Available through the Center for CTC*



MAKING THE DECISION TO GO VIRTUAL

Covid

- Parents were unable to attend workshops
- Many parents were struggling with children home all the time
 - Homeschool/Responsible for online school
 - No daycare
- Stress levels were high



GOING VIRTUAL: GOALS

- Maintain fidelity and efficacy
- Engage parents in a virtual environment so that exposure would be strong
- Keep curriculum to 90 minutes
- Address equity and inclusion
 - Known issues – look of curriculum, word choice
 - Perceived issue – access to technology



HOW DID WE GET THERE?

- Added a welcome session to assist parents not familiar with online platforms
- Shortened sessions by assigning prereading to maximize interaction during each session
- Adjusted activities to work better in the virtual environment
- Anticipated parents would be more comfortable and could better support their children session 3 & 4 were swapped
- While we were adjusting materials we focused on equity and inclusion



PARENTS LIKE GGC!



“[It’s] great to be in community with other parents and experts around these issues. Thank you!”

“The topic of this session [Session 2 on guidelines, monitoring, consequences] could be the topic of the entire program. Much of our children’s emotional health is in reaction to the choices made regarding substance abuse and/or other excessive behaviors.”

“It is comforting to “see” other parents who share the same hopes for our kids. I am looking forward to learning all together. During this difficult time, it is especially beneficial. Thank you!”

BENEFITS TO VIRTUAL DELIVERY

- Participants enjoy the comfort of home
- No transportation barriers
- Less childcare barriers
- Class sizes more manageable
- Collaborating efforts across a large geographic area



CHALLENGES FACED WITH VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

- Distractions
- Tech support
- Bandwidth and connectivity struggles
- Shift in teaching strategies and more practice for instructors
- Session 4 with children present
 - Everyone not on camera
 - Not as candid with parents in the room
 - Breakout room challenges

NOW WHAT?

(WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK WITH GGC)

2

Two main areas we want to address moving forward:

- Retention
- Increase participation

RETENTION

FOCUS ON-COMMITMENT, RELEVANCE AND CONNECTION



- Begin the orientation session by stressing the importance of committing to the group
- The value of the individual to the group, may be a valuable perspective to introduce
- Share the feedback from pilot (story from parents' reactions to those who drop out)
- Share how to get the most out of attending the GGC groups

RETENTION

FOCUS ON-COMMITMENT, RELEVANCE AND CONNECTION

- Temper substance use prevention with understanding that parents of this age group are often resistant or fearful
- Carefully approach AOD along with their immediate concerns and address their current needs
- We can address their current concerns and still stress the importance of being prepared for these difficult conversations
- Keep reminding them of their wishes, throughout sessions, this is why they're here



AN EXAMPLE
OF PARENTS'
WISHES FOR
THEIR
CHILDREN



RETENTION

FOCUS ON-COMMITMENT, RELEVANCE AND CONNECTION

- Bonding is an important topic in GGC, we will use it in our groups to create a sense of belonging and value
- Weaving in more opportunities throughout the sessions for families to share with each other their feelings, ambivalence, and struggles will create bonding, which we hope will translate into a commitment to the group



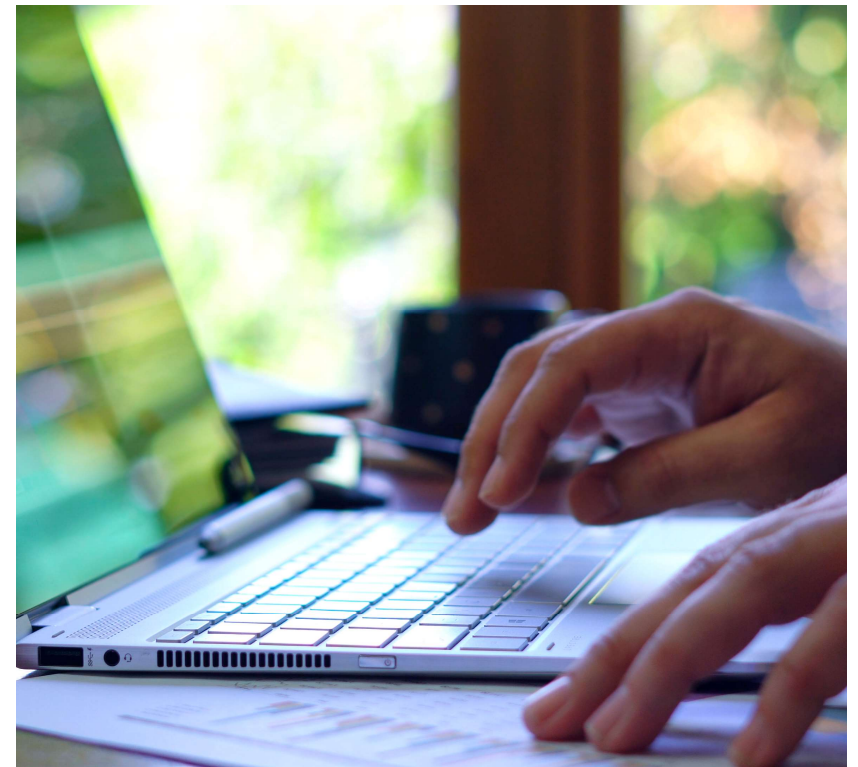
INCREASE PARTICIPATION DURING SESSIONS

- Cameras on! Virtual group participation relies on having the video on. Keep reminding that we want to connect and seeing each other's faces is important
- Presenter really must work hard to engage and pull others into the conversation



LESSONS LEARNED BEYOND GGC

- Training should model interactive tools and methods we want used
- Facilitators need to have mastered the virtual platform in order to focus on the intervention itself (or have tech help)
- It takes longer to do most things in a virtual environment (bond, discuss, introductions, preparation, you name it)
- For some participants, technology removes barriers...for others it may add them



QUESTIONS?

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