

## Introduction to the sfpy parent sessions



*The following are questions that participants often have about the SFPY program.*

- Q. What will I gain by participating in this program?**  
 SFPY gives parents a better understanding of their teen and helps them to learn fresh ways of approaching old problems. If you consider parenting a “tool box,” SFPY will give you new tools to put in the box and different ways to apply the tools you already have. The more consistently you and your teen attend and participate in the activities, the more you’ll gain from the experience.
- Q. I’m not the “parent” of my teen. Is this program for me?**  
 SFPY is for parents and other significant caring adults and their children ages 12–16. Many adults who participate will be grandparents, aunts and uncles and others who are caring for a teen.
- Q. Is this an opportunity for me to hear from other parents in the same situation and to share my experience?**  
 By all means, you will have the opportunity to share your experiences with others who are facing the same challenges. You’ll also get support from others. But, most importantly, the program focuses on learning and practising specific skills. We follow a set curriculum that has been tested with many parents and has been found to be effective.
- Q. Will participating in this program result in better behaviour from my teen?**  
 We often think that to make teens behave responsibly we simply need to tell them how to behave. Experience shows us this isn’t always true.  
  
 Instead of aiming to change your teen, the SFPY program looks at how you can change the way you respond to your teen. We encourage you to learn new skills, to try them with your teen and to have change begin with yourself. Our research shows that change within your teen will follow.
- Q. Will this program prevent substance abuse in my teen?**  
 SFPY is designed to increase teens’ ability to deal with problems, stress and anger and to help them identify and communicate their feelings. These are all skills that can decrease their likelihood of substance abuse. Both parents and youth also learn about alcohol and other drugs in one of the sessions, but the primary focus of the program is on communication and coping skills in general, so it is not simply a “drug education program.”

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**Q. What are the teens doing in their sessions?**

The teen sessions also follow a set curriculum and focus on the same topics covered in the parent session, such as communication, praise, anger and stress. The difference is that the teen sessions have more activities specifically designed to engage youth.

**Q. Why is it a requirement that teens attend along with their parents?**

It's important that teens learn the same skills as parents in order for both to work on improving their relationship. It also shows that everyone is making a commitment to the family and helps to increase understanding of and appreciation for each other.

**Q. Why does this program have family sessions?**

The family sessions give parents and teens a chance to practise the skills they've been learning. They provide time for parents and youth to interact in ways that may be new and fun and for parents to focus on what is positive with their teens. The sessions also allow parents to hear from their own teen and from other teens. Meanwhile, teens hear what other parents are thinking. Our research shows that participants appreciate learning about "the other side" through the family sessions.

**Q. What if my teen and I complete the program and we still need help with our problems?**

SFPY gives you tools and strategies to improve your family relationships and communication, but the nine sessions will not necessarily resolve major family issues. That said, many families find that, by applying the skills they learn in the program, they begin a family dialogue and are better prepared to seek help to deal with important issues. The program facilitators will help you to find further resources if you feel you need them.

***If you have more questions, contact agency staff.***