

This handout covers information from the workshop held for community partners, parents, caregivers and others, living in York Region. The information and resources provided below is by no means an exhaustive list but can support your journey in advancing your understanding of the topic.

Attachment – the bond between a parent and caregiver. It is the basis for all future relationships and is developed over the lifetime through warmth, responsiveness, listening, and consistency

Child Development

- 0-2: Don't understand the separation/divorce but are very sensitive to changes.
- 3-12: They can understand divorce but have a difficult time with "future thinking" and realities other than their own. They need to be reminded that it is not their fault. Divorce is the enemy.
- 13+: They are going through many changes with puberty and will have difficulties managing stress. They may place the blame on one or both parents. They will start to wonder about their own future relationships

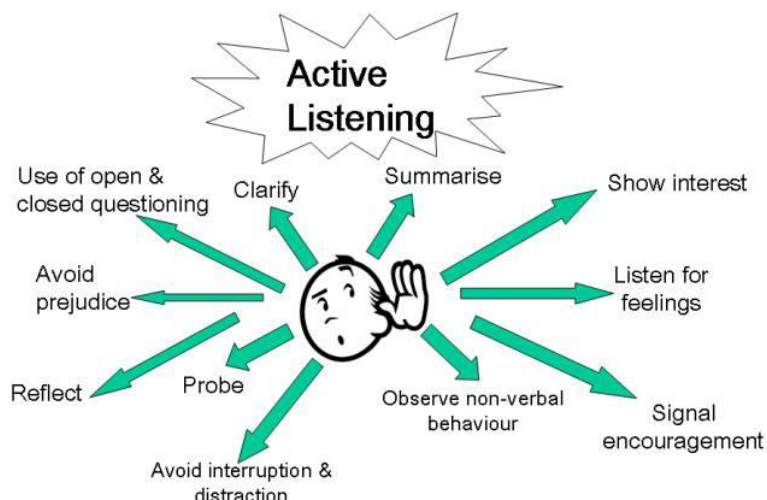
Learn your child's cues, as well as your own!

We may lose our cool or become angry. That is okay; what is more important is to repair and discuss the event which happened. Debrief and check-in after a time you have lost control of an emotion or shared something about the other parent.

A Tangled Ball of Emotions

(grief, loss, sadness, anger)

- Active Listening
- Help them find words for their feelings
- Let them be honest
- Make talking about the divorce an ongoing process
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Reassure
- Both parents will be there
- Warmth and Closeness



Let your children know that it is okay to express those feelings. They will need help learning safe and healthy ways to do this.



Role model appropriate ways to deal with feelings.



Find healthy ways to deal with your feelings and help your children develop safe ways to process their own feelings

Calming Stormy Waters

Manage parental conflict – Build resiliency and protects against stress/vulnerability long-term

- Set the record straight
- Be Patient. Kids may seem to "get it" one day and feel unsure the next. Treat your child's confusion or misunderstanding with patience.
- It's vital to be honest with your kids, but without being critical of your spouse. This can be especially difficult when there have been hurtful events, but with a little diplomacy, you can avoid playing the blame game.
- Present a united front as much as you can, try to agree in advance on an explanation for your separation or divorce - and stick to it.
- Plan your conversations. Make plans to talk with your children before any changes in the living arrangements occur. Plan to talk when your spouse is present, if possible.

Additional Strategies

- Make sure they understand that both parents still love them and love between parent/child is everlasting
- Words need to be backed up with action – hold true to your word. Make promises and keep them.
- Consistency, Routine, Schedules are helpful even if timing is different between transitions. Consistent consequences
- Support your child's relationship with the other parent and honour communication between children and other parent. Keep each other informed of events
- Comforting items when transitioning (e.g. a blanket, stuffed animal, bracelet, favourite toy, etc.)

How to Deal with Anger

- 1) Stay Calm
- 2) Increase awareness of emotions
- 3) Accept feelings and redirect angry action
- 4) Use clear and consistent consequences for the behaviour
- 5) Don't take it personally



Resources

Brene Brown

[Click here to watch video](#)

Because Life Goes On - (ebook)

[Click here to access ebook](#)

Active Listening

[Click here to watch video](#)

How Does Divorce Affect Children

[Click here to watch video](#)

Triple P Family Transitions Group

Please reach out to York Hills Intake Department
905-503-9560 (open to York Region residents only)

Families in Transition (FIT) supports the well-being of children who are experiencing significant change brought on by separation/divorce of parents.

<https://familyserVICEToronto.org/ourservices/programs-and-services/families-in-transition/>

Find us on:

