**Scenarios - Stop arguing, start talking - workshops for parents**

We want to thank you, parents, and/or guardians, for choosing to participate in workshops on communication with your children. Their aim is to improve this process by encouraging you to read and to do exercises. The theoretical basis for these workshops is the Solution Focused Approach (SFA). Basing these scenarios on the Solution Focused Approach does not imply an encouragement to therapise your children! It is only meant to give all parents some direction in understanding their teenager and to show that the thinking and techniques presented are knowledge-based. The interviews with professionals suggested for listening provide evidence that the approach works. The selected extracts - knowledge, methodologies, techniques, and tools - are intended to help parents communicate better with their children. These scenarios provide a short course, showing what seems helpful in working with teenagers, and are designed to encourage parents to do what works and to understand their child's behavior. In each scenario, there will be a link to the theoretical part, as well as a practical mini-lesson and a set of several exercises. Some of the materials are taken from YT or TikTok, as these are the two channels most often watched by teenagers and these that impact their lives. It is worth knowing what our children watch and what they draw from it. It takes about half an hour to familiarise yourself with the script's content and complete the exercises.

In the scenario, we use the terms: teenager, child, she, he; however, we are aware that the participants may include parents/guardians of transgender or non-binary teenagers or those who experience their gender identity or sexuality differently. In Polish, in contrast to English, where the form they, them is used, there is no appropriate pronoun, and it is therefore assumed as above.

**I. Solution-Focused Therapy and what can be particularly useful from it**

The approach of Solution-Focused Therapy was created to apply what works and is helpful in people's lives. It is a short-term approach focused on solutions but not solutions to the problem. Its creators, Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg, started from the assumption that many people know what they do wrong but don't know what to do to change it and to do things differently. Many people feel trapped in the 'problem trap,' unable to see beyond the problem. Solution – Focused Therapy practitioners' thinking about people is positive, in the sense of believing they can change, grow and use the resources they have. The following videos are worth checking out:

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMOiprnfTK8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ0BC1CkS8U https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX2FnFUqLMo (English)**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oFZqf\_9oKA**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h1X5MmrDeE**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bm-s-MunpaY**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bm-s-MunpaY)**(Polish)**

The Solution-Focused Approach is not an approach focused on solving problems. How is it different? Fundamentaly, here's an example: I'm supposed to teach a biology lesson to my class, but my laptop with the presentation is not working. Solution-focused - I teach the course without the presentation; problem solution-focused - I set aside time to get the presentation working, and I look for someone to help me.

Here is a second example: I have to get to work, but the car doesn't work. Solution focus - I drive something else, focus on the solution of the problem - I try to get to know how I can fix the car now. In the SFA, we answer what my goal is (getting to work now or fixing the car?).

Please give some examples focused on the solution, not on solving the problem.

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And now, we encourage you to watch the Solution-Focused Approach presentation.

**In line with the central philosophy of SFA:**

1. **If something isn't broken, don't fix it.**
2. **If something works, do more of it.**
3. **If something doesn't work, do things differently.**

Now ask yourself, to what extent are you applying the above assumptions?

* 1. If something isn't broken, don't fix it.

To what extent do I want to improve something that works well? What is it? ......................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

* 1. If something works, do more of it.

What works in your relationship with your child?

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* 1. If something doesn't work, do things differently.

This principle often only works out for some people. We tend to do more of the same thing even though IT doesn't work, than to do something else. Take a look at yourself. Is it also the case that when your child doesn't answer the phone, you call more often instead of texting?

Or maybe you have already repeated the same thing "100 times" and nothing happens. What can you do other than keep repeating the same thing in the same way? What ideas come to your mind? It matters what I do instead of what doesn't work.

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The Solution Focused Approach, in a sense, frees the adolescent and us (his/her parents/guardians) from seeing him/her through the lens of the problem.

It allows you to see what they can do and what they are already doing.

**II.I start with myself**

1. When seated on an airplane, there is an instruction to put the oxygen mask on yourself first and then your child if necessary. This is a valuable metaphor for where we will start now. From ourselves, the parents, and guardians. Why is this so important?

Those interested can listen and watch here (the non-scientific part) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyeSbGBAmpI> (English)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNGGkXTLbFk (Polish)

For those interested in reading here: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003927?gclid=CjwKCAjwyaWZBhBGEiwACslQozLQqdXE83Kol88rgDLxFW_-VyqGnAQXj1trRleVtCbrW0L4kYK-_hoCWoUQAvD_BwE> (English)

<https://www.miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/bartlomiej-dobroczynski-najtrudniej-przyjrzec-sie-sobie/> (Polish)

When we are tired, upset, or too focused on our emotions, it is challenging to accept the feelings and behavior of someone else. Instead, we want "holy peace"; we are tired of giving instructions and repeating the same thing constantly. Because of the rush of time, we rarely give ourselves permission to self-regulate and self-soothe. Often like a hailstorm, we rush in and assign tasks; sometimes - we suppress emotions and push them beyond the conscious part of our perception, being surprised that our head or stomach hurts. Some of us may also escape into sleep, compulsive cleaning, or eating.

Now ask yourself, how is it for you? Which of the strategies listed is yours? Or perhaps another? Write something about it ...............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

1. Take a moment to consider how you would like things to be different. Write four short sentences (trying to make them statements not wishes).

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1. (Un)fortunately, we can't change others; we can't make someone want to want as they don't want to. Sometimes we want to influence our children. When we succeed, it is because they also, for some reason, want this change, find it necessary or profitable.

What goals connected with your children do **you** have?

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Now, look at your goals written out above. Do they start with: I would like my son daughter to… or I would like to do something in contact with my daughter son?

How the goal is written makes a big difference. Goals are written out: I would like my son, my daughter means that you will only change when they change, which you nevertheless have limited influence over. Goals formulated by a third party select your influence and your agency, passing it on to someone from outside, in this case the child.

Goals that start with the pronoun I, i.e., with the first person singular, are achievable goals over which you have influence on and over which you have control.

Try again, perhaps following the example: (I) would like to talk calmly in contact with my son. Or: (I) would like to find a way to have more contact with my daughter. How can you rephrase them according to the formula above?

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1. This meeting aims to look at ourselves. It's not about finding fault and proverbially 'beating your chest", it's about change, but first of all about self-regulation of emotions. What are your ways of self-soothing/self-regulation?

List three: ...............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

Now on the points above mark how often you use them. If we take a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means - I very rarely use it and 10 means - very often, how many points do you give yourself in every point?

People generally do not like advice. Hence the following will present some suggestions and examples that you can, as you wish, use for self-regulation:

 - square breathing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5mgkWk4brE> (Polish)

; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEmt1Znux58> (English)

- Flower Breath (Tulip Hand) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxKJ5OGBDiA> (English);

- when you come back from work and/or a difficult meeting, give yourself 5 minutes to sit in your car or on a bench near your house, or get off the stop earlier and take a walk. The aim of this is to leave everything that was difficult in the car, on the bench, on the walk, so that with such distraction and with emotions of others, you don't walk into your house.

What else can help you?

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1. When we talk to our children, we want them to learn lessons and apply something. What do you take from this scenario for yourself? What was important? Please, write down.

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* 1. **What do I know about my child?**

1. When our children are young, we know a lot about them. What they like to eat, what clothes they hate, and what they want to play with. The process of independence also leads to the fact that we often know less and less about our growing children. On the one hand, we can take a break from constantly keeping an eye on them; on the other hand, other groups become more attractive to the children and they stop sharing their world of experiences with us so much. The following exercise will consist of two parts. In the first, you will answer the questions below; in the second, you will ask your adolescent the same questions. It will be interesting how many answers will coincide?

- my teenager's best friend's name is ........................................................................................................................................

- lately she/he has been most concerned about ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

- in the life she/he takes joy from ...............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

- favorite channel on the internet is ........................................................................................................................................

- had a really good time recently when ...............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

- dreams of having for lunch ........................................................................................................................................

How did the meeting go? Write a conclusion, maybe two, for yourself.

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1. Sometimes parents project their fears onto their children. They often do not do this consciously. They fear for their life and health and wonder what is normal and what is beyond health and the norm. What are you afraid of? How does it affect your child?

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1. Now a rather difficult challenge. What strengths does your child have? What can he / she do? What does he or she cope with? What do you admire about him/her? What would you like to do the same way as your child does it?

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1. Try to tell him/her about it. What is his/her reaction?

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 What does this reaction tell you? What is the clue?

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1. We now invite you to watch a presentation about teenagers (presentation #1)

What is new to you from what you have read?

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After watching the short videos, write down what YOU see as your child's strengths.

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYKNsYGgN3Q; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=issXL3mYi\_E (English)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8ck4BTzMtg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyNW4HH6j90> (Polish)

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What are your conclusions from this scenario?

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[😊 just for fun: https://www.tiktok.com/@dr.annlouise.lockhart/video/7134197397445692718?\_r=1&\_t=8VnDWHGiwTN&is\_from\_webapp=v1&item\_id=7134197397445692718](😊%20just%20for%20fun:%20https://www.tiktok.com/@dr.annlouise.lockhart/video/7134197397445692718?_r=1&_t=8VnDWHGiwTN&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7134197397445692718) (English)

* 1. **Communication stoppers**

1. Communication stoppers are all statements, questions and proverbs that hinder communication. On the one hand, it is the content aspect (**what**is said); on the other hand, it is the relational aspect (**how**it is said).

Now take a moment to think about what makes communication difficult for you.

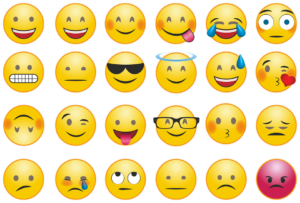
Now, on a scale form 1 to 10, where 1 means - I use it very rarely and 10 means - I use it very often, tick what your trendency when talking to your teenager is:

Content aspect:

1. I ask closed questions such as: do you..? are you…?
2. I give advice .....
3. I refer to my experience ......
4. I refer to achievements of other teenagers (friends, people from school),
5. I keep telling how it used to be ....
6. I conduct a monologue, not a dialogue .....
7. I approach the conversation without being open to what I might hear .....
8. I ask judgmental questions like: but why, .....
9. I use statements like: "because you always", "you never...", ....
10. I use sarcasm and statements like: "well, sure, for cleaning you don't have the strength, but for using your mobile, you do?". ....
11. I always want to be right ....
12. During the conversation, I focus on all the negative topics that happen to come up (I do not focus on one) ..........
13. I use vulgarities....
14. I answer the questions I am asked in half-words .....
15. I answer the questions I am asked with a question ....
16. I ask questions that I know often lead to conflict ....
17. I minimize achievements ...
18. I use double messages like: " maybe the dishwasher is unloaded now, but your room is still a mess".....
19. I am able to read my child’s mind ....
20. I interrupt the speech .....
21. I urge the child to answer more quickly ....
22. During the conversation, I mostly focus on what needs improvement, not what is ok .....
23. I challenge an opinion using a message like: "and how come you are so smart"....
24. I command, " put yourself together immediately" .....
25. I burst out angrily, "give me a break at last."…
26. I end the communication suddenly: "end of this conversation"….
27. Intimidation: ' when I die, maybe you will finally understand'.
28. Other examples ................................

Most parents and/or guardians find this task difficult. Count how many of the above points score six or higher.

How do you feel after doing this exercise? You can indicate several feeling states below.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYm1BGlIw18 - for those who have trouble recognizing emotions (Polish)

As mentioned earlier, these exercises aim to improve communication. Communication is a process for which each participant is 100% responsible, not 50%. You are responsible for your 100%, your child for his/ her 100%, taking into account that your 100% is that of an adult; and your child's 100% is, according to the presentation, 100% of a person whose brain, personality, habits are still forming.

Now, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means - I use it very rarely and 10 means - I use it very often, tick what is your habit/trend when talking to your teenager:

Relational aspect:

1. I seem to be talking, but my thoughts are somewhere else ....
2. I know the answer " in advance", I do not listen to what is said to me ....
3. I need to "give vent to my emotions", I pick on my child ....
4. I talk to my child during other activities ....
5. when the child wants to talk I say: now I don't have time ...
6. with my body posture I show disrespect for what the child is saying ...
7. with my facial expression I show disrespect for what the child is saying ....
8. I mock ....
9. I talk so that others can hear our conversation....
10. I dish my child with a colleague even though the teenager asked me to be discreet ....
11. I use so-called situational traps to talk to my teenager even though I know he/she doesn't like it, for example while driving ....
12. I avoid eye contact ....
13. I violate the body boundary, I force the teenager to hug me
14. I put emotional pressure on my child by saying "I know you don't want to, but come here and hug me"....
15. I unexpectedly interrupt communication and start doing something else
16. I unexpectedly interrupt communication and leave the room ....
17. I use pushes, jerks ....
18. Other examples .....

Worth watching <https://www.tiktok.com/@zapidhire/video/6987752128861179138?_r=1&_t=8VnGBDmeQVx&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=6987752128861179138> –

The exercises above were self-diagnostic in nature. Those points where you scored six or higher are issues of particular concern. These are issues that may be on your side in communication with your child . Sure, on your child's side too, but these are workshops for your change that you decided to participate in. This is your 100%.

Here is the diagnosis!

And what next? Welcome to the second part. But before that, watch presentation No. 2 (presentation #2) , which bridges the gap between what was and what will be.

And for dessert: [😊 https://www.tiktok.com/@parenting360/video/7085786919380077825?](https://www.tiktok.com/@parenting360/video/7085786919380077825?_r=1&_t=8VnEWNfkULt&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7085786919380077825)\_r=1&\_t=8VnEWNfkULt&is\_from\_webapp=v1&item\_id=7085786919380077825

* 1. **Triggers for good communication vol. 1**

There is a lot of academic, popular science and popular literature on the subject of good communication and a whole host of handbook.

Worth watching: [😊https://www.tiktok.com/@highimpactclub/video/7127076641842548010?](https://www.tiktok.com/@highimpactclub/video/7127076641842548010?_r=1&_t=8VnE0GA3gv8&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7127076641842548010)\_r=1&\_t=8VnE0GA3gv8&is\_from\_webapp=v1&item\_id=7127076641842548010

Worth watching: [https:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5kj-nr26o8)//www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5kj-nr26o8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntYJFVCTwas,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueXunpFaoTA>

Worth reading: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/teenagers-and-communication#bhc-content>

As it was mentioned earlier, in communication the responsibility lies 100% within each party. Obviously, the responsibility of an adult is different from that of a teenager or a pre-school child. Communication is also affected by the context in which it takes place. Context is that part of the environment that, for some reason, can affect our communication. There are many aspects of communication, recognised in the literature on the subject, as being relevant. This section selects some issues that are considered important.

1. The “I” messages is an arrangement of three statements. The purpose of it is to turn to another person and share with him/her the emotions that his/her behaviour has caused in you and to express a request or wish related to this behaviour. Its purpose is to say something about yourself, not to judge others. Here's the layout of the three statements. :

**I feel**(felt)/ or I am (was)...... (here define your emotion)

**When ...**

1. Description of the person's behaviour (not evaluation, not analysis)

Or

1. Description of the situation in which the person was involved

**I ask/ I expect/ I demand / it is important to me**

Example:

I feel disappointed when I see the mess in your room, please put things in the wardrobe.

I was concerned when you didn't call me from the event, it's important to me that you call.

Now think about the statements you want to say to your teenager

I feel .............

When ...

I ask ....

And another situation:

I was .............

When ...

It is important ....

The “I” messages are not only used to express negative emotions or to get attention. They are also a source of support. Using the same construction of a statement one can say:

I was happy when I saw the dishes put in the dishwasher, please keep doing that!

I'm happy when you chat to me about what was at school, it's important to me that you do that!

The “I” message is easy, but often far from our habits. Hence, it may be worth taking a snapshot of these three statements and have it always on your mobile phone, at hand.

1. Complimenting is noticing that our child has done something and telling about it. This can take the form of direct or indirect messages. It is important that such a message is based on facts, supported by a description and the hope of repetition. We may have memories in our past when our son or daughter showed us a drawing and we respond: how nice! And thank we went back to our business. Perhaps we recall an inglorious incident when our teenager told about a good grade, and we replied: great, and what about other grades in the class? These is not appropriate behavior. So how should we talk?

Let's imagine that our son brings a hand-drawn model of the COVID -19 virus. Our new reaction could be: oh I see you drew a model of the virus (fact), interesting colours, whata line (fact-based compliment), how did you know how to do it (indirect compliment), I would like you to show me your next works (hope to repeat the good behaviour). Or another example: our daughter comes in wearing the make-up she did according to the yt directions. Our complimenting response could be: I see you have new make-up (fact), it's probably more work than last time (fact-based compliment), how did you know how to combine those colours on your eyelids (indirect compliment), what a talent (direct compliment), I'm curious about your next creations (hope for the future).

Give your examples:

Your child shows you ................................................................., your reaction: ........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

Your child shows you .................................................................., your reaction: .....................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

An indirect compliment is a compliment involving the opinion and conviction of others.

Examples: what would Frank say if he saw this model? The biology teacher said you were doing super on the project, how does he know that?

What of what the materials used today can you apply? What will be your small first step to move towards change? .............................................................................

<https://www.tiktok.com/@toriphantom/video/6926586483369413893?_r=1&_t=8VnH6kosYWE&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=6926586483369413893> – ciekawe?

* 1. **Triggers for good communication vol. 2**

1 We will start today with a seemingly easy exercise. The technique is called positive reframing or rephrasing. Its purpose is to find something good in a teenager's behaviour or habit. First two have been given to you as examples, then - I invite you to practice,

- chatterbox - is a person who loves to talk and is extremely sociable,

- untalkative - is a person who lives by the maxim "speech is silver and silence is gold", a person who gives space to others so that they can exist,

- sleeper - ........................................................................................................................................

- messy - ........................................................................................................................................

- a person "sitting" non-stop in his/her mobile phone - ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

- poseur - ........................................................................................................................................

- lazy - ........................................................................................................................................

- a person not answering the phone - ........................................................................................................................................

- a person who often forgets something - ........................................................................................................................................

Write your examples down, think about what behaviour your child is struggling with and then make a positive reframing :

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1. Another technique is to separate the person from the behaviour. Has it ever happened to you , that someone judged you badly because they generalised your current behaviour onto you as a person? For example, you were late for work and someone said about you that you were irresponsible ? Or you broke a new light bulb instead of replacing it, and someone said you didn’t know how to do anything? The trigger for good communication is the ability to separate the person from the behaviour. This is a good start to embark on a journey of finding your child's resources.

Resources are strengths, talents, feature of character, or a way of seeing the world that can be helpful in coping with stress or difficult life experiences.

Below you can find a game: how to extract resources of your child. You will need two dice to play this game with your child. If you don't have a dice, ask your child to find a tutorial on yt on how to make a dice when you don't have one. Really, there are quite a lot of ideas😊 Once you've got the dice, open sheet 1. Take turns and answer the questions you've been asked! And then come back for a moment to share your emotions and experiences in writing.

How do I feel after playing? What did I experience playing with my child?

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1. Looking for exceptions. Nothing is always the same. Hence it can be assumed that there is an exception to every behaviour. A moment in the past when our child did something different or something differently. Often it is the case that these exceptions merge with what is wrong and to be corrected, so it is difficult for us to remember them. These exceptions are important for teenagers too. You may remember a situation like this when you say to your child that he/she never does anything . He/she in fact reminds you that he/she did it. Write down the exceptions you remember:

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* 1. My own prescription

Thank you for taking part in these workshops. Now the challenge is in front of you. Knowing yourself and your child, write recommendations for yourself, a kind of prescription that will be your guide