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## Session: Building Bridges

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### Description

When my kids were little, I noticed that sometimes, in the middle of playing they would suddenly stop what they were doing, come squish their face into me and inhale. At first, I thought that it was just about the comforting scent of a parent. But over time I noticed that after inhaling they would exhale, their whole body relaxing as though all was now right with the world. I came to realize that this was much deeper than a sensory experience.

According to Psychiatrist, Dr. Bruce Perry, we can't be fully whole if we aren't in loving relationships with others. He says, "Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love."<sup>i</sup>

There is science behind this. It's called "limbic resonance" or "limbic regulation" which is an exchange of body signals that unfold between people who are deeply connected to each other. This is especially important between parents and children. We need physical time and touch with the ones we love.<sup>ii</sup>

In a spiritually healthy community, whether it's your family or community of friends, there is a focus on the betterment of the whole. As we spend time together, we learn about mutual service to each other without the expectation of a reward.

It isn't always easy, but we can refine each other – smoothing the rough edges off like a rock tumbler, little by little over time with sand and water revealing the beauty of each individual stone. We need each other.

In this session you will work together in teams of two to complete a task. Each of you will have your own part to do but the parts will come together to make a whole.

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### Materials Needed

Any items you have in the house that you could build a little bridge with; Paper, cardboard, tape, glue, Legos, straws, sticks, paper clips etc.

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### Handouts

None

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## Building Bridges

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### Read aloud the quote or scripture

“Understanding is the bridge between two minds; love is the bridge between two souls.”

— *Matshona Dhliwayo*

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### Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. Can positive things come out of difficult relationships? Explain. What are some ways we make each other better?
2. Name some communities you belong to. What are some similarities between those communities? Differences?
3. Is God part of those communities? If so, which ones and how? Is God involved in your family? Explain.
4. What do you think empathy is? Have you ever had empathy for a member of your family? Describe.
5. Do you think a person can be healthy without being in loving relationships with others? Why / why not? What are some of the benefits of spending time with your family?

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### Rule of life activity

#### Building bridges

1. Gather the things on your materials list and give a set of those materials to each member of the family. Make sure each person has enough material to build half a bridge.
  2. Choose teams of two. Littles might need a buddy for their part.
  3. Sit back to back with your partner with the pile of materials in front of you. Set the timer for 10 – 15 minutes.
  4. Without looking at what your partner is doing, each of you constructs one half of a bridge. At the end you will connect the two halves to make a whole bridge.
  5. Talk to each other to coordinate what you are doing so that the two halves will align when you are finished. No peeking!
  6. After the timer goes off, turn around and look at your partner's half bridge.
  7. Now do your best to connect the two halves to make a whole bridge.
  8. Share your bridges with the rest of the family to see how you did. Were they cohesive?
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## Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
  2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why
  3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?
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Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Go to a retirement home and paint women's nails. Human touch is so important.
- Volunteer at a community food bank.
- At Christmastime use pine boughs and ribbon to decorate your neighbor's mail boxes.
- Donate your magazines to a senior center or the library.
- Volunteer to lead an activity at your community senior center.

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<sup>i</sup> Perry, Bruce Duncan, and Maia Szalavitz. 2017. *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love, and Healing*. New York: Basic Books. page 230.

<sup>ii</sup> Lewis, Thomas, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon. 2001. *A General Theory of Love*. New York: Vintage Books