

FAMILIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Includes
worksheets
with exercises
and
activities

SAMPLE PAGES

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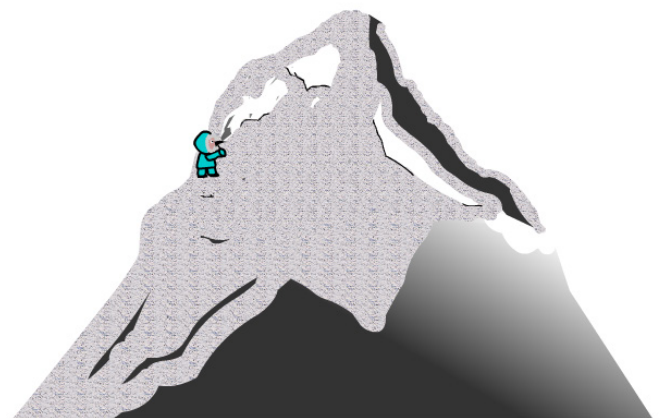
Introduction

Over the years, our view of family life and what makes a typical family has changed. Many phrases come to mind such as ‘step-family’, ‘half-brother/sister’, ‘foster parents’, ‘single-parent family’. There is no such thing as a typical family and there are no set views on what a family unit consists of. This publication will examine different types of family units and discuss situations that young people may find themselves in. It will also discuss the importance of getting a good education and finding a job before rushing into the responsibilities that family life can bring.

Some issues that will be covered are:

- What is a family?
- Coping with separation or divorce.
- Underage sex and teenage pregnancy.
- The growing number of single teenage mothers.
- Same-sex relationships and families.
- Making the best of family life by coping with various situations.
- The importance of school and getting a good education for the future.
- Communication problems within the family.
- Teenage marriage.

Sometimes, dealing with family members and coping with the everyday stresses and strains can seem like an uphill struggle. This publication aims to provide you with the necessary skills to help you make a success of your family life.



What is a Family?

Show **INFOSHEET 1** and ask everyone to give their own definitions of 'family'. A family is a unit of two or more people some of whom are related by blood. We often hear people speak about the nuclear family. This usually refers to a man and a woman and their children who live together under the same roof. An extended family is a nuclear family plus other, more distant relatives such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins etc.

Ask the group to think about their own families. Ask the following:

- How many people live in your house?
- Is everybody living in your house part of your family?
- Do you have contact with other relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins?

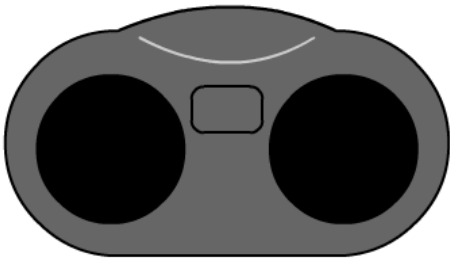
Give out **WORKSHEET 1** and ask them to list as many members of their own family as they can. Explain they must include everyone including in-laws (not blood-related), step-members, half brothers and sisters etc.

When they have completed the list, ask them to count their family members. Are they surprised by the amount of people in their family? Add together the family members of the entire group. What is the total figure? Are they surprised by the number of people who are related to members of the class?

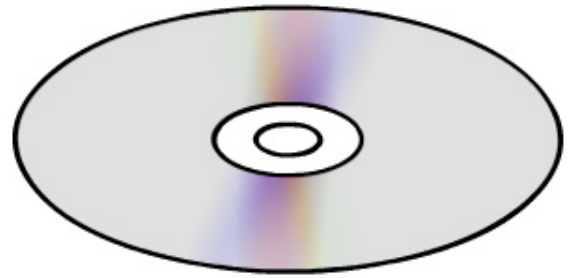
Families come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Some families have only a mother and some only have a father, and some have a mother and father. In some families the children have two mothers, while others have two fathers. There are some families where the children are cared for by their grandparents, or their aunts and uncles. Some couples do not have any children at all. Some children are born into their family while others are adopted or fostered. While some families live together, others live apart with certain members living in different places.

INFOSHEET 2

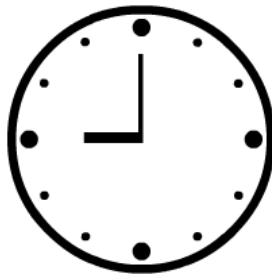
The Generation Gap



Music



What time to be home

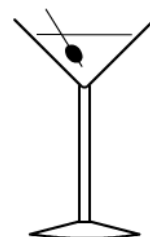


Dating



Exam results

Drinking/Smoking



Friends/Associates

Family Tree

A family tree is a diagram of a family including names, dates of births, ages, dates of marriages etc. Give out **WORKSHEET 5** and explain that this is what a family tree usually looks like. Give them time to examine it and discuss it as a group.

Ask them if they think they will be able to draw up a family tree for their family. To do this they will need to ask older members of their family for assistance. If they are unable to carry out this exercise for whatever reason, or if they prefer not to use their own family, they can carry out research into the family tree of a person of their choice. This can be a celebrity, politician or someone from history. Point them in the right direction so they can carry out adequate research.

Who can they ask for help? Write up a list of people who may be able to help them. They might include:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Other relatives
- Neighbours
- Old newspapers
- Library
- The internet
- Church records

Can they think of any other sources of information? Ask them to add these to the list on **WORKSHEET 4**.

When they have had an opportunity to speak to family members, give out **WORKSHEET 6** and ask them to have an attempt at drawing their family tree.

WORKSHEET 7

Find out the answers to the following questions — use figures for either the UK or Ireland depending on the circumstances:

There were _____ marriages in the UK/Ireland last year.

There were _____ separations in the UK/Ireland year.

There were _____ divorces in the UK/Ireland last year.

Ten years ago, there were _____ divorces in the UK/Ireland.

The number of children that live in step-families in the UK/Ireland is _____.

The number of children living in single-parent families in the UK/Ireland is _____.

You can use your local library, school library, the internet or official statistics websites — details are at the end of this resource pack.

Discuss your findings with the rest of the group. Did you all come up with the same statistics?

Do you find any of these statistics surprising?