

# Introduction: Getting Started On Creating A Healthy Future For Your Family

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Reflect on the past as a step toward setting goals for a healthy family.
2. Create a vision for achieving one's goals.

## HANDOUTS:

1. *Zakia's Lifeline*
2. *Reading Zakia's Lifeline*
3. *My Lifeline*
4. *Reading My Lifeline*
5. *Take Home Message for This Session*

## ITEMS NEEDED FOR THIS EDUCATIONAL SESSION:

- Handout materials for participant workbooks
- Flip chart and markers
- Pencils and pens
- Scrapbook materials

### GETTING STARTED

In the last session, we introduced the **Together We Can** program to you. We also started working on your **Memory Book**. Before we start on today's lesson, let's talk about some of the things you may have thought about since the last session:

- Did you give any further thought to the yarn network activity that we did as a group? What did you think about it? Did you tell others close to you about what you learned from the activity?
- Did your children's other parent or other family member complete the **Tell Me About You** page? What did you learn from having him or her do this page? Did you talk about what you each wrote down on the handout? How did that conversation go?
- Any other things you learned that you want to share with the group?

At this session, we are going to look more closely at your past life events. Understanding yourself will help you have healthy relationships with other people and be the best parent you can be. We will also look at your goals and develop a picture of what you would like to have happen as a result of this program.

### ACTIVITY: Looking Back Before Looking Forward—Zakia's Lifeline

Much of the time in this program will be spent talking about and planning for your children's and your own future. Before we begin focusing on the future, we're going to take a look back. Looking at the past also helps us dream about and plan for the future.

On the handout is a drawing of Zakia's lifeline. A **lifeline** is a way of showing the ups and downs in one's life. You can see on Zakia's lifeline that she faced some very hard times, like being kicked out of her parent's home. But she also had some

high points like learning to read and finding a better place to live. In small groups of two to three people, discuss these questions:

- What were the good times in Zakia's life?
- What were the bad times in Zakia's life?
- What things do you think Zakia was most proud of?

When the group reconvenes, write the small group discussion responses on a flip chart. Then give the participants the handout **Reading Zakia's Lifeline**.

The handout shows what Zakia thought were the good times and hard times in her life and the reasons why. It also shows the things that she was most proud of. How close were your thoughts to what Zakia thought about her life?

### ACTIVITY: Your Lifeline

If couples are attending, each person needs to create his or her own lifeline.

Now I would like you to make your lifeline using the handout provided. Follow the directions at the top and use Zakia's lifeline as an example.

Walk the class through the directions to be certain they understand the task.

Next complete the handout **Reading my Lifeline**. Use **Reading Zakia's Lifeline** to help you complete the questions.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- What caused your hard times or low points? Were the reasons similar such as problems with school, health, money and relationships?
- How did you cope with the hard times? What helped you to get through the low points? Who helped you?
- Looking at your lifeline, what have been your top three major life events?

- What relationships did you include in your lifeline? Who most influenced your life in a good way or a bad way?
- Is your line always above or below the neutral or base line? What does that tell you?
- When you think about your lifeline in the future, what do you want it to look like? What kind of events do you hope to see?

### **ACTIVITY:** **Visualizing my Goals**

If participants are attending as a couple, have them complete their own scrapbook page. Spend some time answering questions about how to complete the goal sheet if participants struggled with doing this as homework. Prepare flip charts ahead of time with the information below on goals.

For your homework, you were asked to fill out the handout called **My Goals**. The purpose of this homework was to have you think about what you want to get out of this program. One way to help you get the most out of this experience is to set goals for yourself.

A **goal** refers to what you want to have happen as a result of this program. Your goals can be very complex or very simple. What kind of goals did you set that are related to this program?

Why do you think it is important to have personal goals?

- Give us a sense of purpose
- Help us make good use of our time
- Make us feel excited about what we want
- Feel better about yourself

Research even shows that people who set goals for themselves and meet them are:

- Less anxious
- More focused
- More self confident
- Happier and more satisfied

Not all goals are alike. The most important step here is to set goals that help you work toward what you want. Sometimes people set goals that are too big, and they become discouraged when they fail to reach them. Other people set goals that are too small, and they lose interest in them. The trick is finding the right balance.

Here is an easy formula to help you set goals that work. It is called **SMART Goals**:

- **S = SPECIFIC.** The goal should emphasize what you want to happen. What are you going to do? Try to use action words like direct, organize, develop or plan. Why is this important for me to do? How I am going to do it?
- **M = MEASURABLE.** This means you will know when you have reached the goal. For example, people who want to lose weight usually set a weight loss goal in pounds. Not all goals can be measured in this way but think about how you will be able to see the change you want.
- **A = ATTAINABLE.** This goes back to our earlier point about setting goals that you can truly reach. If your goals are too high, you will become discouraged and give up.
- **R = REALISTIC.** This does not mean easy but do-able. You want to challenge yourself just a little bit, but not too much. As you reach your goals, you become excited about moving onto the next one.
- **T = TIMELY.** Set a time for when you hope to reach your goal. If you don't, you run the risk of not working towards it. Some of us are great at putting things off until tomorrow.

Let's look at the **My Goals** sheet you did for your homework. Look at how you answered the questions on your goals.

- Why are you attending this program?
- What three goals did you think of? Would you change those now based on our conversation today? How would you change them?
- Do you need to re-write your goals using the **SMART Goals** guides? How will you change them?

Spend a few minutes reading through your responses and adding and/or changing your thoughts and goals based on what you learned about yourself in the lifeline activity.

Once you have completed this step, prepare a scrapbook page that helps to visualize or show your highest priority goal. Show the strengths or resources you have to help you reach your goal. Think of it as a picture of what you hope to have happen.

Once participants complete their scrapbook pages, have them share and discuss them with the group. Explore how visualizing our goals in this way helps us to take a step closer to reaching them.

### **CLOSING:**

Today's session helped you to explore your past by creating a lifeline. Hopefully, you not only identified the struggles you've had but also the strengths you developed as a result of difficulties. You also re-examined your goals and created a picture for your Memory Book. Before the next class, take two small steps that will help you move closer to your goal. Write these steps on the message to put in your magnetic frame.

### **REFERENCES**

Nikitina, A. (2006). **SMART Goal Setting**. Retrieved from the Internet at URL: [www.goal-setting-guide.com/smart-goals.html](http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/smart-goals.html)

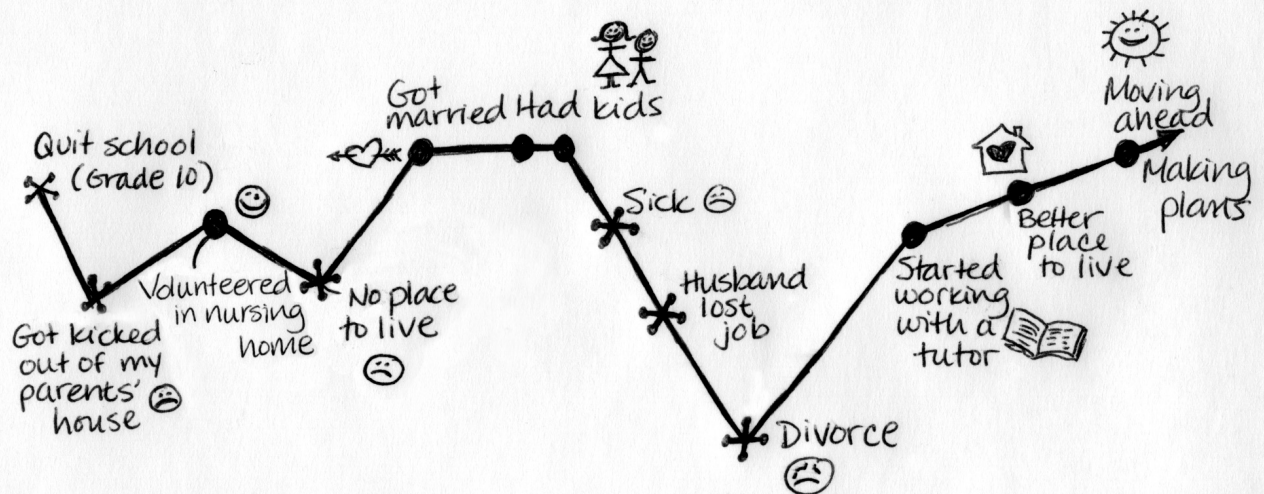


# Zakia's Lifeline

## A Dream That Walks—My Life & Dreams

If you look at your past it can help you dream about the future. You can look back and see what was happening when times were hard and when times were good. It can help you imagine what direction your life could go in the future. This can help you set goals.

One way to think about the past is to draw a lifeline. Let's look at the lifeline Zakia drew.



Adapted from Northwest Regional College (2004). *Connecting Generations: Women in Literacy*. Available at URL: <http://www.nwrc.sk.ca/cgp.pdf#>

# Reading Zakia's Lifeline

Good Times in Zakia's Life	Hard Times in Zakia's Life
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. She loved volunteering in a nursing home.</li> <li>2. She liked being married and having children.</li> <li>3. She enjoyed working with a tutor.</li> <li>4. She found a better place to live.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Zakia quit school.</li> <li>2. She was kicked out of her parent's house.</li> <li>3. Zakia was sick.</li> <li>4. Her husband lost his job and they were fighting a lot.</li> <li>5. Zakia got a divorce.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Zakia said they were good times because:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She had a job. She was taking care of people.</li> <li>• She wasn't alone.</li> <li>• She was learning.</li> <li>• She had a safe, comfortable home.</li> <li>• She was planning the future and taking control of her life.</li> </ul>	<p><b>She said these were the hard times because:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zakia felt dumb. She felt like a failure.</li> <li>• She was alone. She had no place to live.</li> <li>• She couldn't do anything or control her life.</li> <li>• Her family had no money. She was very unhappy.</li> <li>• Zakia felt alone. She was going through too many changes all at once.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The things that Zakia did that made her feel proud were:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She was learning to read and write.</li> <li>• She helped people through a volunteer job, and took care of her family.</li> </ul>	

# My Lifeline

Draw a line that tells about your life. Move the line above the baseline when things were going well and below the baseline when times were hard. Draw large dots at the high points and large X's at the low points on the line. Write or draw what was happening at the points marked with the dots and Xs.



# Reading My Lifeline

Good Times in Your Life	Hard Times in Your Life
<b>They were good times because:</b>	<b>They were hard times because:</b>
<b>The things I did that I am proud of:</b>	



# Take Home Message for This Session

**Directions:** Think of one step you will take before the next session and write it down in the space provided. In addition, write down the time, date, and location of the next session.

## I am SMART about my goals

My Action Steps:

.....  
.....

The Next Session:

.....  
DATE  
.....  
TIME  
.....  
LOCATION

