

**MODULE 4**  
**POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES**

# **MODULE 4**

Theme:

**Positive Parenting  
Strategies**

Materials:

**Interventionist Workbook**

**Interventionist Manual**

Pens/markers



# OVERVIEW: MODULE 4

- Check-In
- Warm-up Discussion: Current parenting practices and challenges
- Building a good relationship with children by spending time together as a family
- Involvement of all caregivers
  - Facilitate caregivers' discussion to enable them to understand each other's household and parenting responsibilities
  - Understand the role of father and mother, and other adults in the family
- Hitting and any forms of violence damages family relationships
- Effective Discipline and Positive Parenting Strategies
- Staying Calm
- Fidelity Checklist
- Check-Out

# NOTE FOR INTERVENTIONISTS

- Emphasize that **all caregivers need support**, and that parenting is challenging for everyone.
- Raise the idea that with the difficulties families face during and after resettlement, parenting can become more challenging and without much support.
- Make it clear that **you are NOT going over this subject** because you think they are bad caregivers. This can be helpful for everyone.
- Positive feedback is essential
- You are there to support the family

# WARM UP DISCUSSION



## Questions you can ask

- Before you had your own children what are some things you noticed about parenting in the community?
- When you first became a parent, how did you know how to raise your children?
- What are some things that surprised you about becoming a parent?
- What are the things that you love about being a parent?
- What things do you enjoy about being a parent of each of your children?
  - Ask for each child
- Are there things your parents did to raise you that you appreciated when you were growing up? Are there any things in their parenting style that you were surprised with?
- What are some of the ways you are proud of your parenting?
- What are some things that have been challenging for you about being the parent of each of your children?
- What, if any, have been some challenges with parenting your oldest child?
  - Ask for each child



**BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD**

# **NOTE FOR INTERVENTIONISTS**

## **BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD**

**The purpose of this section is to have caregivers reflect on strategies for building and maintaining positive relationships.**

- Some parents may already be doing this well.
- Ask parents to reflect on what they are doing and what they could improve upon.
- Acknowledge that while these things may seem straightforward, they can be hard when life is busy, or a child is misbehaving.



Why is it important for caregivers to have a positive relationship with their children? How can you explain this?



## **SUGGESTED TEXT**

### **BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH**

*“An important part of parenting is having a good relationship with your children. When parents and children have a good relationship, it can:*

- ❖ Help children to feel loved and safe*
- ❖ Help children to behave well*
- ❖ Help children and parents to communicate about problems and solve them together*
- ❖ Help parents to watch their children more closely”*



How can caregivers build and maintain positive relationships with their children?



## SUGGESTED TEXT

### BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD

*“Building and keeping a positive relationship with your children isn’t always easy, especially as children grow up, and when families have many other stressors.*

*There are many parts of a good relationship. These are:*

- Spending time with your child*
- Having positive interactions with your child*
- Communicating with your child*
- Being involved in your child’s activities*

*If you are already doing these things really well - that’s great. There may be things that you want to do more or do differently.”*

# FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

What challenges might you see with the Afghan families you work with when trying to build and maintain positive relationships with their children?





**INVOLVEMENT OF ALL  
CAREGIVERS**

# INVOLVEMENT OF ALL CAREGIVERS

- Sharing childcare, household responsibilities and chores is important for a positive family environment.
- Caregivers should balance responsibilities or take turns doing different chores and spending time with the children.
- Both caregivers spending time with children benefit them and their children in many ways:
  - Children learn different skills, knowledge, and experience from each caregiver
  - Children receive different interactions from each caregiver (i.e. one engages in more calm, gentle play, while the other may be more likely to engage in active, physical play.)
  - Both caregivers have the opportunity to build a strong relationship with their children
  - Caregivers can be productive, or get needed rest, when the other is engaging the children
  - Caregivers stress is relieved when one is not responsible for all childcare duties
  - Children benefit from consistent messaging between caregivers

# ACTIVITY: SPOUSE RESPONSIBILITIES

## Mother's Responsibilities

- Have the father list all of the mother's responsibilities and record in workbook.
- AFTER he is finished, have the mother list any he missed and record.
- Make sure the mother does not interrupt or correct the father while he is speaking.

## Father's Responsibilities

- Have the mother list all of the father's responsibilities and record in workbook.
- AFTER she is finished, have the father list and she missed and record.
- Make sure the father does not interrupt or correct the mother while she is speaking.

## Reflection

- Ask the caregivers which responsibilities surprised them.
- Ask both caregivers if they help each other with responsibilities by working as a team and record their response.
- Praise them for all examples of teamwork.
- Acknowledge that coordinating is difficult but it strengthens the family.

## Father's Ideas

- Ask the father about his typical schedule and day.
- Discuss when and how he might engage in activities with the children.
  - What activities do he and the children both enjoy?
- Record the father's ideas and when he will make time for them.
- If he has trouble coming up with ideas have the mother help.

## Mother's Ideas

Repeat this process with the mother using the same format and don't forget to record.



What challenges might you face during this activity? What are example ideas you could give to the parents if they are struggling?

# FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

How might Afghan beliefs on traditional family roles affect spouse responsibilities and teamwork? How can you respectfully acknowledge this?



# SPOUSE RESPONSIBILITIES ACTIVITY IDEAS

If caregivers are identifying times when they were doing things *for* the children, but not necessarily *engaging with* the children, ask caregivers to think of how they could turn this time into a positive interaction.

## Example Ideas:

- Read or tell a story together
- Talk about their day at school or their favorite TV show
- Play with a ball outside
- Work together on a household chore

If a child is rejecting the caregivers' attempts it could mean a different type of activity would be better due to their age and interests. As children grow activities will need to be adjusted.

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a woman and a child standing on a beach at sunset. The woman is on the left, leaning forward and pointing her finger towards the child on the right. The background is a bright, hazy sky over the ocean, with the sun low on the horizon. The scene is captured in a high-contrast, low-key style, emphasizing the shapes of the figures against the light background.

**HITTING AND ANY  
FORM OF VIOLENCE  
DAMAGES FAMILY  
RELATIONSHIPS**

# HITTING AND ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE DAMAGES FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- We usually think of discipline as punishment but hitting and yelling at children are common forms of discipline that **don't** help children learn or behave in positive ways.
- As children learn positive behavior from caregivers, they can also learn harmful behaviors.
- Hitting of any kind, can land caregivers in legal trouble in the U.S.
- Anyone suspecting a child of going through physical abuse is required to report it to the authorities. In such cases, Child Protective Services (CPS) get involved as they are responsible for evaluating reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.
- Discipline must be done without hitting them or harming their mental or physical health.

# **HITTING AND ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE DAMAGES FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

- Children who experience any form of abuse and neglect suffer from immediate physical injuries such as:
  - cuts, bruises, or broken bones,
  - and long-term emotional and psychological problems including but not limited to depression or anxiety, difficulty sleeping, using drugs or alcohol among other possible problems.
- Such children are also more prone to becoming victims to future physical abuse. Children can stray away from religious and cultural values and the whole family can end up suffering.



# OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE

## HITTING

Hitting is when physical force is applied, either by hand or by a tool or weapon, to cause physical harm to a child.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

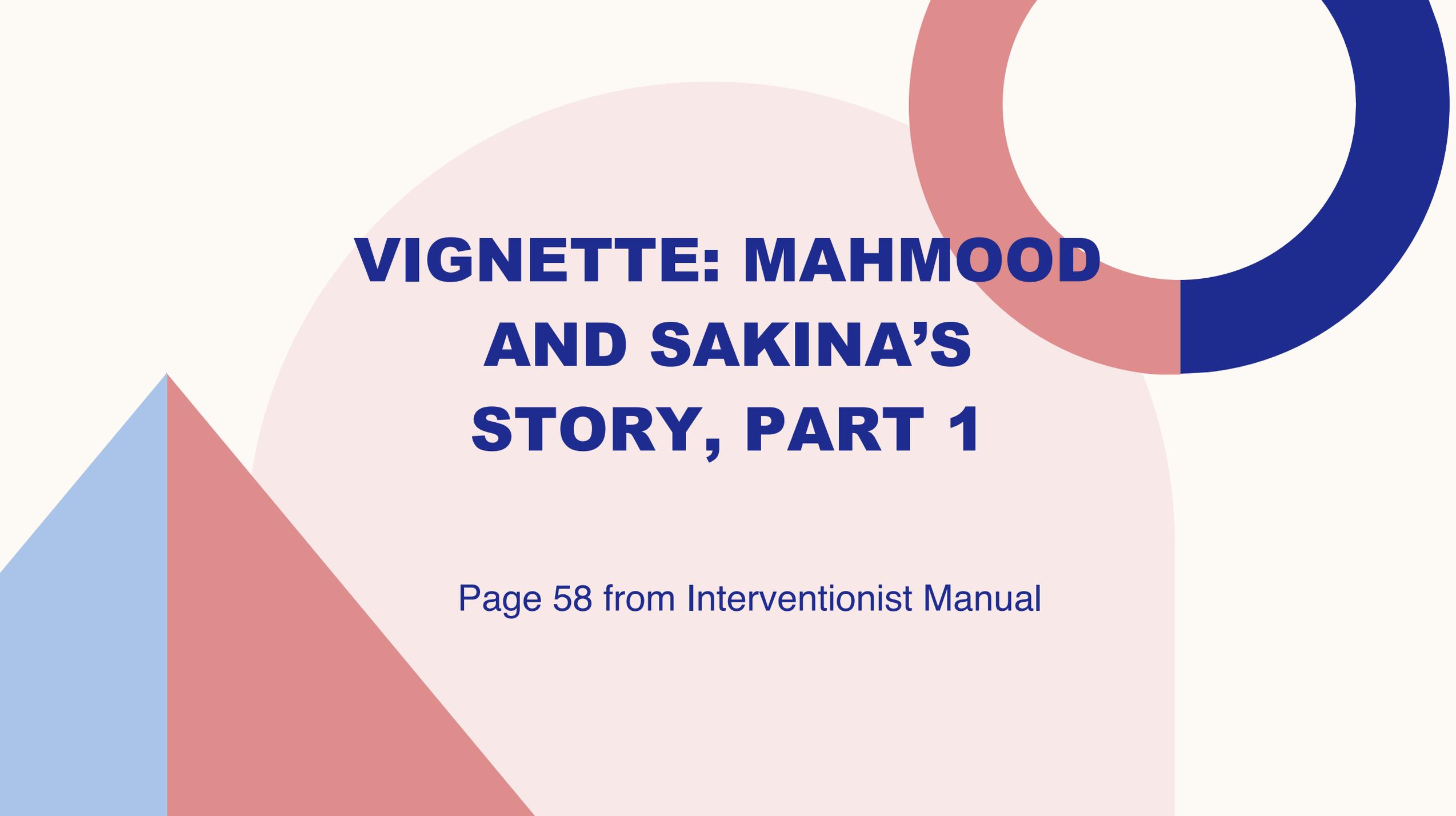
Sexual abuse is violating a child's body. This includes forcing a child to be a part of various sexual acts.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse includes actions that cause harm to a child's mental health and well-being.

## NEGLECT

Neglect is when caregivers fail to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs.



# **VIGNETTE: MAHMOOD AND SAKINA'S STORY, PART 1**

Page 58 from Interventionist Manual

# TENSION AMONGST CAREGIVERS

- Children can also sense stress between caregivers, whether it's the parents or other elders in the house.
- It is important that family/caregivers resolve disagreements in a healthy, calm way, so that children may copy these behaviors.
- Caregivers who are experiencing hitting or any other form of violence may have a depressed mood, which makes it harder for them to respond well to their child's needs.
- Over time, hitting and other forms of violence stain family relationships and creates an atmosphere of fear, depression, and violence.

# FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION



- What do you remember about the way your parents disciplined you?
- What happened to you when you misbehaved or got in trouble?
- Was this discipline effective or helpful? Did it reduce misbehavior?
- Do you use the same discipline strategies as your parents did?
- Did you learn any positive habits from your parents.
- Are there any ‘bad habits’ you picked up from your parents?



# THINK, PAIR, SHARE

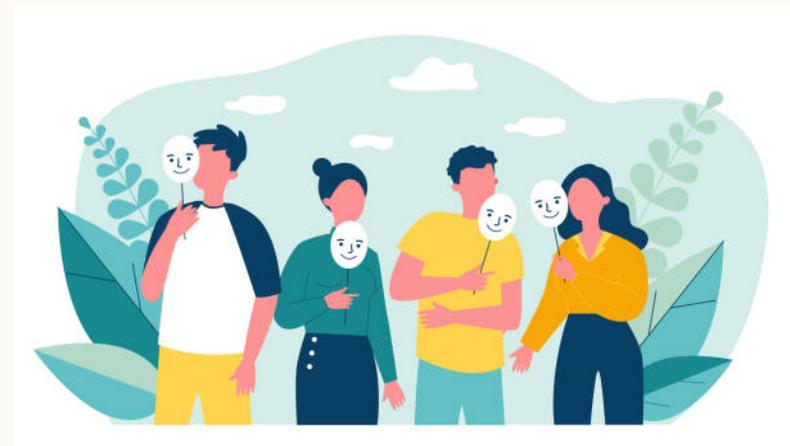
## DISCIPLINE

What do you think is the best approach to disciplining children? Why?

## ROLE PLAY

### BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD

- Get into groups and role play discussing and reflecting upon these strategies with parents.
- Offer feedback and reflect





# Q & A



# **EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES**

## **EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES**

- All caregivers want to raise “good” children and discipline is an important part of that.
- Many traditional discipline practices don’t help and can make children’s behavior worse!
- Caregivers want to teach their children to speak nicely, be respectful, and not hurt others. Children want attention from their parents. The most effective thing caregivers can do is pay attention to positive behaviors.

## RESEARCH AGAINST PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT



# NOTE FOR INTERVENTIONISTS

## EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES

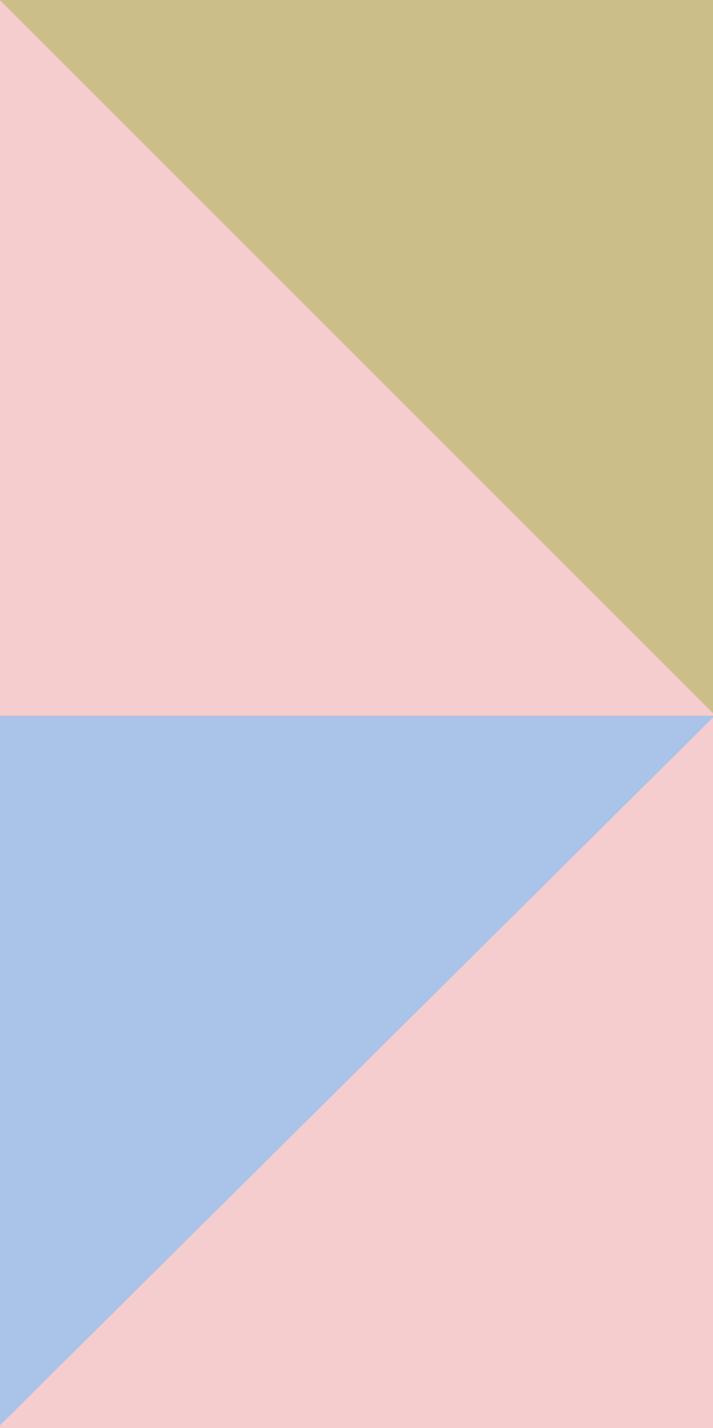
- It is common for caregivers to have different opinions about physical discipline. It is important that we are not forcing the idea onto caregivers, **simply inviting them to think about a different option.**
- If caregivers report that their parents used physical discipline, and it worked, and they had no negative consequences- don't argue with their opinion.
- Ask gently if they would be willing to learn and try out some other options, to see if these work well for their family, so that they can then choose which strategies they'd like to use.



# THINK, PAIR, SHARE

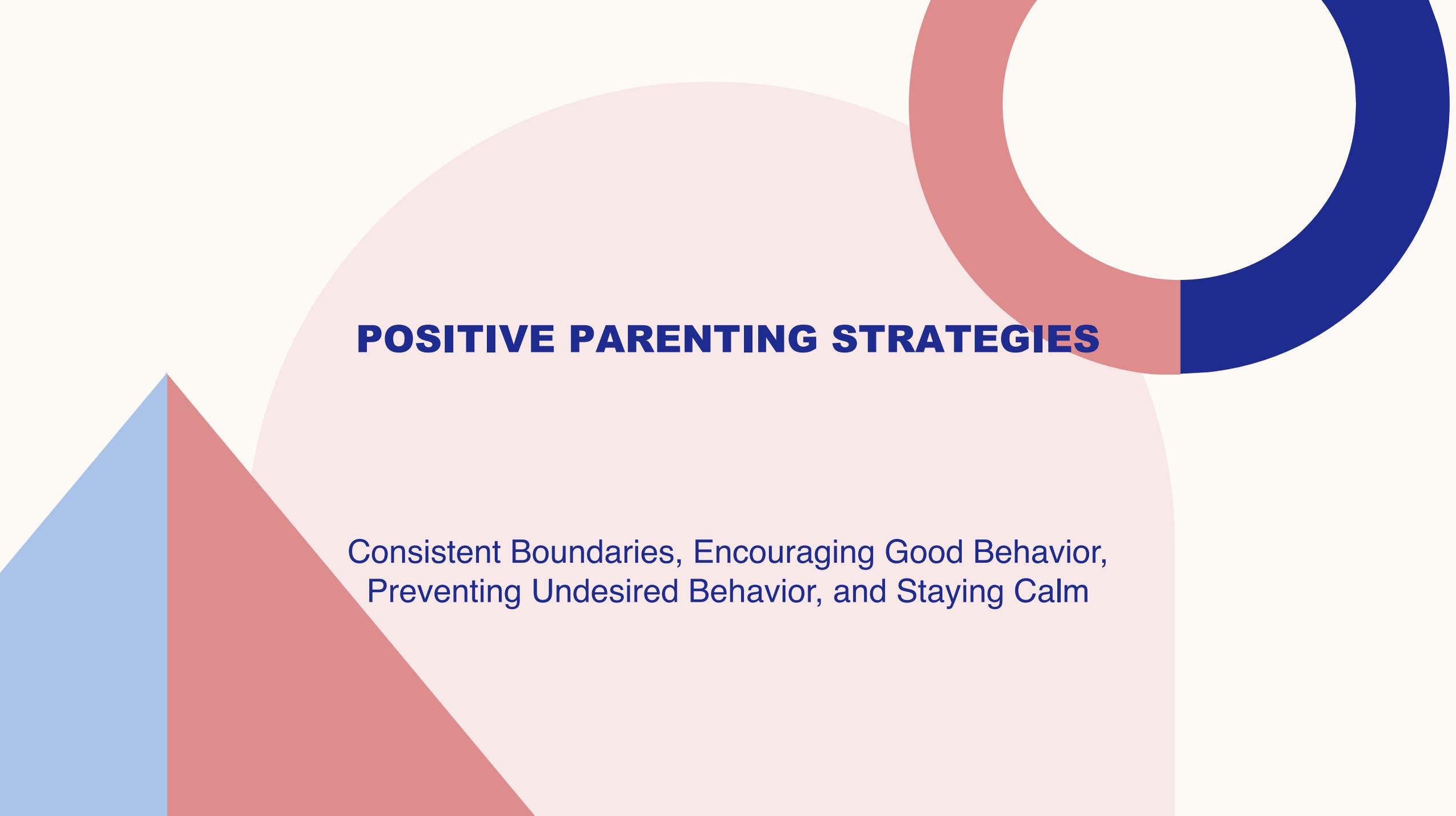
## DISCIPLINE

Has your opinion on how best to discipline children changed? Why or why not?



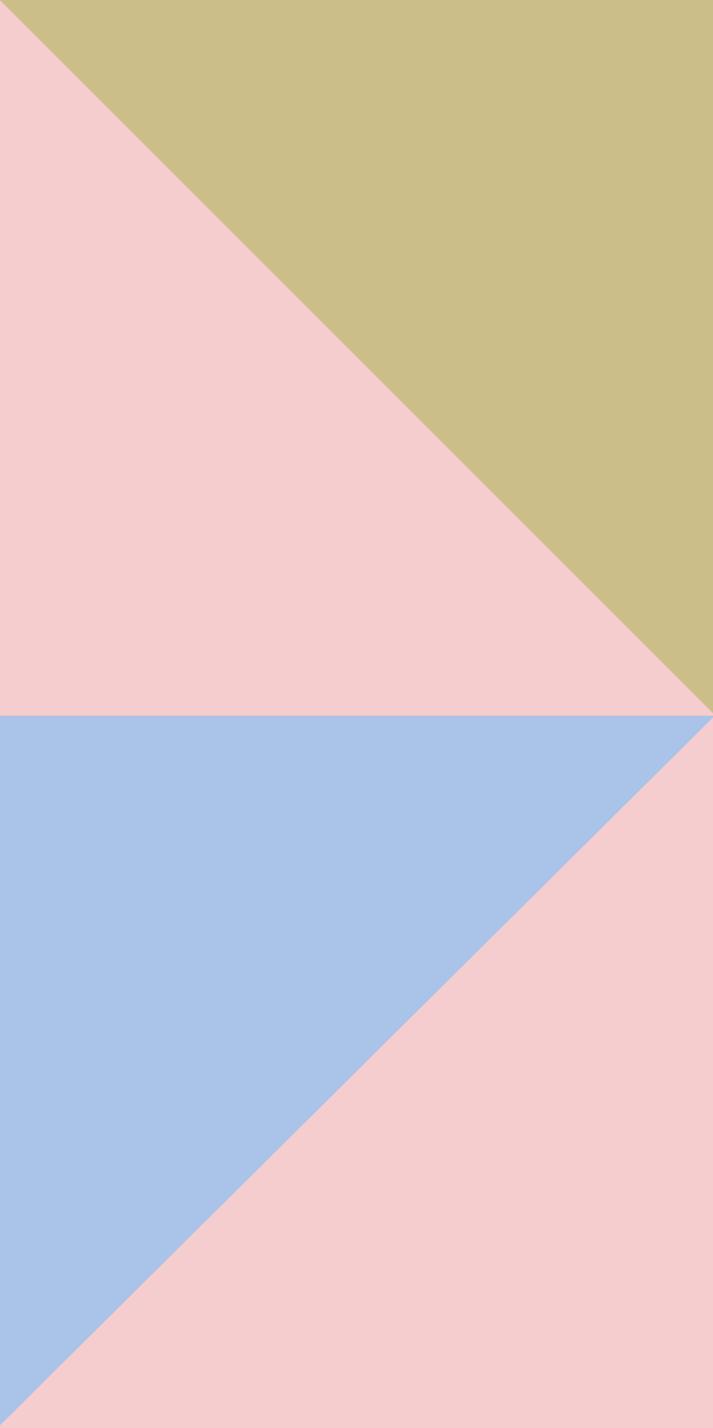
# POSITIVE PARENTING

- Positive Parenting is an effective way to discipline children and also develop a strong relationship with them.
- These techniques help children feel safe and loved at home and be able to thrive outside of it.
- Positive Parenting can be hard to do when life is busy or when children are misbehaving, but it will become easier; both for the caregivers and the children over time.



# **POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES**

Consistent Boundaries, Encouraging Good Behavior,  
Preventing Undesired Behavior, and Staying Calm



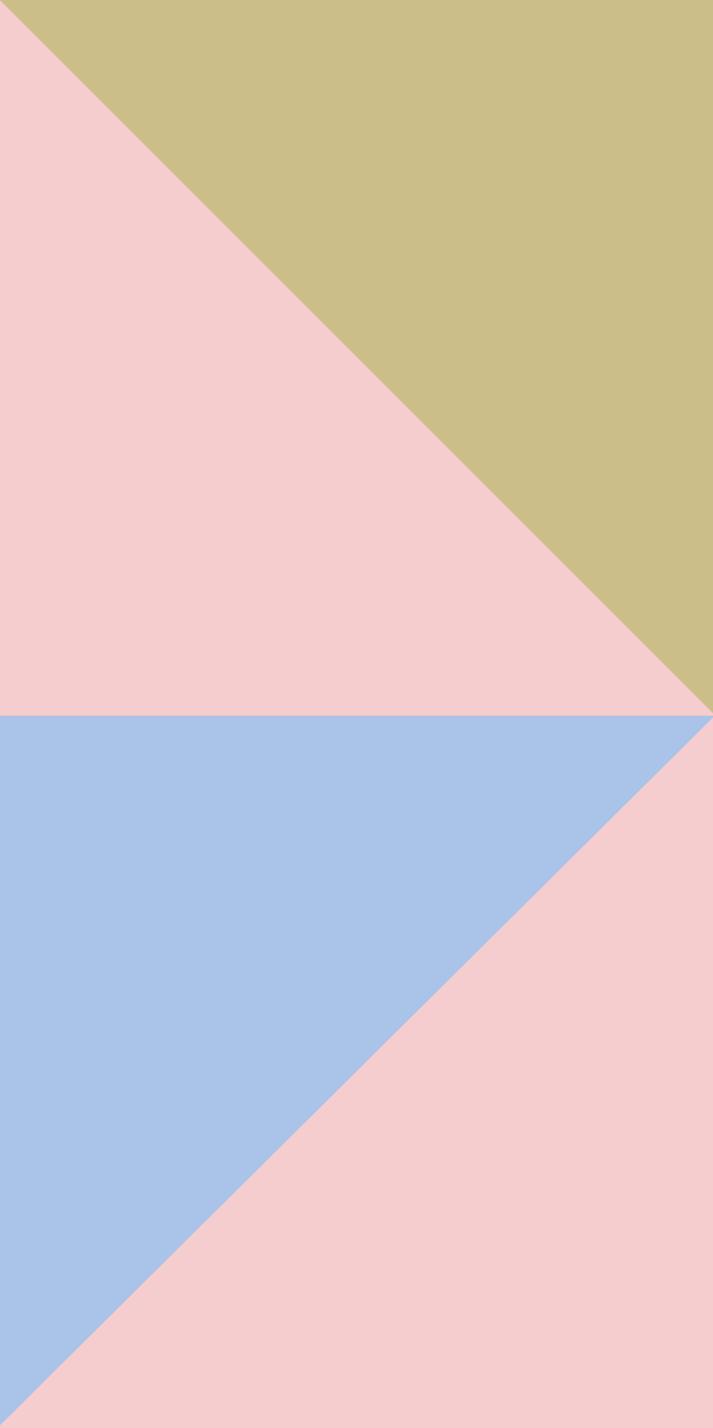
# 1. CONSISTENT BOUNDARIES

- A boundary is a line or limit that you establish with your children in terms of what kind of behavior is okay and what behavior is not okay.
- Clear, consistent boundaries help children feel safe.
- Children often “test” these boundaries by misbehaving.

# NOTE FOR INTERVENTIONISTS

## CONSISTENT BOUNDARIES

- It is common to see some behavior get worse before getting better. Many times caregivers can think “this isn’t working” or “it’s making it worse.”
- Ask them to be consistent so that they can see improvements over time. It will likely get better!



## 2. ENCOURAGING GOOD BEHAVIOR

- Children are much more likely to repeat a positive behavior if they are praised or rewarded.
- Children are more likely to stop repeating a negative behavior if they understand why not to do it anymore, or if there is a consequence.
- Fear of punishment for negative behavior, like getting yelled at or hit, can stop children from repeating the behavior for a little while, but usually not for long.
- Children are more motivated by receiving praise as compared to receiving punishment.

# FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION



- Think about a time that someone has told you that you are doing a good job. Did it motivate you to keep doing what you were doing?
- Think about the rewards that you might receive from working in your job, such as benefits. Do the benefits motivate you to keep working? ?



How is encouraging good behavior different from discouraging bad behavior?



## **SUGGESTED TEXT**

### ENCOURAGING GOOD BEHAVIOR

*“Often caregivers spend a lot of time and energy on managing bad behavior. Instead, we should focus on building up positive behaviors and teaching new behaviors.*

*For children and adults, when we get something good after we do something (e.g. some nice attention, positive praise, a reward, pay), we are more likely to do that thing again.”*



What are ways caregivers can reward positive behavior?

# THINKING ABOUT HOW TO REWARD POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

- **Positive attention:** If you notice your child doing something you like, how could you let them know? Sometimes a smile, or a pat on the back can be enough.
- **Praise:** Praise must be specific, so that children understand what they are doing well. “Good job” is not as effective as, “It makes me so happy and proud to see you working on your homework right now.”
- **Giving a reward:** This doesn’t have to be food or toys, or things. Some caregivers can reward their children by giving them a special privilege such as choosing what is for dinner, going to the park to play, etc.

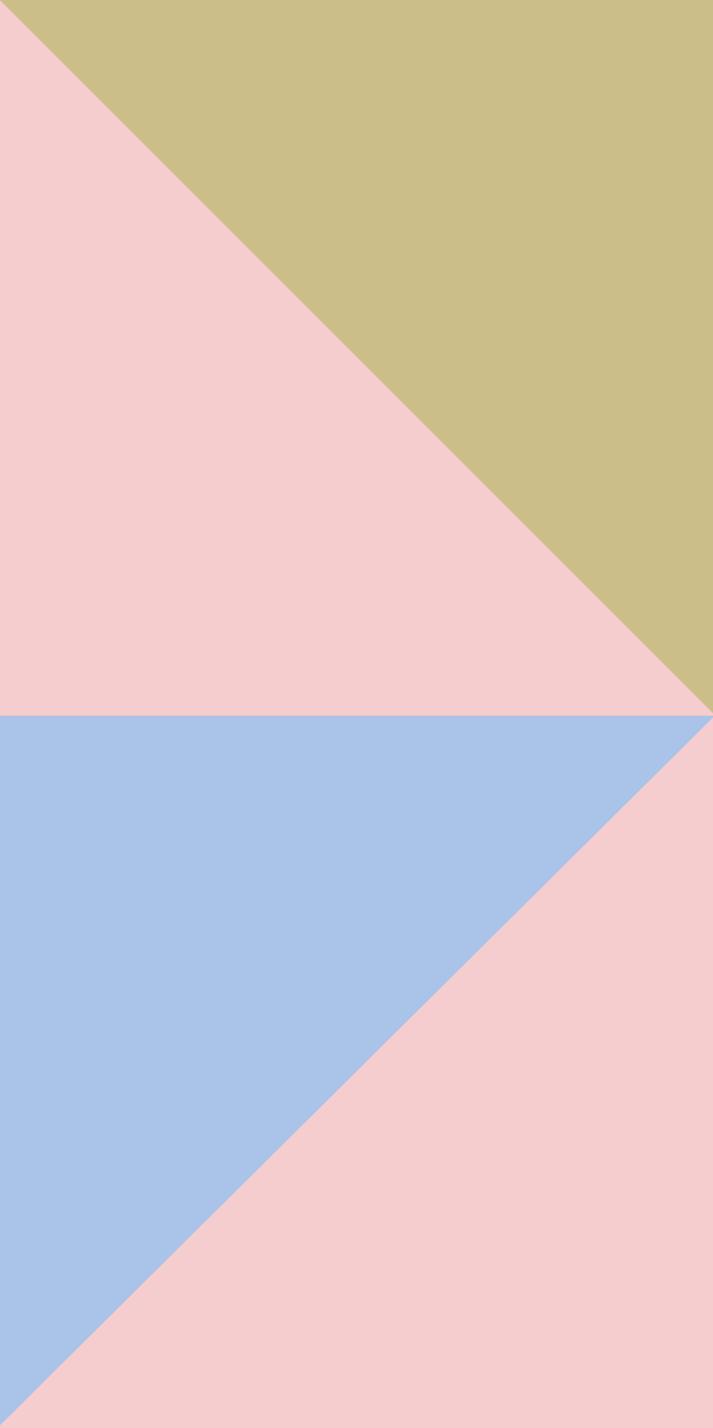


What challenges do you think caregivers might have with rewarding positive behavior?

# NOTE FOR INTERVENTIONISTS

## ENCOURAGING GOOD BEHAVIOR

- Some caregivers were not praised as children. It may feel strange for caregivers at first, especially if their caregivers didn't praise them. Practice will help it feel more natural.
- Some caregivers might feel that praise will make their child 'spoiled.' Invite caregivers to practice. It might feel strange for children and caregivers at first, but if caregivers continue to praise their children, children usually respond well. Caregivers don't have to believe you, encourage them to try it out.
- Praise that encourages effort and behavior can increase children's self-esteem and encourage good behavior to continue.



### **3. PREVENTING UNDESIRE**

- There are ways to limit undesired behavior in children.
- Using these a lot can help decrease bad behavior and increase good behavior. They are as follows:
  1. Natural and Logical Consequences
  2. Modeling Good Behavior
  3. Giving Good Instructions



What is the difference between preventing undesired behavior and discipline?

# PREVENTING UNDESIREB BEHAVIOR

The idea is “**Prevention is better than cure**”

We want caregivers to think of ways to...

- build a strong relationship
- encourage positive behavior
- prevent bad behavior

# NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

- Those things that happen as a result of the child's behavior without parental involvement.
- Parents do not deliver a natural consequence themselves
- Natural consequences only work if they are undesirable to your child and you do not interfere



# EXAMPLE: BREAKING THINGS

Let's say a child gets very angry and breaks the video game he is playing

- **Natural Consequence:** A natural consequence would be that his game is now broken so he can't play it. He now needs to earn money to fix it or get a new one if he wants to play it.
- **Explain reasoning:** Breaking his game means he cannot play it anymore, and it is expensive to pay for a new one.
- **Practice correct behavior:** Assign him chores to earn back an allowance if he wants a new game. Work with him on practicing calming techniques to help him control big feelings.

# LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Logical consequences are options the parent suggests to their child
- They are different from natural consequences because they are presented by the parent
- Sometimes letting a child experience the natural consequence of a behavior is too dangerous
  - Example: Letting the child run around the parking lot
- Positive consequences are things your children like
  - Example: You may watch TV when you finish your homework.
- Negative consequences are things your child does not like
  - If you are not home in time for dinner, you cannot go to the movie
- Try to use more positive than negative consequences

# EXAMPLE: COLORING ON THE WALL

Let's say a child is coloring on the wall with his/her crayons.

- **Consequence:** Hitting a child for coloring on the wall won't help the child understand why this behavior was wrong. A consequence might be asking the child to scrub the crayon off of the wall before they do anything else.
- **Explain reasoning:** Coloring on the wall ruins the wall and can be expensive to fix. Coloring is meant to be done on paper.
- **Practice correct behavior:** After child cleans the wall, practice drawing together nicely on paper. Praise the child for doing the correct behavior (drawing on paper, not the wall)

# FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION



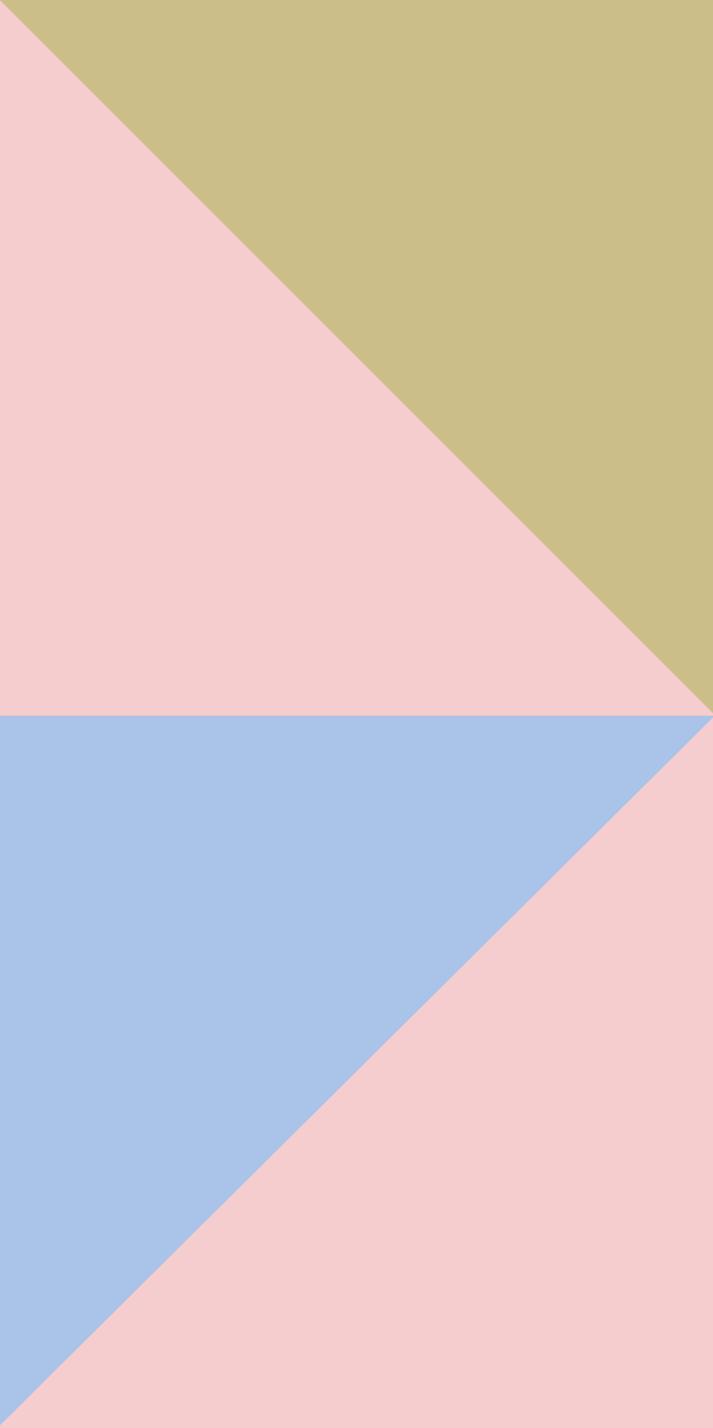
- What do you think is a natural consequence for hitting someone?
- What do you think is a natural consequence for throwing a ball over the fence?
- What do you think is a natural consequence of making a mess?

# MODELING GOOD BEHAVIOR

- Model the behavior that you want to see in your child
- Examples
  - If caregiver wants their child to speak nicely to family and others, the caregiver should speak nicely to their family and others
  - If caregiver wants the child to clean up, the caregiver also needs to be cleaning up
- Children are often watching and listening to caregivers more than we realize and imitating the behaviors they see around them

# GIVING GOOD INSTRUCTIONS

- Good instructions are given when the caregiver is near the child
- Be specific!
- Give a few simple steps at once
- Give instructions that are clear, calm, and easy to understand
- Tell children what to do, not just what not to do (redirect the behavior)
  - Use positive instead of negative language
- Instructions are not repeated too many times
  - Check that children listen and act the first time.



## 4. STAYING CALM

- Experiencing different emotions including anger, sadness, and frustration, is common for caregivers.
- However, caregivers should try to maintain control of their **emotional behavior, body language, and hands** when disciplining their children, even if they feel frustrated or angry.
- Changing difficult behaviors into more positive behaviors requires time, thought, and effort.
- Children learn from your responses and will copy both positive and negative reactions to stressors. You can help your child learn to solve problems positively by modeling positive, peaceful, respectful resolution.



- Why is it important the caregivers stay calm?
- What are some techniques caregivers can use to stay calm?

# ACTIVITY: STAYING CALM

Ask Caregivers to think about things they can do when they are very upset/angry with their child, and record in your Workbook.

- Take some slow deep breaths
- Leave the room for a short time
- Make themselves a cup of tea
- Phone a friend or family member for support

It is easier to remain calm if caregivers are managing stress every day. Ask caregivers to talk about what they do to manage the stress.

- Talk to friends/family/partner about the day and discuss parenting
- Take time away from the children, even if just moments
- Exercise
- Sing/dance
- Religious practices

# NOTE FOR INTERVENTIONISTS

## STAYING CALM

- If caregivers report difficulties in managing stress, tell them that we will talk more in Module 6.
- You may also discuss a referral to an appropriate mental health service for them.
- Remind them that many refugee families experience high levels of stress. Seeking support is a positive step for the caregiver and their family.



## SUGGESTED TEXT

### POSITIVE PARENTING

*“We usually think of discipline as punishment, but it is more effective when it used to teach children better ways to behave. Hitting and yelling at children are common forms of discipline but don’t help children learn to behave. It can even hurt your relationship. It is important for children to be able to talk to their caregivers when they have a problem and need help. A safe and strong relationship is important for this.*

*Use discipline to teach children what they SHOULD do, not just what they SHOULDN’T do.*

*Effective discipline is an opportunity to stop a bad behavior and teach a positive behavior. Try to calmly explain why their behavior was a problem, how you feel about it, and what they can do differently next time. If possible, show a positive behavior as well”*



## SUGGESTED TEXT

### POSITIVE PARENTING

1. *Tell the negative behavior (“I don’t like it when you yell at me”) in a strong, but not angry voice.*
2. *Understand the child’s emotions and validate their feelings (“I can see that you’re mad, but it’s not okay to yell at me.”)*
3. *See the child’s experience so they feel understood (“I know you really want to go outside and play...”)*
4. *Explain and show a positive option (“... if you can talk to me calmly, then we can make a plan to play together later.”)*

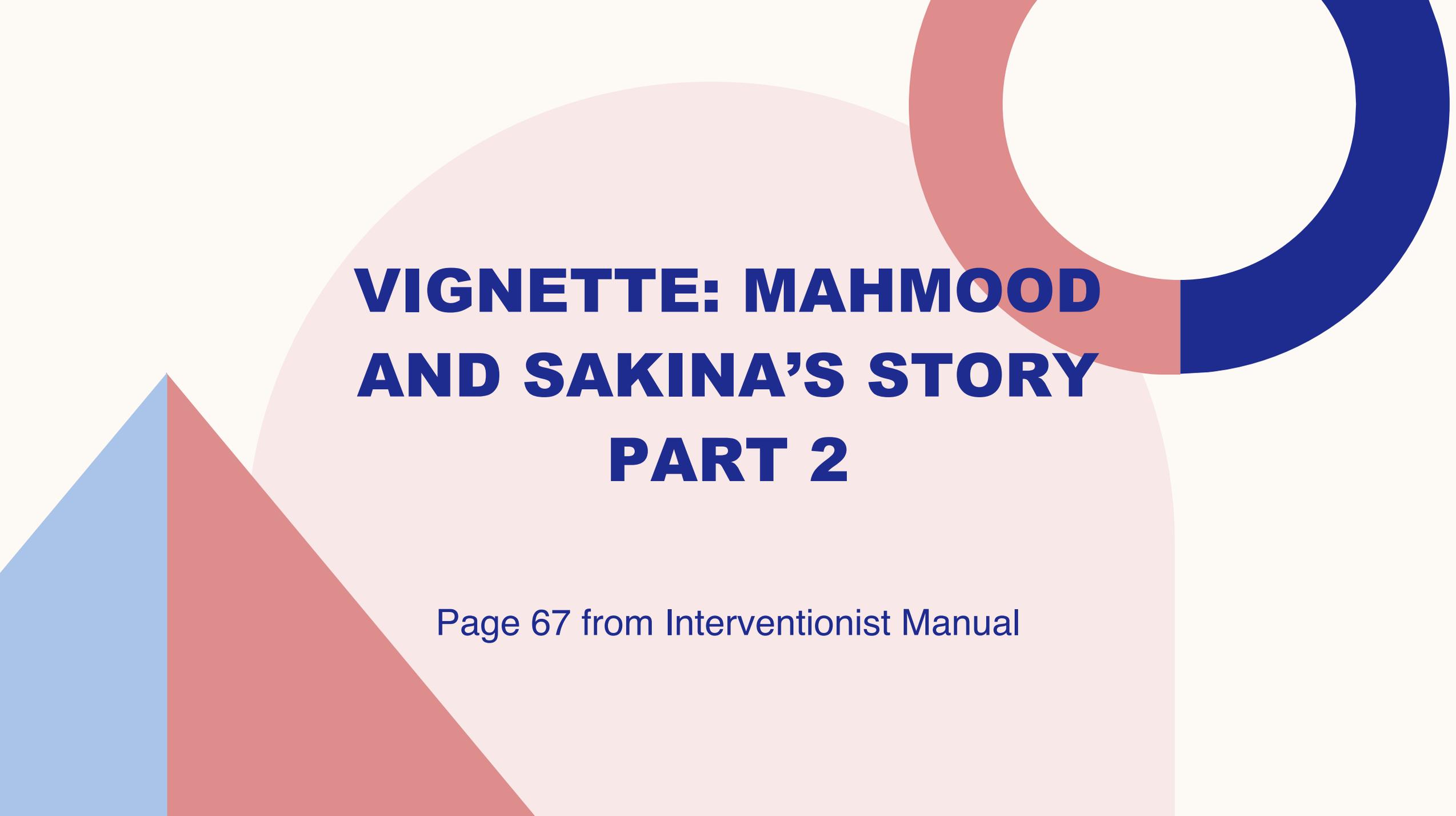
*You know your child best. There may be times where he/she may be too upset or angry to listen. In these situations, you can be short. For example: “Please don’t yell, when you can speak to me in a calm voice, I will listen to you.”*

*All children need to learn to calm down their emotions and respond in an appropriate way even when upset or angry. When a child is very upset or angry, parents can suggest that they take a “cool down” time, which is some time to calm down and then return to practice an appropriate behavior. Some parents may want to use a strategy like “Time-Out.”*

# FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION



- What was the most difficult part of being the parent when the child is misbehaving?
- How can caregivers overcome this challenge?



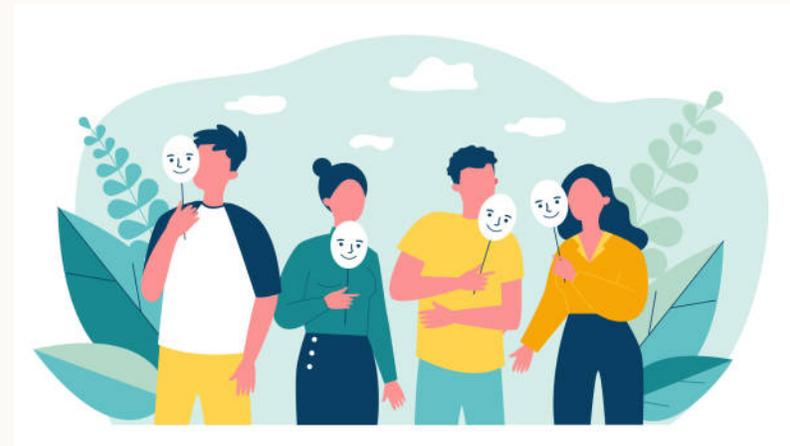
# **VIGNETTE: MAHMOOD AND SAKINA'S STORY PART 2**

Page 67 from Interventionist Manual

## ROLE PLAY

### STAYING CALM AND POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES

- Role play discussing how to stay calm and positive parenting strategies with caregivers
- Offer feedback and reflect





# Q & A