



Fathers learn tools for managing conflicts

Mr Alex Cavazos, a father who attended EMCC's Father-Teen Conflict Resolution workshop on August 3, learned tips such as the importance of communication and the reasons for the conflict to help him build a better relationship with his teenager.

Another participant at the workshop held at Crescent Girls School said in his feedback that the learning point most applicable to him was to believe in his child and that managing the teenager starts with trust and respect.

The 25 participants at the workshop learnt tools to help them manage conflict so they can become peacemakers in their homes. They heard about the golden rules for conduct, such as active listening and how to examine and focus on the issues so they "carefront" and not confront their teens.



In their interactive learning in the workshop, they went on a journey of self discovery of their current life-stage as fathers as well as gained an understanding of the levels and types of conflict.

EMCC's Father-Teen Conflict Resolution workshop was conducted in collaboration with Dads For Life under the Fathers@Schools programme. Launched in 2009, the national Dads For Life movement aims to inspire and involve all fathers to play a more active role in their children's lives."

Mothers learn insights into mother-teen conflicts



"Learn to release" was one of the learning points several mothers said



they found most useful and applicable after attending EMCC's Mother-Teen Conflict Resolution Workshop on July 6, 2013.

They were among a group of 29 mothers who came to the workshop held at Dunman High School looking for a solution to conflicts between mother and child. They left with insights and tips into how to build a

better relationship in the long term.

EMCC's trainer brought up the observation that mothers cannot seem to let go of their children even though they have already grown up. As described in Lebanese-American artist, poet and writer Kahil Gibran's poem "On Children", mothers are like the bows and their children as the arrows. Mothers pull back the bows -- they do their best, investing their lives in their children. But they need to release the arrows (their children) into the world, hoping that they go as far as they can, helping them fulfill their destiny.

Another point raised at the workshop was that many mothers do not realize that their unrealistic expectations of their teenagers cause these conflicts to start. The mothers also learnt about their own conflict styles using a profile tool called COSPI (Conflict Style Preference Inventory) developed by EMCC's founder and Honorary Vice Chairman Dr John Ng.

They learnt about the 12 different conflict styles and became more aware of the effects of their adopted conflict style. Brain development was also discussed and mothers learnt how a part of the teenage brain called the prefrontal cortex -- responsible for reasoning, planning and organizing -- is still in its developmental stages. Hence, teenagers cannot seem to keep their rooms tidy and do their homework once they reach home though their mothers were expecting them to do so.

"Money and You" talk hosted by EMCC

"It was a very good talk on money management with good insights and delivery," said a participant of EMCC's "Money and You" talk held on June 27, 2013.

Another participant described the event attended by 120 people at the YMCA International House as "entertaining, down to earth, enriching talk with candor".

As money is often the source of conflict in many marriages and family relationships, EMCC decided to sponsor a talk on money management for supporters, past workshop participants and couples who had attended EMCC's Marriage Preparation Programme.



The speaker was Mr Benny Ong, EMCC's Honorary Secretary who has close to 40 years' experience in financial planning. Mr Ong has conducted seminars for financial institutions and other organisations, lectured part time on the subject of Personal Financial Planning and written for various publications.

In the course of the 2-hour session, Mr Ong shared his personal experiences and tips on managing finances without stress, achieving growth and avoiding the pitfalls of investment and financial freedom.

He taught the participants how to calculate their real net worth, analyse their lifestyles as well as spending habits. He also provided guidance on how to identify priorities, personal and family goals and identify strategies and possible solutions for accomplishment of their goals.



Benny Ong

Client story: counselling improved troubled marital relationship

I* am sharing my story, because I feel that attending counselling sessions is a widely adopted practice in many countries, but there is generally a stigma attached with it in Singapore. That was how I felt initially as well, because I even resisted going for pre-marital counselling before our marriage and I simply did not open up during those first sessions.

However, if couples do find a good counsellor who has a methodology which helps them -- as our EMCC counsellor did -- and start working with them openly once the first signs of trouble in their marriage surfaces, I believe a lot more heartache could have been prevented.

Taking advice from friends and online forums, no matter how well intended, may still be misguided and not entirely relevant for your situation, so it is still best to speak to a counsellor to help mend/rebuild relationships.

My husband and I first went to EMCC through a recommendation of a close friend. We had been attending three to four counselling sessions at another private centre since our relationship started to go downhill. However, our previous counselling sessions did not result in any improvements, and after things took a drastic turn for the worst, we decided to try a new counsellor.

As the wife in the troubled relationship, I first approached the EMCC counsellor because I was unable to deal with all the emotions I was feeling. I was unable to openly share my issues with any of my friends, because they were very personal, and I felt it was embarrassing to let anyone know what happened. Without someone to speak to, to help make sense of everything that happened, I was literally unable to function normally, and my work and health were affected.

After my first session with my EMCC counsellor, I was able to share all my issues and bottled up emotions. By being able to share in confidence, I already felt a lot better.

I was encouraged to invite my husband to join the sessions in order for them to be effective. We started attending the sessions together once a week, even though we were not staying together anymore.

During our counselling sessions, many issues surfaced, and we worked through them gradually. The sessions were often very emotional, as we analyzed many feelings and complicated incidents which led to the breakdown of the marriage. By talking openly about issues during our sessions, it has helped us to better understand each other's needs and perspectives.

During the difficult period, we tried to practise the actions our counsellor provided, in order to slowly change our attitudes towards one another, and the way we handled arguments. We leaned very heavily on the sessions, and at times intentionally waited till the sessions to discuss incidents that happened in the past week, just so that we will not approach delicate issues incorrectly and cause further arguments.

During the 6 months we have been attending sessions with our EMCC counsellor, our relationship has improved significantly and we're working towards reconciliation. In the initial sessions, I thought I would never be able to recover from the emotional turmoil I felt, but our counsellor told me that after 6 months, there would be more clarity, and yes it was true.

*The client, a professional, has been attending EMCC sessions for 6 months

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