

Caregiver-Teen Impact Report

Data gathered for one year of service from October 1, 2020, to September 28, 2021

Background and Program Purpose:

The vision of Community Justice Initiatives' Caregiver Teen Services is to work alongside caregivers and teens to create conditions that support lasting behaviour change in the ways caregivers and teens interact when conflict arises. We know that caregiver and teen relationships develop within complex contexts, and power imbalances are inherent in these relationships. Therefore, improving these situations of sustained and escalated conflict is not easily addressed within standard mediation processes alone. At CJI, we have built a menu of options in the Caregiver Teen Program including individual and group conflict coaching, referral and connection support, and facilitated dialogue opportunities between the caregiver, teens, and others involved with supporting the family.

We believe that the opportunity to coach and support caregivers and teens through a series of insight- and skill-building activities prior to mediation, increases the potential for productive family conversations. Furthermore, in situations when caregiver and teen mediation is not appropriate or desired, coaching has the potential to empower caregivers, as the "senior" partners in conflict with their teens, to alter dynamics and trajectories within their relationship.

COVID-19 has added complexity to the delivery of this program. This past year, we have moved to a hybrid model of online and in-person services. We have been able to be flexible with our support, such that caregivers and teens may choose if service is in person, on the phone, or via video-conferencing. We are grateful for funding that we have received for this service from Astley Family Foundation and Family and Children Services of the Waterloo Region.

Services Delivered

From October 1, 2020, to September 28, 2021, CJI's Caregiver-Teen Coaching program has worked with 48 families who include 59 caregivers, that impacted the lives of their 66 children. Of the 66 youth impacted, 19 teens engaged in sustained, direct service, which means that they participated in ongoing coaching and mediation. Currently we have 35 families open and actively receiving service. Of the 48 families referred, 36 reported recent or current involvement with Family and Children's Services.

- 823 hours of individual family work (intake meetings, case development and mediation sessions, corresponding with F&CS workers and other service providers, and one-to-one conflict coaching)
- 329 hours of group delivery work (including preparation for group, delivering group sessions, communicating with families for follow-up and coordination with families)

The caregivers and teens participated in the following services:

- 3 caregiver group cycles complete (14 participants completed group),
- 3 teen group cycles complete (5 participants completed group)
- 48 individuals received individualized coaching processes which involve a number of sessions over a length of time (varies from 3 sessions to more than 15 sessions over a number of months)

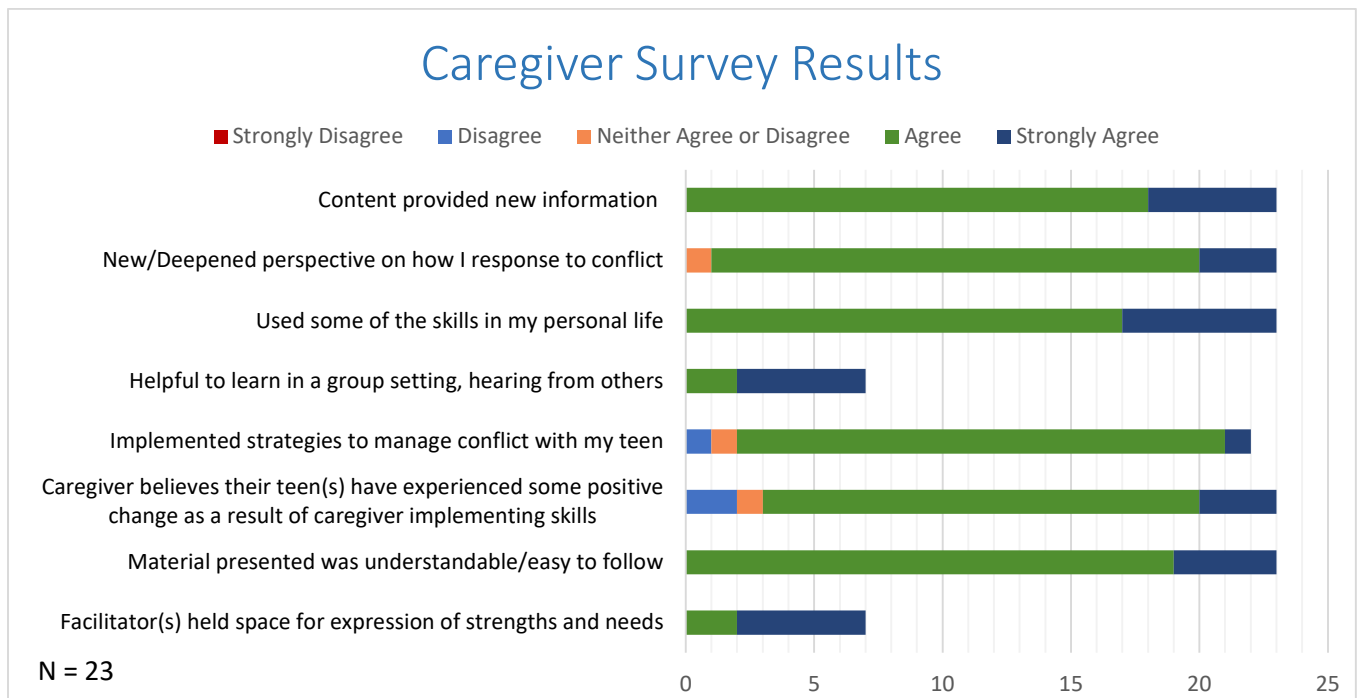
- 62 individuals prepared for 25 mediations that were facilitated during this timeframe
- 1 family of 4 individuals participated in a series of online family circles

We are excited to announce that we have launched a monthly Circle Connection Group for any caregivers who have completed the conflict coaching group, and have expressed a desire to stay connected with other caregivers to continue peer support and learning. CJI staff are responsible for holding the space and CJI trained volunteers who are also in their own parenting journeys but are currently experiencing stability in the caregiver teen relationships are co-participants with caregivers. This space is co-created by the volunteers, caregivers, and CJI facilitator so that it is meeting the needs of all participants. So far, the anecdotal feedback from participants has been positive. We are excited to potentially pilot this same concept with our teen participants.

Program Impact Statistics – Caregiver Section

Caregivers were invited to give feedback post-involvement with individual coaching, mediation, and group involvement. The following results are presented below.

Consolidated Feedback from Caregivers



We have also received some feedback directly from caregivers:

“I really appreciate how creative the content is and I can understand the information in the exercises and manual. One of my biggest learning was that how I can use circles to have family meetings.”

“I really benefit from your support, because I get some good ideas when I talk with you. When I come to a dead-end in my own thinking, I need a good brainstorming partner... someone who is capable and listens to what I’m saying and what I need and my daughter needs. And that’s where you come in.”

“I wish the program could have been longer. It was so helpful – even at work. At the time I was in the group, I was adversely affected by an external issue that was not about teen-parent conflict, but it was very serious. I thought that the facilitators picked up on that very quickly and took action to help me regulate my emotions. I will never forget that. They took the time to address my issue and look after me, even though it was not about the theme of the group. I was very grateful for how they handled that.”

“I’m going to be honest... I really didn’t want to be a part of this group, at the beginning. I would not have chosen to spend time with this particular group of people. I had to be here. I didn’t want to be here. I can say, now, that I would have gone through all the trauma I went through, that brought me here, two times over, to have had this experience with all of you. ...I thought of each of you and what you shared, throughout the week, between our sessions. I am extremely grateful to have spent this time, and to have had this experience, with all of you.”

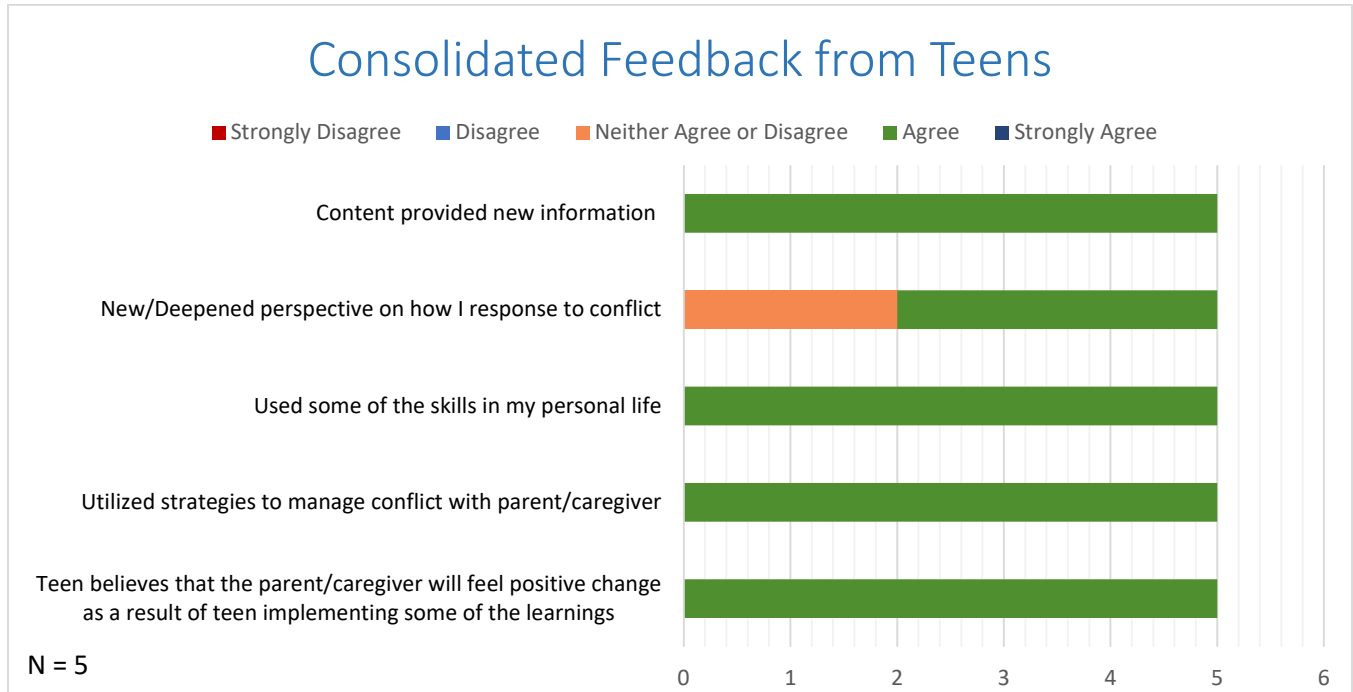
“It was my first experience in a group like this. It was very good. Everybody gave their best to respond to questions and help people really understand. I don’t really have any negative comments. That is probably why I’m ready to participate in the Monthly Connection Circle. I learned so much in the Parent Conflict Coaching Group so I want to continue on.”

“I’m starting to think about how I am going to really miss this group, when it’s over. This group has been an anchor for me, each week, and has kept me going. My weeks aren’t going to be the same, without these meetings. I am feeling very sad about that.”

“I would like to see more examples and stories of people in situations where they had success that they could share (real life examples). There was a video we watched about sympathy and empathy and it was on YouTube – it was helpful but if they have direct access to people and events that they could draw on to show us situations where people implemented the tools they are teaching us about, that would be valuable. I’m only in the one group and I have only drawn on the experiences from people in that group. But I am sure that the facilitators have a lot of experience and conversations to draw on to share with us. Each group should be considered a potential harvest to contribute back into future groups.”

Program Impact Statistics – Teen Section

Teens involved in the program were invited to give feedback post-involvement with individual coaching and group involvement. The following results are presented below.



Narrative:

1. In what ways the training helpful for you in your personal lives with conflict?
 - Learned new ways to control anger
 - It gave me ways to try and avoid conflict and if conflict happens how to control my emotions

2. In what ways did the training assist you in your relationships with your caregivers/parents, siblings, friends, teachers?
 - Learned how to understand the other person's side
 - Too soon to know

3. Did you learn new skills that you plan to use? If yes, what skills do you plan to use?
 - Taking time/a break
 - I've learned more ways to cope when I'm stressed

4. What do you find could be improved within these sessions?

- More people
- More fun

Quotes from teens:

"If you can keep having conversations with [my mom], that would be the most helpful. She and I don't argue as much, after she talks with you."

"My mom understands my perspective better."

"We're getting along better now."

"I learned how to handle stress more often and calm myself down, I also learned a couple of new things that I can also try out."

"I learned how to control my feelings and how to deal with conflict in my house."