**GCCHM Leadership Certification**

**Level VII, Course #5**

**WIRED FOR CONNECTEDNESS**

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**(Presenter’s Notes)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Human beings are created for relationships. All of us need other people in order to be well and to thrive. The song, “No man is an island, no man stands alone!” is so apropos in illustrating this. Moreover, to be effective in our ministry, we need to develop connectedness with the children, their parents, church leaders, and other children’s leaders.

**What is a Connection?**

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A connection, or point of contact in a relationship that can take many forms:

* Your voice in my ear
* A simple pat on the back from a loved one just when you need it the most.
* Compelling speeches, amusing emails, and irritating phone calls are all forms of

 connection.

* Contact between you and someone who has–or wants to have–a relationship with you.



**Relationship with a Connection**

* That red square in the middle is the point of contact, the connection between person “A” and person “B.”
* Connections are actions – action that puts people in contact with each other.
* Your boss texting you to come in on the weekend; talking with your son about his class before bedtime.

**The Engagement Pyramid**

1. Observing
2. Following
3. Endorsing
4. Contributing
5. Owning
6. Leading

**The Engagement Pyramid**

Level 1: Observing – sporadic, occasional conversation

Level 2: Following – regular, sharing information

Level 3: Endorsing – trust enough to seek approval

Level 4: Contributing – committed to discuss and contribute through phone calls,

emails, face-to-face meeting

Level 5: Owning – regular, direct 2-way communication

Level 6: Leading – communication initiated by the person who leads

**Benefits of Connectedness**

* Gives a sense of identity.
* Increases ability to love and be loved.
* Gives a high level of happiness.
* Provides validation of self-worth.
* Provides a source of help in times of trouble.
* Enriches a diversity of ideas and influences to help us grow and learn.

**Research Findings of Connected People**

* HEALTHY
* SAFE
* ENGAGED
* SUPPORTED
* CHALLENGED
1. **Connecting with God**

Connecting with God is all about a relationship -- walking and talking with the God who created you!

**How to Stay Connected with God**

* Reading and studying the bible daily.
* Praying daily and listening for His answers.
* Be involved in church.
* Spend time with other Christians who love Jesus.
* Serve people in the church and in the community.

**Romans 12:5**

“So in Christ we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all the others. “

1. **Connecting with Your Teens**

Even though our teens have a strong need for independence, that doesn’t mean they can’t stay connected to us.

**Ellen White, *Adventist Home, p. 193***

“Let parents become acquainted with their children seeking to understand their tastes and dispositions, entering into their feelings, and drawing out what is in their hearts.”

**Adventist Home, p. 17**

“Let parents and children bear this in mind every day, relating themselves to one another as members of the family of God.”

**Research on Connectedness and Suicide Prevention in Adolescents**

**Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior Journal, 2014**

\* The subjective experience of belonging and feeling useful and valued in at least one proximal context will enhance positive emotions and cognitions pertaining to self and other interrelatedness and will result in fewer or less severe suicide risk behaviors.

**Karcher’s Research on Adolescent Connectedness**

Michael J. Karcher hypothesized connectedness to reflect an ecologically specific form of engagement with others and the environment. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyseswere conducted to develop a measure of adolescent connectedness.

[Karcher, 2003, Results suggest that connection to family, school, and friends make unique contributions in explaining adolescent behavior and should be examined separately in future research on connectedness.](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED477969&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_accno&objectId=0900000b80121ebc) Adolescents’ level of “connectedness” to family, school, friends, and self has been found to contribute to academic performance but also predict violence and substance use.

Adolescent Connectedness consists of:

* **Social Support** – empathy, praise and attention experienced in schools and in the community from peer groups, friends, adults, and the media.
* **Sense of Belonging** – social system and group-specific inclusion felt during adolescence.
* **Attachment**—Parental empathy, praise, and attention experienced within safe relationships in childhood.
* **Sense of Relatedness** – dyadic security in relationships with others in childhood and adolescence.

**Hemingway’s Measure of Adolescent Connectedness**

* Connectedness to Family – need to relate to parents and siblings. Home is where they learn values, religion, and how to relate to each other and with others.
* Connectedness to Friends – being social; teens crave for closeness and acceptance by friends and peers. They have a strong need to feel belonged. They learn social and culture behaviors, etiquette, etc.
* Connectedness to Schools – being academic – need to succeed and achieve and to plan for their future. Connect with teachers, reading.
* Connectedness to Self – becoming an adult.

**Benefits of Strong Parent-Child Connectedness – 2010 Minnesota Student Survey Trends Report**

* Protects teens against unintended pregnancy; HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs); violence; depression; eating disorders; alcohol, tobacco and drug use; and poor academic achievement.

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *School Connectedness,* 2009**

* Research shows a strong relationship between school connectedness and educational outcomes, such as school attendance, staying in school longer, and higher grades and classroom scores.

**Factors That Can Increase School Connectedness**

* Adult Support: School staff dedicate their time, interest, attention and emotional support to students.
* Belonging to a Positive Peer Group: A stable network of peers can improve student perceptions of school.
* Commitment to Education: Believing that school is important to their future, and perceiving that the adults in school are invested in their education, can get students engage in their own learning and involved in school activities.
* Social Environment: The physical environment and psychosocial climate cam set the stage for positive student perceptions of school—safe and clean.

**How to Stay Connected with Teens**

* Be supportive of what they do
* Listen, empathize. Keep advice to a minimum.
* Be available when your teen wants to talk.
* Welcome your teen’s friends.
* Fill your relationship with good interactions
* Spend some time together every single day—fun and play.
* Acknowledge separations and reunions—goodbyes, hugs, welcome them home.

**Know Your Teens and Social Connections**

**Social Network**

* Learn your teen’s social network.
* Learn their language and interests.
* Establish and maintain structure.
* Discuss rules and responsibility.

**Build Bridges with Teens**

*“We build too many walls and NOT ENOUGH BRIDGES.” --* Sir Isaac Newton

**III. Connecting with Others**

**Seligman’s Research**

**"**As a professor, I don't like this, but the cerebral virtues—curiosity, love of learning—are less strongly tied to happiness than interpersonal virtues like kindness, gratitude, and capacity for love.” – Martin Seligman.

**Connect with Other Leaders**

* Network with other experienced leaders.
* Learn and share new ideas together.
* Give support and encouragement to the younger and less experienced leaders.
* Mentor younger leaders.

**Connect with church leadership**

* Know your board members in the church.
* Share your ministry vision with them.
* Get them involved with your programs

**Connecting Others to Jesus**

* Organize community programs to invite community families to attend, eg. Messy Church.
* Introduce the kids and parents to Bible class and small groups
* Introduce them to Jesus.

**Connect with Parents**

* Get to know the parents and develop good collaborative relationships.
* Involve them in your programs—transportation.
* Utilize their gifts and talents to strengthen your programs—building a boat, tell story, lead in a craft.

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