

TALKING: IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER

CLIENT	BEHAVIORS	TOOLS
<p>Toddler (Any child older than 1 year)</p>	<p>Enjoy family meals</p>	<p>Character magnets Client Gifts: Mealtime conversation starters, thumbprint magnet</p>

TOOLS



OPENING ACTIVITY

Position magnet board and “character” magnets, so they are visible to all clients.

TRIGGER EMOTIONAL DRIVERS:

“Every mother wants to give her child character traits that are the foundation of a happy, healthy and successful life. (Refer to magnets.) Moms have told us they want their children to have these characteristics as they are predictors of success. Choose a few of the qualities that are most important for you to give your children as they prepare for a successful journey through life. What makes the trait(s) you selected important to you?” **Listen to client responses.**

Character magnets feature these words:

strong	encouraging	honest	courageous	driven	honorable
resilient	kind	respectful	tolerant	respectful	fair
hopeful	insightful	humble	grateful	polite	forgiving
joyful	ethical	loyal	loving	connected	grit
confident	caring	authentic	optimistic	passionate	
enthusiastic	cooperative	selfless	patient	self-disciplined	

ASK: “You have tremendous power over your child and over what your child becomes. “How would you feel if you were able to give your child all these qualities?” “How old do you think your child needs to be in order to start developing these life-changing qualities?”

Tie to family mealtimes:

SAY: “In the past, children had the opportunity to develop these character traits while sitting on the porch with their families, working together in the garden, quilting and hunting together, and going to family and church events. Those activities where parents could connect with children have become too few and far between, but you don’t have to miss out on the opportunity to give your child character-building values. There is still is one place where you can sit down with your child and put your parental powers in motion.”

ASK: *“Any ideas about what that place may be?”*
Encourage answers.

“Yes, today, children can develop the qualities you want them to have—like the ones you selected—right at the family dinner table. Eating meals together works like magic. You can think of simple dinner conversation with your children as your chance to sprinkle them with ‘magic dust’. And one day, when the dust settles, you won’t recognize the child anymore. Instead, you’ll see the adult you always hoped they’d become.”

Discuss barriers at family dinners.

“At this point, you may be thinking, ‘Sure, the dinner table does provide an opportunity for positive transformation to take shape, but easier said than done.’ Well, if your magic dust isn’t getting through to your children at the dinner table, maybe something is blocking it.”

Address barriers identified by clients or suggest a few of the following barriers:

Perception of perfection:

“Some people think successful family meals are all about formally gathering around a perfectly set table and presenting a home-cooked meal. What would you say to the mom who believes that she has to achieve this perfect illusion in order for the ‘magic dust’ to happen? Trying to be Miss (or Mister) Perfect is probably going to get you all stressed out, and magic dust does not do well with stress.”

Controlling, strict, rigid mealtime rules:

“Some people remember family meals that were punishing and hurtful, not fun and memorable. What would you say to the person who feels mealtime rules need to be strictly enforced? How can any mom become more warm and engaging at mealtimes?”

Stony or uncomfortable silence:

“Some people rush through life and never really stop to listen to their kids or ask questions that lead to a rewarding experience and a fun time. What would you suggest to the person who doesn’t really know how to listen and talk to his or her child?”

Parental and family arguments:

“Sometimes, there’s a fine line between a positive, lively discussion and a nasty, mood-killing argument. What could you do to encourage family connections without conflict?”

Screens (phones, TVs, iPads, video games, etc.) at or near the table:

“What can you do to create a screen-free dinnertable zone?”

ACTION PLAN

Offer clients a “Thumbprint” magnet and a set of “Talk Time” conversation starters.

“This “Thumbprint” magnet is a gift for you. It can remind you that you are a reinvention expert, and each family meal is one way to leave a permanent thumbprint on your child’s heart and life. The ‘Talk Time’ conversation starters are questions you can use at family meals to keep family meals happy and fun. What will you say to yourself this week when you give your child the gift of family meals? Which conversation starter would you like to try this week with your family?”