Session 4

TOP 10 WAYS TO GAIN CONTROL

1. Recognize anger cues:
   Learn how to identify when you are becoming angry. Changes in your tone of voice, muscle tension, body temperature, heart rate, breathing, and other physical cues can help you recognize that your anger is escalating.

2. Talk to yourself:
   Parents may think their children’s behavior is a reflection on their parenting or that the child is intentionally not doing what the parent has asked. Ask yourself why your child is behaving this way. Children behave the way they do for many different reasons. For example, children may not follow directions because they do not understand the direction, or they need help. Identifying the reasons for a child’s behavior helps you to choose the best way to respond.

3. Get calm:
   If you feel yourself becoming angry, take a few deep breaths and exhale. This helps to reduce muscle tension and maintain a controlled response. People use different strategies to calm down and relax; find out what works for you.

4. Take time for yourself:
   Parents are more prone to use physical punishment when they haven’t had any time to themselves, and they feel stressed and overwhelmed. It is important for parents to set aside some time for themselves to do the things that they enjoy. If parents don’t take care of themselves, they may not be able to take care of their children.

5. Set limits:
   Children are more likely to behave well when they have consistent rules and limits to follow. Setting clear limits can often avoid situations that create anger and frustration for you and your child.

6. Give choices:
   Giving children choices within the set limits can prevent power struggles between parents and children (e.g., instead of telling children to clean their rooms, give them a choice of making the bed, putting clothes away, or cleaning up toys). Having choices also gives children a sense of independence and control. Giving children choices may increase their cooperation.

7. Use logical consequences:
   Consequences that are logically related to the behavior help teach children responsibility. For example, a logical consequence for breaking a window is to pay for its replacement.

8. Be consistent:
   Children need to have clear and consistent rules to follow. When parents change rules without notice or issue empty threats, children become confused about what is expected of them. Say what you mean, mean what you say, and do what you said you would do.

9. Give yourself a cool-down period or break:
   If you are feeling overwhelmed and are unable to calm yourself, the best solution is to withdraw yourself from the situation until you can handle it calmly. Take a break to cool down by walking around the block or sitting on the porch. Then, return to deal with the situation in a calm manner.

10. Develop a safety plan:
    Children and parents can work together to develop a plan for situations that are getting out of control to make sure everyone stays safe. Don’t be afraid to seek outside assistance if the situation is escalating beyond your control.