

# Monica

I Didn't Know

Facilitator Discussion Guide

EYFP

## Synopsis

Ms. Stephanie encourages Cameron and Monica to register for the 4-H Healthy Living Summit later in the year. After Ms. Stephanie and Cameron have left, Monica's father suggests that she talk about the Summit with Layla. Monica explains that Layla doesn't want to talk with her at all and shows her father the texts from that morning. Her father suggests that she take the homework and gifts from Cameron to Layla and talk with her in person.

Monica goes over to Layla's house. Layla is laying on a couch, watching television. She is quite angry because she will not be able to finish the year with her cheerleading team. When Monica asks about Shauna, Layla insults Monica. Monica stands up for herself, and Layla admits that she is being unfair. Layla tells Monica that Shauna's brother was arrested, and that her friends are all angry at her for giving Shauna's address to the shelter.

After some discussion about what happened to Max, Layla and Monica try to find common ground. They joke about the flowers Cameron has brought, which seem to have been picked from their yard. Then Layla gets a text from a friend telling her that Shauna's brother was placed into a diversion program for opioid use disorder and that Shauna's family would be sending her to treatment for opioid use disorder as well. The girls reflect on the consequences of misusing prescription substances and the assumptions that they had made about substance misuse. Layla agrees to talk with her parents about the Healthy Living Summit.

Monica returns home, where her father is making dinner. He expresses approval for the Healthy Living Summit because he thinks it will appeal to colleges. Monica finally tells him how she feels about the pressure she faces. Her father explains that he never realized how she was feeling, and that he is very proud of her for making difficult decisions. There is a new level of understanding between Monica and her father at the end of the show.



## Vocabulary Alert!

In this episode, we learn that Jayce has been sent to a **diversion program** (say “**die-ver-shen proh-gram**”). Diversion programs are special systems that help people, like juveniles, people who are battling addiction, or people suffering from mental illness, get the services they need instead of a jail cell or court record. Different programs serve different groups of people, and not all court systems offer diversion programs.

When diversion programs are available, they usually require people to accept responsibility for the harm they caused and find a way to make up for it. They may require counseling, therapy, or community service as part of the deal. The focus in a diversion program is on healing and rehabilitation rather than punishment.

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# Continued

## Facilitator Notes

This episode aligns with Sessions 1-9 of the *Powerful Families, Powerful Communities* curriculum. The goal of this discussion guide is to help participants reflect on resilience and how trusting relationships can promote resilience for all family members.

Episode 9 includes conversations about opioid misuse, animal abuse, law enforcement encounters, and parental death. Some participants may become upset during this session. Watch for signs of distress and adjust the discussion accordingly.

The discussion ends with a quote from Clarissa Pinkola Estés's essay, *Letter to a Young Activist During Troubled Times: Do Not Lose Heart, We Were Made for These Times*.

You can read the entire essay here: [go.ncsu.edu/estasessay](https://go.ncsu.edu/estasessay)

Or to listen to the entire essay: [go.ncsu.edu/youtube.estasessay](https://go.ncsu.edu/youtube.estasessay)

To listen to an excerpt: [go.ncsu.edu/youtube.estasessayexcerpt](https://go.ncsu.edu/youtube.estasessayexcerpt)

## Opening

*What do you think of when you hear the word “resilience”?*

*Today, when we watch the video, look for a time when you feel like someone in Monica’s family displays resilience. We will discuss our ideas after the video ends. (Optional: Write down the timestamp so we can easily find the right place in the video when we share.)*

## After Watching the Video

After the video, facilitate a discussion with the group. Begin by reminding the group of the expectations set during Session 1.

## Round-robin Question

It is important for everyone to contribute to this question as a way to build trust and practice listening. You can choose to go in a circle or let participants “popcorn” respond. An option that doesn’t involve speech is to hold up a piece of paper with a timestamp written on it.

*When did you notice that someone in Monica’s family displayed resilience in today’s Episode?*

*(Optional: Tell us the timestamp of the moment you picked.)*

As participants share, replay the clip they describe. (If multiple people pick the same moment, replay it the first time only in the interest of time.)

# Continued

## Comprehension Questions

These are suggested questions. It is not necessary to ask every question in this list. Participants may answer some of the questions before you ask them, or they may bring up their own questions to explore.

As a facilitator, your job is to listen far more than you speak. In general, ask a new question only if conversation has hit a dead end and 30 seconds of silent time doesn't break the stalemate, or if you sense the discussion veering into unproductive territory. You may also want to ask follow up questions if a participant makes an interesting point that no one else takes up spontaneously. Finally, if you have some very vocal participants, you may need to occasionally break in to invite quieter participants to speak or to repeat a point that might have gone unheard.

At the beginning of Scene 2, why do you think Layla acts the way she does towards Monica?

- In Scene 2, Layla says, "I always thought drug addicts were, like, bad people, not people I hung out with." Why might she have said this statement?
- Monica responds to Layla saying, "Yeah, it's really scary. I'm so glad you—" but she doesn't finish her sentence. What do you think she was going to say, and why might she have decided to change the subject instead?
- In Scene 3, Monica's father mentions college. Why does Monica react the way she does?
- What do you think might happen with Monica and her family after Episode 9? Explain.

## Closing Questions

*There are three closing questions. The first question asks participants to apply their ideas to the fictional story shown in the video, while the second question asks them to apply their ideas to their own lives. Participants may spontaneously ask one another the first question or address it through discussion, but be prepared to ask it if they do not.*

- In her essay, Letter to a Young Activist During Troubled Times: Do Not Lose Heart, We Were Made for These Times, Clarissa Pinkola Estés writes, "Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach." In what ways did Monica learn to "[stretch] out to mend the part of the world that is within [her] reach"?
- In what ways has our work helped you to "[stretch] out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach"?
- Using your own experience as a guide, what would you tell someone who is just starting this program?

## Talking Tips

Participants may have a lot of their own ideas or questions, especially after viewing the entire series. Let the discussion grow organically.

Remind participants to ground their ideas by clearly tying their statements back to the video. This can help keep the discussion productive.

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