

Risking Connection[®] for Foster Parents Handouts and Worksheets

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Exercise: If Feelings Skills Could Speak

What Would They Say... WHEN IMPAIRED	WHEN STRONG
Inner Connection to Others I'm all alone in the world It's terrifying to be alone I can't feel you when you aren't right here PLEASE don't leave me If you leave, you're NEVER coming back I'll do ANYTHING to make you stay	Inner Connection to Others Someone loves me She is thinking of me When I'm upset, I can think of you You're ALWAYS with me, even when we're not together When I'm upset, I remember what you told me I'm alone, but I'm not lonely
Worthy of Life I'm not like you, or anyone else I'm bad, worse than bad No one could love me because I'm unlovable I won't let you see how hideous I am Don't make me look bad, or you'll be sorry Everyone already knows I'm bad, so I'll just act that way I screwed up AGAIN , there's nothing I can do	Worthy of Life I am loveable I am touchable I deserve good things I deserve to live I screwed up, but I'm an okay person I'll say I'm sorry and it'll be okay
Managing Feelings I don't know what I'm feeling I don't want to feel This feeling is too much for me I'll never stop feeling this way I can't stand it I don't know what to do I've GOT to get rid of this feeling	Managing Feelings I'm having a sensation, a feeling That feeling has a word I can survive this feeling It is just a feeling I have small feelings I have big feelings I can make my feelings smaller I can talk about my feelings with someone and feel better

Worksheet: Our Healing Home

Indicators of Trauma-Informed Foster Care

Rate how much you currently do these things.

1	2	3	4	5
I very rarely do this behavior				I always do this behavior

Foster Parents' Beliefs and Actions	Current Practice
1. I feel that "my child is doing the best he can" rather than believing he is acting intentionally (i.e., "he is acting this way because he wants to", "he's not motivated", "if he can choose to act up, he can choose not to").	
2. I explore the problem (i.e., "what's going on?", "what's wrong?") rather than immediately speaking to my child about consequences.	
3. I understand that my child is trying to meet her needs through her problem behavior. So I try to figure out what needs she is meeting and help her learn better ways to meet them.	
4. I actively listen to my child (i.e., listen carefully, restate the problem, empathize with feelings and needs).	
5. I avoid comments that could be shaming to my child (i.e., insist he do things that he can't do, isolate him, scold him in front of others).	
6. I avoid power struggles with my child (i.e., arguing with child, proving child wrong)	
7. I refer to my child in descriptive ways rather than using negative labels (i.e., manipulative, bad, troublemaker, untrustworthy).	
8. I value flexibility in managing my child's behavior rather than strict compliance with rules.	
9. When my child is upset, I mainly work to help her calm down.	
10. I talk with my team about my strong positive and negative reactions to my child.	
11. I ask other people for help or allow people to help when I get stuck trying to manage my child's behavior.	
12. I work well with the other people in my child's life (treaters, bio family, school).	
13. I find ways to take care of myself and do the things I enjoy.	
14. I talk with my team about how providing foster care is affecting me over time.	

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Worksheet: Assessing and Strengthening Feelings Skills

1. Describe a recent crisis with a particular foster child:

2. Assessment of Feelings Skills:

Place a check mark beside the feelings skills that this child needs to strengthen. Briefly explain how the crisis shows problems with this feelings skill

- ☐ Inner connection to others (The ability to feel connected to a loved one when s/he is not present and use the connection to calm down)
- ☐ Ability to Manage Shame (The ability to hold onto a sense of oneself as deserving and worthwhile)
- ☐ Ability to Soothe Strong Feelings (The ability to use skills to soothe oneself)

3. Strategies for strengthening the feelings skills for this child:

For each feelings skill that is weak (checked above), describe 1 or 2 ways you could strengthen the skill.

- ☐ Inner Connection to Others
- ☐ Managing Shame
- ☐ Soothe Strong Feelings

Worksheet: Symptoms as Adaptations #1

Choose the answer that you think best explains how the child's behavior is adaptive or meets a need in the moment. Think about WHY your answer best illustrates the idea of symptoms as adaptations.

1. You and your foster son Tommy are shopping. Tommy sees an expensive new toy that he wants. He starts demanding that you buy it. When you say no, Tommy starts to cry and loudly yells, "You hate me, everyone hates me. I never get anything I want," until you become angry and embarrassed. It's so bad that you need to leave the store with him.
 - a. Tommy is spoiled and thinks that if he makes enough noise you will give in.
 - b. Tommy feels unloved and doesn't think anyone will ever meet his needs.
 - c. Tommy is angry with you and wants to ruin your day.
 - d. Tommy needs to be the center of attention, even if it means getting negative attention.
2. Your family holds a birthday party for your foster daughter Serena. A lot of people attend and there is a cake, games, and fun. Serena is given quite a few presents. After everyone has left you go to her room and discover that Serena has deliberately broken several of her new toys.
 - a. Serena doesn't like your family
 - b. The toys people gave her were not what Serena wanted.
 - c. Serena is ungrateful and doesn't appreciate what everyone is doing for her.
 - d. Serena doesn't feel that she deserves such presents or a party.
3. Your foster daughter Martha has been with you for eight months. It seems to be working out well. You are leaving to go away overnight to visit your sister. Martha has been fussy all day and will not come out of her room to say goodbye to you. When you come back you find that Martha has broken a family picture that you keep on your dresser.
 - a. Martha still is not attached to you and she is glad you are going away.
 - b. Martha doesn't like your family.
 - c. Martha was scared that you were leaving and thought you might never come back.
 - d. Martha has no respect for other people's things.
4. You get a call that your foster son Jeff had a bad day in school and has been suspended for three days. You go over to where he is watching TV, turn off the set, and tell him you have to talk about school. He immediately hurls the remote, just missing you, and then starts pushing things off the table. "I don't have to talk to you, you witch," he says. "You aren't my real mother."
 - a. Jeff takes his anger out on other people and feels "big and bad" by doing so.
 - b. Jeff is ashamed. He knows you're going to tell him how bad he is like everyone else has. He'll hurt you before you hurt him.
 - c. Jeff never takes responsibility for his behavior. He always blames someone else.
 - d. Jeff is violent just like his father.

Worksheet: Symptoms as Adaptations #2

1. Describe a symptom/behavior of a foster child that is difficult to understand and/or difficult to manage.
2. How might that symptom/behavior be adaptive for that child? What problem might it solve at the moment? Be as specific as possible.
3. What are some possible ways the child might solve that same problem with less negative consequences?

Sample: Our Crisis Prevention and Management Plan (Bob)

Child Section:

1. What makes me feel really scared, upset, angry, or sad and could cause me to have a problem?
Too much noise. Yelling. When a lot of people are talking it makes me upset. Being told "no." No structure or routine. I get scared when I feel lonely. I get scared when my mom isn't home. Bedtime is hard for me.
2. What do I think or feel first when I am getting upset?
I feel mad, sad, nervous, excited. My head feels hot and my ears might turn red. Clench my teeth. My heart beats fast and sometimes hurts.
3. What do I or others notice or what do I think or feel when I am getting REALLY upset?
I pace, yell, say mean things, stay alone in my room, refuse to follow directions, refuse to talk, repeat the same thing/question over-and-over again. Threaten and punch. I may "zone out" and clench my teeth.
4. What kind of things do I sometimes do or say when I am VERY upset?
I swear and throw things. I kick, yell, pinch, and threaten to bite.
5. What is important to know about me when you are helping me and I am REALLY upset, sad, or scared? (medical conditions, etc.)
I don't like to hurt people, but I sometimes do when I'm sad, angry, or threatened. I might try to pinch you.
6. What are some things that help me calm down when I get upset?
Talking to my mom, getting away from the situation, finding something else to do. Talking about movies and telling jokes. I like to read and be read to. Asking if I need a hug. I like to be wrapped up in a blanket like a cocoon. I like my back rubbed- it calms me down.
7. What does NOT help when I am starting to get upset, angry, sad or scared?
Yelling. A lot of talking. Being told about punishments. Being in groups. Too many people around me talking to me.
8. What else do I want you to know about me?
That I have trouble sleeping and like a back rub, bedtime story, and being wrapped in my blanket.

Parent Section:

9. Known Risk Factors: (asthma or other physical health status/medical risk, disabilities or limitations, medications, size, boundaries, abuse history, dissociation, etc.)

Bob has a difficult time during transitions and especially after a transition back to the unit from home. Bob had heart surgery about 1.5 years ago and has a pacemaker. Bob also has a history of having difficulty around bedtime and needs extra support around this time.

10. Are there any things that the parents or other caretakers definitely should not do based on current medical conditions? If so, what are they?

The following are current recommendations from his Cardiologist:

"If Bob is truly out of control, then his safety should be considered as he can potentially injure his pacemaker and the wire during his period of being out of control."

"If there is any concern that his pacemaker was injured or that there was a problem then he can be brought directly to the emergency room and a chest x-ray can be obtained to check the pacemaker wire and see if there is any obvious fracture."

Our Crisis Prevention and Management Plan (Blank)

Child Section:

1. What makes me feel really scared, upset, angry, or sad and could cause me to have a problem?
2. What do I think or feel first when I am getting upset?
3. What do I or others notice or what do I think or feel when I am getting REALLY upset?
4. What kinds of things do I sometimes do or say when I am VERY upset?
5. What is important to know about me when you are helping me when I am REALLY upset, sad, or scared?
6. What are some things that help me calm down when I get upset?
7. What does NOT help when I am starting to get upset, angry, sad or scared?
8. What else do I want you to know about me?

Parent Section:

9. My child's special needs (asthma or other physical conditions):

10. Are there any things we should remember or do differently when we respond to a crisis based on his/her medical and/or physical conditions? If so, what are they?

Worksheet: Using Your Reactions

Self-Awareness Worksheet

1. Think of a current or past relationship with a foster child in which you have/had strong feelings.
Child's first name: _____

2. What feelings words come to mind

About this child?

About this relationship?

About yourself in this relationship?

3. What is the most difficult or challenging thing about this relationship for you?
4. What are your similarities to this child? Differences?
5. Does this child remind you of anyone or anything from your life?

6. If you could change one thing *about this child*, what would it be?

About yourself in your relationship with him or her?

7. Have you ever talked with anyone about your relationship with this child? Did that help?

8. After having completed this worksheet, what ideas are new or clearer to you about this relationship? What can you use to strengthen the relationship?

Worksheet: 10 Characteristics of a Resilient Person

Directions: Rate how true the statement is for you. Then pick the 2 highest scores and answer the question how you acquired this ability. For the 2 lowest scores, answer how you could build this capacity.

1	2	3	4	5
Not So Much Yet		So-So		Very True for Me

Characteristic	Rating	For 2 highest scores, how did you acquire this ability?	For 2 lowest scores, what could you do to build this ability?
1. I have a strong social support system.			
2. I look at the positive side of challenging situations.			
3. I have faith in myself to get through challenges.			
4. I am curious about situations and focus on new possibilities.			
5. I feel connected to my values and see meaning and purpose in what I do.			
6. I focus on the important things and don't fight things I cannot control.			
7. I take responsibility for my physical self-care.			
8. I seek solutions for problems that arise and can live with uncertainty until a solution is found.			
9. I consider adversity a challenge, not a threat.			
10. I have a sense of humor about challenges.			

Adapted from: *The Resilience Alliance: Promoting Resilience and Reducing Secondary Trauma in Child Welfare Staff*; ACS-NYU Children's Trauma Institute, September 2001.

Characteristics adapted from: <http://ezinearticles.com/?10-Characteristics-of-Resilient-People&id=5648714>

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Worksheet: Making Amends to Restore Relationships at Home

Think of a time when a child in your home did something that hurt others.

1. What led up to the behavior?

2. What was the child experiencing?

3. What needs was the child trying to meet?

4. What would you like the child to do when he is feeling this way?

5. What skills, beliefs or knowledge would he need to do this?

6. What could the child do to make up for the harm he caused?

Handout: Restorative Tasks for Making Amends -- Suggestion Sheet

The first step in making amends is to figure out who was affected by the behavior. Who was hurt, inconvenienced, upset, insulted?

Then, consider what the child can do to work it out with the person affected and make his or her life better.

This may include listening to their account of how they felt during the situation. It may include the child telling them steps he or she will take to avoid it happening again.

Tasks to make amends for damage done to an individual:

- Talk with the person affected about how the experience felt
- Write the story of the event from their point of view
- Make a poster or card for the person hurt (drawing, or collage) to explain what happened and how the child was feeling before the event
- Write the person a letter
- Do a chore for or with the person
- Replace something that was broken
- Make something for the person - a decoration, or food
- Do an activity with the person affected or play a game with them
- Teach the person something (like how to play a video game)

Tasks to make amends for damage done to the whole family

- Decorations
- Posters illustrating feelings and positive behaviors
- Make food for family
- Cleaning
- Weeding
- Setting out a treat for each family member
- Lead a family activity
- Teach something to younger children, or read to them
- Clean the car
- Repair something you broke. If you cannot repair it, do something nice for the people who do have to repair it (like bake cookies for Dad who has to do the repair)

Handout: Trauma-Informed Behavior Management in Foster Care

What To Do
To Prevent Problems
Alliance comes before compliance.
Be reliable and honest. Be patient as it will take a long time for the child to trust you.
Pay attention to helping the child feel safe in your home.
Help the child by naming emotions and sharing your own ways of managing life's problems
Reassure the child that things are not as bad as they seem.
Think about what problem the child is trying to solve, advantages he gets out of his behavior
Help him learn how to stay calm, model staying calm yourself.
Help the child experience success, notice small progress.
Structure, rituals and schedules are extremely important.
Problems in the areas of bed times and hygiene should not be addressed through punishments or rewards. Support children through parent closeness and creative interventions.
During a Problem
Ask yourself: is the child feeling safe?
As yourself: is he over stimulated?
Be aware of the intensity of shame, be careful not to shame the child, and understand the way shame might keep a child from acting
When a child is agitated or out of control, all parent efforts should be to help them calm down. Listen and understand, don't give advice
Children who are having difficulty should be kept closer to parents
Forcing a child to be alone in any room should not be done.
Behavioral difficulty should be handled through re-direction and coaxing. Punishments should not be threatened or used except as a last resort.
After a Problem
Until the child has repaired their relationships, they should not participate in extra or just-for-fun activities. They should be part of all regular activities.
When the child has repaired their relationships and is back on track, they should return to all normal activity.
Parents, team, and child should talk about the event and learn from it. How did it start? What contributed to the problem? What needs was the child meeting? What helped? Ideas for next time?
Parent should talk about the event with the child, share their own feelings about it and listen to the child's feelings.

Risking Connection for Foster Parents Program Evaluation

Date:		RC Training Type: RC Foster Parent Training				
Physical Environment						
Please rate the facilities in the following areas:						
1. Temperature	Too cold	OK	Too hot			
	1 2 3 4 5					
2. Size of room	Cramped	OK	Too big			
	1 2 3 4 5					
3. Ease of access	Hard	OK	Very Easy			
	1 2 3 4 5					
4. Lighting	Bad	OK	Great			
	1 2 3 4 5					
Trainer #1 Name:		Low (1)		High (5)		
1. Spoke clearly and understandably	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Generated audience participation	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Related our experience to content	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Exemplified RICH –Respect, Information, Connection and Hope	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Gave us information we can use	1	2	3	4	5	
Trainer #2 Name:		Low (1)		High (5)		
1. Spoke clearly and understandably	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Generated audience participation	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Related our experience to content	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Exemplified RICH – Respect, Information, Connection, and Hope	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Gave us information we can use	1	2	3	4	5	

Feedback for the Future	
What benefits did you get from the program?	
Would you recommend this training to a foster parent? Why or why not?	
What could we do to improve this program?	