



# Put on Your Oxygen Mask

SESSION THREE FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR ARC REFLECTIONS

SUMMER 2017

## ARC REFLECTIONS

ARC, or Attachment, Regulation and Competency, is a framework for working with children and teens who have experienced trauma. Developed by Margaret Blaustein and Kristine Kinniburgh of the Justice Resource Institute, ARC builds on the resilience of children, teens and families.

ARC Reflections — an ARC-informed caregiver training curriculum for foster parents, kin and other caregivers — was written by Blaustein and Kinniburgh with support and consultation from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The model was piloted in six child welfare agencies in 2015 and evaluated by Child Trends, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center with a focus on child welfare.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



TRAUMA CENTER

At Justice Resource Institute

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# PREPARING TO FACILITATE

## A CHECKLIST

### Materials needed

- Whiteboard or flip chart and markers
- Name tags
- Slide packet
- Pens and paper
- Multicolored markers on each table
- PowerPoint slides
- Life Savers® candies for all participants
- Small basket of manipulatives (if available) and descriptions of the regulation activities from your *Facilitator Welcome and Handouts* booklet (either on whole sheets or cut the activities into squares) on each table

### Handouts

- Check-in handout (today you will need three per participant)
- “What is in your head?” worksheet
- Toolbox worksheet
- Self-reflection worksheet: Your “life savers”
- Homework sheet: What makes a hard day?
- Summary sheet (with teaching points, homework assignment)

## A NOTE ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Words written in italics are generally suggesting that you, the facilitator, take an action. For example, that you *Focus on themes of caring and responsiveness* or *Suggest that participants pair up*.



# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO SESSION THREE

## WELCOME

 <p>THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION</p> <p>TRAUMA CENTER At Justice Resource Institute</p>	<h3>ARC Reflections</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ARC, or <b>Attachment, Regulation and Competency</b>, is a framework for working with children and teens who have experienced trauma. Developed by Margaret Blaustein and Kristine Kinniburgh of the Justice Resource Institute, <b>ARC builds on the resilience of children, teens and families</b></li><li>• ARC Reflections — an ARC-informed caregiver training curriculum for foster parents, kin and other caregivers — was written by Blaustein and Kinniburgh with support and consultation from the Annie E. Casey Foundation</li></ul>
<h3>Welcome</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This group will meet nine times for two hours each time</li><li>• <b>Please attend all sessions</b></li><li>• Each session will include the following segments:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Warm-up</li><li>• Opening check-in</li><li>• Review and report back</li><li>• Theme of the day</li><li>• Self-reflection</li><li>• Take home</li><li>• Practice</li><li>• Closing check-in</li></ul></li></ul>	

SLIDES 1, 2 AND 3: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

### Welcome

Hello! *Reintroduce yourself and remind participants about basic information necessary to ensure their comfort (parking, location of restrooms, breaks) and the structure of the meeting.*



**WARM-UP**

You Are a Superhero!

- **List your superpowers** (such as listening, patience, etc.)
- Develop a motto that reflects your mission as a foster parent (such as, "Truth and justice for all")
- Choose a superhero name



SLIDES 4 AND 5: WARM-UP

### Goal

*To support foster parents and caregivers in reflecting on areas of strength, competency and mastery as well as on personal values related to their roles as foster parents and caregivers.*

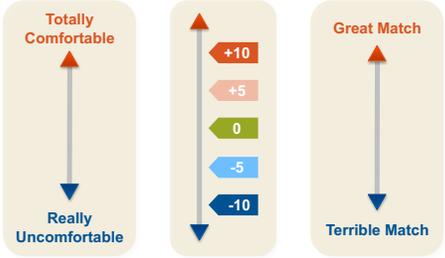
### Ask/Do

- *Read slide, and ask participants to complete the prompts.*
- Who is willing to volunteer and share one of his or her superpowers?
- *Possible prompts for discussion include:* What was it like to sit and think about your strengths? How did it feel? Are there times when your superpowers get challenged? What are the ways you recharge your superpower energy?



**OPENING CHECK-IN**

Where Is Your Energy Now?



Get Comfortable

- If your energy is comfortable and a good match, great!
- If not, **what can you do to get it there?**

**SLIDES 6 – 8: OPENING CHECK-IN**

### Goals

*To increase awareness of internal experience and the effect of this experience on our ability to be present and engaged; to increase awareness of coping strategies; and to engage caregivers in a parallel process, as this is a skill set they will be supporting in their child or teen.*

### Do

*Ask participants to complete the opening check-in. A reminder of possible prompts is provided below.*

### Ask

- Please notice the level of energy or arousal in your body and rate it on the provided scale.
- Notice the degree to which this energy or arousal is comfortable or uncomfortable and rate that.
- Notice the degree to which your energy or arousal is a good match for the current situation (participating in this session) and rate that.

## Do

Please feel free to explore the strategies and tools provided on your tables (such as the small manipulatives and index cards that describe simple activities) and identify anything that might help you feel comfortable and effective in your body.

## **HANDOUT: CHECK-IN**



Review

- Behavior makes sense and is often an attempt to meet a need
- To understand your children's and teens' behavior:
  - Remember the lens: Perception is reality
  - Behavior addresses a need: **Survival trumps everything**
  - Ability to recover: Where are the resources?
- To address behavior successfully, cultivate your curiosity

SLIDES 9 AND 10: PREVIOUS MEETING REVIEW

### Goal

*To review content from the previous session.*

### Teach

- Last week, we talked about the fact that behavior comes from somewhere. Behavior can act as a clue to help us to discover and then understand the needs of children and teens in our care.
- The primary need of children and teens exposed to chronic trauma is safety (avoiding danger). They will sacrifice other needs to survive in their world.
- Children and teens may perceive danger in situations that do not appear dangerous or frightening to us.
- When children or teens invest their energy in survival, they do so at the expense of developing other key skills — skills that would help them recover from distress in the moment and effectively navigate their daily lives.
- It is very difficult to address or change a child's or teen's behavior if you don't know what the behavior is communicating. That's why we try to be curious about what is underneath the behaviors we are seeing.

### Ask

- Does anyone have questions remaining from the content in our previous session?
- Does anyone want to share something that really stood out as they thought about our session last week?

## Report Back

- In small groups, discuss what you practiced
  - **What went well?**
  - What was challenging?
  - What was something you noticed?

### SLIDE II: REPORT BACK

#### Goal

*To provide foster parents and caregivers with an opportunity to review last week's practice.*

*Assignment: To observe a challenging behavior, identifying triggers and function.*

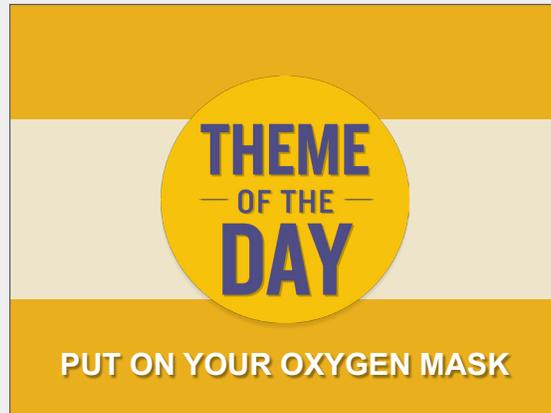
#### Do

Please get into small groups (at your table or with people near you) and discuss your experience with the practice. Each of you was asked to observe a challenging behavior and identify triggers and functions. *After small group discussion, provide a brief opportunity for larger group report back.*

#### Ask

- Does anyone want to share something about your experience with the practice?
- Did any of you have a hard time with the practice? *Make sure to normalize any challenges by asking if other group members experienced similar difficulties.*
- Did any of you find the practice particularly helpful? Why?

## THEME: PUT ON YOUR OXYGEN MASK



SLIDE 12: THIS WEEK'S THEME: PUT ON YOUR OXYGEN MASK

### Goal

*To introduce today's theme.*

### Introduce

- Today's session will focus on some very important people: all of you. To care for children and teens, it is important that you feel supported and have tools to manage your own feelings.
- It is very difficult to support another person when you are overwhelmed, stressed, exhausted or just generally not in a good place. For this reason, we remind you to put on your own oxygen mask before helping someone else.

## Foster parenting is hard



PARENTING IS HARD...  
BUT FOSTER PARENTING IS HARDER

SLIDE 13: FOSTER PARENTING IS HARD

### Teach

- Parenting is one of the most difficult jobs an individual can have. Even with biological children there are times when it can be challenging to figure out what a child or teen needs in a given moment. In part, this is because of the unique characteristics of each child or teen, the dynamic process of development and the complicated nature of parenting in general.
- Foster parenting adds many layers of complexity to this process. Foster parents often do not have the luxury of easing into the process. Often, you begin your journey with a child or teen at a stressful moment, knowing very little about a child's or teen's strengths and needs. The child that comes to you may come from a very different background than you, whether it be race, religion, language, socioeconomic status, gender or sexual identity or just different experiences in life. These differences can add to the complex relationship between you and the children in your home.

## Linking the concept to Olivia

Checking In on Olivia	More About Olivia
<p><b>Olivia:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has been in a new foster home for about six months. It is her longest placement since entry into the system</li><li>• Is 5 years old, but she acts like a 2- or 3-year-old most of the time</li><li>• <b>Needs constant support</b> to complete daily self-care tasks, including eating and using the toilet</li><li>• Has a very limited capacity for independent play and is persistent in her attempts to engage positive or negative attention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When Olivia's foster parents provide attention, Olivia often rejects it, screaming, "I hate you!" and "I want a new family!"</li><li>• Even minor redirection leads to severe and persistent tantrums that include screaming, crying, throwing things, cursing and, at times, aggression toward her foster parents</li><li>• Even on good days, <b>she still melts down every night</b> at bedtime, crying and clinging when her foster mother leaves the room</li></ul>

SLIDES 14 AND 15: LINKING THE CONCEPT TO OLIVIA

### Goal

*To return to the example of Olivia and describe some of the behaviors in which she engages that may be challenging.*

### Teach

Let's check in with Olivia and talk about some of the behaviors she displays that may be challenging.

### Do

*Read the slides.*

### Ask

- We've previously developed a list of some of the challenging behaviors you have seen in your homes. Do Olivia's behaviors remind you of any of the children you've cared for?
- What do you think it is like for Olivia's foster parents when she engages in some of these challenging behaviors? *You may wish to include prompts such as: What might they be feeling? Thinking? Wishing they could do in these moments?*

### Some Questions for You

- Thinking about your own journey as a foster parent:
  - What are some of the things that have been most challenging for you?
  - What do you wish you had known entering into this process?
  - What feelings and thoughts do you notice coming up for YOU when parenting feels hard?

#### SLIDE 16: THE CHALLENGE OF BEING A FOSTER PARENT OR CAREGIVER

### Goal

*To engage foster parents and caregivers in a discussion of some of the challenges they experience in responding to challenging behaviors, emotions and situations.*

### Do

- *Using the prompts on the slide, engage the group in a brief discussion of challenges they have experienced as a foster parent or kin caregiver. Try to keep the focus on the foster parent or caregiver's own experience rather than on specific child behaviors. For instance, if a foster parent says, "I hate it when my foster kids lie to me," the group leader might ask, "What feelings or thoughts do you notice coming up for you when you think kids are lying?" Write responses on a whiteboard or flip chart.*
- *Notice any similarities and differences in what various group members are naming; pick a few common responses and ask how many participants have shared these experiences.*
- *Refer back to this list of experiences as often as possible today.*

### Some Answers

- Other foster parents have shared these challenges:
  - **It's hard to parent from the middle** — in the absence of a child's history or previous relationships
  - There is so much that is unexpected and unpredictable — placements, transitions, behavior, histories
  - Lack of control
  - Lack of information
  - Lack of resources

#### SLIDE 17: THE CHALLENGES FACED BY FOSTER PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

### Goal

*To illustrate some of the common challenges of foster parenting.*

### Do

- *Briefly review the list.*
- *Link to what participants offered on the previous slide.*

### The Challenge

- How do you connect with a child or teen for whom connection may be loaded, undefined, unpredictable, undesirable, frightening, desperate or all of these at once?

SLIDE 18: BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A CHILD OR TEEN WHO MAY FEAR CONNECTION

#### Goal

*To involve foster parents and caregivers in a reflective process about engagement with children and teens who have experienced trauma.*

#### Teach/Discuss

- Children and teens in foster care enter into the relationship with you and your family looking through a lens colored by abuse, maltreatment, neglect, loss and separation. Often, they have developed self-protective strategies and may distance, disconnect and withdraw from the adult who is attempting to help.
- For foster parents, this can feel very personal and is often emotionally draining.

## Why self-care is important

<p>Why Are We Talking About Your Feelings?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Because you matter</b></li><li>• Because the more regulated you are, the more effective you are</li><li>• <b>Because all of this affects kids in your care</b></li></ul>	<p>Before We Go Any Further</p> <p>Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Even your less attractive feelings make sense</li><li>• Kids' behavior feels really personal sometimes</li><li>• <b>Everyone has terribly hard days</b></li><li>• No one makes good choices all the time</li><li>• You can recover from missteps</li></ul>
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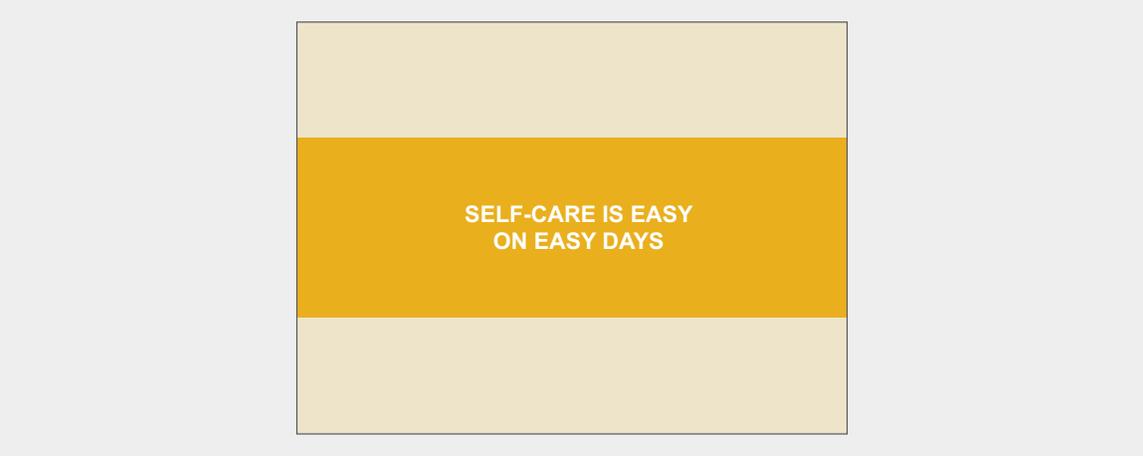
SLIDES 19 AND 20: WHY YOUR FEELINGS ARE IMPORTANT

### Goals

*To emphasize the important role foster parents and caregivers play in the lives of children and teens who have experienced trauma; validate foster parents' and caregivers' emotions, reactions and missteps; and highlight the link between self-care and effective foster parenting.*

### Teach

- Foster parents play an incredibly important role in the lives of children and teens.
- The more in control, regulated and competent you feel, the more likely you will feel effective in caring for children, and the more likely the child or teen is to experience you as a safe resource.
- Almost everyone struggles with hard feelings sometimes. It feels personal when a child or teen calls you a name, targets a vulnerable spot or seems determined to hurt you. It is OK to feel how you feel. It's what you do with the feelings that matters the most when parenting children and teens who have experienced trauma.



SELF-CARE IS EASY  
ON EASY DAYS

SLIDE 21: WHY SELF-CARE IS IMPORTANT

### Goal

*To highlight that self-care is a complicated skill that is most challenging to implement on the days caregivers need it the most.*

### Ask

- How are each of you doing in terms of providing care to yourselves? Can I have a show of hands:
  - How many of you feel like you are doing a really great job focusing on your self-care?
  - How many of you feel like you sometimes struggle with this?

### Teach

- *Congratulate those who are doing well and normalize the experiences of those who struggle.*
- What is self-care? It is the ability to actively focus on your own basic needs for safety, security, connection and regulation.
- All our self-care practices are going to ebb and flow depending on our situation and circumstance. Perhaps those of us who are doing well today were struggling last week or will struggle next month. Our experience and our feelings about our self-care success is likely to vary over time.
- We tend to do a better job with self-care when things are going well and struggle when there are more challenges in our lives. Our self-care practices are more likely to break down or become absent during moments or periods of stress or when we need them most.

### So What Makes a Hard Day?

Factors related to your child or teen:

- Normal child or teen stuff
- Tough behaviors
- Disruptions: Visits with family, therapy, unexpected transitions
- Bearing witness: **Painful feelings**, memories, experiences
- Having to go to bat and advocate for what makes sense (for school, placements, visits, treatment)

SLIDE 22: HOW YOUR CHILD OR TEEN CONTRIBUTES TO A "HARD DAY"

#### Goal

*To illustrate how factors related to the child or teen in care can contribute to a hard day.*

#### Teach

There are so many factors that affect your stress level and that in turn contribute to having a hard day.

#### Ask

This slide lists some things related to your child or teen that can make for a hard day. Can you add things that are missing from this list? *Write participants' responses on the flip chart or whiteboard.*

### So What Makes a Hard Day?

#### Factors related to your larger world:

- Bills
- Other children's needs
- Maintaining relationships
- Schedule disruptions
- Job demands
- School demands
- Other stressors
- "Positive" stresses, such as a new job, new home, celebrations

SLIDE 23: LIFE STRESSORS AND HARD DAYS

### Goal

*To illustrate how factors related to a foster parent or caregiver's world can contribute to a hard day.*

### Ask

There are things other than the child or teen that affect how you experience any given day. Sometimes there are things happening in your world that can increase your stress. On the slide are some examples. What else would you add? *Add to the list on the flip chart or whiteboard.*

### So What Makes a Hard Day?

#### Factors related to your self:

- Being tired, sick, hungry, overworked
- Being pulled in multiple directions
- When expectations don't match what happens
- Your own history and push buttons
- When something threatens your feelings of competence and confidence
- **Feelings**, even if unrelated to the child or teen
- Heightened arousal: Waiting for the sky to fall

#### SLIDE 24: HARD DAYS RELATED TO YOUR SELF

#### Goal

*To illustrate how factors related to each participant's self can contribute to a hard day.*

#### Ask

There are things related to your own experience that can make for a hard day. Can you add things that are missing from this list? *Add these examples to your flip chart or white board list.*

#### Teach

- Each factor we have discussed can increase your feelings of stress on a given day.
- These stressors are not mutually exclusive and can add to and affect each other. For instance, if you are tired and feeling sick, you may find your child's behaviors even more stressful than usual. Or your child's most challenging behaviors can make you feel particularly tired and out of sorts.

### So What Can You Do?

- Acknowledge that **this is hard**
- Stay aware — of yourself, your feelings, your push buttons
- Build a self-care toolbox

SLIDE 25: HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH ALL THIS HARD STUFF?

#### Goal

*To introduce the three strategies that will be discussed on the following slides.*

#### Ask

- We are going to talk about three strategies that can help you focus on self-care and stay regulated in the moments when you need self-regulation most.
- These are the tools that will be discussed in the coming slides.

### Acknowledge That This Is Hard

- Do you always give yourself permission to feel what you feel?
  - **Your feelings matter**
  - Feelings give you information (if you stay aware of them)
- **But:**
  - Feelings are not always comfortable
  - Feelings can put us on the Express Road

#### SLIDE 26: ACKNOWLEDGE CHALLENGES AND FEELINGS

#### Goal

*To establish that the first step in managing challenging emotions is to acknowledge that they exist.*

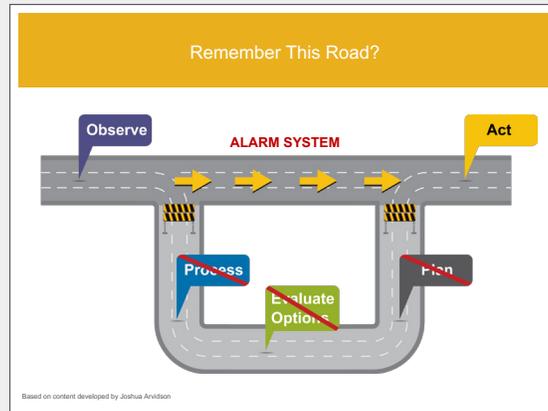
#### Ask

- Can I get a show of hands: Who always gives him- or herself permission to feel what you feel?
- The key word here is always. Can you share some ideas about why it is challenging to always allow yourself to feel what you feel?

#### Teach

It is common for us to experience shame and guilt about our feelings. This can cause us to criticize and question the validity, morality and importance of what we feel. In response to this, we may shut down or deny or dismiss our own feelings and experiences.

## Are you on the Express Road?



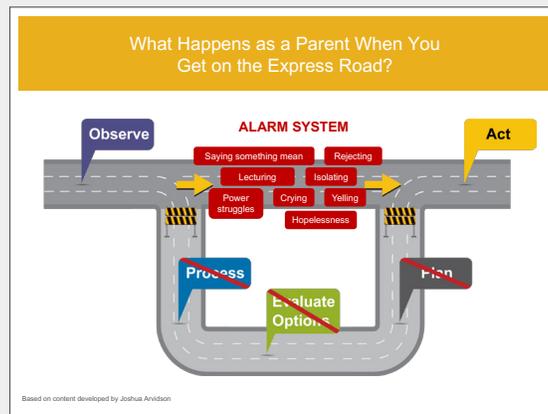
SLIDE 27: THE EXPRESS ROAD AND MAIN ROAD

### Goal

*To remind participants that with any signal of possible danger, children's and teens' brains will take the Express Road to action.*

### Teach

- Remember the Express Road? Last week, we talked about how, when faced with signals of possible danger, children's and teens' brains can take the Express Road to action, bypassing things like thinking, evaluating or planning.
- The same is true for adults who experience stress or who have their own traumatic experiences. The challenges of parenting children and teens who have experienced trauma may lead you to take the Express Road to reaction.



SLIDE 28: CLUES THAT YOU MAY BE ON THE EXPRESS ROAD

**Goal**

To identify behavioral clues in foster parents and caregivers that indicate they may be on the Express Road to reaction.

**Ask**

- So what are some clues that you may be on the Express Road? *Review the list on the slide.*
- Ask participants to take a moment to think about their individual clues that they might be on the Express Road and jot these down. If appropriate, ask if anyone would like to share a clue they have noticed.

(Try to) Stay on the Main Road

- **How?**
  - **Anticipate**
    - Be aware of stressors that lead to hard days for you related to your child or teen, your world and your self
  - **Stay aware**/catch it
    - How do you know when you are having a hard day?
  - **Check in**

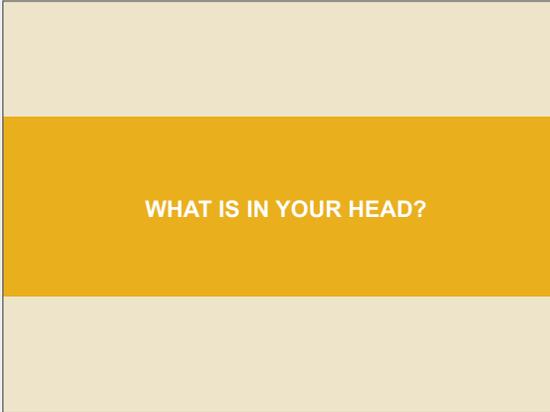
SLIDE 29: HOW TO STAY ON THE MAIN ROAD

### Goal

*To identify two primary strategies for preventing reactions on hard days.*

### Teach

- The more we become aware of and pay attention to our stressors or push buttons, the more we are able to anticipate and manage our reactions to them.
- When you anticipate, it puts you in a particular state of mind — one that allows you to think, plan and problem-solve. This helps you respond instead of react.
- Checking in with ourselves, like we do with the Check-In tool, can help us pay attention to all of those clues that suggest we are entering the Express Road.
- **As a reminder:** These are skills that are easy to practice on easy days. So start on easy days and work toward being able to do so on a day that feels hard.



WHAT IS IN YOUR HEAD?

SLIDE 30: BUILDING SELF-AWARENESS TAKES PRACTICE

### Goal

*To provide the opportunity to practice self-monitoring and expand on the Check-In concept.*

### Ask/Do

- Today, we are going to practice self-monitoring skills. *Refer to the “What is in your head?” worksheet.*
  - *Using the worksheet as a guide, prompt the participants to complete this activity.*
  - *After the activity is complete, engage participants in a discussion about their experience. Possible prompts include: What was this like to do? Did anyone find that this activity made you aware of something on your mind that you hadn’t noticed or weren’t aware of earlier? Did anyone find that reflecting made thoughts take more or less space or importance than they had before? Did anyone realize they had more on their minds than they originally thought?*
- Paying attention to our thoughts, feelings and body sensations can give us important information. But it can be hard to remember to do. Practicing different ways of checking in with yourself on a regular basis can be a good tool for self-care.

### HANDOUT: “WHAT IS IN YOUR HEAD?” WORKSHEET

## BUILDING FOUR SETS OF SELF-CARE TOOLS

<p style="text-align: center;">Experiment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You can't use the same tool for every situation</li><li>• There is no one perfect tool</li></ul> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Build a (Realistic) Self-Care Toolbox</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Preparation tools</li><li>- Recovery tools</li><li>- In-your-pocket tools</li><li>- Ongoing self-care tools</li></ul></li></ul> 
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SLIDES 31 AND 32: BUILDING A DIVERSE TOOLBOX

### Goals

*To highlight the idea that there is no perfect solution, strategy or tool that will work in every situation or every time it is used. These slides introduce the next section, in which the concepts will be discussed in depth.*

### Teach

There are many tools we can use for self-care; we will be talking about some different types.

## Preparing in advance

1. Tools to Prepare Yourself

- How can you prepare before going into a stressful situation?
  - Self-talk
  - Have a plan
  - Bring a support person
  - Get a good night's sleep
  - Make sure you are not hungry



SLIDE 33: TOOLS FOR PREPARING YOURSELF

### Goal

*To provide examples of strategies that may be used to prepare for stressful situations.*

### Ask

- None of us would expect to be able to run a marathon, perform on stage or pull together a dinner for 30 people without taking time to prepare. A lot goes into being and feeling ready to take on those activities.
- As an example, think about all the steps that might go into preparing a large family holiday meal — like cooking a turkey, prepping mashed potatoes, stuffing, etc.
- We often don't think about everyday stressful situations in the same way, but it can be helpful to prepare for those as well.
- For example, let's say you need to go to a school meeting to advocate for your foster child with providers who have been challenging to work with. The slide includes some suggestions for how you might prepare.
- Can anyone add things to this list? *List suggestions on the flip chart or whiteboard.*

## In-your-pocket tools

2. In-Your-Pocket Tools

- What if, unexpectedly, everything goes south?  
What tools can you use?
  - Deep breathing
  - Relax your muscles
  - Count to 10
  - Walk away for a moment
  - Remember your self-affirmation statements



SLIDE 34: IN-YOUR-POCKET TOOLS

### Goal

*To provide examples of in-the-pocket strategies or coping tools that can be used in or during the moment of stress.*

### Teach

Now let's think of a different tough situation. You are on the highway and you get a flat tire. Unlike our examples on the last slide, this is a situation that happens without warning. Hopefully, you will have tools in the trunk to make the situation more manageable.

### Ask

- On this slide are examples of tools you might use to manage situations such as the stress of having to change your tire on a busy interstate.
- Is there anything you would add? *List additional items on the flip chart or whiteboard.*

### Teach

- It is important to keep your in-your-pocket strategies simple and concrete.
- These strategies help us keep our thinking brain engaged, our bodies regulated and our responses on the main road.

### Practicing Your In-Your-Pocket Tools

- Think about something stressful that happened this week. Notice what happens in your body
- Now, try these exercises...
- What did you like the best? How did each one shift your energy and your internal experience?

#### SLIDE 35: PRACTICING IN-YOUR-POCKET TOOLS

#### Goal

*To provide an experiential opportunity to practice in-your-pocket tools.*

#### Do

- Let's practice our in-your-pocket tools. I want each of you to think about something stressful that happened this week. Notice what happens in your body as you think about it.
- Now I want everybody, on the count of three, to yell the statement "I am awesome" as loud as you can. Ready? *Count to three — and join in.*
- So think about our check-in activity now. How do you feel? Do you notice any immediate changes in how you are feeling or in your energy?
- Next, we are going to do a simple breathing activity. Let me demonstrate. *Breathe in, raising your arms (arms out straight from your side, palms facing up) toward the sky. When you breathe out, bring your arms back down to where you began. After demonstrating, invite participants to try it.*
- What happens in you as you do this? Do you notice any changes?
- *Facilitators should feel free to add or substitute other brief activities that engage participants in self-monitoring.*

#### Teach

Many of the in-your-pocket strategies lead to changes in your emotional or physical state in moments of stress because you are actively doing something to shift it.

## Recovery tools

### 3. Recovery Tools

- How do you recover when you've been through something stressful?
  - Call a friend
  - Do something you enjoy
  - Make a cup of tea or coffee
  - Try to **remember one good thing** that happened today
  - Exercise



SLIDE 36: RECOVERY TOOLS

### Goal

*To illustrate the importance of practicing self-care strategies in the aftermath of a stressful event or situation.*

### Teach

- Research shows that stress does not stop or go away the moment the situation has passed. Often our body and mind continue to experience the impact of the event or situation that has occurred.
- Because of this, it is important to build both your in-your-pocket strategies and your recovery skills, or the things that you do to help yourself after a stressful situation is over.

### Ask

- Let's go back to your earlier recollection of the time this week when you experienced stress. Did you do anything to help yourself recover?
- Here are some examples of possible recovery tools. What else would you add? *Add new strategies to the whiteboard or flip chart.*

## Ongoing self-care skills

### 4. Ongoing Self-Care Tools

- What do you do to build a foundation for yourself — what tools create an ongoing self-care regimen?
  - Have and use a team
  - Make time for yourself
  - Find something you enjoy that is about you and not about you as a parent
  - **Provide for your basic self-care needs** and get the sleep, food and health care you need



SLIDE 37: ONGOING SELF-CARE SKILLS

### Goal

*To provide examples and illustrate the importance of strategies for ongoing self-care practices.*

### Teach

- Beyond the skills that we wrap around specific stressful moments, all of us need tools, strategies and supports that are in place every day in an ongoing way.
- Here are some examples of ongoing self-care strategies. What else do you do that helps with your self-care? *Write down participants' suggestions.*

## Wrap-Up

- Parenting is hard. Foster parenting is harder
- Your feelings matter, for lots of reasons
- Self-care is easy on good days, but harder on hard days
- Keep in mind what makes a hard day
- Stay on the main road:
  - Acknowledge your feelings
  - Stay aware
  - Build and use a self-care toolbox

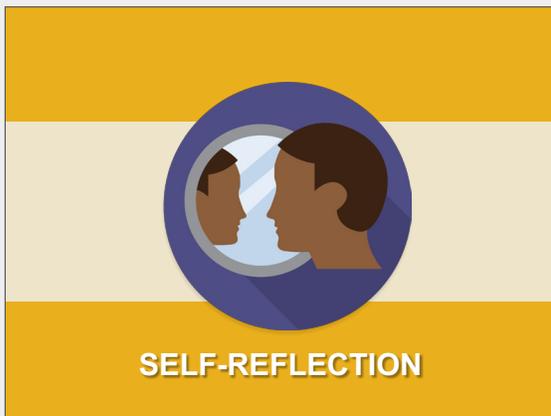
SLIDE 38: WRAP-UP

### Goal

*To review the key teaching points from today's session.*

### Ask

Let's review what we have discussed today. Does anyone have any questions?



#### Question

- What are your "life savers"?
- In your group, share one or more things you have found most valuable in getting you through a hard day



SLIDES 39 AND 40: SELF-REFLECTION

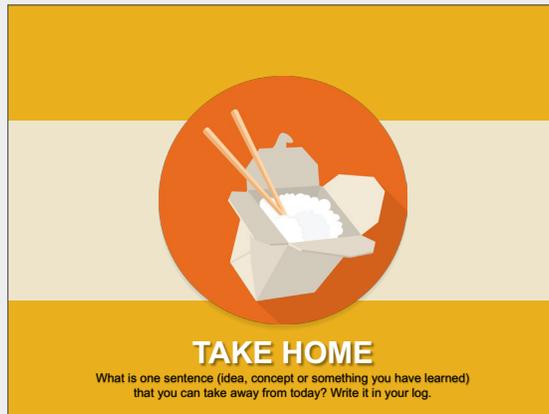
#### Goals

*To apply the toolbox concept discussed in today's session.*

#### Do

Take a moment to think about your "life savers," those things you find most valuable for getting through the day. Think about how your strategies fit into the categories we defined today — tools for preparation, in-the-pocket tools, recovery tools and ongoing self-care tools. *Ask participants to get into pairs or small groups to discuss.*

**HANDOUT: SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET**



SLIDE 41: TAKE HOME

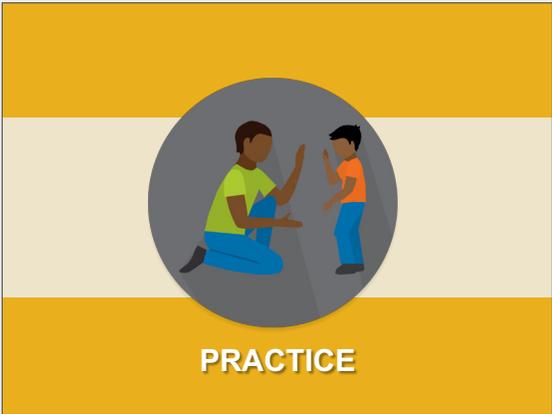
### Goal

*To identify at least one take-away concept from today's session.*

### Ask

Please identify at least one take-away concept from today's session — an idea, concept or something you learned that you can apply in your own life, or that felt relevant or important to you. Please take a minute to write this down in your log.

# PRACTICE AT HOME



Practice

- Using the worksheet provided to you, try to identify what makes a hard day for you
  - What are your particular push buttons?
  - This week, notice if any of these push buttons are triggered; remember how they affect your mood or response

SLIDES 42 AND 43: PRACTICE

## Goal

To apply the “what makes a hard day” lessons to the home environment and build foster parents’ awareness of their push buttons.

## Practice

Please use the worksheet to identify what makes a hard day for you and what pushes your buttons. You’ll do some thinking about how you can use this knowledge in your home and daily life.

## Ask

Any questions?

## HANDOUT: WHAT MAKES A HARD DAY?



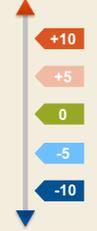
**CLOSING CHECK-IN**

What Is Your Energy Right Now?

Totally Comfortable




Really Uncomfortable



Great Match




Terrible Match

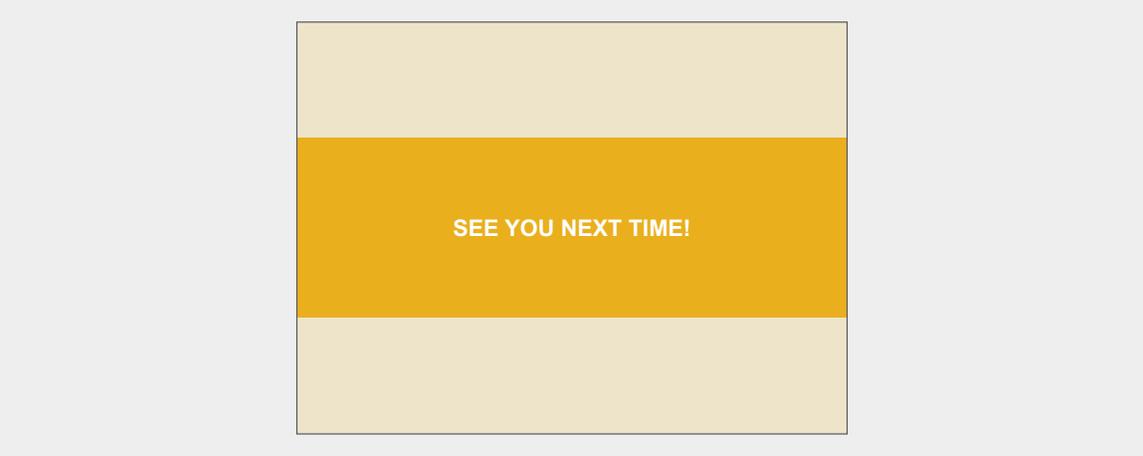
SLIDES 44 AND 45: CLOSING CHECK-IN

### Goals

*To increase awareness of internal experience and the effect of this experience on our ability to be present and engaged; to increase awareness of possible coping strategies; and to engage caregivers in a parallel process, as this is a skill set they will be supporting in their child or teen.*

### Do

- Let's take a moment to check in again before we go. I would like you to notice the level of energy or arousal in your body right now and rate it on the provided scale. Then, notice the degree to which this energy or arousal is comfortable or uncomfortable and rate that. Lastly, notice the degree to which your energy or arousal is a good match for the current situation (leaving the group), and rate that.
- Then, take a minute to consider the various tools you tried out today. Identify any that might be helpful in supporting you to feel comfortable and effective in your body.



SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

SLIDE 46: CLOSING

### Closing

- I am looking forward to our next session. Our theme will be “Cultivate Connection.” We will talk about building your relationship with the child or teen in your home. We will talk about the roller coaster of parenting and some strategies for expecting and creating opportunities for joy.
- *Note the time and location of the next meeting.*