



# Case Manager Guide

FOR SESSIONS ONE THROUGH NINE OF 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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# INTRODUCTION

**Welcome to ARC Reflections!** In the coming weeks, you will play an important role in helping foster parents learn about the influence of trauma on children and teens in their care and supporting them in applying what they learn.

ARC Reflections presents information about specific tools that foster parents can use to help children and teens learn to regulate, feel connected and build strengths. Foster parents can use these tools in their own lives. In fact, any of us can use these tools. This guide provides an overview of information foster parents are learning in each of the nine ARC Reflections sessions. It will help you support your foster parents. The guide presents lessons learned each week, a description of what foster parents were asked to think about and do and suggested questions you can use to help extend foster parents' understanding of the role trauma plays in the lives of their children and teens.

Would you like more details? Ask facilitators to share the full curriculum with you — or find it online at [aecf.org](http://aecf.org). There are nine PowerPoint presentations and facilitator guides, plus a bonus file that tells the compelling story of Olivia and her foster parents.

Thank you for your commitment to children and families.

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# CASE MANAGER INFORMATION GUIDE

## SESSION ONE: UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Understanding Trauma."

### Key lessons

In this first session, foster parents will receive foundational information about the impact of trauma and adversity on children and teens in foster care. Key points:

- There are many kinds of potential trauma. Children and teens entering foster homes may have experienced many different types of trauma, stress and adversity.
- Trauma is the norm, not the exception, for children and youth in foster care.
- Trauma is even more common and complex for children and youth of color or who identify as LGBTQ.
- Some trauma exposures are less obvious than others. For instance, psychological abuse and repeated placements are a less obvious or talked about form of stress than sexual or physical abuse. Keep in mind that these "invisible" forms of adversity can have a big impact on a child or teen.
- Trauma influences development. The experience of trauma, stress and adversity has a strong impact on many aspects of children's and teens' development
- Trauma shapes the lens through which children and teens understand themselves and the world. First, it may shape how children and teens take in information. Additionally, the ways in which children and teens understand themselves and other people, and how they create meaning from their experiences, may all be influenced by early losses and stressors.
- Behaviors are often survival strategies. All of us develop strategies to help us adapt to our worlds. Many behaviors we see in children and teens who have experienced trauma are survival strategies.

### Pay attention to emotions and arousal with the check-in

Foster parents will be introduced to all the ARC Reflections routines, including icebreaker activities and the check-in approach. They will have opportunities to apply what they have learned using a self-reflection question, identifying an important "message" and completing brief practice assignments.

A very important part of this routine is the check-in. The check-in asks foster parents to pay attention to the level of energy or arousal in their body, noticing:

- how high or low that energy is;

- how comfortable or uncomfortable that energy feels; and
- how good a match (effective) that energy is for what the foster parent is doing.

### Self-reflection question

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's content to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions. This week's self-reflection question is: "Who or what influenced you? Please think about three influential people, experiences or environments.

- List them here:
- Describe how they influenced your lens for:
  - Self:
  - Relationships:"

A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few minutes to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents' practice

Foster parents will be asked to practice the check-in at least once a day, noticing where they were and what they were doing. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' experience with ARC Reflections.** Ask: "How did your first week in the group go?" Ask foster parents about their experiences and answer any questions that may have come up. Reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and apply the content.** Review key lessons from this week's session. Ask: "Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?" Apply the content to children and teens. Ask: "In what ways do you think \_\_\_\_ has been affected by his or her experience? How are you seeing it show up in your home?"
- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support the check-in practice.** Ask: "Have you been able to do your check-in practice this week? How is it going?" Try applying the check-in in your own meetings with foster parents. Take a few moments at the start or end of your conversation and ask foster parents to reflect on how they are doing. It is often very helpful to model this by doing it yourself.
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** A key goal of ARC Reflections is to support foster parents in being curious and reflective, paying attention to their own reactions and responses and those of their children or teens ("What am I feeling right now? Where is it coming from? How is it affecting my responses to this young person?") and to the responses, behaviors and experience of their children

and teens (“What just happened that led to my child getting very upset? What does this behavior tell me about what the child needs?”).

Ask if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:

- Child or teen (or the child’s or teen’s behavior) during or after the group.
- Own behavior during or after the session.
- Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### **Tools provided**

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- Olivia’s story handout
- Take-home log
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day’s key content
- Practice: Daily check-in sheets

## SESSION TWO: BEHAVIOR MAKES SENSE

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Behavior Makes Sense."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be taught that behaviors happen for a reason. To respond effectively to the very complicated behaviors of children and adolescents in their homes, it is important that they first try to understand where the behaviors are coming from. Key points:

- **Behavior makes sense and often is an attempt to meet a need.** Behaviors come from somewhere. They are functional and act as clues to help us to discover, then understand the needs of children and teens. The primary need of children exposed to chronic trauma is to seek safety and avoid danger. Children will sacrifice other needs to "survive" their world.
- **We can understand children's and teens' behavior by remembering three things:**
  - **The lens.** Perception is reality. The brains of children and teens who have experienced trauma have learned to react to many situations as if they are dangerous. Because there are many reminders of past danger (or triggers) that children and teens experience, they may perceive danger in situations that do not appear dangerous or frightening to us.
    - Note that current events and the things children or teens hear or see in the news may be triggers, particularly for children of color or who identify as LGBTQ.
  - **Behavior addresses a need; survival trumps everything else.** The most distressing behaviors are often the child's or teen's unconscious attempts either to avoid perceived danger or to meet needs.
  - **Ability to recover.** When children invest their energy in survival, they do so at the expense of developing other key skills — skills they need both to recover in the moment of distress and to effectively navigate their day-to-day lives.
- **Be curious and learn to observe, listen and respond to the messages that children and teens are sending.** It is very difficult to address or change behavior if you do not know what the behavior is communicating.

### Self-reflection question

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's content to their own lives by thinking about a self-reflection question. This week's self-reflection question is: "Think about a time this week when someone made you angry. What set you off? What was the situation? Think about:

- **The lens:** What meaning did you take from the situation? What was your lens? Do you think the other person saw it the same way?
- **Function:** What did you do? Why do you think you did that? What were you trying to accomplish?
- **Resources:** How did you get yourself back on track? What resources (internal or external) did you use or need?"

A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents' practice

For practice, foster parents will be asked to pick a behavior that bothers them in someone they know (child, partner, friend) and, throughout the week, try to notice when, how and where the behavior happens. Based on those observations, foster parents are to try to identify (a) the trigger (what starts the behavior) and (b) the function (why the person engages in the behavior). A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' group experience.** Ask foster parents: "How did the session go for you this week? Was it different from last week? In what way?" Ask foster parents if they are feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and discuss the content.** Review the key lessons from this week's session: that behaviors happen for a reason and that it is important to try to understand both the trigger(s) and the function of behaviors to respond to them. Ask: "Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?"

Also, discuss how this week's theme applies to a child or teen in (or coming to) the foster parent's home. Ask questions such as: "What behaviors have you found most confusing or hard to respond to in your child or teen? Did this week's session give you any ideas about where those behaviors might be coming from? Would it help for you and me to brainstorm together about it? What do you think might trigger a specific behavior of your child or teen? What kinds of things seem to help your child or teen recover or get back on track?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Check with foster parents. Ask: "Have you been able to identify a behavior to track this week? What have you noticed about that behavior?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"
- **Check in on the previous week's practice.** Ask: "Did you have a chance to do the check-in each day? Was it helpful?"
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child's or teen's behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### Tools provided

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- What are your filters? handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- Practice: Noticing behavior

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION THREE: PUT ON YOUR OXYGEN MASK

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Put on Your Oxygen Mask."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be taught that it is very difficult to support another person when you are overwhelmed, stressed, exhausted or generally not in a good place. Discussions will emphasize that adults who care for children and teens who have experienced trauma need to learn strategies for managing stress. Key points:

- **Parenting is hard; foster parenting is harder.** Parenting is a difficult job. Even with your biological children, there are times when it's hard to figure out what a child needs in a given moment. This is because each child is an individual and is also subject to the dynamic process of development.

Foster parenting adds many layers of complexity. Foster parents may not have the luxury of easing into the relationship. Often, they begin their journey with a child or teen at a time of stress, knowing very little about his or her strengths and needs.

Children or teens enter into the relationship with a "lens" of others colored by abuse, maltreatment, neglect, loss and separation. They often use self-protective strategies to distance, disconnect and withdraw from adults.

Children or teens placed in the home may come from a very different background than the foster parents or family, 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 the foster family and the children placed in the home.

- **Self-care is easy on easy days, but harder on hard days. What makes a hard day?**
  - Your child's challenges, such as normal child stuff, tough behaviors, disruptions (such as visits with family, therapy, unexpected transitions) and bearing witness to painful feelings, memories and experiences.
  - Your world's challenges, such as bills, meeting other children's needs, other relationships, schedule disruptions, job or school demands and other stressors.
  - Your own challenges, such as being tired, sick, hungry, overworked; being pulled in multiple directions; your expectations not matching what is happening; your own history and push buttons; anything that threatens your feelings of competence and confidence.
- **Foster parents can use certain strategies to stay on the main road.** These include acknowledging that foster parenting is hard; staying aware of yourself, of your feelings, of your push buttons (push buttons are situations or interactions that "push your buttons" — that evoke feelings and thoughts that cause you to react to a situation, usually in a negative way); and building a realistic toolbox that includes strategies that help you prepare yourself, use your in-the-pocket tools, use your recovery tools and provide ongoing self-care.

### Self-reflection question

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's content to their own lives by thinking about a self-reflection question during the session. This week's self-reflection question is: "What are your 'life savers'? Share with your group one (or more) things that you have found most valuable in getting you through a hard day." A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents' practice

This week, foster parents will be asked to identify what makes a hard day for them. They will be asked to identify things that push their buttons and to notice when their buttons are pushed during the course of the week. If their buttons are pushed, we suggest they tune into the impact these buttons have on their emotions, interactions and behavior. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' group experience.** Ask foster parents: "How did the session go for you this week? Was it different than other sessions? In what way?" Ask foster parents if they are feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and discuss the content.** Review the key lessons from this week's session: understanding that foster parenting is hard and that learning and using strategies for managing stress helps. Ask: "Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?"

Also, discuss how this week's theme applies to a child or teen in (or coming to) the foster parents' home. Ask: "What makes a hard day for you?" Ask whether this week's session gave foster parents any ideas about what pushes their own buttons and how these buttons may contribute to their challenges with children's emotions, interactions or behaviors. Also, ask: "What are some strategies that you can use to stay aware of yourself? What kinds of strategies or tools are in your toolbox?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Check with foster parents. Ask: "Have you been able to identify what makes a hard day for you and the things that are likely to push your buttons?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"
- **Check in on the previous week's practice.** Ask: "Did you choose a behavior that bothers you and notice when and why it happens? What have you learned?"
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child's or teen's behavior) during or after the session.

- Own behavior during or after the session.
- Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### **Tools provided**

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- What is in your head? worksheet
- Toolbox handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- Practice: What makes a hard day?

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION FOUR: CULTIVATE CONNECTION

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Cultivate Connection."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be asked to think about the ingredients that go into building safe relationships with children and adolescents who have experienced many relationship changes and losses. Key points:

- **When building relationships, remember the child's or teen's lens.** Foster parents will be asked to think about the many experiences that led to their child or teen being in care. Many children and teens have experienced loss and danger in relationships and/or separation from loved ones. As a result, they need — and struggle with — relationships. Foster parents are reminded to remember the child's or teen's lens for relationships. Often, children and teens believe others will hurt them, abandon or reject them or be unpredictable.
- **Relationships take time and require many different ingredients.** Foster parents will be asked to consider the following key elements of cultivating connections:
  - **Prepare.** Foster parents will be asked to do some work before a child or teen enters their home, such as making sure everyone in the family is on board, lining up supports and resources and thinking about what they may need to support the child or teen.
  - **Start with the basics and ease in.** Foster parents will be asked to provide the child or teen with information about their family, the household and the child's or teen's space, giving the child or teen opportunities to express his or her preferences.
  - **Meet the child where he or she is.** Foster parents will be asked to try to learn the child's or teen's preferences and engage in a way that works for the child or teen. For instance, one child might like to talk a lot and another may need space. It is important to find ways to connect that feel safe for the child or teen.
  - **Ride the roller coaster.** There will be discussions about the fact that children and teens in care WILL have hard days. No matter how well things are going, there will be times they retreat from their relationships. Foster parents will be asked to think about this disconnection as a self-protective move, not a rejection of the foster parent. Foster parents will be asked to anticipate that these hard days will come, try not to take them personally and get curious about why disconnects occur.
  - **Reconnect.** The disconnects are less important than the reconnects. Foster parents will be encouraged to think about ways to reach out after hard days, to reconnect at the child's or teen's pace and to move on.
  - **Cultivate joy.** Relationships are buffered by shared positive experiences. The more foster parents can find ways to engage in pleasurable activities with children and teens, the more they will be able to tolerate and get through the hard times.

### Self-reflection questions

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's lessons to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions during the session. This week's self-reflection questions are: "What are the things that lead YOU to disconnect in relationships? What helps you ease back in? Think both about what you do and what you want others to do for you." A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents' practice

This week, foster parents will be asked to make a list of as many five-minute joy activities as possible. Joy activities are brief activities that might be fun to do at home with a child or teen. Foster parents will be asked to try at least one activity a day. In the next session, foster parents will share their lists to give each other ideas. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' group experience.** Ask foster parents: "How did the session go for you this week? Was it different than other sessions? In what way?" Ask foster parents if they are feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and discuss the content.** Review the key lessons from this week's session, which focus on the importance and challenge of building relationship with children and teens. Ask: "Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?"

Also, discuss how this week's theme applies to a child or teen in (or coming to) the foster parents' home. Ask questions such as: "What are you learning works for this child or teen? How were you able to connect when he or she was first placed in your home? In what ways are you continuing to connect now? Can you give me an example of an activity you like to do together? What makes it hard to spend time with the child or teen? What do you find difficult? Can we think together about why that might be happening? What is it like when you and the child or teen have moments of disconnection or when you get upset or angry with each other? How do you handle those moments? Are you able to reconnect after? What works and what gets in the way?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Ask: "Have you been able to think of some five-minute joy activities? Have you tried any of them out?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"
- **Check in on the previous week's practice,** which was to identify what makes a hard day and identify some things that push your personal buttons. Ask foster parents: "Have you noticed any of those coming up lately? Are there things I can do to support you?"

- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child’s or teen’s behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

#### Tools provided

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- Cultivate connection handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day’s key content
- Practice: Five-minute joy activities

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION FIVE: MIRROR, MIRROR

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Mirror, Mirror."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be taught about the process of learning another person's "language," including verbal and nonverbal cues that indicate specific wants and needs. Key points:

- **We communicate our experiences in ways that go beyond language.** Every individual is unique. When any parent meets a child or teen for the first time, there isn't a guidebook or manual that explains the dos and don'ts of parenting that particular child or teen. This week, foster parents learn about child development and the degree to which a child's or teen's communication is shaped by his or her developmental stage. Consider a new infant. Each infant communicates his or her comfort needs in very different ways. Some whimper when experiencing discomfort, some cry just a little and some scream and cry as loud as they can. Foster parents must experiment and learn what works to comfort the infant. Of course, in different contexts, situations and emotional states, the infant will communicate in different ways and have very different needs.
- **The process remains the same when caring for children and teens who have experienced trauma.** Foster parents must learn and experiment to find what works with each particular child or teen.
- **Cultural beliefs and practices may influence how a person expresses his or her emotion.**
- **Learning someone's language takes time and starts with curiosity.** Learn to observe rather than react. How do humans observe? By managing our own (understandable) reactions and feelings, slowing down our reactions and responses and using the tools in our self-care toolbox, purposefully tuning in and paying attention to patterns, going beyond the surface behaviors and working to understand what is driving them.
- **Slow down and become a detective.** Notice how subtle changes in each of these areas communicate need: body tension, tone of voice, contact, facial expression, language, behavior, observable emotion, connection or withdrawal.
- **Use mirroring.** When all the clues have been observed and gathered, it is time to convey your understanding of and acceptance for all that has been communicated. We do this through mirroring. Mirroring involves engaging in a child's experience and reflecting it back: communicating through language, relationship and emotion that we see them. You can mirror through language by being curious, communicating interest, reflecting affect or cues, validating (communicating that you see the child's or teen's perspective, even if you don't agree with it) and normalizing. You can mirror through behavior by matching the child's or teen's nonverbal cues.

### Self-reflection question

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's lessons to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions during the session. This week's self-reflection questions

are: “Can you recall a time recently that someone came to you upset or with a problem and you felt good about how you responded? What was it that you did? Why do you think it went well? Discuss briefly with your partner.” A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents’ practice

This week, foster parents will be asked to pick one person in their life to observe (child, partner, co-worker, friend) and try to identify all the clues that suggest that person might be frustrated. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents’ group experience.** Ask foster parents: “How did the session go for you this week? Was it different from other sessions? In what way?” Ask the foster parent if he or she is feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and apply the content.** Review key lessons from this week’s session, such as that learning another person’s language takes time and that foster parents need to remember to observe, be a detective and mirror their child’s or teen’s experience. Ask: “Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?”

Also, discuss how this week’s theme applies to a child or teen in (or coming to) the foster parents’ home. Ask questions such as: “Did this week’s session give you any ideas about the ways in which children and teens placed in your home may be communicating? What are some of the communication strategies used by children and teens placed in your home? Would it help for you and me to brainstorm about it? What are some of the challenges of being an active observer?” Review the strategies for mirroring experience, then ask: “Which strategies do you currently use to mirror experience? Which strategies are you willing to try out?”

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: “What did you write down as your take away and why?”
- **Support foster parents’ efforts to do their practice.** Ask: “Have you been able to observe and identify cues associated with frustration in your child/teen, partner or friend this week?” If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: “What do you think is getting in the way of this week’s practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?”
- **Check in on the previous week’s practice.** Ask: “Have you made a list of five-minute joy activities? Have you been able to try any? Which have worked well?”
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child’s or teen’s behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### Tools provided

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- Practice: Be a detective

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION SIX: CALM, COOL, CONNECTED

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Calm, Cool, Connected."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be taught that their ability to remain calm, cool and ultimately connected is key to supporting a child or teen in learning to self-regulate (which includes being able to manage or control one's thoughts, emotions and energy). Key points:

- **Soothing strategies are crucial.** We help infants regulate by keeping ourselves calm, learning to read what infants need and prefer, being open to learning, experimenting with new skills and learning what is and is not working, having daily routines that build a sense of rhythm and connecting and engaging with the infants during the day, even when they are not distressed.
- **Infants need consistent soothing.** Soothing supports connection and relationship, creates a sense of safety in the world and in the baby's body, builds an understanding on a visceral level that feelings come and feelings go (which builds an ability to tolerate distress) and helps the infant learn that someone is able to meet his or her needs and make even uncomfortable sensations go away.
- **Children and teens exposed to danger, chaos, violence and inconsistent early care may struggle much more than other children and teens.** They may have a hard time understanding, communicating and managing feelings. Cultural beliefs and practices may also affect how a child or teen expresses emotion. For example, some cultures believe in keeping problems to themselves and not discussing emotions with others.
- **The first step in supporting self-regulation is to provide a foundation.** To do so, build daily routines and rhythms that include challenge points and opportunities for soothing, engagement and connection. Engage in ongoing activities such as play, reading and listening to music. Use soothing strategies, such as sensory and motor activities, providing a dedicated space and providing opportunities for connection. Also, be a detective. Learning about children's or teens' patterns — including nonverbal cues about their energy and emotions.
- **The second step is to support in-the-moment regulation.** Use skills discussed during the session, including catch the moment, check-in, be a mirror, meet the need, support a child's or teen's tools, provide control and choice and reconnect.

### Self-reflection questions

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's lessons to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions during the session. This week's self-reflection questions are: "Think about what happens when you are very upset about something. How do you like to manage feelings and experiences? Is it the same for every kind of feeling or is it different depending on your mood (sad, mad, hurt)? Then pick one feeling. What are you able to do independently to manage your experience? Why do you think that works for you? In what ways do other people support you? What do you like from others when you are upset? Why do you think that is?" A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

## Foster parents' practice

This week, foster parents will be asked to look around their home and identify things that may be helpful in supporting regulation. (Keep in mind that this includes items as well as daily practices.) Foster parents are also asked to identify and think about their own regulation needs. Each foster parent will be asked to generate a list of haves and needs. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

## Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' group experience.** Ask foster parents: "How did the session go for you this week? Was it different from other sessions? In what way?" Ask the foster parent if he or she is feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and apply the content.** Review the key lessons from this week's session: The process of learning to self-regulate begins in infancy and is dependent on the consistency of caregivers' response to soothing needs. A child or teen who has not had this early need met is likely to struggle with his or her ability to understand, manage and communicate feelings. A foster parent will play a primary role in supporting regulation and can think of this role in two steps: 1) providing an ongoing foundation for regulation and 2) supporting "in-the-moment" regulation.

Also, discuss how this week's theme applies to a child or teen in (or coming to) the foster parents' home. Ask questions such as: "Have you noticed your child or teen having any challenges with understanding, managing and/or communicating feelings? Would it help for you and me to brainstorm together about it? Did this week's session give you any ideas about strategies you can use? What strategies fit best with your family and with the children and teens in your home? Are there times when you struggle with supporting children and teens in your home with in-the-moment regulation strategies? Are particular behaviors (moments of dysregulation) more challenging than others? Which of the in-the-moment strategies do you think are the most and least challenging to implement?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Ask: "Have you been able to identify things that will help you support your child's or teen's ability to regulate? What have you noticed about that behavior?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"
- **Check in on previous week's practice.** Ask: "Did you practice identifying cues of frustration in the person you selected?"
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child's or teen's behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### Tools provided

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- Modulation activities handout
- Daily routine examples handout
- Engagement activities handout
- Sample bedtime routines handout
- Make a toolbox handout
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- The self-reflection worksheet
- Practice: Self-regulation inventory

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION SEVEN: RESPOND, DON'T REACT

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Respond, Don't React."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be taught steps for thinking about ways to respond to the often very complicated behaviors of children and teens in their care. Key points:

- **Behaviors are driven by needs; needs are hierarchical and will vary by the child's or teen's state.** The challenging behavior of children and teens in care can be very hard to shift. In this session, foster parents are reminded of the three ingredients that lead to many of the hardest behaviors: 1) a very deep-seated belief by the child or teen that the world is dangerous, 2) a wish to survive the danger and 3) insufficient resources or coping strategies to calm down once upset. Very few things are as hard to change as behaviors that began as survival strategies.

Our own responses can be hard to change as well, particularly if we are feeling frustrated or overwhelmed. As a result, foster parents and children and teens can get into a cycle of reacting instead of purposefully responding.

- **To address behavior successfully, foster parents are encouraged to respond, rather than react.** They can:
  - **Be proactive.** We are most successful when we get in front of difficult behaviors, rather than impulsively reacting when the behaviors arise. Foster parents will be asked to identify one or two behaviors to address, rather than trying to change everything at once.
  - **Identify the pattern and the need.** Foster parents will be asked to use their detective skills to try to understand the behavior. For instance, what are the circumstances in which the behavior occurs? What leads to it? What does the foster parent think the function of the behavior might be (what is the child or teen trying to do or communicate)?
  - **Use their go-to strategies.** There are two strategies for addressing any behavior:
    - **Meet the child's or teen's needs.** For instance, if a child or teen is engaging in attention-seeking behaviors, providing attention without the child or teen having to ask for it may reduce the behavior. If a child or teen is yelling and throwing things because he or she needs space, separating until everyone calms down may help.
    - **Support the child's or teen's regulation.** No matter which strategy a foster parent wants to use to address behavior, nothing will be very effective if the child or teen and the foster parents are not in a regulated state. When thinking about a behavior plan, foster parents are asked to consider in advance what tools they might need to support regulation in themselves or their children.
- **Identify other strategies purposefully.** Primary strategies that will be discussed include the use of praise and reinforcement, problem solving and limit setting. These strategies are most effective when the foster parents have a plan for how to use them. In this session, foster parents will be taught why, when and how to use each strategy.

### Self-reflection question

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's lessons to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions during the session. This week's self-reflection questions are: "Think of a behavior you've been struggling with. What strategies are you trying now? Based on today's discussion, why do you think your approach might be working, or not?" A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section; take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents' practice

This week, foster parents will be asked to pick a behavior that a child or teen in their home is displaying that they either find challenging or want to increase. Foster parents will be asked to use the provided behavior worksheet to try to identify the patterns of the child's or teen's behavior (when it happens and what triggers it); the need (what is the child or teen trying to do?); and a possible plan for addressing it. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' group experience.** Ask foster parents: "How did the session go for you this week? Are you feeling connected to other foster parents in the group? Are you able to participate actively?" Ask foster parents if they are feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that may arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and apply the content.** Review key lessons from this week's session about ways to address complicated behaviors in children and teens in care. Ask: "Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?"

Also, discuss how this week's theme applies to a child or teen in (or coming to) the foster parents' home. Ask questions such as: "What behaviors do you find hardest to address in your child or teen? Why do you think that might be? What strategies have you found most effective with the child or teen? Why do you think he or she responds to those? How often are you able to use praise or other positive reinforcement with him or her? How do you support your own regulation when your child or teen is having a hard time?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Ask: "Have you been able to identify a behavior to track and work on this week? What do you think might be driving that behavior? What types of strategies do you think might be effective?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"
- **Check in on the previous week's practice.** Ask: "Have you made a self-regulation inventory and thought about what you have or might need to support regulation in your home? Have you been able to use any of those this week? Do you think any might help address some of the behaviors we have talked about?"

- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking what the foster parent hopes to learn next and if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child's or teen's behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

#### **Tools provided**

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- Approaches to behavior handout
- Behavior strategies: What are your tools? handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- Practice: Approaches to behavior

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION EIGHT: WHO ARE YOU? ALL ABOUT IDENTITY

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Who Are You? All About Identity."

### Key lessons

In this session, foster parents will be taught that a key developmental process is the growth of a sense of self, an understanding of individuality and eventually the formation of a coherent identity. Trauma often creates an internalized belief that the child's or teen's self is damaged or inherently bad. An important part of caring for and supporting children and teens who have experienced trauma is to enhance their perceived competency. Foster parents will be asked to encourage opportunities for exploration and mastery. Key points:

- **The core tasks of identity development vary based on a child's or teen's developmental stage.**

The stages include:

- *Infancy*: Early existence. The earliest understanding of self as separate from others.
- *Toddlerhood*: The explorer. Children gain a growing sense of self-awareness and independence. They begin to explore their environment and see the impact they have on their world.
- *Early childhood*: The concrete self. Children have an increased awareness of their individuality and independence. Preferences become more evident as favorite foods, activities, colors, books, clothing, soothing objects, etc., are identified and explored.
- *Elementary years*: The unique self. Children's understanding of self expands to incorporate the experiences from multiple domains of their life (home, school, activities, etc.).
- *Early adolescence*: The emerging self. Children continue the process of establishing their identity, their self-worth and their sense of self in relation to societal rules and expectations.
- *Late adolescence*: The abstract self. Teens have increasing experience with independence as they move toward college, vocational training or the workforce.

- **Identity and sense of self grows in layers over time.** They are built on how we are seen and treated in relationships, how we engage with the world, our successes or failures, our opportunities to explore and our range of experiences.

- **Over time, this lens of self becomes a filter through which we interpret our experiences.** Each new experience can reinforce our filter and "self" can become harder and harder to change over time. For example, if we see ourselves as smart and fail a test, then we believe the failure is because the test was too hard. If we see ourselves as stupid and pass a test, then we believe we got lucky or the test was too easy.

- **Our lens for self influences** our sense of:

- *Agency* — our belief that we can have an impact on the world.
- *Exploration* — our willingness to take risks, try new things and approach the unknown.
- *Tolerance for frustration* — our ability to tolerate challenges and the inevitable failures.

- *Internal state* — how we feel about our actions, our abilities and ourselves.
- *Imagination* — our ability to be creative and imagine alternatives.
- **Foster parents (and other caregivers) have the power to shift the child’s or teen’s lens by helping** explore his or her unique self, build positive self, tolerate vulnerable self, hold the past, capture the present and build the future.
- **Think about how a child or teen of color who has experienced repeated racism, or a child or youth who identifies as LGBTQ who has been bullied, may develop his or her lens or filter.**  
Foster parents are encouraged to provide children or teens placed in their homes with opportunities to develop their racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or gender identity through community activities, groups at a local church/mosque/synagogue, etc.

### Self-reflection question

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week’s lessons to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions during the session. This week’s self-reflection question is: “Think about your own identity. Reflect and try to identify one thing that:

- You feel defines you, such as a value, cultural influence or role.
- You take pride in.
- Challenges you or creates a sense of vulnerability.
- Represents the past that you have held on to or that continues to feel important to you.
- Your wish for the future — a goal.”

A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section. Take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself.

### Foster parents’ practice

This week, foster parents will be asked to review the ideas for supporting children and teens in developing a positive and unique self, identify one idea that they can use to actively support the child or teen and try out at least one idea. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents’ group experience:** “How did the session go for you this week? Was it different from other sessions? In what way?” Ask the foster parent if he or she is feeling comfortable in the group, answer any questions that may arise and reinforce the importance of actively participating.
- **Review and apply the content.** Review key lessons from this week, especially related to the role of development in a child’s life. A key developmental process is the child’s growth of a sense of self, an understanding of individuality and eventually the formation of a coherent identity. Trauma significantly affects this process and influences the lens for self and filters for experiences that contribute to a

child's or teen's personal identity. An important part of caring for and supporting children and teens who have experienced trauma is to enhance their perceived competency by fostering opportunities for exploration and mastery.

Ask foster parents questions about children or teens in their home, such as: "What developmental stage (vs. chronological age) do you think best describes the children and teens in your home? Why? Did this week's session give you any ideas about strategies you can use to support identity development?" Review key strategies for "shifting the lens" of self with foster parents. Ask: "Which do you think would be the most or least challenging to implement? For those challenging strategies, can I help you brainstorm about how to use them in your home?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Ask: "Have you been able to identify one way that you can support your child or teen in developing a unique or positive self?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"
- **Check in on the previous week's practice.** "You were asked to pick one behavior that a child or teen in your home is displaying that you find challenging or that you want to increase and develop a plan to do so. How is that going? Have you tried to implement and follow on the plan? How is it working?" If any challenges are identified, support problem solving around this.
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** Ask if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child's or teen's behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### Tools provided

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- Layers of self worksheet
- What are your filters? handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- Practice: Positive and unique self

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**

## SESSION NINE: ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

### Today's theme

Each week, ARC Reflections sessions are organized around a theme. Content, activities and practice will relate to that theme. This week's theme is "Endings and Beginnings."

### Key lessons

In this ninth and final session, foster parents will be encouraged to think about ways to support positive transitions for children and teens in their care. Key points:

- **Not all endings are the same.** It is important to acknowledge that there are many different qualities of placements and many ways that placements may end. All of this may influence how the transition feels. For instance, foster parents and a child or teen may feel very different about a planned, positive transition than a transition that feels abrupt — or about which there is disagreement. The child's or teen's feelings can influence the nature of the ending, as can the adult's feelings and those of other family members.
- **Transitions can be particularly challenging for children and teens in foster care.** Because children and teens in care have experienced so many endings, transitions can be particularly complicated for them. They may cope with their feelings in many ways, including behavioral regression, disconnection from foster parents, acting out or becoming very clingy or anxious.
- **Foster parents can support a positive transition in a number of ways.** Foster parents will be encouraged to think about the range of ways they can support children and teens in making a positive transition. Ideas include the following:
  - **Start early.** Foster parents are encouraged to prepare children and teens all along the way. Ideas for doing so include supporting connections between children's and teens' community, biological family (as appropriate) and other relationships.
  - **Help children and teens prepare.** Information is powerful and children and teens are often better equipped for change when they have an idea of what to expect. Foster parents are encouraged to invite questions from children and teens and support them in getting the answers. Common questions of children and teens in care are discussed.
  - **Reflect on your time together.** All but the very briefest of placements represent an important period in a child's or teen's life, whether it is a few weeks or a year or more. It is important to honor this time period, both for the child or teen and for the foster parents. Foster parents are asked to think about ways they can spend time with children and teens talking about and concretely capturing their time together, such as looking at photographs, making a scrapbook or writing down memories together.
  - **Talk about ongoing connection.** Children, teens and foster parents often have many questions about whether they will be able to remain connected after the child or teen leaves the home. Foster parents are encouraged to seek and provide clear information about this.
  - **Pay it forward.** As the primary caregivers over a period of time, foster parents learn a great deal of information about children and teens in their care. They are encouraged to find ways

to capture and share this information with others, such as clinical providers, case managers, educators and adoptive or biological parents.

### Self-reflection questions

Each week, foster parents will be asked to apply the week's lessons to their own lives by thinking about one or more self-reflection questions during the session. This week's self-reflection question is: "Think about your time in this group. If you had to pick one sentence that will stick with you, that changed your thinking, that resonated or that will influence how you care for children and teens in the future, what would it be? Write it down." A copy of the self-reflection worksheet is in the handouts section. Take a few moments to complete the worksheet yourself, thinking about what you have learned from reviewing these information sheets each week.

### Foster parents' practice

In this final week, foster parents will be asked to start at the beginning: to pick one of the skills they have learned and try to practice and refine it over time, choosing a different skill to practice each week. Foster parents will be reminded that we all learn something new every day — and that everything takes practice. A copy of the practice is in the handouts section; you may wish to try it out yourself.

### Case manager: What can you do?

You can:

- **Check in on the foster parents' group experience.** Ask foster parents: "How did the session go for you this week? How are you feeling about the group coming to an end? Did your time in this session feel valuable or meaningful to you? Why or why not?"
- **Review and apply the content.** Review the key lessons from this week's session, which highlighted how to support positive transitions for children and teens in care. Ask: "Did you learn anything, or did anything surprise you?"

Ask foster parents questions about how ideas discussed in this week's session may apply to children and teens in their home. Ask: "What has your experience been with supporting transitions in the past? What have you learned about yourself and how have you or your family handled that kind of change? When you think about this child or teen leaving your home, what do you think might be hard? How do you think you might want to handle it? What ideas did you hear today that you think might be particularly useful for this particular child or teen when the time comes for him or her to transition? What do you want to try to remember?"

- **Be curious about the take-away exercise.** If the foster parent is willing to share, ask: "What did you write down as your take away and why?"
- **Support foster parents' efforts to do their practice.** Ask: "What skill do you think you would like to go back to? Is there a skill you want to practice sometime?" If the foster parent has not done the practice yet, ask: "What do you think is getting in the way of this week's practice? Would it help for you and me to do it together?"

- **Check in on the previous week's practice.** Ask, "Were you able to think of a way to support your child or teen in activities that help with development of a positive sense of self or help the child or teen explore what he or she likes to do? Have you been able to continue with any of those activities this week? Why or why not? Are there ways I can be supportive of this?"
- **Support reflection and curiosity.** This week, you can support reflection and curiosity by asking if the foster parent noticed or thought anything new about his or her:
  - Child or teen (or the child's or teen's behavior) during or after the session.
  - Own behavior during or after the session.
  - Own experience doing the check-in activity during or after the session.

### Tools provided

Foster parents will be provided with the following handouts this week:

- Several copies of the check-in handout
- Remembering endings handout
- The self-reflection worksheet
- A summary sheet listing the day's key content
- Practice: Review your skills

**Remember to support the check-in. Consider modeling this by trying it yourself.**



# HANDOUTS

Foster parents involved in ARC Reflections training will receive a variety of handouts. Two from each session follow. The entire curriculum is available online if you want to see it.

## **SESSION ONE:**

Self-reflection: How have people influenced you?

Practice: Check-in

*Note: Foster parents were provided with a week of check-in worksheets; just one is provided here.*

## **SESSION TWO:**

Self-reflection: Applications of the three-part sequence

Practice: Noticing behavior

## **SESSION THREE:**

Self-reflection: What are your “life savers”?

Practice: What makes a hard day?

## **SESSION FOUR:**

Self-reflection: What leads you to disconnect?

Practice: Five-minute joy activities

## **SESSION FIVE:**

Self-reflection: Being an effective responder

Practice: Be a detective

## **SESSION SIX:**

Self-reflection: Managing your feelings

Practice: Self-regulation inventory

## **SESSION SEVEN:**

Self-reflection: Current approaches to behavior

Practice: Approaches to behavior

## **SESSION EIGHT:**

Self-reflection: Identity

Practice: Positive and unique self

## **SESSION NINE:**

Self-reflection: Transitions

Practice: Review your skills





## SESSION ONE

# Self-Reflection

Who or what influenced you? Please think about three influential people, experiences or environments. List them here:

Describe how they influenced:

- Your lens for self:

- Your lens for relationships:



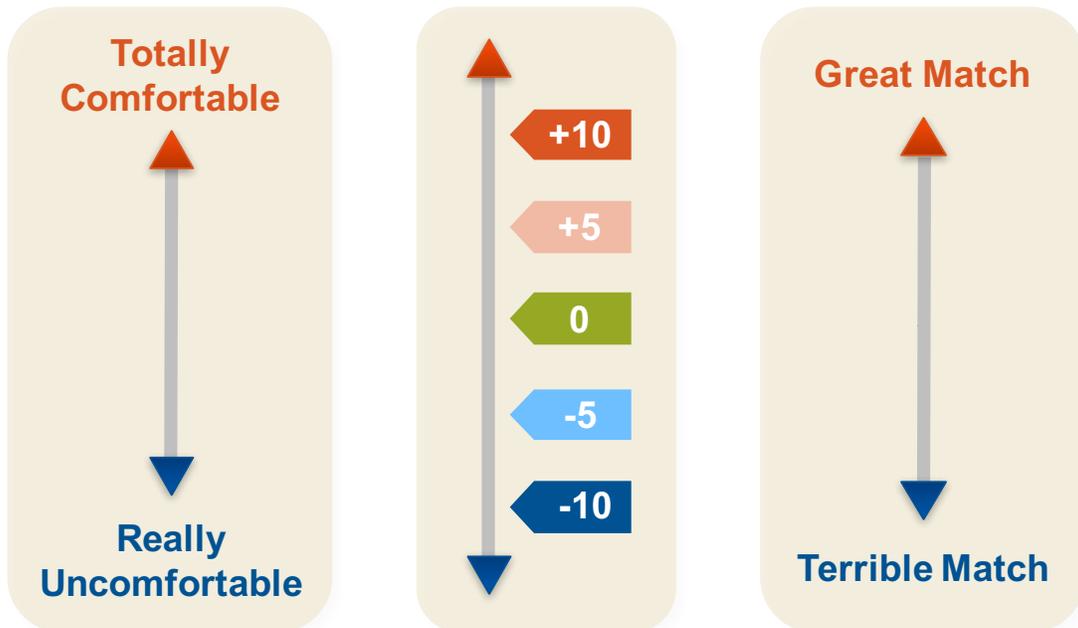


## SESSION ONE

# Check-In

Take a moment to check in with yourself. Mark answers on the scales below:

1. Where is your energy? How high or low?
2. How comfortable does that energy feel in your body?
3. How good of a match is your energy for what you are doing right now?



If your energy is comfortable and a good match, great. If not, what can you do to get it there? Identify one strategy or skill you can use to feel more comfortable and effective.

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## SESSION TWO

# Self-Reflection

Think about a time this week when someone made you angry. What set you off? What was the situation?

**Lens:** What meaning did you make of the situation?

- What was your lens? Do you think the other person saw it the same way?

**Function:** What did you do? Why do you think you did that?

- What were you trying to accomplish?

**Resources:** How did you get yourself back on track?

- What resources (internal or external) did you use or need?





## SESSION TWO PRACTICE

# Noticing Behavior

### Part 1: Identify a behavior

Pick any behavior that annoys you in someone you know (child, partner, friend). Be sure to pick something you see on a regular basis. Describe the behavior you will be focusing on:

### Part 2: Identify patterns

Start with curiosity. Observe the behavior closely. Write down when the behavior happens each time this week. Write a quick description of what is going on when this behavior occurs.

Time 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Time 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Time 3: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 3: Tune into patterns

After the behavior happens several times, think about any patterns that lead up to it. Can you identify a specific trigger that leads to the behavior (a time of day, an interaction, a specific location, etc.)?

### Part 4: Think about the *function* of the behavior

Why do you think this behavior might be happening? What do you think the person you are observing is trying to do? What need might the behavior be meeting?





### SESSION THREE

# Self-Reflection

What are your "life savers"?
Share with your group one (or more) things that you have found most valuable in getting you through a hard day.





## SESSION THREE PRACTICE

# What Makes a Hard Day?

What pushes your buttons or leads to big feelings in you?

This week, try to notice if any of these things happen and how they affect your mood or responses. Ask yourself:

- What is my body telling me?

- What am I feeling?

- What am I thinking?

- What do I want to do?





## SESSION FOUR

# Self-Reflection

What are the things that lead you to disconnect in relationships?

What helps you ease back into the relationship after a disconnect?

- What do you do to ease back in?

- What do you want/need OTHERS to do to help you ease back in?





## SESSION FOUR PRACTICE

# Five-Minute Joy Activities

Make a list of as many (but at least five) ideas as you can think of for quick, positive activities to do with your child or teen. We'll give you a few to start you off:

- |                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. <u>Make a snack together</u>    | 9. _____  |
| 2. <u>Dance to a favorite song</u> | 10. _____ |
| 3. <u>Blow bubbles</u>             | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____                           | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____                           | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____                           | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____                           | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____                           | 16. _____ |

### Try it out

This week, try to engage in at least one five-minute joy activity each day. It can be the same one each day, or you can try different ones. Track it here:

- Day 1 activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- Day 2 activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- Day 3 activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- Day 4 activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- Day 5 activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- Day 6 activity. \_\_\_\_\_
- Day 7 activity. \_\_\_\_\_





SESSION FIVE

# Self-Reflection

Can you recall a time recently when someone came to you upset or with a problem and you felt good about how you responded?

What was it that you did?

Why do you think it went well?





## SESSION FIVE PRACTICE

# Be a Detective

Pick one person in your life to observe (child, partner, co-worker, friend). You won't have to share who you picked when you bring this back next week.

See if you can identify all the clues that suggest that person might be frustrated. Notice how changes (even subtle) in these clues might communicate feelings or needs:

Body tension \_\_\_\_\_

Tone of voice \_\_\_\_\_

Eye contact \_\_\_\_\_

Facial expression \_\_\_\_\_

Language \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior \_\_\_\_\_

Observable emotion \_\_\_\_\_

Connection or withdrawal \_\_\_\_\_

Other observations \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





SESSION SIX

# Self-Reflection

Think about what happens when you are very upset about something.

- What are the ways you like to manage feelings and experiences? Is it the same for every kind of feeling, or is it different depending on mood (sad, mad, hurt)?

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- Pick one feeling. What are you able to do independently to manage your experience? Why do you think that works for you?

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- In what ways do other people support you? What do you like from others when you are upset? Why do you think that is?

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SESSION SIX PRACTICE

# Self-Regulation Inventory



Look around your home. What do you have that lends itself to supporting regulation? Make a list of what you have:


What might you need to add? (Keep in mind that this includes *items* as well as *daily practices*.)  
Make a list of what you need:






SESSION SEVEN

# Self-Reflection

Think of a behavior you've been struggling with. Write it down.

What strategies are you trying now?

Based on today's discussion, why do you think your approach may or may not be working?





## SESSION SEVEN PRACTICE

# Approaches to Behavior

Pick one behavior a child in your home is displaying that you find challenging or that you want to increase. Use this worksheet to try to identify a child's or teen's patterns and needs and develop a plan.

1. What behavior do you want to address?

Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want this behavior to:                      Increase                      Decrease

2. Identify patterns. What do you think leads to this behavior? What are some of the triggers (situational, environmental, internal)?

What do you think the child is trying to do? What is the function or need that the behavior is addressing?

3. Go-to strategies to address this behavior:

How else might you be able to meet the needs identified in question 2? Be specific: when, how, who?

What regulation/de-escalation/crisis management strategies can you support in the moment if the child is dysregulated?

4. Additional behavior response strategies. Which of these do you think might work?

- **Praise and reinforcement.** Use to increase a behavior or a desired alternative behavior.
- **Problem solving.** Use when child is in regulated state, to support control/choice and identify alternatives.
- **Limit setting.** Use to contain and address negative or dangerous behaviors.

5. After the behavior occurs, how might you and the child continue to learn from it? Consider timing, method and approach to revisiting behaviors, with a goal of shifting the behavior the next time. What can you plan to do? Be specific:

*With my child, I can (When? How?):*

*By myself or with my caregiving partner, I can (When? How?):*



## SESSION EIGHT

# Self-Reflection

Think about your own identity. Reflect and try to identify:

1. One thing that you feel defines you — for example, a value, cultural influence, or role

2. One thing in which you take pride

3. One thing about yourself that challenges you or creates a sense of vulnerability

4. One thing from your past that you have held on to, that continues to feel important to you

5. One goal you have for the future













## SESSION NINE PRACTICE

# Review Your Skills

This week, I will work on:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identifying patterns and understanding my child or teen
- \_\_\_\_\_ Managing my emotions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Building a positive relationship with a child or teen in my care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mirroring/reflecting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting my child's or teen's emotions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Responding (not reacting) to behavior
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting positive identity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting a positive transition
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

My goal this week (keep it simple and concrete). I will work on my skill by:

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Support I may need to reach this goal:

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Notes: How did it go?

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