



Facilitator Orientation and Handouts

FOR SESSIONS ONE THROUGH NINE OF ARC REFLECTIONS

SUMMER 2017



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

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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WELCOME TO ARC REFLECTIONS

Thank you in advance! You will play an important role in helping foster parents do more than learn about the influence of trauma on the children and teens in their care. You will help them grow their problem-solving skills and figure out how to apply what they learn in their own homes and relationships.

ARC Reflections presents information about specific tools foster parents can use to help children learn to self-regulate. Foster parents — any of us, really — can use these tools in their own lives, too.

There are a few items you will need to copy in advance. Find them in the next couple of pages, along with instructions on how to prepare them.

Also, the foster parents you train will need to receive binders to store copies of each session's PowerPoints and handouts. You will need to arrange for this to happen — and make sure to emphasize that foster parents should bring their binders to each and every session. They will need them!

As you prepare for each session, make sure to check in advance that PowerPoints and links to the internet work with the technology provided in the location where your training will be held.

One common thread through this curriculum is Olivia, who we first meet as a 5-year-old. Want to have her entire story in one place? Find it as an extra document on Casey's website.

Thank you for your commitment.

Tracey Feild

Managing Director

Child Welfare Strategy Group

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Margaret Blaustein and Kristine Kinniburgh

ARC Co-Developers

The Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute

ABOUT ARC REFLECTIONS

PREPARING TO IMPLEMENT ARC REFLECTIONS

As you prepare to facilitate ARC Reflections, please read *Implementing ARC Reflections for Foster Parents*. Work with your co-facilitator to understand your strengths and strategize about how to handle any challenges that might come up.

Regulation activities. For each training session, distribute among the tables copies of the regulation activities (page 7) for participants to review as they have time. Put whole sheets on each table or cut the activities into smaller squares to distribute.

Items to purchase. If funds are available, purchase a sufficient amount of the following materials for each table of training participants:

- 2–3 stress balls
- 1 bottle of bubbles with bubble wand
- 2–3 straws
- Small box of crayons
- Small container of Play-Doh

Check-in minis. Make two copies of these (page 9) for each table. Later, these minis can be shared with case managers and others. Do you have the ability to laminate them? That would be ideal.

Word cards for Session Nine activity. For Session Nine, you will need one set of word cards for each table. Cut them into squares ahead of time.

CREATING EMOTIONAL SAFETY

In preparing to facilitate ARC Reflections, be mindful that material presented in these nine sessions can bring up strong emotions in participants — and in you. While you will use care to limit participants' exposure to highly distressing content and details, your sessions will frequently address the idea of trauma and loss.

To provide safety for all:

- **Be transparent about content.** Be clear to potential participants that the training will address the experience of trauma in a range of ways and that this may evoke distressing thoughts, feelings and reactions.
- **Identify boundaries.** Discuss what kinds of conversation are appropriate for the group and which conversations or concerns should instead be brought to caseworkers or other support providers in private. For instance, participants should feel comfortable talking about their experiences as foster parents and the range of emotions they feel toward children and teens in their care. However, you may wish to have participants agree not to share graphic stories of child abuse or violence, whether from their children's lives or their own. You may suggest that participants agree not to share names or identifying information of children and youth in their care or their biological or foster families. Facilitators and participants may use discretion in setting specific boundaries, but please have this conversation at the beginning of the training.
- **Make a specific plan with all group members.** At the outset of the group, ask participants to identify people they can turn to for support if they realize they are feeling distressed by training discussions or lessons. This may include helpers provided by the agency (for instance, case managers or — privately — ARC Reflections facilitators) or others in their personal network (for instance, therapists or parenting partners).
- **Identify rituals for checking in with group participants.** Ideally, all participants will do individual "check-ins" 2–3 times during each session. This is one way facilitators and participants can identify when they are struggling. Determine in advance what participants can do if they notice during a check-in that they need help. In addition, facilitators should plan to check in individually with group participants 2–3 times over the course of the nine sessions, to provide support, answer questions and help participants identify additional resources if and as needed.
- **Identify and discuss a plan for managing distress in the room.** At the beginning of each session, give participants explicit permission to participate — or not — in ways that are comfortable and tolerable for them. Participants can routinely be reminded to check in with themselves, use their self-regulation tools and strategies, take steps to support themselves (for instance, by taking

a break, stepping out of the room, etc.). Co-facilitators should identify a plan for addressing any strong distress that arises in the group (for instance, if a participant leaves the room crying or upset, perhaps one of the co-facilitators will follow and offer support).

- **Stay conscious of your own reactions.** It is often helpful to model the process of checking in, noticing internal experience and using regulation tools as the need arises. For instance, a facilitator might state, “I’m noticing as we’re talking about Olivia’s story that I’m feeling very sad, because it’s reminding me of some of the children I’ve worked with. I’m going to take a moment to check in with myself and do a quick stretch. Does anyone else notice that they are feeling any discomfort or emotion? Go ahead and take a moment to check in with yourselves, as well.” Co-facilitators should plan to check in with each other after each group, to process any concerns or reactions and to provide support.

ALL SESSIONS

REGULATION ACTIVITIES

Breathe in through your nose, counting slowly to three. Pause, counting to four. Exhale out of your mouth slowly, counting to five. Notice your abdomen moving out as you breathe in and moving in as you breathe out, while your shoulders and chest remain still.

Take the provided bubbles and take a slow and long breath to make a large bubble. Continue practicing blowing large bubbles for one minute.

Take a straw and a small piece of paper. Take a deep breath in (expanding belly out so that it looks and feels like it is filling with air) with the goal of holding the small paper on the end of the straw. Count to four and exhale, allowing the paper to fall to the floor.

Squeeze a stress ball and notice the sensations of tensing and relaxing the muscles in your hand.

Sit up straight with both feet on the floor. Close your eyes. Focus your attention on silently reciting a positive mantra such as “I feel at peace” or “I’m doing just fine.” Place one hand on your belly to sync the mantra with your breath. Let any distracting thoughts float by like clouds.

Tense and relax the muscles in your toes. Next, do the same with your lower leg. Progressively work your way up to your neck and head. You can also start with your head and neck and work down to your toes. Tense your muscles for at least five seconds and then relax for five seconds and repeat.

With your eyes closed, mentally list simple information, such as days of the week, months of the year, etc.

Take a few moments to imagine relaxing at the ocean. In a comfortable position in your chair and with your eyes closed, think about the smell of salt water, the sound of crashing waves and the warmth of the sun on your body.

Imagine a peaceful, healing light entering your body that releases any tense areas in your body.

Use some of the provided crayons to create a doodle or drawing.

Tune into your current physical sensations. Take time to become aware of how it feels to be sitting in the chair, how your back feels, where your feet are placed, etc. Start at your toes and work your way up.

In your chair, stretch your arms above your head, inhaling deeply. Pause, and when exhaling, slowly let your arms sink back onto your lap.

Notice and describe to yourself four things that you can hear, three things that you can see, two things that you can feel and one thing that you can smell.

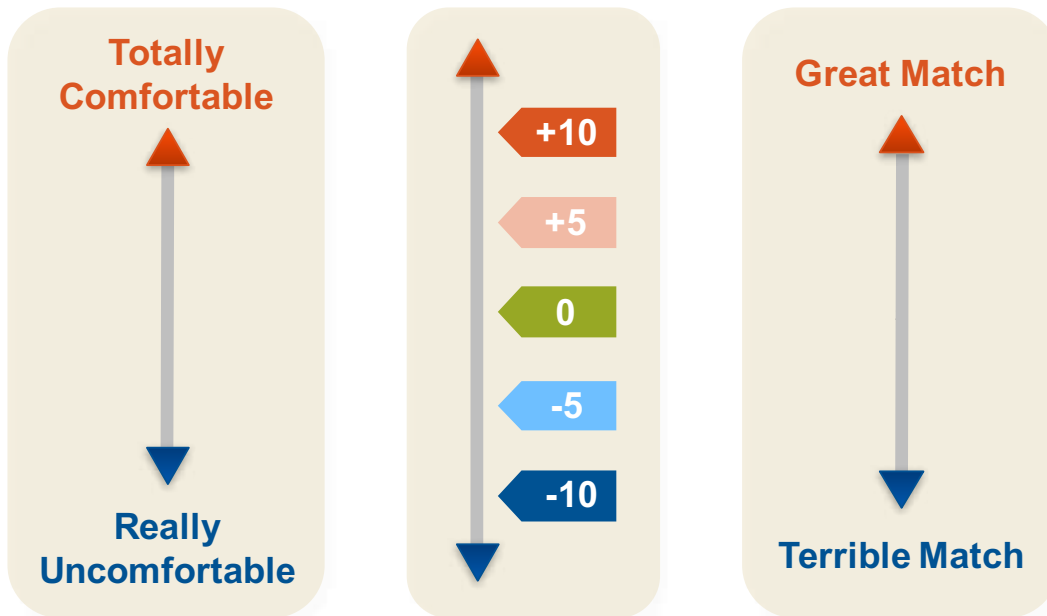
Roll your head slowly from side to side.

Sitting comfortably in your chair, and keeping your toes on the ground, lift your heels up, hold it, and then lower them down. Find a pace that feels comfortable. Now reverse it, and keep your heel on the ground while bringing up your toes.

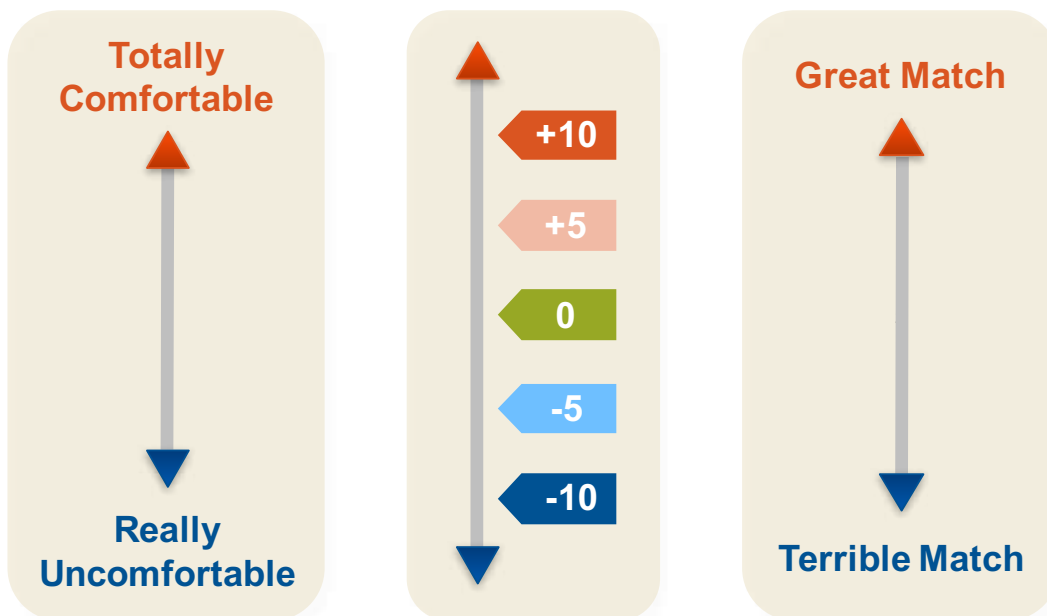
Take an object from the table and let yourself explore it. Notice the feel of a pen in your hand, mold a piece of clay or Play-Doh or take one of the balls, rolling it from one hand to the next. Notice how the object feels in your hands, its physical properties and different ways you can experiment with it.

Think of someone you love. Try to use all your senses in imagining this person — picture their face, try to remember their smell or the feel of physical contact with them.

CHECK-IN



CHECK-IN



SESSION ONE

Understanding Trauma



SESSION ONE SUMMARY

Understanding Trauma

Many different things may be experienced as traumatic. Trauma can:

- Activate the survival instinct
- Overwhelm a person's ability to cope
- Cause intense feelings of helplessness and vulnerability, even outside of the traumatic situation
- Generate a range of negative feelings, such as fear, rage, betrayal, shame, guilt or submission
- Be predictable (such as sexual abuse) or unpredictable (such as parental mental health issues)

Trauma can profoundly influence the development of a child or teen.

Trauma shapes the child's or teen's lens for self, relationships and danger.

Trauma responses are designed to help the child or teen protect himself or herself and survive.

Practice for this week: Take your Check-In handouts home. This week, try to do a Check-In at least one time every day. Make a note of where you were and what was going on when you did it.



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?

Totally Comfortable

↑

↓

Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

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.



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:



Take-Home Log

Each week, write a one-sentence takeaway that describes the one thing you want to remember.

Week 1: Understanding trauma

Week 2: Behavior makes sense

Week 3: Put on your oxygen mask

Week 4: Cultivate connection

Week 5: Mirror, mirror

Week 6: Calm, cool and connected

Week 7: Respond, don't react

Week 8: Who are you? All about identity

Week 9: Endings and beginnings



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 1

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

↑

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Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

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Terrible Match

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.



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 2

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

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Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

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Great Match

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↓

Terrible Match

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.



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 3

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

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Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

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.



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 4

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

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Really Uncomfortable

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+10

+5

0

-5

-10

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Great Match

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Terrible Match

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.



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 5

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

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Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

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Great Match

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Terrible Match

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.



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 6

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

↑

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Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

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Great Match

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↓

Terrible Match

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.



SESSION ONE PRACTICE

Check-In

Week 1 Practice: Day 7

Date/Time: _____ What are you doing/where are you? _____

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?

Totally Comfortable

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Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

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.

SESSION TWO

Behavior Makes Sense



SESSION TWO SUMMARY

Behavior Makes Sense

There are two primary functions of behavior:

- **Safety.** This includes actions designed to keep the child or teen safe in the face of perceived danger.
- **Getting needs met.** This includes actions designed to help a child or teen meet physical, emotional or relational needs in the face of perceived deprivation, rejection or abandonment.

To understand the behavior of your children or teens, remember these three points:

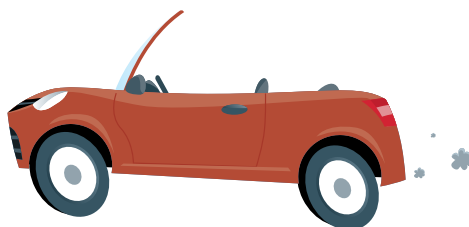
1. Remember the lens: Perception is reality



2. Behavior addresses a need: Survival trumps everything else



3. Ability to recover: Where are the resources?



To address behavior successfully, **cultivate your curiosity**. Get curious about:

- What might my child or teen have been reacting to?
 - What might my child or teen need? What might he or she be trying to tell me?
 - How can I keep him or her safe? How can I keep myself safe?
 - What can I do to help him or her regain a sense of safety or control?
-

Practice for this week: Use the practice worksheet provided by the facilitator. Pick any behavior that annoys you in someone you know (child, partner or friend). Be sure to pick something you see regularly. This week, notice when it happens, how it happens and where it happens. See if you can identify:

- The trigger (what starts it?)
- The function (why do you think he or she does it?)

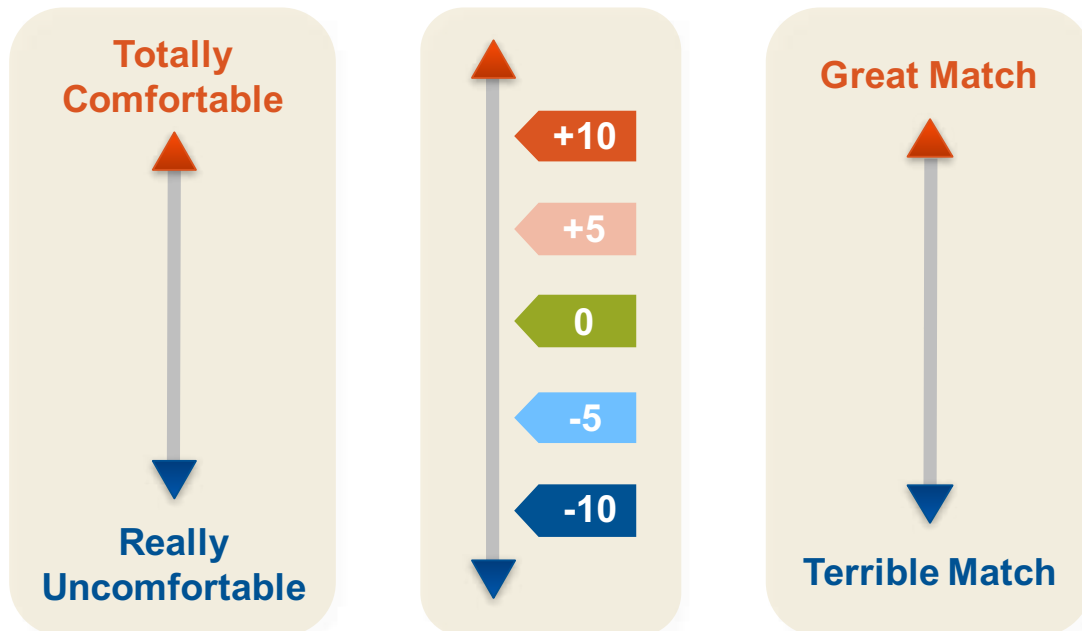


SESSION TWO

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.

SESSION TWO

What Are Your Filters?

Each of us responds differently to different situations, in part because of the beliefs we have about those situations, which are based on our previous experiences.

Consider the following. How might you react to each one? Would your reaction be positive/negative/somewhere in between? How strong might your reaction be?

	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE	HOW STRONG, ON A SCALE OF 0-10
Raised voices				0 ← 5 → 10
Someone not looking you in the eye				0 ← 5 → 10
Someone who is quiet				0 ← 5 → 10
Smell of fire				0 ← 5 → 10
A hand on your shoulder				0 ← 5 → 10
The sound of crying				0 ← 5 → 10
People in authority				0 ← 5 → 10

Notice the situations to which you have the strongest reactions (whether positive or negative). Why do you think that might be?



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 in to 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

Put on Your Oxygen Mask



SESSION THREE SUMMARY

Put on Your Oxygen Mask

Parenting is hard. Foster parenting is harder because:

- It's hard to parent from the middle — in the absence of a child's or teen's history or previous relationships.
- There is so much that is unexpected and unpredictable — placements, transitions, behavior, histories.
- Of your lack of control.
- Of your lack of information.
- Of your lack of resources.

Your feelings matter for a lot of reasons, including because:

- they give you information (as long as you're aware of them);

but

- they're not always comfortable — they can put you on the Express Road.

Self-care is easy on good days, but harder on hard days. Keep in mind what makes a hard day:

- Things related to your child
- Things related to your world
- Things related to your self

Stay on the main road:

- Acknowledge your feelings
- Stay aware
- Build and use a toolbox

Practice for this week: Using the provided worksheet, try to identify what makes a hard day for you. What are your particular push buttons? This week, try to notice if any of these things happen and how they affect your mood or responses.

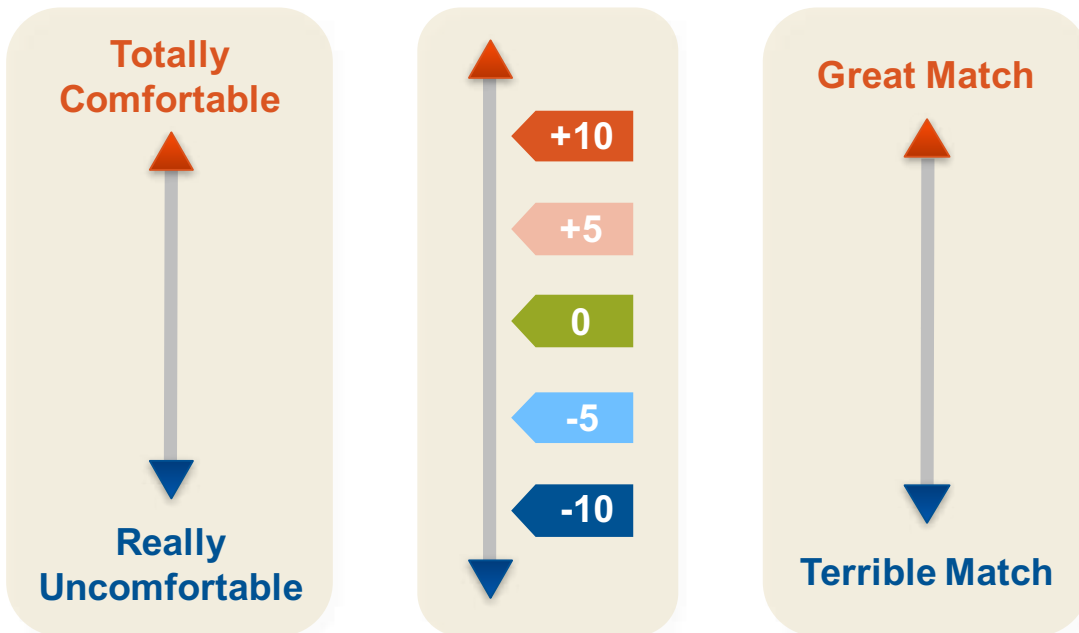


SESSION THREE

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.

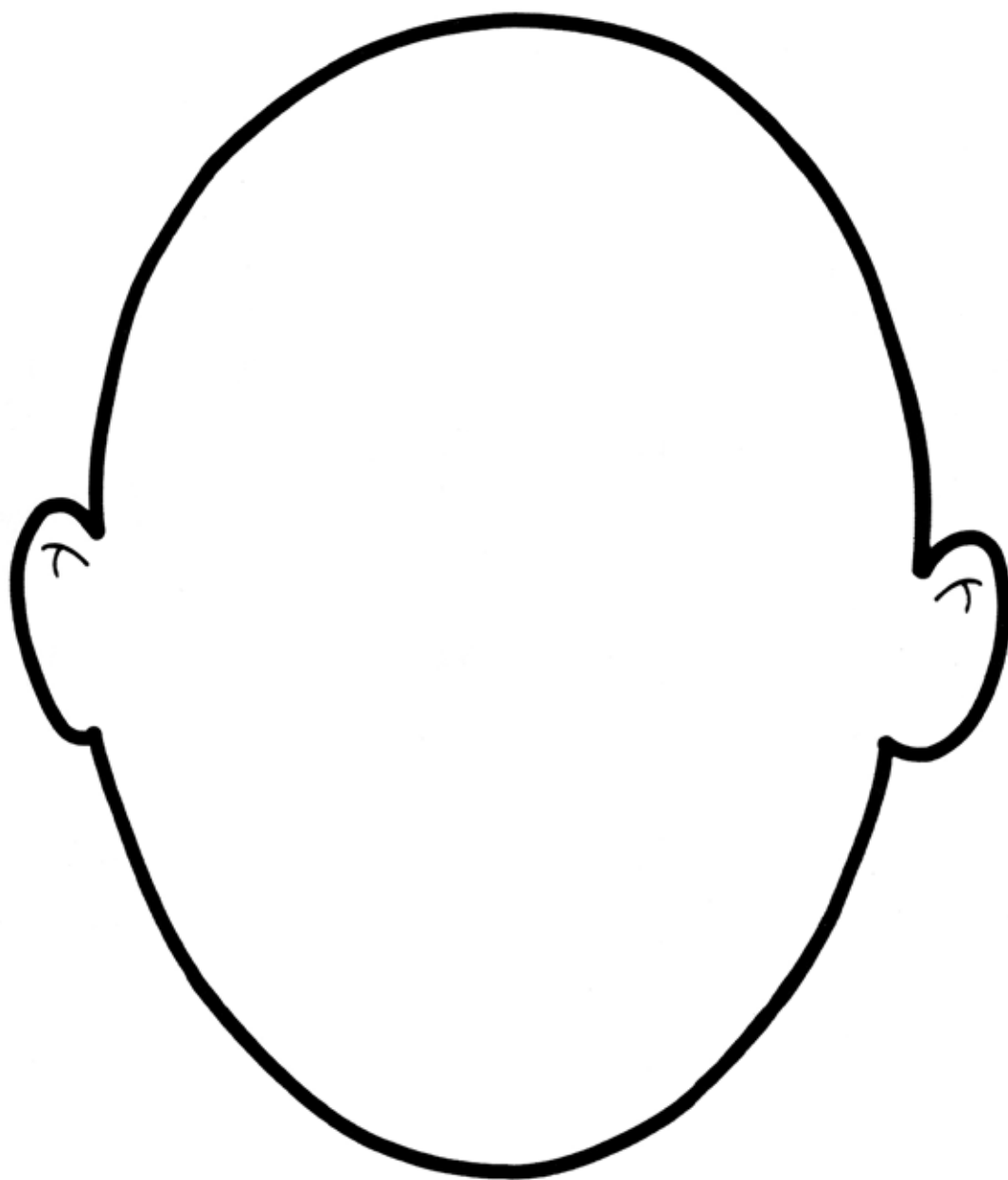
SESSION THREE

What Is in Your Head?

What are all of the things that are taking up space in your head right now? Some may feel good and others may be worries. Write them next to a box below. Pick a color for each and color in the box. You may be thinking about just a few things or you may be thinking about a lot of things. You can add boxes as needed.

<div></div>	<hr/>	<div></div>	<hr/>
<div></div>	<hr/>	<div></div>	<hr/>
<div></div>	<hr/>	<div></div>	<hr/>
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<div></div>	<hr/>	<div></div>	<hr/>
<div></div>	<hr/>	<div></div>	<hr/>

We all have lots of different things in our head at the same time. Some things take up a lot of space and energy; some take up less. How much space does each thought take up in your head? If it's a big thought, color in a big space on the head (on the back of this sheet), and if it's a small thought, color in a small space.



SESSION THREE

Try to Stay on the Main Road: Use Your Toolbox

First set of tools: Prepare yourself. Before going into a stressful situation:

- Use self-talk
- Have a plan
- Bring a support person
- Get a good night's sleep and make sure you're not hungry

Second set of tools: Have something “in your pocket.” Tools such as:

- Deep breathing
- Relaxing your muscles
- Counting to 10
- Walking away for a moment
- Thinking of self-affirmation statements



Third set of tools: Recovery tools, such as:

- Calling a friend
- Making a cup of tea or coffee
- Exercising
- Doing something you enjoy
- Trying to remember one good thing that happened today

Fourth set of tools: Ongoing self-care strategies, such as:

- Having and using a team
- Making time for yourself
- Finding something that is about you, and not about you as a parent
- Ensuring your basic self-care needs, such as sleep, food and health



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

Cultivate Connection



SESSION FOUR SUMMARY

Cultivate Connection

Good relationships require many ingredients, including:

- Respect
- Joy
- Curiosity
- Acceptance
- Mutuality
- Repair
- Trust



When building your relationship, remember the lens of the child or teen. He or she may:

- Carry other relationships with him or her
- Expect harm, abandonment or rejection

Relationships take time. You will need to:

- Prepare
- Ease in
- Meet the child where he or she is
- Ride the roller coaster
- Reconnect
- Cultivate joy

Practice for this week: Make a list: How many five-minute joy or engagement activities can you think of? Try to bring back a list of at least five activities to share with the group. Try to engage in one every day.



SESSION FOUR

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?

Totally Comfortable

↑

↓

Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

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.

SESSION FOUR

Cultivate Connection: Ideas for Building the Relationship

Before a child or teen enters your home, prepare by:
Start with the basics. What can you put in place as soon as the child or teen enters your home?
Ease in. What things can you do to help a child or teen begin to feel comfortable with you and your family?
Start to build the relationship. How might you begin to build a connection?

Meet the child or teen where he or she is. How can you connect with your particular child or teen?
Riding the roller coaster and handling disconnects. How might you handle the ups and downs of your relationship with the child or teen in your home — and how can you maintain connection over time?
Creating opportunities for joy and connection. What ideas do you have for building good times and positive experiences with the child or teen in your home?



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

Mirror, Mirror



SESSION FIVE SUMMARY

Mirror, Mirror

We communicate our experience in ways that go beyond language, including through our:

- Body tension
 - Tone of voice
 - Eye contact
 - Facial expression
 - Language
 - Behavior
 - Observable emotion
 - Connection or withdrawal
-

Learning someone's language takes time. It starts with curiosity and observation. We become observers 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;
 - going beyond the surface behaviors and working to understand what is driving them; and
 - noticing patterns.
-

Slow down, be a detective and mirror what you see by:

- engaging in a child's or teen's experience and reflecting it back; and
 - communicating through language, relationship, behavior and emotion that we see in a child or teen.
-

Practice for this week: Take home your detective sheet and pick one person in your life to observe (child, partner, co-worker, friend). See if you can identify all the clues that suggest that person might be frustrated. Bring this back next week (you don't have to share who it is that you picked).



SESSION FIVE

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?

Totally Comfortable

↑

↓

Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

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.



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

Calm, Cool & Connected



SESSION SIX SUMMARY

Calm, Cool and Connected

Remember how infants and young children learn to regulate. You can help infants regulate by:

- Keeping yourself calm.
- Learning to read the infant's signs — that he or she needs playtime, sleep, food, comfort — to get in front of the distress.
- Learning the infant's preferences: rocking, touch, movement, swaddling, sound (voices, music).
- Being open to learning and experimenting with new skills (and learning from what is not working).
- Having daily routines that build a sense of rhythm (sleeping, feeding, playing).
- Connecting and engaging throughout the day, even when the infant isn't distressed.

Children and teens who do not get enough soothing when they are young have a much harder time managing feelings and behavior.

You can help by laying a good foundation. Do that by using routines and ongoing strategies, building connection and learning your child or teen's patterns. You can respond in the moment by:

- Catching the moment
 - Checking yourself
 - Being a mirror
 - Meeting the need
 - Supporting child or teen tools
 - Providing opportunities for control and choice
 - Reconnecting
-

Practice for this week: Look around your home. What do you have that lends itself to supporting regulation? What might you need to add? (Keep in mind that this includes items as well as daily practices.) Make a list of what you have and what you need.

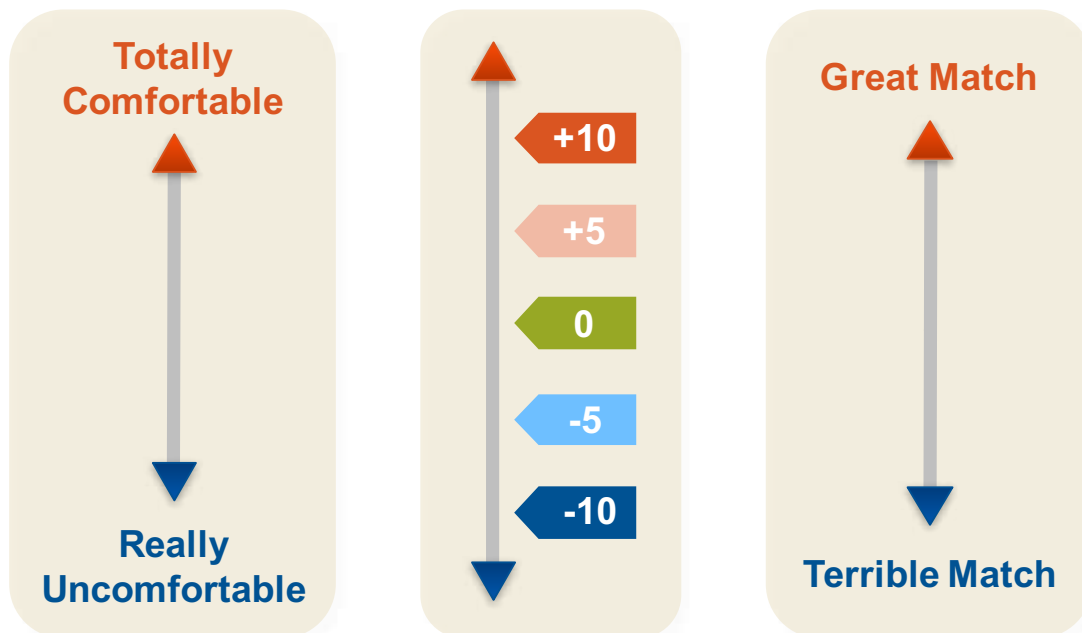


SESSION SIX

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.

SESSION SIX

Make a Toolbox: How to Support Regulation All the Time!

Provide ongoing activities, such as:

- Playtime (playing alone or together)
- Sports
- Expressive arts/dance/theater
- Yoga
- Reading
- Listening to music

Find ways to soothe, by providing:

- Sensory activities
- Gross motor activities
- A dedicated, calming space
- Opportunities for engagement and connection

See modulation activities handout for more ideas.

Develop creative daily routines and rhythms

- Routines are the rhythms, structures and predictable moments that build safety, skill and support.
- Routines are not about rigidity — they are about creating a rhythm.
- Routines should decrease rather than increase distress. If your routine is making things harder, change it.

Use routines to:

- Target challenge points, such as transitions, hygiene, expectations (homework, chores)
- Provide natural soothing opportunities at bedtime, playtime, bath time, etc.
- Provide engagement and connection points, such as check-ins, asking about the day, solving problems together

Be a detective — read your child or teen's patterns

- What sorts of activities or experiences lead to feelings or energy that seems more or less organized or in control?
- How do you know your child or teen is comfortable or uncomfortable in his or her body and with his or her feelings? What are the clues?
- What patterns of strength and challenge does your child or teen show? When does your child or teen do best — and worst? Target soothing routines for the challenging times.
- Actively track clues each time your child or teen has a hard time. These clues will come in handy next time.

SESSION SIX

Daily Routine Examples

Morning	Morning transitions are often difficult for everyone, but particularly for highly stressed or chaotic households. Work to create consistent and realistic morning routines.
Mealtimes	Meals are often a forum for communication and a place for family together time. Use mealtimes to provide an opportunity for less structured peer interaction and conversation. Mealtimes can support the development of social skills, turn-taking, manners and interest in others' activities. Work to come together for meals that are part of a daily routine as often as possible.
Play	Play is a child's natural means of expression — this is often true for teens, as well. Play with your children or teens. Allocate time during the week for family, solitary and peer-to-peer play. Although often mistakenly considered less important than chores, homework or other task-oriented experiences, play is a vital part of healthy development. Play also provides a forum for socialization and skill building.
Chores	Performing chores helps to build a sense of responsibility and self-efficacy. Of course, chores should be age-appropriate, but it is OK for even very young children to have expectations about their areas of responsibility. This conveys the idea that all family or community members, including the child or teen, make important contributions. Work to develop child- or teen-appropriate, realistic daily expectations.
Homework	School achievement and success is an important area of competency for children. You can contribute by emphasizing the importance of homework, providing an appropriate environment that supports homework completion, being available to provide help or encouragement and emphasizing effort over success.

Family together time	Build into daily family routines a time for caregivers and children or teens to come together, formally or informally, to share experiences. For instance, some families may consider holding a weekly family meeting to share significant events. It may be incorporated into mealtime, bedtime, etc. Regardless of the forum, it is important that there be opportunities for family members to routinely share their experiences.
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SESSION SIX

Bedtime Routine Examples

Story time or reading	Read a story; encourage an older child to read to you or have a teen read independently.
Music or soothing sounds	Encourage a child or teen to listen to soothing music or sounds while settling for bed.
Tuck in	Tuck the child or teen in for the night. This can be literal or figurative, depending on the needs of the child or teen.
Singing	Sing a preferred song(s) (for younger child) to or with your child before bed.
Bathing	Have child take a bath or shower about an hour before bed. This may help with calming. Pay attention to privacy, boundaries and the possibility of these activities being a trigger.
Safety check	Help children and teens feel safe. Leave on a nightlight, hang a dream catcher, check under beds or in closets, rub on “no-monster” lotion, etc. Or, for an older child, review your safety plan
Movement	Allow time for rocking, stretching, yoga or some other type of preferred movement to ease a child or teen into a state of arousal conducive for sleep.
Checkout	Create a checkout ritual or a routine approach to ending the day (such as saying a prayer, sharing high/low for the day, making a plan for the morning, etc.).

SESSION SIX

Modulation Activities

Choose activities that are naturally modulating, such as:

- Play (alone or together)
- Sports
- Expressive arts, dance or theater
- Yoga
- Reading
- Listening to music
- Crafts

Use sensory strategies, such as:

- **Sound:** Listen to music, use headphones or noise machines to drown out noise
- **Touch:** Provide hugs, weighted blankets, soft pillows, stuffed animals, cool stones, things to fiddle with, chewable jewelry
- **Smell:** Provide lotions, use air fresheners, fill the air with the scent of cooking
- **Taste:** Share a favorite food
- **Sight:** Provide pictures of safe people and favorite places. Minimize visual stimulation

Provide gross motor opportunities, such as:

- Small trampolines
- Opportunities to run, jump and play
- Exercise balls or yoga balls
- Balance beams
- After-school dance parties

Create a dedicated comfort zone:

- Make it in a safe place, preferably just for the child or teen
- Fill it with materials that are safe, comforting and sensory
- Have the child or teen practice using it when he or she is calm

Additional activities to support modulation include:

Breathing activities, such as:

- *Deep breathing with movement and sounds.* You be the model. Say, “We are going to practice deep breathing with movement and sounds. When I raise my arms up [demonstrate], I am going to take a deep breath in. When I bring my arms down, I am going to exhale, making a sound,

like this: ooooooooooooooooooh. You can make any sound that you wish to make. OK, on the count of three, let's practice together..."

- *Bubble breathing:* You be the model. Use a jar of bubble mixture and a wand. Breathe slowly into the wand, emphasizing breathing slowly to make a large bubble.
- *Deep breathing with a straw.* Remind your child or teen that deep breathing is the fastest way to send a message to the brain that everything is OK. Give him or her a straw and a small piece of paper. On the count of three, ask the child or teen to take a deep breath in (expanding the belly out so that it looks and feels like it is filling with air). The goal is to hold the small paper on the end of the straw. After a count to four, prompt the child or teen to exhale, allowing the paper to fall to the floor.
- *Pillow breathing.* Have child or teen lie on floor with pillow or stuffed animal on stomach. Teach him or her to breathe so that pillow or animal rises and falls with each breath.
- *London Bridge breathing.* Have children or teens raise their arms (like in game London Bridge). Breathe in as arms go up; breathe out as arms come down. See how slowly they can move their arms up and down.
- *Breathing with imagery.* Have children or teens imagine taking a deep breath and blowing out birthday candles. Or have them try to paint the opposite wall with their breath, or smell flowers, then blow a dandelion puff.

Focus activities, such as:

- *Focus bell.* Explain that you will be ringing a bell. Encourage the child or teen to focus on the sensory experience of sound. Encourage them to practice their deep breathing while listening. Notice the change in sound as time passes. Say, "Raise your hand when you no longer hear the sound."
- *Memory game.* Ask the child or teen to be mindful of his or her environment and study all the things in the room. Then ask, "Please close your eyes. Now recall an item in the room that is white." You can modify this by selecting a few items (toys, pens, objects, etc.) and placing them in the middle of the table. Have the child or teen focus on the items for one minute. Then say, "Close your eyes," while you remove one item. The final step is to give the child or teen an opportunity to guess the missing item.
- *Grounding.* Have children tune in to their senses, using concrete, easy-to-hold stimuli, such as:
 - Magic wands
 - Small stuffed animal
 - Magic rocks
 - Glitter cream
 - Worry stones
 - Pleasurable smell
 - Piece of velvet cloth
 - Stress balls

Movement activities or games, such as:

- *Dice game.* The goal is to practice breathing or light movement. You roll the dice. Then choose a movement for you and the child and teen to sustain to the count indicated on the die. For example, roll your shoulders to the count of 10. Or wiggle your nose to the count of seven.
 - *Stretching.* Lead the child or teen in gentle movement and stretches.
 - *Simon says.* Review the rules to Simon says. Remember that in Simon says, there is a leader (Simon) and followers. The follower is to follow the leader's actions — but only when the leader says "Simon says."
 - *Head, shoulders, knees and toes.* Play this game with younger children to expose them to music and movement at the same time.
-

Music activities, such as:

- *Relaxation with music.* Play some relaxing music and have the child or teen listen to it mindfully. Remind the child or teen to breathe while listening.
- *You've got the beat.* "We are going to create music together today. Each of us is going to have a turn creating a beat using our hands and body. We will take turns being the leader or creator of the beat. The rest of us will follow the leader." You can do this exercise with movement, too.
- *Musical instruments.* Gather several types of musical instruments. Demonstrate the sound of each. Say, "Close your eyes or turn your back (if comfortable)." Ask the child or teen to identify the sound and link it to a specific instrument.



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)?

- 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?

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

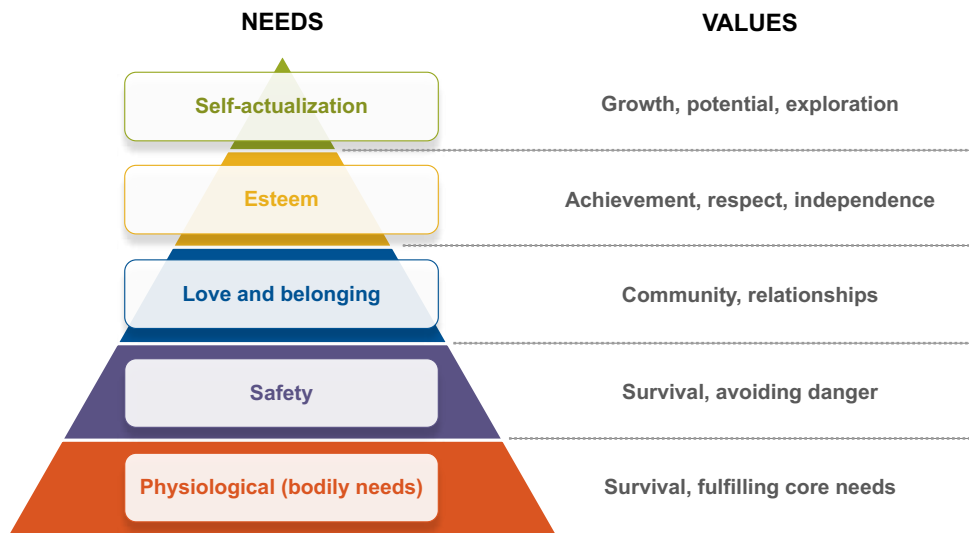
Respond, Don't React



SESSION SEVEN SUMMARY

Respond, Don't React

Behaviors are driven by needs. Needs are hierarchical and will vary by state:



Adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)

To respond successfully to behavior, respond, don't react:

- Be proactive
- Identify the child's or teen's need(s)
- Use your go-tos
- Identify other strategies, such as praise, problem solving and limit setting

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

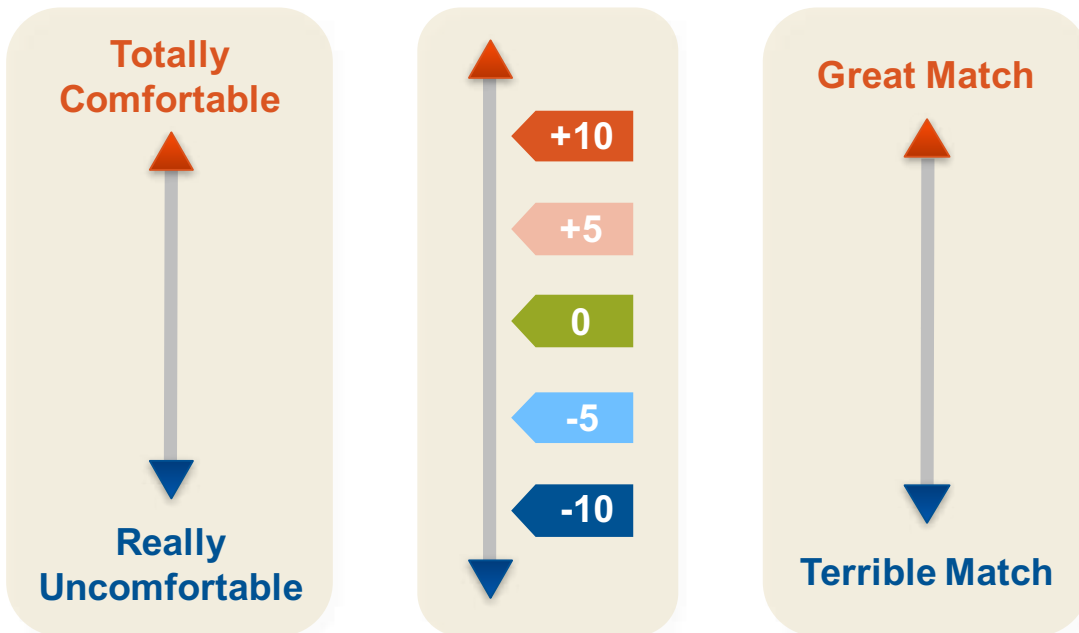


SESSION SEVEN

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.

SESSION SEVEN

Approaches to Behavior

1. Be proactive. Try to identify in advance a few behaviors to address. Think of behaviors you want to increase as well as those you want to decrease.

2. Identify patterns. The more you understand a behavior, the better you will be at addressing it. Try to identify:

- **Triggers.** What factors make this behavior more likely to happen? Triggers may include something going on inside the child or teen or in his or her environment or situation.
 - **Needs.** Remember that all behaviors meet a need. Try to identify what the child or teen is trying to do with his or her behavior. When you know the function or need, you can address the behavior better.
-

3. Use your go-to strategies to address behavior.

- **Meet needs.** For instance, if a child or teen is acting a certain way because he or she needs attention, withdrawing attention (ignoring) might actually increase, rather than decrease, the negative behavior. Try to identify some healthy ways you might be able to meet the need you've identified and therefore decrease the behavior.

Support regulation. When a behavior is out of control, before anything else can happen you need safe, effective strategies to support regulation, de-escalate arousal and manage crisis. Pay attention to strategies for managing your and the child's or teen's emotional responses.

4. Purposefully use additional behavior response strategies. There are many options for addressing child or teen behaviors; each may be useful at different times. You are more likely to be effective if you have a plan. Behavior response strategies may include:

- **Praise and reinforcement:** Use to increase or decrease a behavior.
 - **Problem solving:** Use when child or teen is in a 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, find ways for you and your child or teen to continue to learn from it. Talking through or otherwise addressing a situation is likely to be most effective once everyone is calm and there has been some opportunity for reconnection. Think of each crisis or difficult interaction as a way to learn and shift things for the next time.

SESSION SEVEN

Behavior Strategies: What Are Your Tools?

This handout will discuss three types of tools:

- **Praise and reinforcement**
- **Problem solving**
- **Limit setting**

For each tool, a brief discussion is provided of ways in which a child's or teen's experience with trauma should inform your use of the specific tool.

Praise and reinforcement

- **Why?**
 - To build children's and teens' awareness of their successes and positive capacities
 - To shift the adult frame from negative (focused on bad behavior) to positive (focused on strengths and successes)
- **When?**
 - Any time a child or teen is engaging in a behavior you want to increase (including ending a negative behavior)
- **How?**
 - Provide verbally (with words), nonverbally (showing pride and appreciation) and/or concretely (using reinforcement charts or tangible rewards)
 - Be specific. Label the behavior:
 - "I'm so proud of you for trying to use your tools and calm down"
 - "You just did such a good job listening when I asked you to clean up"
- **Trauma considerations.** Be aware that praise can trigger traumatized children and teens:
 - If kids reject your praise or ignore it, try not to take it personally, and don't engage in a power struggle. It's OK for a child or teen to disagree with or not respond to your statements.
 - With children and teens who seem triggered by praise, it may be helpful to focus on the positive behavior rather than the whole child or teen and to be selective (don't praise everything). Say things like, "You worked so hard on that drawing," rather than "What a good artist you are."

- Keep noticing positive things. Even for a child or teen who seems distressed or unresponsive, over time the positives will matter.
-

Problem solving

- **Why?**

- To help children and teens build awareness of having and making choices, and the ability to get in front of challenges, instead of just reacting to them
- To help children and teens feel more in control of and powerful over their lives

- **When?**

- In calm states, in anticipation of or following distress, challenges or other problem situations
- When the child or teen is asking you for help
- Regularly, through building skills by practicing and addressing the many small challenges that arise daily

- **How?**

- Communicate your willingness to support the child or teen and your belief in a solution (Let's figure this out)
- Help the child or teen identify what the problem is (What is it that you're trying to solve?)
- Identify goals or outcomes (What do we want to happen?)
- Identify choices (What kinds of things might we be able to do?)
- Identify consequences (What might happen if we do that?)
- Make a plan and troubleshoot it — be sure to pay attention to the adult support role

- **Trauma considerations.** Is it possible to use problem-solving strategies in any situation? The ability to engage in problem solving depends on:

- agency, the child's or teen's belief in his or her ability to make choices or be successful;
- state, which part of the brain is online; and
- stage, the child's or teen's developmental capacity.

Another factor to consider: The adult's calm approach, appropriate timing and ongoing support are crucial to using problem-solving approaches with children and teens. Very few can problem solve on their own in a challenging situation.

Limit setting

- **Why?**

- To establish an understanding of boundaries, expectations and understanding of what happens in a safe world
- To help children and teens contain and shift negative behaviors and identify positive alternatives
- To help children and teens learn about inappropriate behaviors

- **When?**

- When behaviors cross established boundaries for safety, harm to others or harm to self
- Thoughtfully — and not for every behavior

- **How?**

- In a calm adult state, whenever possible
- Thoughtfully: Work to identify appropriate limits in advance of behaviors occurring
- Make limits age appropriate
- If naming consequences, do so when child or teen is reasonably calm, after regulation tools have been used
- Less is more. Be concise and clear in naming consequences. Link them to the behavior, not the child or teen.
- Move on. Allow space for the child's or teen's distressed affect (it's OK for a child or teen to be angry about a consequence), but also create space for repair. Try to let go of your own anger and use your tools.

- **Trauma Considerations.** Any limit can be a potential trigger for a traumatized child or teen.

When setting a limit:

- Be thoughtful about the child's or teen's particular history when choosing and naming consequences. For instance, time-out may escalate distress for a child or teen with a neglect history. Yelling is likely to trigger a child or teen who has experienced violence.
- Bring attunement into your choice of limits. Remember to validate and name the child's or teen's affect, even when you give a consequence for behavior ("I understand how angry you were, but we use our words, not our hands when we are mad").
- Separate the behavior from the child or teen



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

Current 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?

<p>What regulation/de-escalation/crisis management strategies can you support in the moment if the child is dysregulated?</p>
<p>4. Additional behavior response strategies. Which of these do you think might work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>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:</p>
<p><i>With my child, I can (When? How?):</i></p>
<p><i>By myself or with my caregiving partner, I can (When? How?):</i></p>

SESSION EIGHT

Who Are You? All About Identity



SESSION EIGHT SUMMARY

Who Are You? All About Identity

Identity develops in stages over time:

- Infancy: Existence
- Toddlerhood: The explorer
- Early childhood: The concrete self
- The elementary years: The unique self
- Early adolescence: The emerging self
- Late adolescence: The abstract self

Trauma can have a profound effect on a child's or teen's sense of self and identity. The effect may show up as challenges in the child's or teen's:

- Ability to explore
- Sense of agency
- Ability to tolerate frustration
- Imagination
- Internal state

Foster parents can have a significant influence on the child's or teen's sense of self by paying attention to:

- Helping the child or teen explore his or her unique qualities
- Building positive experiences
- Tolerating vulnerabilities
- Holding past, present and future

Practice for this week: Review ideas for developing a child's or teen's positive and unique self and think about the child or teen in your home. Identify one way that you would like to actively support the child's or teen's development of a positive or unique sense of self. Fill out the provided worksheet with your ideas and try one out.



SESSION EIGHT

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?

Totally Comfortable

↑

↓

Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

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.

SESSION EIGHT

Infancy: Existence

Infants' primary task in infancy is establishing trust in their environments and the people around them.

Infants work to establish attachment with primary caregivers who consistently meet their needs and develop comfort in interacting with others. They make their basic needs known (thirst, hunger, sleep, stimulation, soothing) by crying or sending other nonverbal signals to their caregivers.

The earliest understanding of self as separate from others occurs during infancy. Infants become aware of the role of others and, in particular, their primary caregivers as sources of basic need fulfillment. Self-concept develops and grows as others respond in predictable ways to actions, behaviors and interactions.



SESSION EIGHT

Toddlerhood: The Explorer

Toddlers have a growing sense of self-awareness and independence. During this phase, they experience increasing agency over their world. They begin to explore their environment and see the effect they have on their world.

Toddlers become aware of others' responses to actions, behaviors and interactions. This reflected lens is incorporated into their early understanding of self.

Trauma can influence early exploration. Usually, toddlers have secure attachments that provide them sufficient feelings of safety to explore their worlds, and, by extension, different aspects of themselves. Children learn whether they can accomplish goals, experiment with novelty, explore likes and dislikes and more. Children who have been traumatized often curtail exploration in the service of safety, relying on rigid control and repetition. Without exploration, children are limited to what immediately is, rather than the possibilities of what could be. This limitation on imagination cuts off potential facets of self, both in the present and in the future.



SESSION EIGHT

Early Childhood: The Concrete Self

Young children have a growing sense of individuality and independence. Their preferences become more evident as favorite foods, activities, colors, books, clothing, soothing objects, etc., are identified and explored.

Concrete interests and preferences begin to be incorporated into their sense of self as unique from others. There is also a growing sense of curiosity and an increasing ability to use fantasy and imagination. Children's exploration of individuality and growing independence is still in large part supported by consistency and routines.

At this stage, young children find opportunities to assert their growing individuality and independence. Dressing may be one area where this will show up. It is often common during this stage to hear the words "by myself" as the young child increases capacity for completing daily tasks independently. It can be a challenging time for the caregiver, who has to balance his or her own preferences (having a child who wears appropriate or matching clothing to school), desires and needs (to get to work on time, for example) with the child's growing need for independence.



SESSION EIGHT

Elementary Years: Unique Self

During this phase, children's understanding of self expands to incorporate experiences from multiple domains — his or her home, school and activities, for example.

Children focus in part on concrete attributes and outcomes: "I am a girl [or a boy]," "I am strong [or weak]," "I am smart [or dumb]." Attributes are often understood in dichotomies, with shades of gray developing over the course of this stage.

Interactions with caregivers continue to be important to self-concept. However, the responses of peers, teachers and others now play a role, too. In a sense, the reflected lens is expanded.

Over time, a sense of self grows to encompass personal attributes, likes and dislikes, and individual values. The development of identity requires the ability to integrate experiences and aspects of self into a coherent whole.

Children who have experienced trauma often rely on dissociative coping methods that involve disconnecting from their experiences. As such, children may have multiple senses of self and have difficulty integrating them to form a coherent sense of self across experiences and affective states. This becomes more challenging as the reflected lens expands and self is influenced by dichotomous thinking.



SESSION EIGHT

Early Adolescence: Emerging Self

During the early stage of adolescence, children continue the process of establishing their identity and self-worth. Through this process and with guidance from their caregivers, they establish a sense of self in relation to societal rules and expectations.

During this stage, adolescents advance their academic and extracurricular skill set, make and sustain friendships, continue the process of gender identification and begin to explore intimate relationships.

Young adolescents begin the process of separating from caregivers as they strive for an increased sense of independence. Identification with a group often begins at this stage as the peer group has a growing influence on self-concept. Young adolescents may try on different attributes in an attempt to crystallize a sense of self.



SESSION EIGHT

Late Adolescence: Abstract Self

During this phase, there is increasing independence as teens may begin college or vocational training or enter the workforce.

Identity in this phase integrates past and current experiences as well as future goals, though older adolescents often struggle to connect current actions, behaviors and interactions to future outcomes.

Older adolescents experience significant changes in their capacity to think. As they move from concrete to abstract thought, they are increasingly able to understand abstract ideas, think about possibilities, think ahead and empathize with others. Abstract concepts and ideas are now incorporated into their broader sense of self.

This is a time when both self-awareness and increased peer influence converge. This can result in increased sensitivity and, at times, negative self-evaluation.



SESSION EIGHT

Layers of Self

Identify one person from your childhood who made you feel worthy, lovable and/or cared for.

Think about an early experience that made you feel capable, powerful and/or successful.

Think about a goal that you had for yourself as a young child or adolescent that you had the opportunity to work toward/achieve.

SESSION EIGHT

What Are Your Filters?

- Are there areas in your life where you feel really successful, confident and/or competent? This is likely a positive filter. Describe one or two examples.

- Are there areas in your life where you feel somewhat unsuccessful, unconfident and/or incompetent? This may be a not-so-positive filter. Describe one or two examples.

- Do these filters influence actions, behaviors and interactions? If so, in what ways?

- Positive filter:

- Not-so-positive filter:



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 EIGHT PRACTICE

Positive and Unique Self



Review the ideas for developing a positive and unique sense of self and think about a child or teen in your home. Identify at least one way that you would like to actively support the child's or teen's development of a positive or unique sense of self. Describe.

SESSION NINE

Endings and Beginnings



SESSION NINE SUMMARY

Endings and Beginnings

Not all endings are the same. Types of transitions in foster care:

- Reunification with biological family
- Transition into a (pre-)adoptive home
- Transition into another foster home
- Higher level of care (group home, residential, hospitalization)
- AWOL (absent without leave or running away)
- Aging out/emancipation

Transitions can be particularly challenging for children and teens in foster care because of their:

- History of multiple losses
- Negative lens of self (“Will everyone reject me?”)
- Negative lens of others (“Will my next person be safe?”)
- Fears about the future
- Trouble coping with stress and big feelings
- Easy activation of the Express Road
- Hard time reaching out for help
- Difficulty managing changes and unpredictability

You can support a positive transition by:

- Starting early
- Helping children and teens prepare
- Reflecting on your time together
- Talking about ongoing connection
- Paying it forward

Practice for this week: Every week, try to take the time to use one of the skills you have learned. Practice it. Refine it. We all learn something new every day, and everything takes practice.

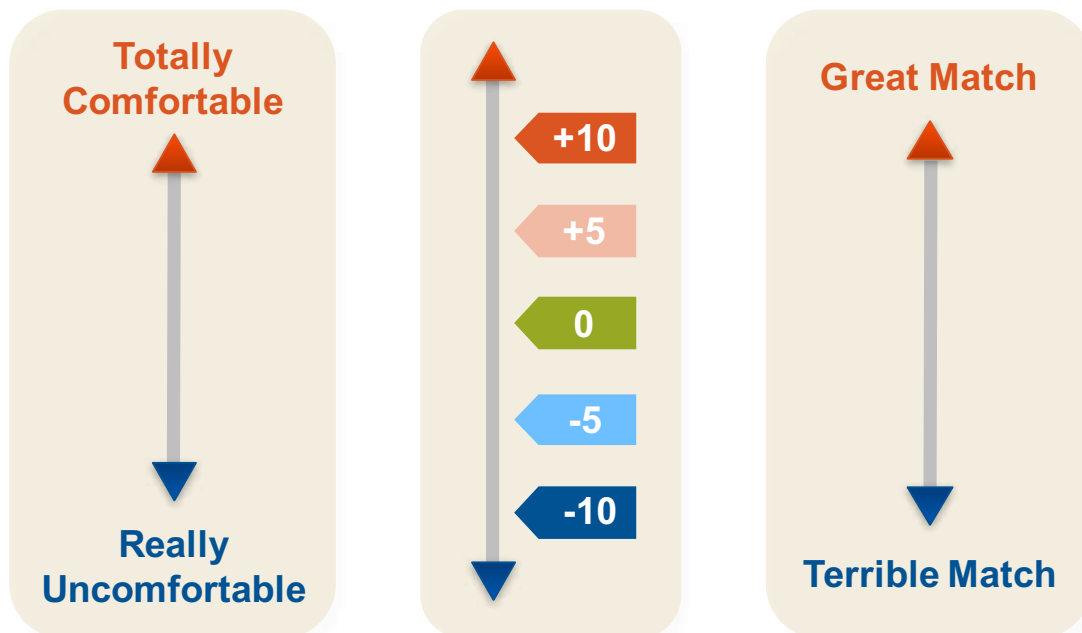


SESSION NINE

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.

SESSION NINE

Remembering Endings, Part I

All of us have experienced endings in our lives: a move, a separation, a loss. Some endings are generally positive (such as getting married or going away to school) and others are harder.

Think of two transitions you have experienced in your life that had a strong effect on you. What two endings come to mind for you?

For each ending, take a moment to reflect on your experience. What are the first words that come to mind when describing the way this ending or transition affected you?

Transition 1 (briefly describe):

If you had to capture this transition in a few words, what would they be? How did this transition affect you?

Transition 2 (briefly describe):
If you had to capture this transition in a few words, what would they be? How did this transition affect you?

SESSION NINE

Remembering Endings, Part 2

Our early experience with transitions often influences our later experience. Take a moment to think about the transitions you experienced in childhood. List some of them here. (Note: the categories are provided to help you think, but list whatever transitions come to mind):

Moves: _____

New schools: _____

Changes in friends/peer group: _____

Losses: _____

Life transition (college, marriage, etc.): _____

Other: _____

Now think of major transitions you have experienced in adulthood (new jobs, new homes, new relationships, new children, etc.). What have you learned about your own reactions to change? Think about the ways that change affects your:

Emotions and reactions (i.e., Are you moodier? Quick tempered? Calm?)

Behaviors and coping strategies (What do you like to do when things are stressful?)
Relationships (Do you want to be with people? Do you need more space?)
Take a moment to look at your responses. Do you see any link between the two? Are there ways in which your childhood experiences may have affected how you respond to change now?



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:

Support I may need to reach this goal:

Notes: How did it go?

CARDS FOR SESSION NINE ACTIVITY

STRONG	CURIOUS
RESILIENT	PASSIONATE
COMPASSIONATE	EMPATHIC
GROWING	CARING
COMMITTED	