

Facilitator Preparation and Planning for TST-FC

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For more information about TST-FC, please contact the Child Welfare Strategy Group at webmail@aecf.org.

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welcome

TST-FC

Thank you for serving as a TST-FC facilitator! The next several pages will include tips on scheduling, preparing for and presenting TST-FC, including:

- Helping others learn
- Who is on first?
- Working as a team
- Gearing up for training

HELPING OTHERS LEARN

This curriculum has been developed using adult learning principles. As you prepare to help others learn about trauma and its effect on children and teens, remember that you were chosen for a reason. You are good at what you do!

Also, remember that you and your co-facilitator are the local experts. We trust you to know your regional culture and the preferences and perspectives of your training participants far better than we do. Please feel free to adjust vignettes, vocabulary and approaches as needed to best suit your caregiver population and the children they care for. While we want to ensure fidelity to the content, training is an art. Please use your creativity, experience and expertise to provide the best training possible for the foster parents and kinship families you serve.

As a facilitator, you will:

- Be responsible for covering training material in a way that facilitates participants' learning and stays on task so training goals and objectives can be met.
- Work to draw out the opinions and ideas of group members, involving them in answering questions, processing information and applying lessons learned to their own lives.
- Be mindful that race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity, both of children in care and caregivers themselves, influence the experience of caregivers in the room. Be prepared to address related challenges that may come up during training.
- Share accountability for learning outcomes with participants.
- Ensure that everyone feels comfortable sharing and that all ideas are heard and respected.
- Prepare participants about what they can expect from the training.
- Help participants agree on a few important guidelines at the outset of the training — such as respecting others' opinions, sharing time so everyone gets a chance to participate and agreeing that discussions during training will be confidential.

WHO IS ON FIRST?

Before the first day of training arrives, there is a lot to do. With your co-facilitator, assign responsibility for work that needs to happen from weeks in advance until the last day of training. Make sure each of you is clear on who is responsible for what.

This document will help. It starts by describing the responsibility you and your co-facilitator will share, then presents an approximate schedule. If you are an experienced facilitator, none of this will be new. But an overview always helps!

WORKING AS A TEAM

TST-FC will be presented by you and a co-facilitator — a caseworker in a child welfare agency or a foster parent. Both of you will have received the TST-FC training curriculum and be familiar with it and the approach. If you would like to explore the possibility of additional training or coaching, please see the inside cover of this publication for possible resources.

While it is not necessary that you and your co-facilitator have experience teaching together, it is important that you meet a couple times beforehand to review all materials, discuss your training philosophy, determine your approach to the content and decide who will present each part of the training. Is one of you an experienced facilitator and the other new to training, or are your levels of experience similar? Talk about how to handle imbalances so each of you has an opportunity to grow.

If possible, schedule time to debrief with one another after each training session. Review what worked well and what modifications you may need to make before the next session. If you have any questions you aren't sure how to answer, identify someone who can help — a training mentor, someone with deeper knowledge of trauma or a particularly skilled foster parent. Having their feedback, guidance and support could be very helpful.

GEARING UP FOR TRAINING



Schedule (8–10 weeks in advance)

- What timeframes work best? TST-FC includes four consecutive modules. Modules One and Two are 2.5 hours each and Modules Three and Four are 2 hours each. Present them in order one night per week for four weeks. Or present two at once — on consecutive Saturdays, for example, adding in time for lunch and breaks. Don't forget time for the pre- and post-training surveys.
- Continue to read through the materials and begin to learn them. This curriculum focuses on building skills in addition to enhancing awareness. As such, it will require more preparation than other purely informational curricula you may be familiar with.

- Where and when?
 - Decide how many times you will need to offer training. Twelve parents per group is optimal but up to 25 participants can work if sessions are carefully planned. If possible, conduct your first training with foster parents who may be your early adapters so that they can talk up the training with others.
 - Choose a location convenient for as many of your participants as possible — a site that has ample meeting and free parking space and can be reached by public transportation.
 - Make sure the training location offers adequate audiovisual equipment and has a screen or a large blank white wall onto which slides can be projected.
 - Choose a time convenient for parents on weekday evenings or Saturdays. Keep safety in mind during the winter months when it gets dark early.
 - Offer child care, if at all possible.
 - Arrange for refreshments. Even a small snack can make a big difference in attendees' ability to concentrate on the material and feel valued.
- Will you offer make-up sessions?
 - Decide whether you will offer opportunities to make-up missed sessions.
 - Decide how that will work so everyone knows.

Review availability of training credits (8 weeks in advance)

- Review training credit requirements in your area so that whenever possible, foster parents can receive credits toward their license or re-licensing process for this training.

Communicate (4–6 weeks in advance)

- Develop training announcement materials. Make sure you:
 - can explain clearly and concisely who should attend and describe credits and other benefits of participation;
 - provide an easy way for participants to register; and
 - include testimonials from foster parents who benefited from the training.*

Meet with your co-facilitator (4 weeks in advance; plan 2–3 meetings, as needed)

- Get to know one another. Discuss your backgrounds, areas of expertise and interests. Training success is often closely related to the chemistry between facilitators. Develop some!
- Review content and identify division of responsibilities, including who will prepare and gather materials. How will you handle the pre- and post-surveys? What about the training evaluation?

* In future sessions, use quotes gathered from recent training participants. If you are piloting your agency's first TST-FC training, consider using the following responses from foster parents who took the training in three sites nationally. After the training, all foster parents "felt more equipped to care for children who had experienced trauma," thought the training included "just the right amount of hands-on activities" and thought the tools to which they were introduced "will help them with the children they foster." Source: Child Trends TST scale-up training feedback, October 21, 2015.

- Begin to practice with the materials. Find a co-worker, family member or friend you can begin practicing the most difficult elements with. Talking through the material with different people prior to presenting it for the first time is very helpful.
- Talk about your comfort level representing the ideas in the curriculum and discuss how to handle the audience and make them feel comfortable as they wrestle with often-difficult subject matter.
- Talk about concrete steps you can take to minimize secondary trauma. Some participants may have their own trauma histories. Make sure you and your co-facilitator think about how to avoid re-traumatizing parents or reinforcing harmful or destructive ideas or parenting practices.
- Discuss the kinds of questions and situations each of you feels most comfortable handling in the context of training content. For example, if caregivers bring up issues related to race, ethnicity, gender or sexual identity, who is most comfortable facilitating that conversation?
- Talk about confidentiality. What guidelines about confidentiality might the two of you propose to session participants?
- Review the PowerPoint presentations and plan how each of you will continue to practice presenting until you feel comfortable. Review examples and vignettes for relevance based on who you expect to attend the training. Note the video link in Module Three. Make sure you know how to make it work during your session — and have the computer speakers you need so participants can hear.
- Determine whether the two of you want to make calls to participants a week before the training. If you have the time, this can be helpful. You can introduce yourself, answer any questions and positively reinforce participation. You can get an idea of the ages of children placed in participants' homes, too, so you can customize training examples.
- Discuss and add to your work plan arrangements for ensuring that all participants take the pre-training survey prior to the first TST-FC session. Will you email the survey to participants when they sign up? Send an email two weeks before the session begins?
- Determine how to end the last session. Staging a small graduation celebration on the last day is nice. Make sure to include sufficient time for it as you build the schedule — and decide what needs to be done to prepare for it. Also, plan a small reward for yourselves: How will the two of you acknowledge your accomplishments and celebrate?

Prepare materials (2 weeks in advance)

- Prepare a variety of materials, including:
 - an attendance tracking form
 - a “missed you” card to send to parents who are absent
 - certificates of completion
- Review curriculum to determine whether any additional copies or table materials are needed. Solidify which emotional regulation skills you are using and practice.

- At the beginning of the training, each participant will receive a *Foster Parent Resource Guide* to take home. This guide is meant to serve as a tool the caregivers can turn to at home when they need reminders of what they learned in each session or fresh copies of the worksheets to complete at home. You will reference many of these worksheets throughout the training, but participants are not expected to bring this guide to each session. As the facilitator, you will provide copies of the relevant worksheets that are needed in each session. In addition, we suggest you provide participants with copies of the PowerPoints, printing no more than three slides on a page for ease of reading.
- Confirm arrangements for laptop and laptop projector and make sure there is a screen or blank white wall at the training location. Make sure you have computer speakers for Module Three!
- Gather a variety of materials, including:
 - name tags or name tents
 - pens
 - 3x5 index cards
 - a question box with a slot big enough for the index cards
 - a dry-erase board and markers, flip-chart paper and markers or large adhesive flip-chart pads
 - an easel
 - masking tape, painter's tape or some other, non-damaging way to secure paper to a wall
 - multiple pads of 3x3 Post-It® notes
 - if possible, small candies for the tables

Handle last-minute details (day before the training)

- Review the PowerPoint presentation and practice presenting until you feel comfortable. Review examples and vignettes for relevance based on who you expect to attend the training, taking into consideration race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity of caregivers and the children they care for.
- Prepare flip-chart pages with these headlines:
 - *Guidelines for Participation*. Use this to capture suggested guidelines for participating in the sessions.
 - *Parking Lot*. Use this page to collect ideas or questions for later.
 - *For Next Week*. Make four. On each, write one week's homework assignment.
- Make question boxes. Label the covered container. During each training, make sure to place index cards on each table. Participants can write down questions, with you and your co-facilitator reviewing and responding to questions after breaks or in the next training session. This is particularly helpful for participants who don't feel comfortable talking in large crowds or who may want to ask their question anonymously.
- Get a good night's sleep.

Train (each training day)

- Try to eat some breakfast and do some mindfulness activities.
- Bring a paper copy of the PowerPoint just in case there are technical difficulties.
- Read through the Facilitator's Guide and make sure you have all handouts and materials you need.
- Place the question container in a prominent place and index cards on each table.

Celebrate! (the final training day)

- Make sure to bring copies of the post-training survey.
- If participants will not receive their post-survey at your last session, let them know when and how they will receive and be expected to return post-training surveys. Note that the surveys help identify what does and doesn't work about the training and that their input will go a long way toward improving TST-FC for future groups of caregivers.
- Have certificates ready to hand out.
- Celebrate your accomplishment!