



Who Are You? All About Identity

SESSION EIGHT FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR 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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PREPARING TO FACILITATE

A CHECKLIST

Materials needed

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

Handouts



- Check-in handout (two per participant)
- Developmental stages handout
- Layers of self worksheet
- What are your filters? handout
- Self-reflection worksheet: Identity
- Homework sheet: Positive and unique self
- Summary sheet (with teaching points, homework assignment)

A NOTE ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO SESSION EIGHT


WELCOME

 <p>THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION</p>  <p>TRAUMA CENTER At Justice Resource Institute</p>	<h3>ARC Reflections</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
<h3>Welcome</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This group will meet nine times for two hours each time• Please attend all sessions• Each session will include the following segments:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-up• Opening check-in• Review and report back• Theme of the day• Self-reflection• Take home• Practice• Closing check-in	

SLIDES 1, 2 AND 3: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS





Welcome

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



WARM-UP

Warm-Up


SLIDES 4 AND 5: WARM-UP

Goal

To engage foster parents and caregivers in an experiential activity about their personal identity.

Ask/Do

- Take a minute to look at the four pictures on the slide — the superheroes, the Rubik's cube, the kangaroo and joey and the stone wall.
- Ask the participants to break up into pairs or small groups and discuss which picture best represents him or her.
- In the large group, invite volunteers to share which picture(s) they selected and why.



OPENING CHECK-IN

What Is Your Energy Right Now?

Totally Comfortable

Really Uncomfortable

Great Match

Terrible Match

Getting Comfortable

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

SLIDES 6 – 8: OPENING CHECK-IN

Goals

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

Do

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


Ask

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

Do

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

HANDOUT: CHECK-IN



Review

- Behavior is driven by children's and teens' needs. Needs are hierarchical and vary depending on the state the child is in at the moment
- To be successful, respond, don't react
 - **Be proactive**
 - Identify the child's or teen's needs
 - Use your go-tos
 - Identify your other strategies purposefully

SLIDES 9 AND 10: PREVIOUS MEETING REVIEW

Goal

To review content from the previous session.

Teach

- Because behavior is designed to meet a need, the behaviors you observe will tell you something about the needs and drives that are most prominent in a given moment for a child or teen in your care.
- One of the most important ways to address trauma-based behavior is to get in front of it — to become purposeful and active in planning a response.
- For children and teens affected by trauma, we pay particular attention to two kinds of needs: behaviors designed to manage danger (survival behaviors) and behaviors designed to get needs met. The more we understand what is driving a behavior, the better we are able to respond to it.
- Two “go-to” strategies for responding are to meet needs and to support regulation.
- Remember to target your behavioral strategies purposely and review the why, when and how of praise, problem solving and limit setting.

Ask

Does anyone have questions remaining from our last session? Does anyone want to share something that really stood out for them from the last session?

Report Back

- In small groups, discuss your practice from last week
 - **What went well?**
 - What was challenging?
 - What was something you noticed?

SLIDE II: REPORT BACK

Goal

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

Assignment: *Pick one behavior a child or teen in your home is displaying that you find challenging or that you want to increase. Use the "Approaches to Behavior" worksheet to try to identify patterns and needs and develop a plan.*

Do

Please get into small groups (at your table or with people near you) and discuss your experience with the practice. *After small group discussion, provide a brief opportunity for larger group report back.*

Ask

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

THEME: WHO ARE YOU? ALL ABOUT IDENTITY



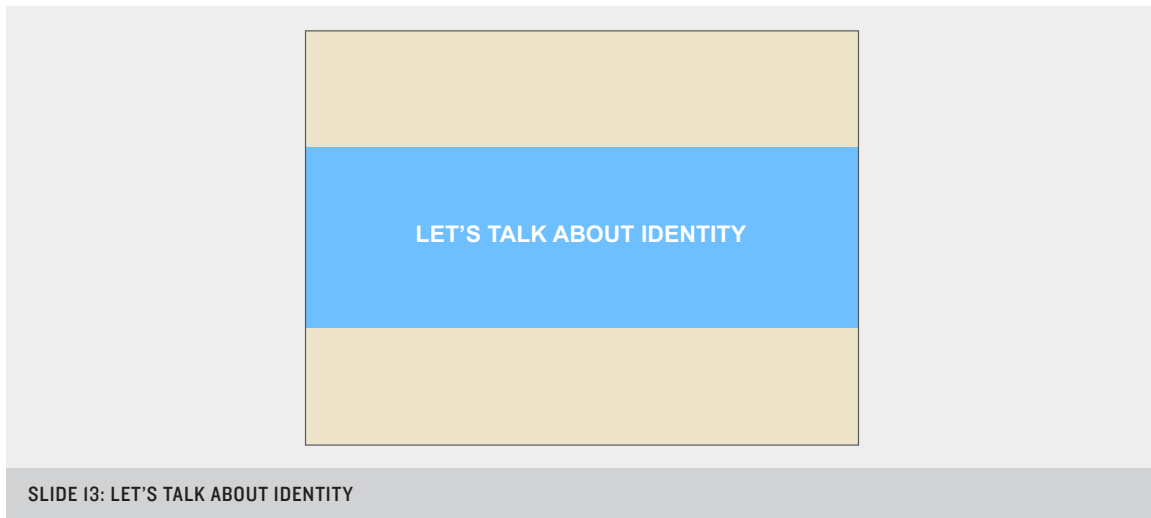
SLIDE 12: THIS WEEK'S THEME: WHO ARE YOU? ALL ABOUT IDENTITY

Goal

To introduce today's theme.

Teach

- A key developmental process is the growth of a sense of self, an understanding of individuality and eventually the formation of a coherent identity.
- Establishment of a coherent sense of self advances across developmental stages.



Goal

To introduce the next set of slides on the development of identity

Ask/Do

- Let's briefly review the warm-up activity we completed earlier. Did anyone have difficulty identifying just one picture to represent yourself? *Why? Invite volunteers to share their responses with the larger group.*
- *(Optional)* Please break into small groups to discuss five things (roles, characteristics, values, etc.) that contribute to each of your own self-concepts or understanding of who you are.
- *After small group discussion, provide a brief opportunity for larger group report back.*

Teach

- Identity is complex, evolves over time and depends on context.
- As we go through the next set of slides, think about how trauma might influence these stages.

HANDOUT: DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Infancy: Existence

- During infancy, babies:
 - Gain **their earliest understanding of self** as separate from others
 - Identify their basic needs



SLIDE 14: INFANCY

Goal

To learn about the developmental needs and tasks of infancy.

Teach

- A primary task for babies is the establishment of trust in their environment and the people around them.
- Infants work to establish attachments with primary caregivers who consistently meet their needs and develop comfort in interacting with others.
- Infants make their basic needs (thirst, hunger, sleep, stimulation and soothing) known by crying or sending other nonverbal signals to their caregiver.
- The earliest understanding of self as separate from other occurs during infancy. The infant becomes aware of the role of other and in particular their primary caregiver as the source of basic need fulfillment.
- Self-concept develops and grows as others respond in predictable ways to actions, behaviors and interactions.

Toddlers: Explorers

- In toddlerhood, the lens for self is primarily influenced by **how others see us**. As the toddler develops, he or she begins to explore his or her environment and test the boundaries of ability and power



SLIDE 15: TODDLERHOOD

Goal

To learn about the developmental needs and tasks of toddlerhood.

Teach

- Toddlers have a growing sense of self-awareness and independence.
- During this phase, toddlers begin to explore their environment and see the effect they can have on their world.
 - Let me describe a scenario, then ask you to finish it for me. A toddler is sitting at the table eating breakfast. At one point, he stops eating and starts to move food around on the tray. Then, he picks up a handful of food, looks at his caregiver and...Well? What do you think — what happens next?
 - *As participants volunteer answers, note that the toddler in this scenario may throw food onto the floor and then look back to the caregiver to experience his or her reaction. This process is likely to be repeated because it creates a sense of personal control and power.*
 - Secure attachments to their caregivers provide children the 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, etc.
 - Children who have experienced trauma often curtail exploration in the service of safety. They rely instead on rigid control and repetition. Without exploration, children are limited to what immediately is, rather than the possibilities of what could be.
- Toddlers also become aware of others' responses to their actions, behaviors and interactions. They notice whether adults appear to be happy or angry or approve or disapprove of their actions. They notice whether and how adults respond to them. Toddlers will see themselves as others see and react to them. This reflected lens is incorporated into their early understanding of self.

Early Childhood: The Concrete Self

- Children gain an awareness of opinions and preferences and **internalize labels of self** in concrete categories



SLIDE 16: EARLY CHILDHOOD

Goal

To learn about the developmental needs and tasks of early childhood.

Teach

- Young children have a growing sense of individuality and independence. They are curious about their worlds and have an increasing ability to fantasize and imagine.
- Preferences become more evident as favorite foods, activities, colors, books, clothing, soothing objects, etc., are identified and explored and begin to be incorporated into their sense of self. Children may increasingly notice group preferences (for instance, what other children in preschool are doing and wearing) and compare themselves in concrete ways (“I like green and she likes green”).
- Let’s do another open-ended scenario. There is a 4-year-old girl who is really interested in princesses. She is getting ready to go to preschool and her mother suggests that she wear pants and a long-sleeve shirt because it is a cool day. While her mother is preparing her lunch, the little girl goes to her room to get dressed. She emerges wearing...
- Who can finish this scenario for me? *Participants are likely to say something like: wearing a princess dress and tiara.*
- At this stage, young children find opportunities to assert their growing individuality and independence. Dressing may be one area that this shows up. It is 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 (such as having a child who wears appropriate or matching clothing to school), desires and needs (such as getting to work on time) with his or her child’s growing need for independence.

Elementary Years: Unique Self

- Children gain **an expanded ability for self-reflection**, sorting of categories and gain an awareness of themselves in comparison to others



SLIDE 17: ELEMENTARY YEARS

Goal

To learn about the developmental needs and tasks of toddlerhood.

Do

- Before we discuss this stage, let's break into small groups. In your groups, please reflect on and discuss your own elementary years. Each group member should identify one teacher (or staff member), one peer or one activity that contributed in a positive way to your growing sense of self at that age. In what way did this person or activity influence who you are today?
- *After small group discussion, provide a brief opportunity for larger group report back.*

Teach

- During this phase, understanding of self expands to incorporate the experiences from multiple domains of a child's life (home, school, activities, etc.).
- 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.
- Over time, a sense of self grows to encompass personal attributes, likes and dislikes and individual values.
- Interactions with caregivers continue to be important to self-concept, although the responses of peers, teachers and other key figures play a role, too. In a sense, the reflected lens is expanded.

Early Adolescence: Emerging Self

- Young people have an emerging ability to think about their abstract selves (**their values, goals and preferences**) and may be strongly influenced by peers



SLIDE 18: EARLY ADOLESCENCE

Goal

To learn about the developmental needs and tasks of early adolescence.

Teach

- During the early stage of adolescence, teens 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 relationship to societal rules and expectations.
- During this stage, teens advance their academic and extracurricular skills, make and sustain friendships, continue the process of gender identification and begin to explore intimate relationships.
- Young teens begin the process of separating from caregivers as they strive for an increased sense of independence.
- Identification with a group often begins to emerge at this stage as the peer group has a growing influence on a teen's self-concept.
- Young teens may try on different attributes in an attempt to crystallize a sense of self.

Late Adolescence: Abstract Self

- Young people's primary developmental task is **to build identity**. Their ability to connect *now* to the *future* is limited. They are very self-focused, exhibiting an overly sensitive self-awareness



SLIDE 19: LATE ADOLESCENCE

Goal


To learn about the developmental needs and tasks of toddlerhood.

Teach

- During this phase, there is increasing independence as older teens go to school, get vocational training or enter the workforce.
- Identity in this phase integrates past and current experience as well as future goals, though the older teen often struggles to connect current actions, behaviors and interactions to future outcomes.
- Older teens also experience significant changes in their capacity to think. In changing 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 older teens experience a growing awareness of self. Their peer group may have increasing influence on them. This can result in increased sensitivity and, at times, negative self-evaluation.

The effect of trauma on identity development

HOW MIGHT TRAUMA, LOSS AND
CHAOS AFFECT CHILDREN IN
EACH OF THESE STAGES?



SLIDE 20: THE EFFECT OF TRAUMA ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Discuss

- Some of the key developmental tasks we discussed were exploration, connection, development of self-concept, pride, self-esteem and independence.
- Take a moment and think about the ways we have talked about trauma affecting children and teens. How do you think these tasks of development might be influenced by traumatic experiences?

The Layers of Self

- Identity and sense of self grow in layers over time and are built on:
 - How we are seen and treated in relationships
 - **Are we worthy or unworthy**, loved or unloved?
 - How we engage with the world and our successes and failures
 - Are we capable or incapable, powerful or weak?
 - Our opportunities to explore and our range of experiences
 - Are we curious or stuck? Do we have a vision — or have we had no opportunities for vision?

SLIDE 21: LAYERS OF SELF

Goal

To illustrate things that influence self-development and the dynamic process that unfolds.

Do/Ask

- *Ask participants to find their “Layers of self” worksheet. Ask them to break into dyads or small groups and briefly discuss their answers to these questions with each other.*
- *After small group discussion, provide a brief opportunity for larger group report back.*

Teach

- Identity development rests on the foundation of trust and care provided by the primary attachment system. The reflected lens for self is grounded in the actions, behaviors and interactions that children have with their earliest caregiver(s). Over time, these experiences are internalized and become our earliest representations of self. For example, a child may think, if I am punished, then I must be bad. If no one cares for me, then I must be unlovable/unworthy of caring.
- A child's early attachments and internalized model for self will influence his or her level of engagement with the world. Children and teens who have experienced trauma often self-protect by disconnecting or disengaging. If engagement is sacrificed for survival, then there are fewer opportunities to experience the self as capable or powerful. This may make them more likely to experience themselves as incapable, weak and unsuccessful.
- Disengagement, disconnection and inconsistency in the caregiving environment prevent children or teens who have experienced trauma from being exposed to the same range of opportunities experienced by peers who have not had such experiences of trauma. The growing sense of self as incapable, weak and unsuccessful impedes curiosity, vision and belief in future possibilities.

HANDOUT: LAYERS OF SELF

Our Filter

- Over time, our lens of self becomes the filter through which we interpret our experiences
 - If we see ourselves as smart and fail a test, we believe the test was too hard
 - If we see ourselves as stupid and pass a test, we believe we got lucky or the test was too easy
- As a result, each new experience reinforces our filter.
It becomes harder and harder to change our sense of self over time

SLIDE 22: THE EFFECT OF THE LENS ON OUR FILTER FOR EXPERIENCE

Goal

To highlight how self-concept or an individual lens for self becomes the filter through which we interpret our experiences.

Do

- *Ask participants to take out their “What are your filters?” worksheet.*
- *Read the instructions on the worksheet. Encourage participants to complete the worksheet, thinking about their own filters for different types of experiences.*

Ask

- Can anyone share what they noticed about their own filters?
- Does anyone have thoughts about what might have influenced one or more of your filters?

Teach

- *Read the first bullet point and two associated examples on the slide.*
- Think about your own filters. Are there areas in your life where you feel really successful, confident and competent? Are there areas where you feel unsuccessful or lack confidence? Do these filters influence your actions, behaviors and interactions? In what ways?
- *Read the second bullet point on the slide and discuss the ways in which our filter may get reinforced by new experiences.* Here is an example: A trainer. The reflected lens of the audience (as seen in training evaluations) contributes to the development of the trainer’s identity as a trainer. If a trainer gave his first training and most of the evaluations were unfavorable, it is likely that his sense of competence as a trainer would decrease. If he went on to complete a second training and 70 percent of the evaluations were favorable and 30 percent were unfavorable, it is likely that the trainer would pay more attention to the 30 percent, which would further affect his sense of competence in this area. If the trainer chooses to continue and completes a third training and 95 percent of the evaluations were favorable and only 5 percent unfavorable, it is still likely that the trainer would pay

more attention to the 5 percent than the 95 percent and conclude that he is not a great trainer.

- The more experiences the trainer has with unfavorable evaluations (whatever the percentage), the more likely he will interpret them to mean that training is not a strength. This process occurs for children and teens who have experienced trauma, but the effect on identity is likely to be more global (“I am a bad, worthless, damaged person”) rather than specific to the role or context (“I am a bad trainer”).
- 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.

HANDOUT: WHAT ARE YOUR FILTERS?

Have Any of the Children or Teens You Have Cared for...

- Acted as if they were helpless?
- Refused to try new things?
- Gotten upset very easily?
- **Blamed themselves** for things — or said they aren't good at certain things?
- Seemed unable to think of things to do, play or try?

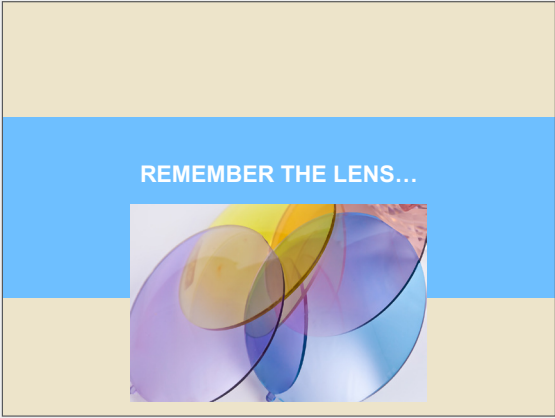
SLIDE 23: HOW THE LENS/FILTER SHOWS UP IN BEHAVIOR

Goal

To demonstrate the relationship between a negative self-concept and behaviors that are commonly experienced with children and teens who have experienced trauma.

Do

- Review each of the questions on the slide one bullet at a time. For each question, ask: Please raise your hand if you have experienced this with your children or teens.



HELLO <small>my name is</small>	HELLO <small>my name is</small>	HELLO <small>my name is</small>
The Cuffer	The Hoarder	Too Noisy
HELLO <small>my name is</small>	HELLO <small>my name is</small>	HELLO <small>my name is</small>
Impulsive	Foster Kid	Manipulative
HELLO <small>my name is</small>	HELLO <small>my name is</small>	HELLO <small>my name is</small>
The Quiet One	The Liar	Stupid

SLIDES 24 AND 25: REVIEW THE LENS FOR SELF


Goal

To review the idea (from session one) that trauma shapes our lens, or understanding of the world, on multiple levels.

Teach

- As we've discussed in previous sessions, trauma shapes the way children and teens understand and make meaning about their world.
- They develop a sense of self based on their early experiences, including their successes and failures, the labels others use about them, and their ability to influence — or not — the world around them.

The influence of the caregiver



YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HELP
SHIFT THE CHILD'S LENS

SLIDE 26: THE INFLUENCE OF THE CAREGIVER ON THE LENS

Goal

To illustrate the positive role caregivers can play in shifting a child's or teen's lens to a more positive and powerful self.

Teach

- As previously discussed, relationships have a powerful influence on children's or teens' developing sense of self.
- The reflective lens of how children or teens are seen by others can either reinforce or challenge the filter of shame, vulnerability and damage.
- In the next set of slides, we will talk about specific ways that you can contribute to a child's or teen's developing sense of self.

Explore Unique Self

- **Goal:** To support children and teens in exploring, identifying and celebrating the many qualities that make them who they are. Examples:
 - **Provide self-expression opportunities.** Let them pick their clothes, style their hair, decorate a room in their favorite colors, etc.
 - Identify and name your child's patterns ("You pick up new ideas quickly!"). This may help him or her gain self-awareness
 - Create space for each child's or teen's unique contributions
 - Support opportunities to identify and explore new interests
 - Pick your battles. Particularly for teens, self-expression is key. Hair, clothes and music? Only go there if it is crucial
 - Be curious: Try to learn what influenced your children and teens
 - Allow space for things important to the child or teen (values, religion, rituals and holidays)

SLIDE 27: UNIQUE SELF

Goal

To highlight the importance of identifying, exploring and celebrating attributes, values and talents that make an individual unique.

Do/Discuss

- *Review the list of example ideas on the slide.*
- *Is there anything you would add to the list on the slide? Write ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart.*

Build Positive Self

- **Goal:** To help young people become more aware of their positive attributes and feel successful. Examples:
 - Allow kids to identify and try out new interests
 - Redefine success for your child or teen. What does it mean for this child or teen to have a good moment, hour or day? Look for moments of success on the hardest days, not just the best ones
 - Find one success moment each day and praise it
 - Hang things up — artwork, homework, etc.
 - Foster success by engaging in activities with your child or teen
 - Support, don't criticize (for every negative children or teens hear, make sure they hear 10 positives)
 - **Notice small moments of success**, even for behavior that is expected ("I really like how cooperative you are being." "Thank you for being such a great helper.")

SLIDE 28: POSITIVE SELF

Goal

To highlight the importance of supporting children and teens in increasing their ability to identify and experience positive attributes and moments of success.

Do/Discuss

- *Review the list of example ideas on the slide.*
- *Is there anything you would add to the list on the slide? Write ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart.*

Tolerate Vulnerable Self

- **Goal:** To help young people tolerate the challenges of life and see them as experiences, not self-definition. Examples:
 - **Acknowledge and normalize challenges** ("Everyone makes mistakes. I'm sorry we had such a hard day.")
 - Try to tolerate their feelings, even if you don't agree or understand them. This lets children or teens know feelings are acceptable
 - Mirror and support before trying to shift or change a child's or teen's feelings. Even painful feelings are part of our experience of life
 - Talk about their behavior, not them as people ("I am frustrated with that behavior" not "You are such a pain")
 - Don't label your child or teen; labels will become internalized as self-definition (the hoarder, the cutter, etc.)
 - Don't limit their possibilities. Be realistic and supportive but don't assume a child's or teen's past challenges will define his or her future

SLIDE 29: VULNERABLE SELF

Goal

To highlight the importance of supporting children's and teens' ability to tolerate challenges, identify and express vulnerability and understand that experiences contribute to, rather than define, who we are.

Teach

- Review the list of example ideas on the slide.
- Even though we want to support youth in developing and sustaining a positive sense of self, the reality is that children in your care have experienced and continue to experience many hard moments. Tolerating vulnerability can be hard for anyone, including foster parents, and disconnecting from these vulnerable experiences may be a coping strategy for youth or caregivers. An important role you can play is to support children and teens in learning to tolerate these harder, more vulnerable parts of who they are and see them as only one aspect of their identity.
- As a caregiver, this can be hard to do. Remember to use your toolbox (prepare yourself, in-your-pocket tools, recovery tools, ongoing self-care) to regulate your responses to your child's or teen's emotional expression. This will help send the message that all emotions make sense and are accepted in your home.
- Some strategies to consider for supporting a child's or teen's vulnerable self include:
 - **Mirroring.** Mirroring is an important tool for helping children and teens to tolerate vulnerability. You can use language to mirror, validate and normalize challenges they are experiencing in emotion, relationships, interactions and situations.
 - **Regulation.** Support children and teens in using their regulation toolbox when vulnerability causes internal distress or discomfort.
 - **Avoid labels.** Children or teens who have experienced trauma have internalized many labels over the course of their lives. Many of these labels are incorporated into their definition of self. Avoid labels at all costs. Once again, separate behaviors from the individual.

- **Be the holder of hope.** Individuals are resilient and have the capacity to grow and change when in the right environment. Convey your belief that your child or teen can grow and change and that anything and everything is possible. Balance the need for imagination (dreams) with realistic goals.
- Does anyone want to add anything to the list on the slide? *If you'd like, write ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart.*

Honor the Past

- **Goal:** To support young people in honoring their history as part of their story. Examples:
 - Be curious (at the child's or teen's pace) about his or her story (important relationships, schools, family, experiences)
 - Work to tolerate positive feelings and statements your child or teen makes about previous relationships, even if it is hard for you to see them as positive
 - As appropriate, support children and teens in maintaining relationships with important people in their lives. **Continuity matters**
 - If children or teens have pictures or other keepsakes, display them or keep them safe. Allow their lives to be part of your family culture
 - Actively support them in exploring and integrating cultural influences
 - When children or teens share stories about their past, write them down and save them. Captured history will last beyond their placement with you

SLIDE 30: HONORING THE PAST

Goal

To teach the importance of acknowledging the role a child's or teen's past has in his or her life narrative and understanding of self.

Teach

- Past experience plays a significant role in identity development. Remember that part of what makes children or teens unique may be grounded in their past experiences (cultural influences, values, etc.). It is important for children and teens to have the opportunity to reflect on, honor and share those past experiences with their current caregiver.
- Foster parents can support this process by being actively curious about a child's or teen's past, including their relationships, schools and family experience.
- If a child or teen in your home has a different racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or gender identity than your family, provide him or her with opportunities to explore and integrate that aspect of his or her identity through community activities, groups at a local church/mosque/synagogue, etc.
- Past experience is likely to include both positive and not-so-positive memories, particularly about family relationships. It will be important to invite both into conversations and work with your child's or teen's team to determine the best approach to supporting traumatic content.
- Identity development is significantly affected by fragmentation that occurs when children or teens have experienced multiple changes in their caregiving system. Much of this work is about supporting continuity, cohesion and integration of experiences (both positive and not-so-positive) across time and context.
- *After you read the list of examples on the slide, ask: Does anyone have anything to add to the slide? Consider adding any additional ideas to the whiteboard or flip chart.*

Capture the Present

- **Goal:** To preserve a child's or teen's life experiences while he or she lives with you
 - Whether a child or teen is with you for two days or two years, you are holding a piece of his or her history. Capture it in whatever way makes sense: take pictures, save schoolwork, frame artwork, keep a height chart, make a keepsake box

Don't let parts of kids' lives disappear

SLIDE 31: CAPTURING THE PRESENT

Goal

To illustrate strategies for capturing the present moment as you care for children and teens.

Teach/Discuss

- *Read the goal on the slide.*
- It is common for children and teens who have experienced trauma to miss out on the refrigerator display, keepsake box or photo album experience. In many families, caregivers maintain a keepsake box of their child's or teen's artwork, report cards and other milestones, as well as an album of photos from various developmental stages. Children and teens may, from time to time, ask to review these items as a means of remembering and integrating their experiences.
- Children and teens who spend a period of time in foster care often receive a goodbye book when transitioning from that setting, but the book typically only captures a small part of their experience. The goal is to provide children and teens with the normative experience of having their accomplishments on display in the present moment — and to be available later to support holding on to past experiences as we discussed in the previous slide.
- *Read the examples from the slide about how a child's experience can be preserved.*
- Does anyone have any additional ideas or strategies you have used for children or teens to capture their current experience? Can you share them? *Write down ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart.*

Build the Future

- **Goal:** To help young people explore, imagine and build toward the many possible paths that lie ahead. Examples:
 - With young children, allow and support creative and dramatic play. **Exploration and imagination are the foundation of the future self.** Whenever you can, engage with them
 - Help children and teens identify goals, both short and long term, and ways to follow through. Support success at every step
 - Build real-world skills in adolescence. Help teens explore vocational and academic interests. Act as a cheerleader and support team. Do not expect independence too soon
 - Help children and teens visualize the future. Think beyond jobs and school. Ask where they want to live, what kind of relationships they want
 - Balance imagination and reality. Allow them to dream, but also identify how they can gain needed skills and develop talents and interests

SLIDE 32: SUPPORTING FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Goal

To provide sample strategies for supporting children and teens in imagining future possibilities.


Do/Ask

- *Read the goal and examples provided on the slide.*
- Do any of you have any additional ideas or strategies you have used to support a child's or teen's capacity to imagine and work toward future possibilities?
- *Write down ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart.*

Olivia

Checking In on Olivia

- Olivia is 9 years old now and has been living with her foster parents for almost three years. **Her parents have learned a lot about her**
- She loves to dance and sing and has a dramatic flair. She shines on stage
 - Her foster parents worked with the school to find an arts-based after-school program that has regular performances
- She often brings home special projects
 - Her foster parents have set up a wall in the kitchen to display her artwork
 - They also made a keepsake box for special crafts, photos, assignments and other mementos





SLIDE 33: APPLYING THE CONCEPTS TO OLIVIA

Goal

To demonstrate ways Olivia's foster parents worked to explore her unique interests and talents.

Do/Discuss

- *Read the case of Olivia from the slide.*
- Can anyone identify the ways Olivia's foster parents might be supporting her identity development?

Olivia's Growing Identity	Olivia and Her Foster Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olivia is developing a relationship with a maternal great aunt. They had little contact before Olivia entered foster care, but her aunt is now bringing her to church and introducing her to extended family members • Olivia's foster parents struggled to support this relationship at first, because the visits often left Olivia feeling emotional. Over time, her foster parents have begun to feel grateful that Olivia is developing strong connections to family members and learning about her cultural roots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As visits with her aunt have increased, Olivia has begun to share positive memories of her parents, with whom she no longer has contact, and is expressing a profound sense of grief • This brings up a lot of feelings for Olivia's foster parents, who feel angry at Olivia's parents for all they did to her and for their inconsistency in visiting over the years. Despite this, they work hard to listen and to acknowledge Olivia's wishes and sadness 

SLIDES 34 AND 35: MORE OLIVIA

Goal

To demonstrate the ways Olivia's foster parents have encouraged, supported and tolerated Olivia's connections to her past.

Teach

- For many children in care, supporting identity means helping them to navigate relationships with their family of origin.
- As it has for Olivia, these relationships can support a greater understanding of self, culture and context, but may come at a cost for foster parents.

Ask

Do any of you identify with the experience of Olivia's foster parents? *If appropriate and time permits, allow an opportunity for brief sharing.*

Olivia and Her Foster Parents

- Olivia's behavior has improved greatly over the years. She still has some hard days. But **she seems more confident**, is mostly able to be independent in an age-appropriate way and can generally tolerate her foster parents' feedback when she makes mistakes
- Her foster parents have gone from having to look for opportunities to tell her they are proud to genuinely feeling proud of all she has accomplished. They feel much more confident in their own ability to get through hard days



SLIDE 36: OLIVIA'S PROGRESS

Goal

To demonstrate ways Olivia's foster parents have supported her ability to identify and experience positive attributes and personal successes.

Discuss

- *Read the case of Olivia.*
- *Ask: What do you notice changing for Olivia?*
- *Can anyone identify with the shift you see in both Olivia and her foster parents?*

Wrap-Up

- Identity develops in stages over time
- Trauma can have a profound effect on sense of self and identity and can influence our lens and filter for ongoing experiences
- Foster parents can have a significant influence on a child's or teen's sense of self by helping him or her to:
 - Explore his or her unique qualities
 - Build positive experiences
 - **Tolerate vulnerability**
 - Hold on to his or her past, present and future

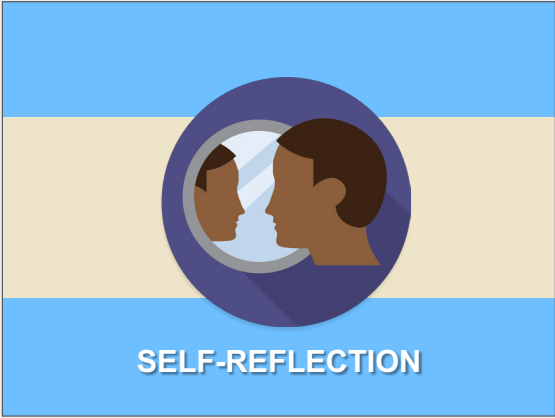
SLIDE 37: WRAP-UP

Goal

To review teaching points from today's session.

Ask

- *Read the slide.*
- Does anyone have remaining questions about what we've been discussing?



SELF-REFLECTION

Your Identity

- Think about your own identity. Reflect and try to identify **one thing** that:
 - You believe defines you (a value, cultural influence, role, etc.)
 - You take pride in
 - Challenges you about yourself or gives you a feeling of vulnerability
 - You have held onto from your past that continues to feel important to you
 - Is a future goal
- Talk about at least three of your responses in pairs

SLIDES 38 AND 39: SELF-REFLECTION

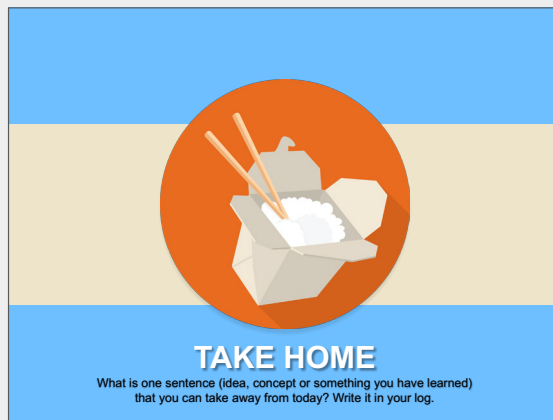
Goal

To provide an opportunity for participants to apply their understanding of aspects of self to their own identity and self-concept.

Ask/Do

- *Read the slide and review each of the questions identified for self-reflection.*
- *Ask participants to consider their own responses to these questions and write their answers down on their worksheet.*
- *Have participants pair up in dyads or in small groups and briefly discuss their responses.*
- *If time permits, invite a few volunteers to share their answers with the larger group.*

HANDOUT: SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET



SLIDE 40: TAKE HOME


Goal

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

Ask

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

PRACTICE AT HOME



PRACTICE

Practice

- Review the ideas for helping a child or teen explore his or her positive and unique self and think about the children or teens in your home
- Identify one way **you would like to be more active** in supporting one of these areas
- Fill out the worksheet with your ideas — and try one out at home

SLIDES 41 AND 42: PRACTICE


Goal

To support group learning through a homework assignment.

Practice

This week's assignment is to review the ideas for positive and unique self and identify one way you can actively support the child or teen in your home in either of those areas. Remember to write your idea on the worksheet and try one out. Make a note about how your child or teen responded and what the experience was like for you.

HANDOUT: POSITIVE AND UNIQUE SELF



CLOSING CHECK-IN

What Is Your Energy Right Now?

Totally Comfortable

↑

↓

Really Uncomfortable

↑

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

↓

Great Match

↑

↓

Terrible Match

SLIDES 43 AND 44: CLOSING CHECK-IN

Goals

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

Do

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

HANDOUT: CHECK-IN



SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

SLIDE 45: CLOSING

Closing

- I am looking forward to our next session. Our theme will be “Endings and Beginnings.”
- *Note the date and location of the next meeting.*