



# Mirror, Mirror

SESSION FIVE FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR ARC REFLECTIONS

SUMMER 2017

### **ARC REFLECTIONS**

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

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

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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# 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**

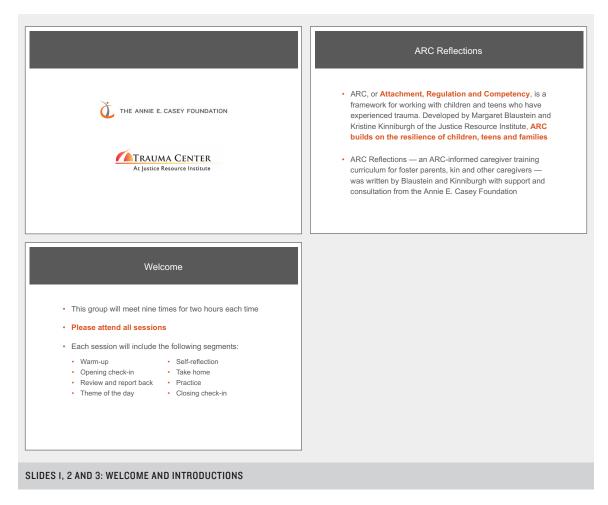
- Check-in handout (two per participant)
- · Self-reflection worksheet: Question prompt
- Homework sheet: Be a detective worksheet (two per participant)
- Summary sheet (with teaching points, homework assignment)

### 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*.

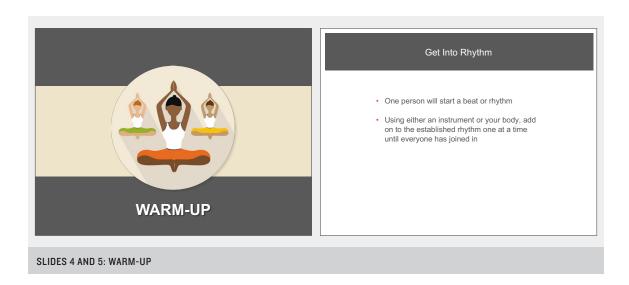
# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO SESSION FIVE

### **WELCOME**



### 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.



To illustrate the concept of getting into rhythm with others.

### Do

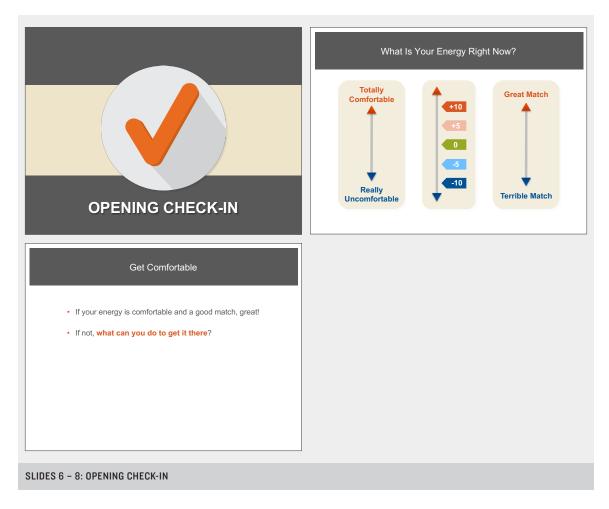
- I am going to start a beat or rhythm. When you feel ready, add on to the rhythm in whatever way you want. For instance, you can clap, hit the table, make a noise, etc. Use whatever you would like to add to the rhythm. We'll keep going until everyone has a chance to join in together.
- Start a simple beat. For instance, clap your hands three times, pause, then repeat the three-clap sequence. Or do something else — it's at your discretion. Keep this going until everyone has joined in.
- After everyone has joined, say, "I am going to change the rhythm slightly. Feel free to change your
  own beat to join me." Shift or change the beat to create a change in rhythm. Hold this new beat until
  everyone joins in and the group feels in rhythm again.

### Ask

- How was that for you? Was it comfortable? Were you in tune with one another? Was it uncomfortable to join the rhythm?
- How did it feel when we were all together? What about when we weren't?

### Teach

Today, we will be talking about relationships and the ways that we come into, and can move out of, rhythm with each other.



### 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** 



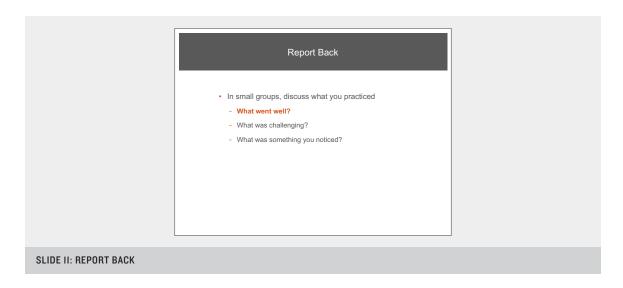
To review content from the previous session.

### Review

- · Relationships take time to develop and generally develop in stages.
- When entering a relationship with children or teens who have experienced trauma, it is very
  important to remember to consider their lens for thinking about relationships, connection, family,
  home, etc. Their perspective can help guide how you enter and build the relationship.
- Meet children and teens where they are. Remember that survival trumps everything that sometimes children and teens (even adults!) use distancing as a survival strategy. Honor that, especially early on. Ease into the relationship.
- Many ingredients go into a good relationship, including respect, joy, curiosity, acceptance, mutuality, repair and trust.
- Being in a relationship with children and teens is similar to riding a roller coaster. There will be
  moments or periods when you feel connected followed by moments or periods when you don't.
- Remember that disconnection is about protection, not rejection. Find opportunities to reconnect when disconnection occurs.
- One of the primary strategies for connecting is to cultivate joy in your interactions.

### Ask

Are there any questions about last week's material?



To provide foster parents and caregivers with an opportunity to review the last session's practice. **Assignment:** To generate a list of as many five-minute joy activities as you can and bring in a list of at

least five, and to practice at least one joy activity every day.

### Do

- Please get into small groups (at your table or with people near you) and discuss your experience
  with the practice. Each of you was asked to generate a list of a five-minute joy activities and practice
  at least one joy or engagement activity each day.
- · After small group discussion, provide a brief opportunity for larger group report back.

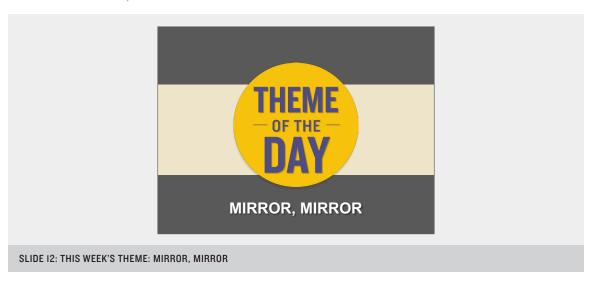
### Ask

- · 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?

### Note

• If it is feasible logistically, you may wish to copy all the five-minute activity lists to share during or after this session.

### THEME: MIRROR, MIRROR



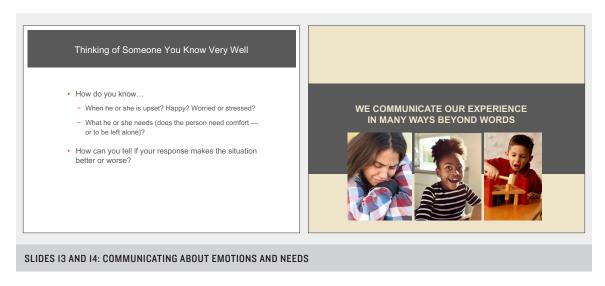
### Goal

To introduce today's theme.

### Introduce

Today's session will focus on the challenge and process of learning to read and respond to others in a relationship.

### Mirroring starts with curiosity



### Goal

To engage foster parents and caregivers in a discussion about the clues people give about their experience.

### Do

- Ask participants to pair up. Each group member should identify a specific person they are in relationship with (they do not need to name this person, just have them in mind).
- Have the partners discuss the questions on slide 12 as they relate to the person they have in mind.
- After a few minutes, ask whether anyone would like to share some part of the discussion in their pairing.

- Being in a relationship with another person often requires you to be a detective. Consider the answers you just gave. A lot of them relate to nonverbal rather than verbal communication strategies.
- The better we can read these communications, the more effectively we can respond.

# Sometimes We Get It Wrong - Think of how someone else might know if you were feeling upset, frightened, hurt, overwhelmed, content. Those who know you best will know your feelings best — but even they will get it wrong someone's "language" is hard work and takes practice, patience, commitment and — sometimes — a lot of getting it wrong SLIDE 15: LEARNING ANOTHER PERSON'S LANGUAGE IS HARD

### Goal

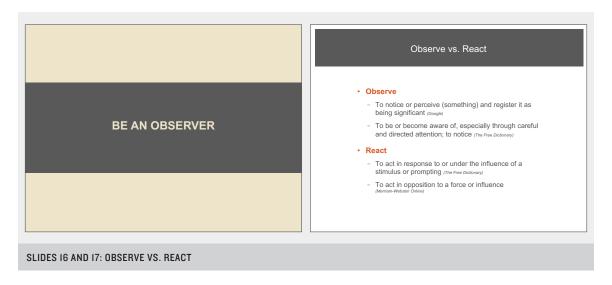
To highlight the complexity of learning to read another person's needs.

### Ask/Do

Read or ask participants to read the first bullet point. Ask the group: How many of you have had an experience in which you felt you were communicating that you felt upset and the person you were with either missed it completely or responded in a manner that felt invalidating?

- · No two people communicate their needs in exactly the same way.
- Learning another person's emotional language is complicated and takes time, even in the most connected of relationships.
- · Consider how cultural beliefs and practices may influence how a person expresses his or her emotion.

### Observe vs. react



### Goal

To highlight the difference between observing and reacting to a person or situation.

### Ask

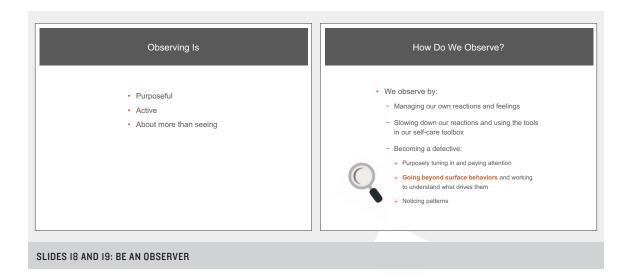
Read each definition on the slide. What do you notice is different between these two definitions?

### Teach

- When you are observing, you are actively attending to information, reflecting on what you are seeing
  and choosing a response that makes sense based on what you have learned. To react means to be
  influenced by something outside of yourself and, in some ways, to be at the mercy of what you are
  reacting to.
- It may help to use a metaphor here. Think about the job an air traffic controller has essentially, to be a signal detector. Air traffic controllers have to be purposeful observers, to take in a lot of information, integrate it together and then choose the best course of action. For instance, to clear a plane for takeoff, or not. A key here is that they need to pull the information together into a meaningful whole. If the controller reacted to every bit of information individually whether relevant or not the process of taking off in an airplane would take forever, and most of us might choose not to fly.
- Children and teens affected by trauma are sending us signals or clues all the time and the clues
  don't always make sense or feel good to those around them. It is easy to react to those signals or
  clues without fully understanding them.

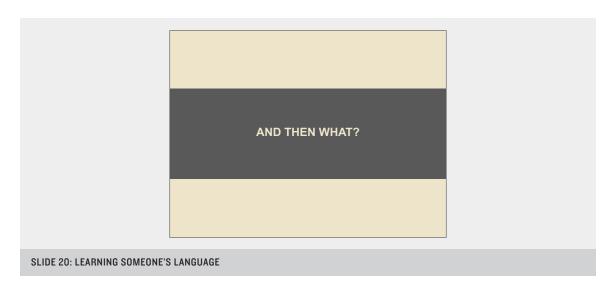
### Ask

Have any of you ever felt confused by the signals your foster children were sending you? Can anyone give an example?



To teach about the various skills involved in being an effective observer.

- It is nearly impossible to be an observer if we are experiencing distress or overwhelming emotions that pull our attention inward.
- The skills from our previous session are taught first because it will be essential to use those in-your-pocket or ongoing self-care strategies as often as needed. These skills will help you to tune into yourself and support your own regulation (focusing your attention inward) so you can get to a place that allows you to observe another person (focusing your attention outward).
- Observing another person sounds simple, but it can be very complicated and challenging to do. To build this skill, you need to focus intentionally on your role as observer.
- The process of observation unfolds in steps and involves being a detective. It starts with noticing overt clues and patterns of clues used to communicate something about need (related to safety or to physical, emotional or relational needs). Then, it involves identifying the underlying need driving those overt clues.
- The goal is to use this information to help you choose and guide your response.



To link to the next set of slides, indicating that the primary purpose of actively observing other people's communication strategies is to build relationships effectively.

### Teach

And then what? What do you think is the point of becoming an observer? Becoming an observer would be pointless if we simply observed. What's important is using what you observe to guide effective responses.

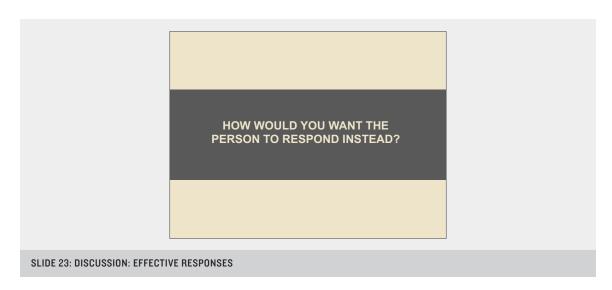
# Provided the Response Was What if the Response Was Provided to get a new job! Provided to get a new job! Provided to get a new job! Don't worry about it— it's not a big deal Calm down— you are not helping yourself by getting so stressed out Why didn't you tell your boss you want to be shown more respect? It's only a shirt. You can get another

### Goal

To support participants in examining their own needs in the aftermath of a stressful experience.

### Ask/Do

- Read the first slide to the participants. Go to the next slide.
- Ask the group: How do you think you might react if someone responded in this way? Why? Engage the group in a discussion.



To support participants in examining their own needs in the aftermath of a stressful experience.

### Ask

How would you want the person to respond to you? *Invite volunteers to generate a list of possible responses.* 

### Olivia's hard day

# Can You Imagine Saying Any of These Things to Olivia? Can You Imagine Saying Any of These Things to Olivia? Don't be so dramatic Don't slam the door Don't slam the door Calm down — you aren't helping yourself by getting so stressed out Why don't you just talk to your teacher about what's going on? It's only a notebook — you can get another one Stop talking to me so disrespectfully

### SLIDES 24 AND 25: APPLYING THE CONCEPT TO OLIVIA

### Goal

To continue the discussion of Olivia and illustrate and normalize common reactions to the situation described in the slides.

### Ask

- How does this apply to Olivia? Let's imagine she's just arrived home after a hard day at school.
   Read or invite the participants to read the scenario on the first slide.
- Can you imagine saying any of the following? Read from the second slide.
- As we all know, these are common reactions of adults when children have challenging experiences. It is common in this kind of situation to:
  - Try to fix the problem by asking: "Why didn't you talk to the teacher about what was going on?"
  - React to the surface behavior: "Stop talking to me so disrespectfully; don't slam the door."
  - Minimize the problem: "It's only a notebook, you can always get another one.
  - Invalidate the emotion: "Don't be so dramatic. Calm down."



To apply the concept to Olivia and to other children and teens who have experienced trauma.

### Ask

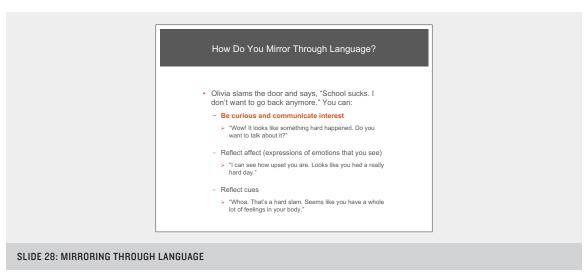
How would you answer this question: What do you think Olivia might have wished would happen when she came home?



To introduce the concept of mirroring.

- Mirroring is a way of letting other people know you see them and understand them and their needs.
- When we mirror, we actively reflect back or share some of our observations with the person with whom we are observing and interacting.
- When we mirror, we observe not just the surface of what we see, but what we think the emotion or need might be that is driving the behavior.
- Mirroring helps you communicate in the moment. Over time, it helps you build an understanding of the child or teen and underscore to the child or teen that you are paying attention and that you care.
- Mirroring is an important support for regulation. It helps children and teens build awareness of their feelings, and helps give them support in managing those feelings. We will talk much more about the ways that we help children and teens with their feelings in our next meeting.

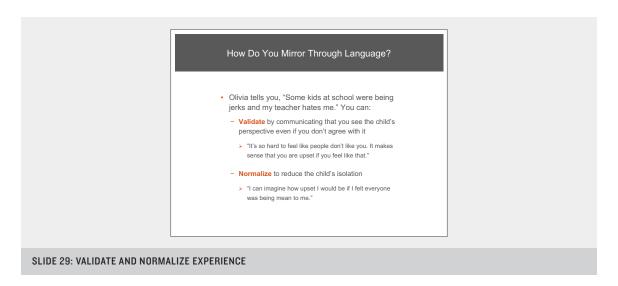
### Mirroring through language



### Goal

To provide examples of how you can mirror experience through language.

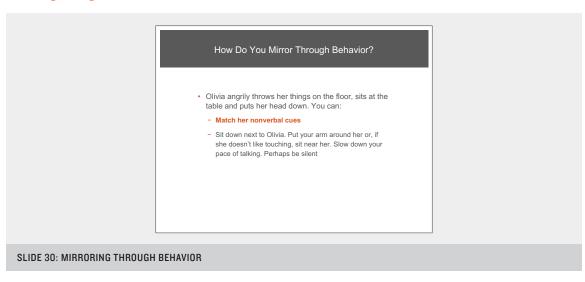
- Following are teaching points for each of the three examples of mirroring listed on this slide.
- Communicate curiosity and interest: You will notice in this example that Olivia's behavior slamming the door is not addressed or reflected upon at all in this response. Her foster parent is communicating the fact that he or she noticed Olivia's discomfort and is communicating interest in understanding more about that discomfort.
- **Reflect affect:** Olivia is clearly experiencing emotion in this example. Her foster parent reflects what he or she sees and labels the emotion state (upset) that Olivia is showing in her behavior and verbal expression.
- **Reflect cues:** In this example, the foster parent is noticing the behavior and communicating his or her understanding that the behavior is a clue that big feelings are happening.



To provide examples of how you can mirror experience through language by providing validation and normalizing experiences.

- Validate: To validate someone's experience reassures them that their experience makes sense. Here Olivia's foster parent communicates her understanding of Olivia's perspective by stating that it is hard when you feel like people don't like you. She is simply stating what she believes is Olivia's perceived experience, which may or may not be grounded in reality. That's worth emphasizing: The foster mom is not communicating about the truth of this experience. Rather, she is reflecting the truth as the child perceives it. Children or teens who have experienced trauma often believe others think their experiences lack validity, importance or truth. It is important to remember the lens that foster children may be using, as we discussed in previous meetings. There may be times when we have to recognize that perception is more important than reality.
- Normalize: To normalize is to use a statement that tells the person that he or she is not alone in his
  or her experience. The point is to reduce the child's or teen's experience of shame and isolation. In
  this example, the foster parent communicates that Olivia feeling upset is a normal reaction, and that
  being in this situation could be upsetting for anyone, including the foster parent.

### Mirroring through behavior



### Goal

To provide examples of how you can mirror experience through behavior.

### **Discuss**

- Language is only one way to mirror experience. Remember: Most communication is nonverbal, so finding nonverbal ways to mirror can be powerful, too.
- We talked earlier about the ways you read communication in your own relationships, and how many of these are nonverbal. Refer to list of clues that people give us to communicate experience (tone of voice, facial expressions, emotions, energy, body tension, eye contact, connection, etc.). It can be helpful for you to mirror and match these clues by reflecting them back through your own behavior.

### Ask

What are other examples of how you could mirror Olivia in this example? If participants can't think of alternatives, you could mention providing Olivia with some space, or putting your head down on the table, too.

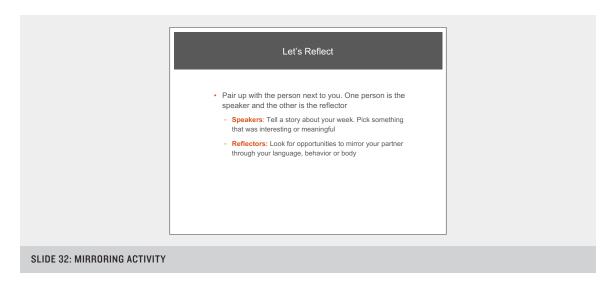
# What Might You Stay Away From? • Fixing. "We can just..." • Minimizing. "It's not such a big deal..." • Limit setting. "I don't care how angry you are, you can't slam doors." • Trying to change her feelings too quickly. "Let's do something fun." • Invalidating. "It is silly to be so angry about a notebook." • Pushing. "What do you mean you don't want to talk about it?"

### Goal

To provide examples of responses that may interfere with mirroring.

### **Discuss**

- Read and review the list of examples provided in this slide.
- Can anyone provide additional examples of what they might avoid? If there is no response, move on.
- Discuss that these responses are normal. Emphasize the relationship between these responses and the emotional state of the responder, citing the importance of using the caregiver toolbox.



To provide foster parents and caregivers with the opportunity to practice mirroring.

### Ask

- We are going to practice mirroring. Please get into groups of two or three. I want each of you to share with others in your group something that happened to you this week. It can be a brief story about how your day or week went. Then:
  - Take turns being the storyteller and the person doing the mirroring (the reflector).
  - The storyteller will have 1-1 ½ minutes to tell his or her story. During that time, the reflector will look for opportunities to use language or behavior to mirror the storyteller.
  - I will call "freeze," and the reflector will remain frozen your face, body and words for about 30 seconds.

### Do

Begin part one of the activity. Allow storytellers to tell their story for 1-1 ½ minutes. Then, instruct the reflectors to become nonresponsive; in other words, to try to show no emotion on their faces, and to stop responding with words. Have the reflectors remain frozen for approximately 30 seconds — then end part one of the activity.

### Do

Switch roles and repeat the activity.

### **Discuss**

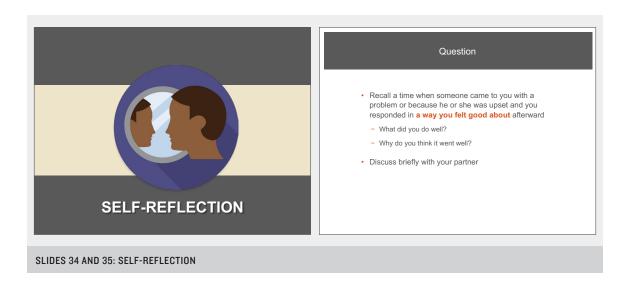
How did it feel to be in each role? How did it shift or change when we switched from mirroring to freezing?

	Wrap-Up	
	We communicate our experience in ways that go beyond language     Learning someone's language takes time and starts with curiosity     Sometimes we get it wrong     Slow down and be a detective     Mirror what you see	
SLIDE 33: WRAP-UP		

To review the teaching points from today's session.

### Discuss

Read the slide. Are there any remaining questions?



### Goals

To apply the concept of being an effective responder to the participants' own life experiences.

### Ask/Do

- In pairs or in small groups, please discuss the following:
  - Identify a situation in which someone came to you upset and you responded effectively.
  - What was your response and how did you know it was effective?
  - Why do you believe your response was effective?

HANDOUT: SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET



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



### Goal

To practice being a detective in the home setting.

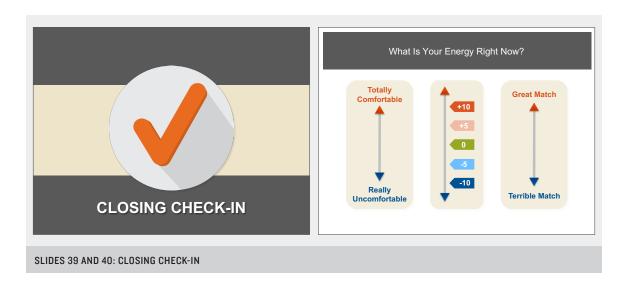
### **Practice**

Take home your detective worksheet and use it to think about one person in your life this week. We'll share what we find next week. You don't have to reveal the name of the person you studied. *Make sure everyone has the detective worksheet.* 

### Ask

Do you have any questions about the practice?

HANDOUT: BE A DETECTIVE WORKSHEET



### 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 (i.e., 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



### Closing

- I am looking forward to our next session. Our theme will be "Calm, Cool, Connected." We will be learning more about ways to help children and teens cope with hard feelings.
- Note the date and location of the next meeting.