



Endings and Beginnings

SESSION NINE 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
- Index cards for icebreaker exercise (with words including: strong, curious, resilient, passionate, compassionate, empathic, growing, caring, committed) from your *Facilitator Welcome and Handouts* booklet

Handouts



- Check-in handout (two per participant)
- Remembering endings handout
- Self-reflection worksheet
- Skill of the week handout
- 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 NINE


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

- Pick one word from the pile of cards on the table. In pairs or small groups, talk about how the word you have picked applies to:
 - You, in your role as a foster parent
 - The child or teen who you now or will care for

SLIDES 4 AND 5: WARM-UP


Goal

To use a warm-up activity to explore powerful common traits between foster parents and caregivers and the children and teens they care for.

Do

- *Ask participants to get into pairs or small groups, with each person picking one word from the pile on the table.*
- *Please discuss how the word applies both to you and to a child or teen in your home.*
- *Invite a few volunteers to share their thoughts with the larger group.*

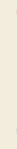
MATERIALS: Index cards with words including: **STRONG, CURIOUS, RESILIENT, PASSIONATE, COMPASSIONATE, EMPATHIC, GROWING, CARING, COMMITTED**



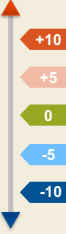
OPENING CHECK-IN

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

- 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 significantly influence 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**

SLIDES 9 AND 10: PREVIOUS MEETING REVIEW

Goal

To review content from the previous session.

Teach

- Over time, our understanding of self — who we are, what we are capable of and the ways others see us — develops and changes. It may grow from a very basic and concrete understanding to one that is very sophisticated and nuanced.
- The experience of adversity, stress and loss are powerful shapers of the lens through which we understand ourselves. Children and teens who have been through many overwhelming experiences often see themselves as helpless, incapable, damaged, bad, unlovable or unwanted.
- This negative understanding of self in turn affects how children and teens approach new experiences. Someone who believes he is unlovable, for instance, may refuse to enter into a new relationship for fear of being rejected again. Someone who believes she is incapable or helpless may refuse to join in activities or try new things because she is sure she will fail.
- As a foster parent, you play a very important role in supporting repair and ongoing healthy development of self and identity in the children and teens you care for. You can do this by helping your children or teens to:
 - **Explore who they are** and what makes them special, what has influenced them and what is important to them.
 - **Experience success** and have moments of positive experience, mastery and connection.
 - **Learn to tolerate and manage hard times**, without glossing over them or making them bigger than they need to be.
 - **Build a cohesive story of self** that remembers and honors their past, captures their current experience and anticipates and builds toward the future.

Ask

Does anyone have questions about this material? 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 with an opportunity to review last week's practice. **Assignment:** To review the concept of positive and unique self, identify one idea for supporting positive and unique self for a child or teen in your home and try it out.

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: ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS



Goal

To introduce today's theme.

Teach

- Today's session will focus on transitions: the ways we can support positive endings for our children and teens. We will also pay attention to our own transition, as we end our time together in this group.
- How many of you have already experienced a transition, when a child or teen in your home has moved elsewhere? If you have, think about the ways that experience may have been positive, stressful, sad, exciting, a relief, heartbreaking or all of the above. We will draw from that experience as we move through the session today.

Checking In on Olivia

- Olivia has just turned 10 and in three months, she will be transitioning to live full time at her aunt's home. After a year of increasing contact, her aunt has committed to becoming Olivia's legal guardian
- Olivia says she is excited and nervous and her behavior has gotten more challenging as the time to move to her aunt's nears. She is clingier with her foster mother, struggling with bedtime separation again, but also seems **quieter and more remote at times**



SLIDE 13: APPLICATIONS TO OLIVIA

Goal

To share the story of Olivia and her upcoming transition.

Do/Discuss

- We are going to talk quite a bit about Olivia and her foster parents today. *Read the slide aloud or invite a participant to read it.*
- What do you think Olivia might be experiencing right now? Why? How do you understand her current behavior?

Mixed feelings

Olivia's Foster Parents



- Olivia's foster parents have **mixed feelings** about her upcoming transition
- Her foster father feels positive about the change. He likes her aunt. Though he will miss Olivia, he believes it is a good move for her
- Olivia's foster mother is surprised by how sad she is feeling. Although she always knew this was a short-term placement, she finds herself feeling angry at the aunt for no reason. She is sure she can provide a better home. She is concerned that Olivia will be hurt more than she already has been

SLIDE 14: APPLICATION TO OLIVIA'S FOSTER PARENTS

Goal

To add layers to Olivia's story by describing what is happening with her foster parents.

Ask/Discuss

- *Read the slide.*
- How do you understand what Olivia's foster parents are going through?
- Can anyone relate to this? In what ways do you think Olivia's foster parents' reactions might influence their experience? Think about their relationship as a couple, their ability to parent Olivia, their ability to parent any other children in their home, their ability to support the transition, etc.

Olivia's Aunt

- **Olivia's aunt is committed but anxious.**
Her own children are grown and it feels like a long time since she's had a child in the home
- Her relationship with Olivia's mother, her niece, was always strained; they disconnected years ago
- She was surprised when child welfare approached her about Olivia, but has grown to really care about this child and believes she can do right by her



SLIDE 15: APPLICATIONS TO OLIVIA'S AUNT

Goal

To add another layer to the story by describing Olivia's new placement resource.

Ask/Discuss

- Has anyone here done something similar, supporting a child's transition to the home of a distant relative?
- What do you think Olivia's aunt might be going through right now? In what ways might this affect Olivia's transition into her home?

What Have Endings Been Like for You?

- Think about different transitions in your life: ending relationships, moving to a new home, saying goodbye to friends, losing family members, leaving your parents' home
- Take a moment to reflect: What has the ending experience been like for you?

SLIDE 16: UNDERSTANDING ENDINGS

Goal

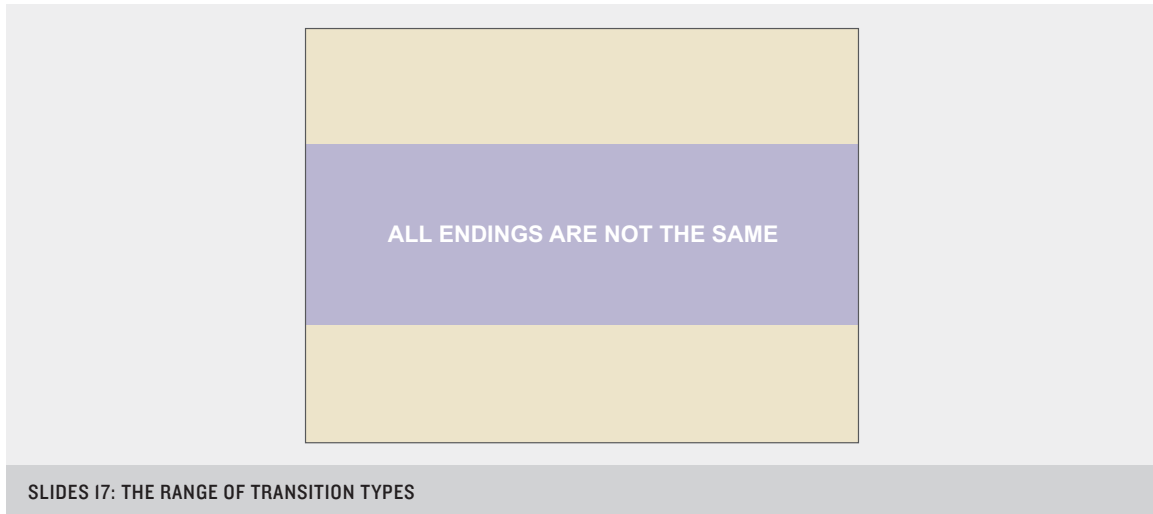
To support foster parents and caregivers in thinking about their own experiences with major transitions.

Teach/Discuss

- Take a moment to think about a few major transitions in your life. Maybe a separation from someone you cared for, a move to a new home or a shift from one developmental stage to another, such as getting married or leaving your family of origin.
 - Ask participants to take out the “Remembering endings” handout to use for this exercise.
 - Pick two of these transitions to reflect upon.
 - For each one, try to remember your experience. If you had to capture the transition or ending in a few words, what would those words be? Write them down.
 - Think about what influenced those words. It might have been the nature of the ending, the ways you perceived it, the extent of loss or gain or many other things.
- Ask a few volunteers to share what they noticed in completing this exercise. If not mentioned by participants, point out that even positive transitions can feel stressful or hard.

HANDOUT: REMEMBERING ENDINGS

Types of transitions



Goal

To highlight ways the nature of a transition can affect how it is experienced.

Do

- How many people in the room have transitioned more than one child or teen out of their homes and into another placement, whether reunification or otherwise?
- Where are some of the places that children or teens leaving your home have gone? *Write the list on the flip chart or whiteboard.*

Types of Transition for Children and Teens in Foster Care

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

SLIDE 18: TYPES OF TRANSITIONS

Goal

To highlight ways the nature of a transition can affect how it is experienced.

Teach

- *Refer to the list generated by participants, as well as any additional ideas provided by this slide.*
- How do you think the experience of transition could be affected by where the child or teen is going, whether to a relative's home, the biological parents, a hospital, etc.? Note that not every experience is the same; among us, there are probably a lot of different experiences and feelings.
- Do you think some of these transition types would feel easier or harder for you? In what ways do you think the transition type might influence your own feelings or approach?

Transitions Are Complex

TRANSITIONS MAY FEEL EASIER IF...	TRANSITIONS MAY FEEL HARDER IF...

SLIDE 19: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITIONS

Goal

To explore factors that influence how transitions are experienced by foster parents and caregivers and children or teens.

Discuss

Let’s explore factors that influence how children, teens, foster parents and kin caregivers might experience transitions. Thinking about what might help a transition feel easier, and what might make a transition feel harder, what would you list in each column? *Capture ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart, focusing on overarching ideas rather than concrete examples. For instance, if someone says, “It was harder that time Olivia got pulled out with no notice by her social worker,” write down, “No advance notice.” Be prepared to offer an example or two.*

Transitions Are Complex

TRANSITIONS MAY FEEL EASIER IF...	TRANSITIONS MAY FEEL HARDER IF...
They are expected	They are unexpected
There is time for planning	There is no time for planning
The transition plan feels positive	Some are not happy about the plan
Ending feels like a good thing	It is out of your control
Everyone is supported	There are fears about the next placement
Everyone can safely express whatever emotions they have	Information is lacking
You feel good about your time together	There are negative relationships
You've had good endings in the past	You've had hard feelings about the child's placement with you
	You've had negative endings in the past

SLIDE 20: TRANSITIONS

Goal

To explore factors that influence how transitions are experienced by foster parents and children or teens.

Discuss

- Here are some things other people have said about transitions. *Highlight any items that may not have come up in the discussion.*
- Do any of you have examples of any of these experiences, either positive or negative?

Trauma makes it harder

What Do You Think?

- How might children's or teens' history influence their experience transitioning from your home?

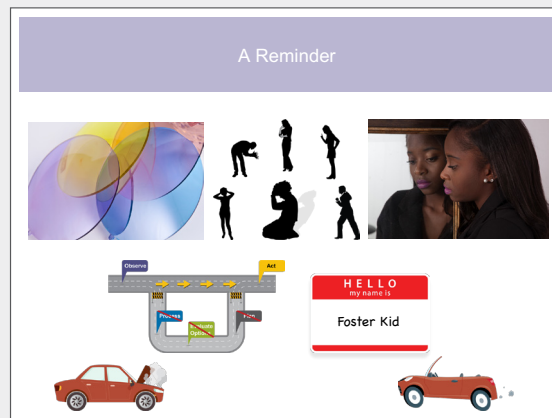
SLIDE 21: INFLUENCE OF TRAUMA HISTORY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITION

Goal

To explore the influence of historical factors on transitions.

Discuss

- *Read the question.*
- *What do you think — how would you answer this question? If not mentioned by the group, describe exposure factors such as history of loss, rejection, disruptions, abandonment and failed placements. Also, mention developmental factors or outcomes such as trouble managing feelings, lack of coping strategies, difficulty seeking support, negative self-image, etc.*



SLIDE 22: VISUAL DEPICTION OF TRAUMA EFFECT

Goal

To use visual images to remind participants of concepts previously discussed.

Ask

- Here's a reminder of some of the key concepts we have discussed over our nine sessions together. *(Review each image one at a time, asking the group to recall what key concepts were associated with that image in previous groups).*
 - **The image of lenses.** A reminder that children's and teens' interpretation of self, others and the world is shaped by their experience.
 - **The silhouette figures.** These represent the lens for others — the child's or teen's belief that others will hurt, reject, abandon, etc.
 - **The "foster kid" label.** The child's internalization of all the negative messages he or she has received can be seen in his or her lens for self.
 - **The Express Road.** This represents the lens for the world and the ways in which the child's or teen's body is ready for danger at all times.
 - **The reflected image of the girl.** The lens for self; the ways that children and teens may struggle with negative sense of self.
 - **The broken-down car and the revving car.** These represent poorly regulated emotions and are a reminder that children and teens may live in bodies that are constantly revving (responding with high arousal) or crashing (freezing and shutting down).
- Ask group members to pick one or two of these items and discuss the ways this effect of trauma might influence the transition process for a child or teen in their care.

Transitions Are More Complicated for Children and Teens
Who Have Experienced Trauma

- They may struggle with:
 - A history of multiple losses
 - A negative lens of self ("Will everyone reject me?")
 - A negative lens of others ("Will my next person be safe?")
 - Fears about the future
 - Coping with stress and big feelings
 - Easy activation of the Express Road
 - Reaching out for help
 - Managing change and unpredictability

SLIDE 23: VERBAL DEPICTION OF DISCUSSED CONCEPTS

Goal

To identify previously taught factors that influence children's and teens' experience of transitions.

Do

Very briefly review the list on the slide.

Teach

- In this group, we have discussed all the factors listed on this slide.
- All these factors have the potential to influence the child's or teen's experience of transitions

How Do Kids Cope?

- It depends on the child or teen. Some show:
 - **Indifference** ("Whatever")
 - A pre-emptive strike ("I don't care about you")
 - Denial and disconnection from fears, sadness or worry ("Everything will be great")
 - A return to challenging behavior
 - Signs of giving up ("I'm never going to get what I want anyway")
 - Separation fears and clinginess
 - Signs of shutting down

SLIDE 24: STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH CHANGE AND LOSS

Goal

To describe the ways challenging behaviors may be a child's or teen's attempt to cope.

Ask

Has anyone with experience transitioning a child or teen from your home witnessed any of these behaviors? Can you provide concrete examples of something a child or teen did before their transition?

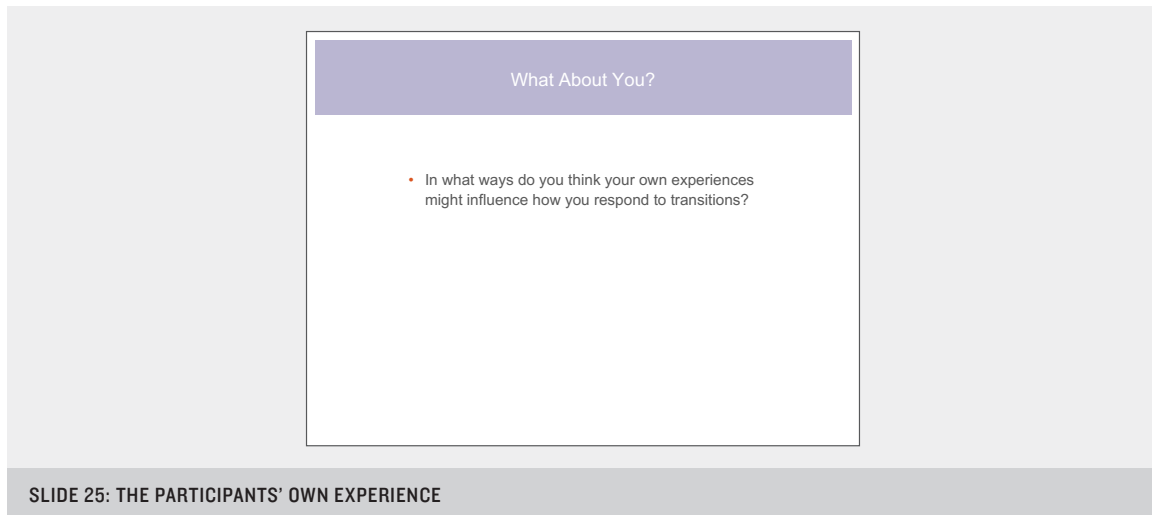
Do

- In this group, we have talked about the ways in which behavior is generally functional.
- Even very difficult behaviors — especially very difficult behaviors — can often be understood as coping strategies.
- When children and teens know they are getting ready to transition from a foster home, difficult behaviors may emerge. These may be the child's or teen's attempt to cope.
- Even when the change is perceived as generally positive, past experiences of abandonment, rejection and loss may trigger self-protective strategies.
- Each of the behaviors listed on this slide is common among children and teens with histories of attachment loss when they are approaching a new relationship change. Different children and teens will cope in different ways, and one child or teen may show many of these behaviors at different times in the transition process.

Ask/Discuss

- Let's talk about one or two behaviors listed here. How might these behaviors help a child or teen cope with perceived loss, change, abandonment or rejection?
- Are any of these behaviors similar to ones you might have seen when a child first transitioned into your home? Why do you think that might be? *If it doesn't come up in the discussion, you might describe ways that children or teens with trauma histories and attachment losses anticipate rejection and abandonment at the start of relationships.*

What about you?



What About You?

- In what ways do you think your own experiences might influence how you respond to transitions?

SLIDE 25: THE PARTICIPANTS' OWN EXPERIENCE

Goal

To invite foster parents to reflect on ways their own past and current experiences might influence their response to transition.

Ask

- Ask participants to refer to their handout, “Remembering endings, part 2.”
- Let’s take a moment to reflect on ways your own past and current experiences with loss, relationship changes and parenting might influence your response to children’s or teens’ transitioning out of your home.
- Your answers will be private — this is just for you. Think about your childhood and write down for yourself some of the major changes you experienced as a child.
- On the bottom of the handout, there is space for you to write down what you have learned about how you handle major life transitions and changes now, as an adult. Examples could include things like moving to a new city or leaving or entering a job. What are your typical emotions, thoughts or behaviors? Do these vary by situation?
- Compare your responses to the first two questions. Do you see any links? Are there ways your past experiences have influenced your approach to life change now?

Important Note

Allow participants sufficient time to complete their handouts. Do not ask for volunteers to share about this activity.

HANDOUT: REMEMBERING ENDINGS, PART 2

More Than One Person Is Transitioning

- When a child or teen leaves your home, everyone in your family is affected
- Change is often complicated
- Keep in mind how your family's ways of coping may influence the transition process

SLIDE 26: ROLE OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Goal

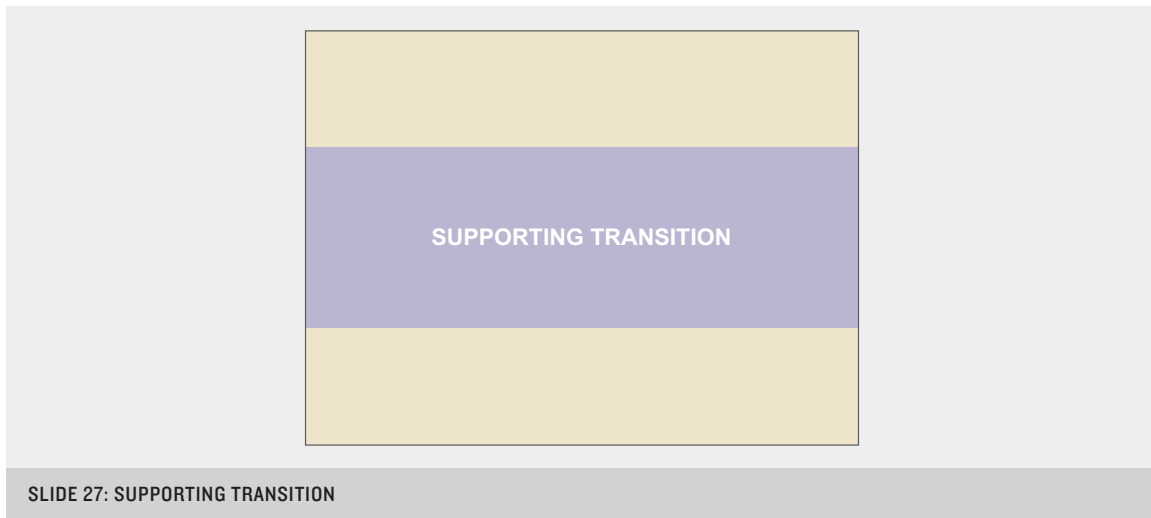
To discuss the multiple members of the family who are experiencing a transition.

Teach

- Although most transition plans focus just on the child or teen in foster care and his or her needs and experiences, don't forget that more than one person is experiencing a relationship change.
- Whether the change is perceived as a loss, a relief or a complicated mix, everyone in the family is undergoing a change in their relationships.
- It is important to pay attention to the reactions and responses of every member of the family system.

Ask

- Let's talk about how transitioning might affect members of your family system. Consider your partner, other children, extended family, neighbors or close community members, pets, teachers, etc.
- Can anyone give an example of a way you have supported a member of your family system at the time of a child's or teen's transition from your home?



Teach

- In this next section, we will discuss a number of strategies for supporting a positive transition for children and teens in your care.
- As we go, please share your own ideas and strategies that you have found helpful in your own home.

Start Early

- For most children and teens in foster care, placement is temporary. From the first day of placement, support the skills that will lead to successful transition later
- **Nurture connections** between the child or teen and his or her broader world (biological family, providers, community connections)
- **Value your role.** Good, loving relationships (even those that are not long lasting) are a strong predictor of positive outcomes
- When transitions are inevitable and anticipated, weave conversations about this reality into interactions along the way, at age-appropriate levels and as the child or teen can tolerate

SLIDE 28: START EARLY

Goal

To describe the importance of starting the transition process early.

Teach

- It is important to start the transition process early — often, from the beginning. Throughout their placement, you need to anticipate that children or teens may at some point be moving into a more permanent placement, whether with their biological family or elsewhere.
- One way to support transition is to help children and teens build and maintain connections to their larger world, particularly those relationships you believe will continue beyond their placement in your home. For instance, relationships with siblings, extended family members, a spiritual or religious community or a school may all be points of continuity for a child. By investing in these broader connections, we can prevent each placement change from being a complete rewriting of the child's world.
- Even if you know a child's or teen's stay with you is likely to be brief, value your contribution and let yourself build a genuine, nurturing relationship. The research is clear that one of the strongest predictors of positive outcomes in adulthood is building positive relationships in childhood.
- Although we don't want to build anxiety by constantly talking about transition, we also don't want to build false hope or an illusion that does not match reality. Acknowledging in an age-appropriate way that your home is not forever is something you can build into conversation over time.

Ask

These questions are possible options for generating discussion on this slide:

- Can you give me examples of people in your child's or teen's life that you have helped the child stay connected to over time? In what ways do you believe these connections have influenced their ability to transition from your home? *Review the third and fourth teaching points on the slide.*
- In what ways have you talked to the children and teens in your home about whether their time in your home is temporary? What kinds of things might prevent you or make you feel uncomfortable about having those conversations?

Help the Child or Teen Prepare

- Information is powerful. When we know what to expect, we can better prepare ourselves and stay on the main road
- **Don't avoid the conversation** because you fear the child or teen can't handle it. Tune in to your own distress tolerance
- Invite questions. Ask the child or teen what he or she is wondering about. If you don't know how to answer the questions, write them down and try to find answers
- Ask your own questions. The more you know, the better you can support the transition

SLIDE 29: HELP CHILD OR TEEN PREPARE, PART I

Goal

To introduce the importance of providing children and teens with age-appropriate information.

Teach

- Knowing what to expect, at an age-appropriate level and with the depth of information desired by the child or teen, can greatly reduce fears and decrease hyperarousal. As long as a child or teen who has experienced trauma does not know what to expect, his or her arousal and vigilance toward danger need to stay high, leading to rapid entry onto the Express Road.
- Often, we stay away from conversations about upcoming changes because we worry about a child's or teen's ability to handle the information. It is important to pay attention to your own fears: for instance, concern that the child or teen will become very upset (they might), act out (they might) and affect our own emotional responses. Be aware of what you are afraid of and have a plan in place for yourself (use your toolbox), but don't let that prevent you from having conversations that a child or teen in your care might need to have.
- One way to support providing the right amount of information (enough, without being overwhelming) is to invite questions. Ask the child or teen what they might be wondering. Answer what you can and try to learn the answers you don't know.
- If a child or teen says that he or she does not have any questions, keep in mind that this may be a self-protective strategy ("I don't care!"). Provide basic information and make sure the child or teen knows who he or she can bring questions to.
- Pay attention to what you need to know yourself. For instance, will you be allowed to have contact with the child or teen after the move if you want to?

Help the Child or Teen Prepare

- Think about the information a child or teen may want:
 - **Who.** Who will be in the new home? What are they like? Are there animals? Will I still be able to speak to you and my family?
 - **Where.** Where is the home? Where will I sleep? How far is it from here? Will I still see my friends, my pet, my teachers, my therapist?
 - **What.** What do new places (house, school, neighborhood) look like? Will this be permanent? What can I take with me?
 - **When.** What is the timing? Will someone tell me when it's going to happen?
 - **How.** Can I visit first? How long will I stay here? How will I get there and who will go with me? How will I pack my stuff? Do I have any choice? Do I have to stay there?
- Capture whatever you can concretely. Ask for pictures, look at maps, make a list of important people and phone numbers, etc.

SLIDE 30: HELP CHILD OR TEEN PREPARE, PART 2

Goal

To identify specific types of information children or teens may want to know about their next home.

Teach

- When thinking about what type of information will be important for children or teens, consider the W's — who, where, what, when and how.
- Particularly for younger children, concrete information (pictures, maps) may be important to support them in understanding and preparing for the change.

Ask

- *Review the categories of information on this slide.*
- Does anyone have an example of other types of information you have found to be important for children and teens transitioning from your home?

Reflect on Your Time Together

- Take some time to **honor this period** of the child's or teen's and your life
- Create concrete items the child or teen can take with him or her: a scrapbook, photo album, timeline, memory book
- Include pictures of the child or teen in your own family archives. Let the child or teen know that he or she has had an impact
- Create opportunities to talk about reactions to the change — the child's or teen's, yours, members of your family

SLIDE 31: REFLECT ON TIME TOGETHER

Goal

To discuss the importance of exploring the relationship between the foster parent (or caregiver) and child (or teen) and their time together.

Ask

Does anyone have examples of ways you have shared memories and experiences of time together with a child or teen? What rituals do you have during transitions?

Teach

- Although the relationship you have had with a child or teen in your home may have been temporary, it is still a meaningful piece of the child's or teen's history and yours.
- For most children and teens, their history is held by their caregivers (in stories, memories that are told, pictures) until they are old enough to hold it themselves. For children and teens in foster care, this history is often lost. They may experience years of their lives for which there are no pictures, no captured memories, no stories or mementos to take forward with them. You can counter this by being very conscious of capturing this history and sending it forward with the child or teen.
- During your final days together, reviewing this history (looking at photo albums, creating a scrapbook, putting important items in a keepsake box) may be a powerful way to reflect with a child or teen on the time spent in your home.
- Communicate to the child or teen how he or she has affected you and your family. For children or teens who have had multiple relationship changes, losses and transitions, it is meaningful to be told that they matter.

Talk About Staying Connected

- A question that you, your family and/or the child or teen may be sitting with: What is next?
- Pay attention to your feelings. What level of contact with the child or teen after he or she leaves feels comfortable to you?
- Talk with child welfare staff to understand any boundaries about ongoing communication
- **Be clear with the child or teen:** How will ongoing connections be feasible — via phone calls, letters, visits, birthday cards, gifts? If the relationship will end with the placement, don't let this be a surprise
- If you need help, get support in communicating about this

SLIDE 32: ONGOING CONNECTION

Goal

To discuss continued connection after a child or teen leaves a foster home.

Ask/Discuss

What has been your experience with continued communication after children or teens in foster care have left your home? Has anyone remained in touch with children or teens who had been placed in your home? What led to the decision to maintain or discontinue communication? What was that like?

Teach

- A very common question for children or teens in care (and for those who are caring for them) is what the rules will be about further communication with you and your family.
- There are many factors that will influence what happens next: your own boundaries, legal constraints, who the child or teen is being placed with, the nature of your relationship, the child's or teen's age and length of stay with you, etc.
- There is no one right answer to the question "What will happen next?" But it is important to be up front and discuss what the child or teen can expect after he or she leaves your home.
- It may be helpful to pull in other people to help you communicate about this (for instance, the child's therapist or caseworker) so that it can be done in a way that feels supportive and not shaming/rejecting.

Pay It Forward

- In the time the child or teen has lived with you, chances are you and he or she have built something together. Send pieces of that forward
- **Communicate about helpful strategies** with case managers, new caregivers and providers. What helps the child or teen succeed? Ask the child or teen to think about what works for him or her, too; discuss how to use these strategies in the new home
- Make a list with the child or teen of favorites (activities, recipes, places), likes or dislikes and skills. Help brainstorm ways to share these with new caregivers
- Consider allowing the child or teen to take objects of significance to him or her from your home

SLIDE 33: PAY IT FORWARD

Goal

To share information that may be important to share with others.





Ask

Can anyone provide examples of ways they have shared information with others at the time of transition?

Teach

- Unless a child or teen has been in your home a very short time, you are likely to have learned important information about him or her. This includes basic information (favorite colors, music, hobbies, etc.), as well as information about what helps the child or teen navigate his or her world (for instance, what helps him calm down, what she looks like when she needs help, what works well for him in the school environment, etc.).
- Capture this information in some way and communicate it to key individuals who will continue to be involved in the child's or teen's life.
- If the child or teen is old enough and willing, talk with him or her. What is important for other people to know? What does he or she want to make sure doesn't get lost (for instance, a favorite recipe you make or a new game he or she learned)? Think about ways to send these with the child or teen.
- If a child or teen has become very attached to an object in your home, consider either allowing him or her to take the object or creating some memento that is symbolic of or a replica of the object.

Olivia one last time

<p style="text-align: center;">Olivia</p> <p>The time is drawing closer for Olivia to transition to her aunt's home, and her foster parents have been helping her sort through her belongings. Together, they have gone through her keepsake box and created a scrapbook of her favorite artwork from the past three years. Olivia picked three pictures to leave behind and she and her foster mother framed them together.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Olivia</p> <p>Although Olivia has had a fair amount of time to get to know her aunt, questions keep coming up. Her foster parents gave her a shoebox that serves as a Question Box, along with a pad of paper. Every time she thinks of a new question, she writes it down. During their evening chat time, they go through her questions. For any question her foster parents can't answer, they make a plan with her to find out.</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Olivia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olivia has been worrying about how to pack. She has strong memories of her clothes and toys being packed in garbage bags and a teddy bear being left behind when she was small • The week before she moves into her aunt's home, Olivia's foster father takes her to a department store and lets her pick out two large purple duffel bags and one smaller one to carry her special dolls and animals. At home, they make a list of important things she wants to be sure not to leave behind 	<p style="text-align: center;">Olivia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the weeks before the transition, Olivia, her foster parents and her aunt have gotten together to talk about many different things: Olivia's favorite meals, where her friends live and their phone numbers, her bedtime routine and so on. Although her aunt already knew a lot of this, Olivia feels better hearing them repeated and watching her aunt write them down • One thing they have been talking about is whether Olivia can still speak to her foster parents. Her aunt has said Olivia can call whenever she wants. Her foster parents plan to speak to her once a week in the beginning 

SLIDES 34 - 37: APPLICATION TO OLIVIA

Do

Read the provided information about Olivia. The group may follow along in their own handouts.

Ask

What do you think about the ways that Olivia's foster parents are helping to support her transition?

What other strategies might you suggest using and why might they be helpful for Olivia?

Olivia

- The day comes and **Olivia's bags are packed.**
Her aunt arrives to take her to her new home



SLIDE 38: OLIVIA, CONTINUED

Goal

To apply what we are learning about transitions to Olivia.

Ask

- If you were Olivia's foster parents, how do you think you would be feeling?
- What would you want or need to do on the day of transition?

Wrap-Up

- Not all endings are the same
- Transitions can be particularly challenging for children and teens in foster care
- You can support a positive transition by:
 - Starting early
 - Helping the child or teen prepare
 - Reflecting on your time together
 - Talking about ongoing connection
 - Paying it forward

SLIDE 39: WRAP-UP

Goal

To review the teaching points from today's session.

Ask

Let's review what we have discussed today. Are there any remaining questions?

Our Own Goodbye

- In this group, you have learned many skills. All of you have so much to offer
- Remember, your greatest and most important teachers will be the children and teens in your care. Stay curious

SLIDE 40: OUR OWN GOODBYE

Goal

To honor the transition this group is making today as we finish training.

Teach

- It is likely that every member of the group began with areas of expertise. I hope this training has added to your areas of expertise.
- Let's make sure to honor this group's own transition. Pay attention to what you have learned. Name it for yourself. The more you make your skills and choices conscious (that is, something you actively pay attention to), the less likely you are to get on the Express Road.
- Every child or teen who comes into your home will have something to teach you. Bring your curiosity to every new relationship so you can keep growing your toolbox over time.

Discuss

- *Name and allow time to process any experience the group members may have in finishing their time together.*
- Would anyone like to share any thoughts about the ending of the training program?



Goal

To share some updated information about Olivia.

Teach

- In this group, we have talked about Olivia since the first day and have learned from her and from her foster parents, just as you learn from the children and teens you care for and from others who have been there.
- One of the things we often wonder when children leave our care is what happens next. What does the future hold for them? So, one last time, here is Olivia.

Olivia



- Olivia is 17 and will graduate from high school next month. She and her aunt have formed a **strong, loving relationship** over the years. Recently, Olivia has cautiously reconnected with her mother, who is newly clean and sober and living in her community. Olivia has kept in touch with her last foster parents over the years although the communications have been less frequent


Olivia

- Olivia's aunt has kept her in dance classes throughout high school since Olivia still loves the arts and performing
- Olivia was recently accepted to the state university. Next year, she will live at home, attend school part time and continue her job teaching young children at her studio



Olivia

- Olivia's story did not begin when she was placed in foster care and it did not end when she left it. But her time there influenced the path she took



Never underestimate the role you play with all the Olivias out there


Meet Olivia



SLIDES 42 – 45: OLIVIA, ONE LAST TIME

Ask/Discuss

Invite group members to share any final thoughts or feelings they have, as we close the story of Olivia.

 <p>SELF-REFLECTION</p>	<p>Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about your time in this group. If you had to pick one sentence that will stick with you, changed your thinking, resonated or will influence how you care for children and teens in the future, what would it be? Write it down
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SLIDES 46 AND 47: SELF-REFLECTION

Goal

To apply the concept of building positive endings as this group finishes its work together.

Ask

Take a moment to reflect on your time in this group. Of all the things you learned or did in the group, what was most influential? What do you think will stick with you after you leave this training group? Write it down on your reflection sheet.

Do

After all group members have finished, if time and group size permits, go around and ask each participant to read his or her sentence aloud.

Optional Do

Consider incorporating a closing ritual into the group ending. For instance:

- *Writing a single word on a river stone that symbolizes each participant's role as a foster parent, to take home.*
- *Dropping a pebble into a jar for each group member and send a photo of the jar to all group members.*
- *Writing one word to leave behind for future group participants.*

HANDOUT: SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET



SLIDE 48: 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

- Start at the beginning. Every week, try to take time to use one of the skills you learned in these nine sessions
- Practice that skill. Refine it
- **We all learn something new every day;** everything takes practice

SLIDES 49 AND 50: PRACTICE


Goal

To continue to apply concepts learned in training in daily life.

Practice

Please keep practicing! Read the slide and refer to the worksheet in your binder. Identify one goal (skill, tool, etc.) to practice each week to support your continued learning. *Suggest that participants make multiple copies of this final handout, to support their ongoing practice.*

HANDOUT: SKILL OF THE WEEK



CLOSING CHECK-IN

What Is Your Energy Right Now?

Totally Comfortable

Really Uncomfortable

+10

+5

0

-5

-10

Great Match

Terrible Match

SLIDES 51 AND 52: 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 do our final check-in before we end. 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.
- **A reminder:** Even though this group is ending, keep remembering to check in with yourself. The more you stay aware and use your own toolbox, the better things will be for you and for the children in your care.



THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!

SLIDE 53: CLOSING

Closing

- Congratulations! You have all worked so hard and contributed so much.
- **Thank you!**