Engaging to Build Trusting Relationships

Trainers:
Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System
Developed: September 2007

Activity Assignment:

Introduce yourself to the group: name, where you work, your job, amount of experience

List on flip chart for group:
1. place of birth
2. where you earned your BA or BS
3. define your own culture with one word
4. what client group is easiest for you to engage?

Foundation Training Required:

- Engaging to Build Trusting Relationships (3day)
- Interviewing in Child Welfare (3day)
- Safety Foundation (2day)
- Case Practice with American Indian Tribes (2day)
Foundation Training: Options Menu

- Team Based Practice (3day)
- Professionalism (1day)
- Access (1day)
- Initial Assessment (3day)
- Safety in Ongoing Services (3day)
- Legal Foundation (online)
- Child Development in Child Welfare (2day)
- Separation, Placement, and Permanency (3day)

Trust is the foundation

- Trust and taking risks
  - Trust and change
    - Trust and natural supports

Discussion Topics

- You will be practicing engaging skills with your colleagues. Please consider personal topics you are willing to be interviewed about. The most useful topics will involve a problem you are trying to solve or a decision you are trying to make.
- Consider subjects safe for you in this setting, but important and complex enough to stimulate an interview of some depth.
- Record on Handout # 3.
Cross Cultural Engagement

- Be aware of differences and potential for misunderstanding
- Express interest in learning the family’s perspective
- Seek to learn rules of behavior
- Learn values, traditions, beliefs of the cultural group: do they apply to each family?
- Learn norms about an outsider’s involvement in family matters
- BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU REPRESENT

Cultural Sensitivity

- Respect and consider the family’s perspective
- Listen and learn about differences
- Do not make judgments from bias, stereotypes or myths
- Assess strength and needs as a unique family
- Ask the family to explain the significance culture has for them regarding family traditions and child-rearing

Values

- Building blocks of culture
- Strongly held beliefs about:
  - What people and life should be like
  - Right and wrong, good and bad
- Principles and standards held by an individual, class, or society
- Regulate our behavior
Culture

“Those sets of shared views and behaviors derived from simultaneous membership in a variety of (social) contexts.”


Cultural Difference Discussion

• What cultural groups in your county might be easiest for you to work with? Why?
• How can you use this strength in your work?
• What cultural groups in your county might be hardest for you to work with? Why?
• How can you overcome this to engage families?

Family of Origin Exercise

• While discussing the questions consider these points of analysis:
  – What values do you share? Which are different?
  – Do you share any values but have different conduct?
  – Have your values or conduct changed over time?
Engaging Skills

**EXPLORING SKILLS**
- Attending
- Recognizing strengths
- Encouraging Expression of Feelings
- Normalizing and Universalization
- Objectivity
- Reflections
- Self-Disclosure

**FOCUSING SKILLS**
- Summarizing
- Clarification
- Questions
- Concreteness
- Partialization
- Reframing

Exploring Skills

- Attending: physical, psychological
- Recognizing Strengths
- Encouraging expression of feelings
- Normalization and Universalization
- Objectivity
- Reflections
- Self Disclosure

Types of Reflections

- Reflecting Content
- Reflecting Feeling
- Combined Reflection
Activity Instructions: Writing Reflections

- Complete the handout 1 page at a time
- Complete a page alone and discuss your responses with your group
- Pick the best response and highlight it.
- Move on to the next page and repeat.
- 3 pages, each with written responses followed by discussion and choice of the best.

Instructions for Skill Practice

- Rotate roles of Interviewer, Interview Subject and Observer. Interview 10 min.
- Subject: select personal topic for interview.
- Interviewer: use Exploring and Focusing Skills
- Observer: note use of skills: Handout #17
- Observer: lead discussion of interview, using Handout #16. Discuss 10 min.
- Try to use every skill

Building Trust With Families: interviews with family members

- Listen with true concern without judging
- Don’t rush decision-making
- Two-way conversation – get to know each other
- Be honest
- Don’t pretend to understand if you don’t
- Treat parents as equals – acknowledge they know their child best
- Step “into their world” – work with families where they’re at
- If you don’t know the answer, say you don’t
- Clear Expectations

Adapted from interviews between Wisconsin Family Ties advocate, Tina Sanford, and parents involved in the CST/ISP process.
Keys to Family Perspective

- Strengths: expands view of family beyond problems or deficits.
- Exceptions: identifies positive behaviors that occur when unsafe behaviors don't occur.
- Images of Success: helps identify the outcomes families want from agency involvement.

Focusing Skills

- Summarization
- Clarification
- Questions: open and closed
  - indirect
  - solution focused
- Concreteness
- Partialization
- Reframing

Strength Based Social Work

- Seeks a total family picture
- Shifts from deficit to solution focus
- Individualized service and support plans
- Family-professional partnerships
- Promotes family perspective
- Increases family commitment
- Blends formal and natural supports
Functional Strengths Activity

- Three inventoried strengths:
  - She loves her child
  - She cooperates with the Department
  - She has a GED

- Identify functional strengths you might expect to find for each inventoried strength: consider specific expressions of the inventoried strength and how the inventoried strength could be useful

- Record best responses on flip chart page

Underlying Needs 1

- Intake information
- Underlying need

Underlying Needs 2

- Family and agency goal
- Elements required for change

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Need or Service

- Transportation to work
- Parenting class
- Help with math homework
- Foster care
- A telephone
- Family therapy
- “Big Brother/Big Sister” (mentor)
- Someone to spend time with
- Daycare
- Energy Assistance
- YMCA membership
- Respite
- Help with evening routine

Adapted from “Need or Service?” handout, Community Care Systems, Inc.

A Solution Focus

- A positive, solution creating approach
- Shifts focus from problems to strengths
- Recognizes the consumer as the expert on their life, their strengths, their problem
- Requires basic engagement skills
- Techniques come from Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy
developed by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg

- Focus on family strengths
- Focus on what is working: do more of it
- Families have the resources for change
- Change starts small and ripples
- Focus on when the problem is not a problem
- Focus on a future when the problem has been solved
Getting Started

- Be not-knowing
- Use client's language
- Notice something positive
- Listen for what the person wants different
- Accept comments as valid and reasonable
- Assume cooperation
- Listen for who and what are important to the person

Types of Solution-Focused Questions

- Solution Defining
- Past Successes
- Exception Finding
- Miracle
- Scaling
- Coping

Solution Defining

- Detailed and sequenced description of how the problem occurs
- Defines who, what, when, where, why, how of the problem and solutions
- Identifies who is interested in the problem or has information that is helpful
Past Successes

- Focus on times when the person solved problems
- Focus on notable positive events or accomplishments
- Bring past successes into the present
- Reinforce competence and strength

Exception Finding

- Seeks examples of when the problem could have happened, but didn’t
- Assumes the problem isn’t happening all of the time
- Assumes that the person deals with the problem effectively some of the time
- Seeks the details of behavior supporting the exception
- Transfers successful behaviors to other times and settings

Miracle Questions

- Create a vision of a life without the problem
- Help the person envision what that life will be like
- Talk as if the problem is gone: when, not if
- How will others notice the problem is gone
Scaling Questions

Use a numerical scale to assess feelings and thoughts

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Least</td>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worst</td>
<td>Best</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Coping Questions

• Examines how people have managed difficult situations
• Identifies elements of resiliency
• Helpful when no exceptions have been identified or the miracle question doesn’t work

Language Shift

• Problem focus
  • What I don’t want
  • When things go wrong
  • Can’t control
  • Stuck
  • Bleak future

• Solution focus
  • What I do want
  • When things go right
  • Can control
  • Moving forward
  • Bright future
Instructions for Solution Focused Skill Practice

1. Rotate the three roles: interviewer, interview subject, and observer.
2. Interview about a topic used in previous practice session. Apply the solution focused questions in sequence. Work on smooth flow. Interview for 10 minutes.
4. Process each interview for 5 minutes.

Stages of Change

- Pre-contemplation- I’m not thinking about change
- Contemplation- I’m considering change
- Preparation- I’m planning to change
- Action- I’m doing things to change
- Maintenance- I’m working to keep my new behavior
- [Recurrence-I’ve gone back to my old behavior]

5 Stages of Change

- Permanent Set
- Maintenance
- Preparation
- Contemplation
- Action
Motivation = Readiness for Change

Conditions that Precipitate Change

2. External Pressure - some external pressure is ignored or resisted. Effective when it comes from a trusted source.
3. Appraisal of Personal Values - behavior doesn't fit values.

The Ingredients of Readiness to Change

Importance

Confidence belief & ability

Readiness to Change

Ambivalence

"Working with ambivalence is working with the heart of the problem."
-Miller and Rollnick (1991)

Self-Efficacy

I Can do it!

Use of Authority

"The exercise of coercion by those mandated to intervene in family violence appears to be a necessary aspect of protecting the vulnerable and creating leverage for change. Unless coercion is used in a considered and skillful fashion; however, it is likely to reinforce the very beliefs that allow an abusive parent to maintain violence as an option."
-Mackinnon and James (1992)
Resistance is a predictable and natural emotional reaction to feeling forced to change or when facing a difficult situation. Resistance occurs as a response to feeling vulnerable, out of control or threatened by change.

Forms of Resistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Passivity</th>
<th>Anger/Hostility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>silence</td>
<td>threats</td>
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<td>feigning ignorance</td>
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**Conditions Supporting Change**

- **Voice**: families feel they have a voice in change and service plans.
- **Access**: families have access to viable service options and to the key people working with them.
- **Ownership**: families have an individualized service plan they can commit to.

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**Skill Practice Instructions**

- You will alternate these roles: interviewer, consumer, observer.
- Distribute the 3 scenarios. There are two copies of each. Divide up the roles: you will fill a different role for each scenario.
- When you know which consumer you will be, take 5 minutes to familiarize yourself with the role.
- Now take 10 minutes to plan your interview: Use the Handout: Interview Strategic Plan.
- Interview for 15 minutes. Discuss for 10 minutes. Observers use Handout: Observer Feedback Worksheet.

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**Skill Practice Instructions**

- You will rotate roles: interviewer, lead observer and observer.
- You will each interview a different actor. Distribute the scenarios, one each.
- Take 15 minutes to plan your interview. Use Handout: Interview Strategic Plan.
- Interview for 15 min. Discuss for 10 min.