Agenda

Engaging to Build Trusting Relationships

1. Introduction

2. Engaging Families of Diverse Cultures
   - Defining culture
   - Understanding your culture
   - The impact of culture

3. Engaging Skills
   - Core Conditions of a trusting relationship
   - Exploring Skills ..................................Skill practice
   - Creating family partnerships
   - Focusing Skills....................................Skill practice

4. Discovering Strengths and Needs
   - Discovering Strengths.........................Skill practice
   - Defining needs

5. A Solution Focus.................................Skill practice

6. Stages of Change
   - Sustaining the Partnership
   - Balancing helping and authority approaches
   - Working through Resistance..............Skill practice

7. Planning and Practice: Consolidating skills...Skill practice

8. Closing
Goals for Attending This Training

It will be a worthwhile training if I walk away knowing and doing...

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Topics I Am Prepared to Discuss

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Cross Cultural Engagement

• Be aware of cultural differences and the potential for mutual misunderstanding

• Express your interest in the family and in understanding their perspective

• Seek to learn the culture’s rules of behavior

• Learn values, attitudes, traditions, and beliefs of the cultural group and check out applicability to each family

• Learn the norms about an outsider’s involvement in family matters

• **BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU REPRESENT**
  - Government
  - Authority
  - Appearance
  - Age
  - Gender
Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Competence

Culture includes race, religion, ethnicity, family values, lifestyle, family composition, customs, values, and beliefs. The family itself is the most important source of information about its unique characteristics, historical roots, and cultural values.

Culturally competent workers:

- Respect the client’s perspective.
- Listen well enough to learn about people who are different from themselves.
- Avoid judgment from bias, stereotypes, or cultural myths.
- Assess strengths and needs of families from various populations.
- Ask the family to explain the significance culture has for them, especially regarding:
  - family traditions
  - child rearing and discipline practices
  - spiritual beliefs and traditions

Every assessment interview will be affected by how effectively a caseworker understands and respects a family’s history and culture. Some of the following questions may assist in eliciting helpful assessment information. They are by no means comprehensive, but may be helpful in thinking about how to approach a culturally different family.

- Who usually makes decisions about the children in this family?
- What types of discipline does the family consider to be appropriate?
- Who usually is involved in child care responsibilities? Extended family? Informal kin?
- What methods does this family use to solve its problems? How does it communicate?
- How are cultural beliefs incorporated in the way this family functions? How does the family maintain its cultural beliefs?
- What role does religion play in this family? How do these beliefs affect child-rearing responsibilities?
- What is the attitude or belief about health care?
- What is the identification involvement with the tribe, race, larger group?
- What family rituals, traditions, or behaviors exist?

Raising Children

What was the value regarding raising children in your family of origin?

What were the influences on this value?

What were the codes of conduct around this value?

How was this value and code of conduct passed on to you?

As an adult do you hold this value and code of conduct?
What was the value regarding the role of men and women and division of labor in your family of origin?

What were the influences on this value?

What were the codes of conduct around this value?

How was this value and code of conduct passed on to you?

As an adult do you hold this value and code of conduct?
What was the value regarding the role of men and women and decision making in your family of origin?

What were the influences on this value?

What were the codes of conduct around this value?

How was this value and code of conduct passed on to you?

As an adult do you hold this value and code of conduct?
Spending and Saving Money

What was the value regarding spending and saving money in your family of origin?

What were the influences on this value?

What were the codes of conduct around this value?

How was this value and code of conduct passed on to you?

As an adult do you hold this value and code of conduct?
Personal Culture Worksheet

My cultural characteristics are:

I have these things in common with the families I work with:

I am different from many of the families I work with in these ways:
## ENGAGING SKILLS

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### Notes
- This page contains engaging skills for building trusting relationships.
- Skills are categorized into Exploring and Focusing categories.
- Each category includes starting and renewing relationships, adding detail, summarizing, recognizing strengths, clarifying, encouraging expression of feelings, normalizing, and reflecting.
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**Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System**

Engaging to Build Trusting Relationships • Developed: January 2008

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Exploring Skills

These skills are used to help the family tell their story from their perspective. Exploring skills are essential when initiating a trusting relationship and will move to the forefront often during the life of that relationship. Exploring requires a variety of techniques that encourage the speaker to keep talking, to let them know that you are interested and that you value their perspective and concerns. These skills help you achieve your dual purpose: collect information and initiate or maintain a trusting, productive relationship.

Attending conveys interest in the speaker and what they are feeling and want to say.

- Physical attending- use of gesture and body language, attention to all aspects of communication. Encouraging behaviors: nodding, smiling; “I see,” “uh-huh.”
- Psychological attending- observing congruence between verbal and non-verbal communication. Does feeling match speech?

Recognizing Strengths expands the focus beyond whatever problem the agency and worker are addressing. By focusing on strengths, we communicate to the family that we see them as more than the problem and as the source of solutions. Look for positive capacities.

- Try to start conversations with compliments.
- Talk about desires and wishes
- Look for things you agree about
- Respect infers recognition of strengths

Encouraging the Expression of Feelings can help create an emotional connection. Be careful with these techniques. The objective with these skills is to acknowledge feelings and bring them out in the open so that you can move into more rational and productive communication. Validating confirms your acceptance of the family members’ reactions, conveying that they have a voice in the relationship.

- Encourage expression of positive and negative feelings
- Avoid defensiveness
- Don’t personalize criticism
- Use calm language, don’t match volume or intensity
- Venting is not productive
- Recognize strengths
- **PROTECT YOURSELF**
Normalization and Universalization point out that what the person is feeling and thinking can be expected under the circumstances and may be similar to what others experience. Take care that the use of these techniques doesn’t minimize individual circumstances and reactions.

- Normalizing statements: “A visit from CPS can be upsetting.” “This would be a tough situation for anyone.” “I agree that your daughter’s behavior is a cause for concern.” “That would try anybody’s patience.”
- Universalizing statements: “Other parents I have met have tried this.” “I’ve seen other families go there for …” “Some other students are working there.”

Objectivity means you meet the family free of preconceived opinions or foregone conclusions. This technique includes the ability to see different points of view. Previous agency information and current referral material is considered, but not assumed to be current fact.

- Seeks family perspective
- Sensitivity to cultural factors
- Withholds decisions and judgment
- Is assisted by a calm demeanor

Reflections are verbal responses that focus on what a person is telling you. They confirm your attention and convey understanding. Reflections may focus on verbal content, feelings or both. An effective reflection holds a mirror up to a person and says “This is what I understand. Am I accurate?”

A note on Self-disclosure: Self-disclosure is an exploring technique that can be useful. However, this skill has many drawbacks and should not be used often. Self-disclosure can erode your authority and credibility. It will not effectively bridge cultural differences. Effective use of the recommended exploring skills will negate the need for self-disclosure.
TYPES OF REFLECTIONS

Reflecting Content

- Stating the beliefs, opinions, events and facts of the person’s message.
- Paraphrasing the objective verbal content.

Reflecting Feeling

- Stating the emotions or emotional aspect of the person’s message
- Accurately identifying and labeling the person’s emotional state and then communicating your understanding

Using Combined Reflection

- Identifying content and feelings in the person’s message
- Conveying an understanding of what the person is feeling and why s/he is feeling that way
Reflections of Content

There is nothing I can do about it. He says he wants to stop using drugs but he doesn’t.

________________________________________

I want you to know that I love my child and I would never hurt her.

________________________________________

He tells me he is going to stop drinking. That going to jail was a bottom for him and there is no place to go but get better. He is going to AA meetings and he has started back to church. He has never tried so hard to change. I hope it will be different this time.

________________________________________
Reflections of Feelings

I can’t do one more thing. You couldn’t possibly understand how stressed I am right now. I don’t have the energy to start anything new.

My Mom really did believe me. My stepfather said that she would never believe me if he told her I was lying.

I am so worried about my granddaughter. You know Carrie is a little slow. Does the family that is keeping her really understand her? I wish she could have come to live with me rather than going to live with strangers.
Combined Reflections of Content and Feelings

Do you really want me to tell you one more time what happened that night? How many people have to hear my story? Doesn’t anyone think about how it makes me feel to keep talking about it?

He tells me it will not happen again. This is the first time he has hit me in front of the kids. I want to believe that things can be different but I don’t know if I can believe that he will change.

My Mom says when she comes to visit next week she will bring my brother who just came home from Iraq. I can’t wait to see him. He has been gone for over a year. When he left, I was still at home with my Mom.
GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Feedback is most helpful when it is both specific and positively stated. It is easier to stop doing something that is counterproductive when a more helpful behavior can be substituted, so positively stated feedback is useful feedback.

Steps for Use in Practice in Triads: Interviewer – Interview subject– Observer

1. Observer: Start by asking the interviewer to describe what s/he did well or what s/he felt was effective in use of exploring and focusing skills. For example, Mary, what skill did you use well that helped Bob tell his story?

2. Observer: Encourage the interviewer to be behaviorally specific! “That’s great that you think you engaged Bob well. What did you do that made a difference?”

3. Observer: Once the interviewer has had the opportunity to self-assess what s/he did well, ask the interview subject to provide behaviorally specific feedback on something the interviewer did well to encourage the subject to explore his/her topic. For example, Bob what did Mary do well that helped you talk about your personal topic?

4. Observer: Once the interview subject has presented strengths-based feedback, then present your feedback to the interviewer on what s/he did well.

5. Observer: After confirming what was effective, ask the interviewer what s/he would do differently to be even more effective.

Observer: Again encourage the interviewer as well as the subject to be behaviorally specific in the assessment of what s/he would do differently. For example, if you had the opportunity to do this interview again, what is one skill you would use to help Bob tell his story?
# OBSERVATION OF SKILLS / TECHNIQUES

## Practice Worksheet

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## Additional notes:

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**Additional notes:**

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A Checklist for Partnering with Parents

☐ Can I put myself in the parent’s shoes?

☐ Do I see the whole child?

☐ Do I value the parent knowledge of their children and family?

☐ Do I believe we are equals?

☐ Do I listen, communicating that I respect and value their insights?

☐ Do I always answer parent’s questions?

☐ Do I always speak in plain language, avoiding jargon?

☐ Do I strive for common understanding?

☐ Do I schedule according to family needs?

☐ Do I follow through on my commitments?
Family Perspective: Exceptions

“Exception questions can be particularly valuable in child protecting work, as they allow discussion and acknowledgment of the problem in a constructive manner, without the need for confrontation.”  Turnell and Edwards

In seeking exceptions, we are asking the family to expand our view beyond the presenting problem behaviors. Asking for exceptions can help family members focus their perspective for us so that we can create a bigger picture of family behaviors and learn about strengths. We increase the likelihood of constructive engagement by projecting these two assumptions:

1. The problem we came to talk about isn’t happening all of the time.
2. The parent probably deals with the problem effectively most of the time.

Consider the reaction of a parent when you present positive assumptions about them the first time you meet. By demonstrating an open mind about the family’s capacities and intent, you are inviting cooperation and may not need to confront and rely on your authority. Invite cooperation as early as possible and the information you collect will be more complete. The details of behaviors that are exceptions to the problem often are the keys to solutions. If an ongoing relationship between the family and agency will be necessary, you will be starting a partnership of cooperation at the first contact when you seek exceptions.

Family Perspective: Images of Success

Family ownership of solutions can be increased when family members’ personal goals are evident in a case plan. Together with a family you can move smoothly from problem identification to problem solution when you tailor plans for that family. The goal is to blend your agency’s expectations for safety with family views about how they will create and maintain safety. Work with the family to describe what will happen instead of the unsafe behavior.

Coming to agreement on the outcome of your agency’s intervention requires two elements:

1. A clear statement, in concrete behavioral terms, about what you consider to be sufficient safety. Clear goal statements from the CPS safety perspective will provide the means for evaluating family progress and will lead to agreement about when the case can be closed.

2. Clear statements, in the family’s words, about exactly how they will create safety. The family will state their understanding of what CPS requires and their own ways of meeting those requirements.

Images of success are personalized statements of safe conditions. You can elicit this element of family perspective by asking such questions as:

- What can you (parent) do to make your child safer?
- In your opinion, what would it take to make your child safe?
- Can you tell the ideas you have for making your child safer?
- How can I be helpful to you?
- Tell me what your house will look like when it’s safe.
- Tell me how you would like to react when your child misbehaves.
- What will your child’s behavior look like when he’s behaving well?

Personalizing images of success creates goals that make sense for each family. While safety may have certain definitions in the CPS perspective, those definitions may not make sense to each family. Creating images of success from the family’s perspective helps you make your intervention practical and doable for the family.

FOCUSING SKILLS

This set of skills helps focus the conversation on the subject which brought the worker and family together. In the focusing stage, information gathered during the exploration stage is expanded and organized to establish a common understanding. Focusing is an essential step that lays a foundation for effective solution planning. These skills help sort out the pertinent information and provide confirmation of fact and intent for family members and the worker. Effective focusing will strengthen the partnership by creating agreement. Solutions will emerge logically.

Summarizing provides structure and flow to the conversation. Good summarizing will address facts and feelings. When summarizing, you put the full picture together as partners. A good summary provides smooth transition to the next part of the discussion.

- Separate the important from the extraneous
- Identify useful ideas
- Review and confirm decisions
- Moves from assessment to planning

Clarification helps assure that you and the family are on the same page. This skill is most useful for blending agency expectations and family wishes. Differences of opinion and areas of agreement will be identified, adding further focus to the conversation as you move towards solutions.

- Safety standards and clear expectations
- Agreements on responsibilities
- Confirm mutual understanding of facts and plans

Questions encourage family members to speak freely. Effective questions can obtain specific information as well as stimulate discussion of feelings.

- Open questions encourage free narrative.
- Closed questions seek specific facts or opinions.
- Indirect questions guide without asking: “Tell me” or “I’d like to hear.”
- Solution focused questions seek successful behaviors and images of success

Concreteness helps family members be specific in their comments about concerns or problems. This skill is used when a person is vague (“I’m really upset”) or uses generalizing statements (“She’s just awful.”) When you don’t understand how someone has reached a conclusion, helping them to be more specific will help them to explain. Concreteness also refers to your ability to be specific and concise. Be clear, communicate at the person’s level and don’t use social work jargon.

Partialization is breaking big things down into smaller components. This skill can bring focus to a discussion and structure to planning. It can also give a family hope that the changes they will make are doable.

Reframing can redefine behavior and move a person into a different perspective. When using this skill, we are asking others to consider a different interpretation of behavior or events. Reframing often changes a problem behavior into a strength.
Reframing Child and Family Problems

Scenario #1

You are working with a foster parent who is having a lot of difficulty with a child in her care whose name is Daniel. Daniel is 7 years old. This is his fourth placement this year. The current foster care provider said that for about four weeks after Danny was placed with them he was an ideal child. He gave them no problems. Now his behavior is extremely oppositional. Everything is a battle! He will cuss his foster parents out when they try to get him to follow simple family rules such as brushing his teeth before he goes to bed. They are at their “wits end.” They are so frustrated that they are almost at the point of asking him to have him removed from their home.

Please reframe this situation.

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Scenario #2

You have been shadowing an experienced worker. He tells you he is taking you out to see an extremely resistant client. He tells you that the parent has not complied with any of the goals in her service agreement. He says that she is still in denial about her alcohol use. She doesn’t show up for her urine screens. When you observe the interaction between the worker and the parent, it is clear that she is engaging in resistant behaviors. As you observe this worker, he speaks to the mother in a negative manner that seems to show he is frustrated and upset about her not telling the truth about her alcohol use. She seems to be extremely passive.

Please reframe the mother’s behavior.

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Scenario #3

You are mentoring a new worker who is working with a mom who is a victim of domestic violence. The mother refuses to stop seeing her boyfriend, even though he's been abusive to her and the children many times in the past. The worker feels the mother has to make a choice - either her boyfriend or the kids - she wants both. The worker can’t understand the mother. She loves her children and misses them. Why would she risk losing her children over a man who is clearly no good?

Please reframe the mother’s behavior:

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Strength-Based Assessments

Key Assumptions:

- Each person is unique and has strengths
- All environments contain strengths
- Change is supported when built on strengths
- People may not know how to describe their strengths and needs
- Survival in difficult conditions is a strength
- Strengths are found in connections and relationships

Elements of Strengths:

- Attitudes and values
- Skills and abilities
- Culture and history
- Preferences and dreams

Tips For Assessments:

- Identify the strengths of each family member
- Expect strengths to emerge and change over time
- Point out strengths when you see them
Strength Based Questions

Past Success
- Tell me about your life when things are good.
- How have you managed to cope (with job changes, financial difficulties, child’s disability)?
- It’s not easy to raise ### children on your own. How do you do it (manage schedules, get them to school on time, pay the bills)?
- Think of a time when there was a crisis. How were you able to handle it?
- What good things have you learned about yourself in the past few years?
- When things are going well, what is different?
- What good parts of your life would you like to have back?

Exception Finding
- Tell me what a good day with your (child/partner) looks like.
- When the problem is solved, how do you think your relationship with (child/partner) will be different?
- When was the last time you expected this to happen and it didn’t?
- Tell me what is different for you at those times when you don’t lose control.

Possibilities
- What are your hopes for your child (school, socially, long-term)?
- What are your goals (family, work, personal)?
- What do you want your life to look like (job, family, personal life)?
- What does it look like when you are happy?

Miracle
- If you had three wishes, what would they be?
- If one thing in your life could change, what would it be?
- When you wake up in the morning, your problem is solved. What do things look like?
- If you painted a picture of what your family would be like if all this were solved, what would that picture look like?

Esteem
- What is special about your child?
- What things do you do that make you a good parent?
- What good things might your (children/friends/family) say about you?
- What things in your life are you proud of?
- What about your life makes you happy?
- Tell me what makes your family special.
- How will you know when things are going well for your family?
Support
• Who has supported you and helped you through tough times?
• What resources have been helpful to you in the past?
  Who are the people you can depend on?
• How has family, friends, community support benefitted your family in the past?

Action
• What do you like to do with your kids?
• What are your special talents?
• What are your children’s special talents?
• What types of activities do you do as a family?
FUNCTIONAL STRENGTHS INVENTORY

The words facilitators use to describe the family during the strengths and cultural discovery often do not give much information to build on when trying to match assets to needs. Without further exploration of the strength and a move into a functional description, there is little information to work with. For example, saying someone is strong or looks nice may be true but these descriptions do not help us build toward goal achievement. However, if what was discovered was that this person has shown strength in the face of great struggles, or that “looking nice” reflects the ability to take care of him/herself, then we have functional strengths we can tap into. Similarly, saying a child can play soccer describes a strength in itself; however, functional strengths associated with this might include the ability to participate in an activity with peers, the ability to follow coach’s directions and the ability to work toward a clear goal.

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Underlying Needs

A need is usually considered to be a basic requirement that is essential for living a safe and healthy life: shelter, food and water, medical care, belonging, acceptance, nurturance guidance. When working with families we often deal with such basic needs. We also must go beneath the problem that triggers our intervention to find the underlying conditions that are the source of the problem. The referral problem is the symptom or behavioral evidence that needs are present. The key to working with families about needs is agreeing on descriptions of needs that blend agency needs (Expectations) with family needs (Develop a strength or change a behavior or condition).

Agency need: “You need to discipline your children without injuring them.”

Parent need: “I need to learn other ways of disciplining my children.”

Child need: “I need to learn to behave like my parents want me to behave.”

Accurately identifying underlying needs helps us discover things that are lacking such as:

- safe home,
- age appropriate parenting,
- correct educational program,
- safe level of supervision

When looking at needs in families it’s important to look both at the needs of children and the needs of the adult caregivers. Often we find that an adult need must be met to enable the adult to be more effective in meeting children’s needs. Validating parent needs for more emotional or material support is an important skill in building trusting relationships. The focus moves from the problem (Need stated in referral) to the well-being and effectiveness of the adult. All of the exploring and focusing skills are used when defining underlying needs.

Need statements are not services or programs. Services are options for helping people meet their needs. Useful need statements:

- May identify the underlying condition or source of a behavior
- Is stated in the family’s language
- Helps the family envision what will be different

Use of family language and family stated needs reflects family perspective. Seeing their personal needs in plans and documents gives a feeling of ownership, that their perspective is respected and included.

Examples of statements that identify underlying needs:
All of the following need statements address poor school attendance.

**Basic need:** The children need to attend school daily. **Underlying need:** The children need caregivers who will meet their needs for supervision.

**Basic need:** The parents need to provide round the clock safety and supervision for their children. **Underlying need:** Mom and Dad need to learn positive ways to support each other that build their confidence and competence as parents.
SOLUTION-FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Solution Defining: These questions help family members define the “who, what, why, where, when and how” of the problem and the solution. It helps to identify the nature of the problem and the solutions, as well as who else is interested in this problem or has information that might be helpful in solving the problem. It helps to provide a video replay of how and under what circumstances the problem occurs. This is done by first asking a question such as “Under what circumstance is this likely to occur?” and then following up with the response “and then what happened?”, and following that response to say “and then what happened?”. This sets the condition for the family member to provide a video replay of the circumstances in which the problem exists.

Examples include:

- Under what circumstances is this likely to occur?
- When this happens (your husband loses his temper and threatens the children), what do you do?
- What are the positives for you in continuing to stay in this relationship?
- Who else is concerned about this problem in your family?
- What would have to be different for you not to be afraid?
- How often did it happen last week?
- Who was there when it happened?
- Where were you when Johnny had his temper tantrum?

Past Successes: Through the interview process, you can focus on a family’s past successes, that is, when the family member was functioning well enough not to require child protective services intervention. It is empowering to the family member to realize that there was a period in his/her life when s/he was more successful than s/he feels at this moment.

Examples of past success questions include:

- It’s not easy to raise three children on your own. How did you do it?
- After having been through what you’ve been through, how did you find enough strength to keep pushing on?
- What do you need to do so that you’ll feel good about yourself and in control of your life again?
- What would it take for you to bring back the confidence you had when you were in high school?

Exception Finding Questions: In solution-focused interviewing, exceptions are times when problems could have occurred but did not. You and the family need to examine who did what, when, where, and how so that the problem did not happen. Essentially, you are trying to discover how the patterns around the problems are different, especially what is different when the problem does not occur. In addition, problematic behaviors usually happen only within certain...
physical, relational or social contexts. It is important to find out in detail what happens when the person does not have the problem. That information can be used to identify the abilities the family uses successfully in one setting. Those strengths/abilities could be transferred to another setting. Examples of exception-finding questions include:

- I can see you have every reason to be depressed. When do you suppose you get a little bit less depressed?
- How would you say you are different when you are a little bit less depressed?
- When you force yourself to get out of bed and walk the kids to school, what do you suppose your children will notice different about you?
- What would it take to force you to get up in the morning more often?
- You are saying that you didn’t drink for five days last week. How did you do it?
- Tell me what is different for you at those times when you don’t lose control.
- How do you explain to yourself that the problem doesn’t happen at those times?
- What would have to happen for you to do it more often?
- When the problem is solved, how do you think your relationship with your son will be different? What will you be doing then that you are not doing now?

**Miracle Questions:** The miracle question literally asks clients to disregard their current troubles and for a moment imagine what their lives would be like in a successful future. It creates a vivid image or vision of what life will be like when the problem is solved and the family member(s) can see some hope that life can be different. The question is:

- Suppose one night there is a miracle while you are sleeping and the problem that brought you to child protective services is solved. Since you are sleeping you don’t know the miracle has happened or that the problem is solved. What do you suppose you will notice that is different the next morning that will tell you that the problem is solved? Follow-up questions include:
  - If the miracle happened, what will be the first thing you notice?
  - If the miracle happened, what will be the first change you notice about yourself?
  - What will your spouse notice different about you?
  - If you were to take these steps, what would you notice different around your house?

Minor miracle questions also help family members look at a more hopeful future. These questions help you and they envision positive outcomes that can become part of the change process. These questions include:

- If you had three wishes, what would they be?
- If you had a magic wand and could grant yourself one thing that would solve the problem/meet the need that your family is now facing, what would you wish for?
- If you could paint a picture for me of what your family would be like if all this were solved, what would that picture look like?

**Scaling Questions:** Scaling questions are an interesting way to make complex features of a person’s life more concrete and accessible for both the family member and the child protection
worker. Scaling questions can be used to assess self-esteem, self-confidence, investment in change, prioritization of problems, perception of hopefulness, etc. They usually take the form of asking the person to give a number from 1-10 that best represents where the family member is at some specific point. Ten is the positive end of the scale, so higher numbers are equated with more positive outcomes or experiences. **Examples** of scaling questions include:

- On a scale of 1-10, with 10 meaning you have every confidence that this problem can be solved and 1 meaning no confidence at all, where would you put yourself today?
- On the same scale, how hopeful are you that this problem can be solved?
- What would be different in your life when you move up just one step?

You can use scaling questions to assess a person’s motivation to change.

- On a scale of 1-10, how much would you say you are willing to work to solve the problem?
- If they give a low answer you could ask: What do you suppose your husband would say that you need to do to move up one point on the scale?

**Coping questions** help you examine with people how they manage difficult times and things they might like to change but can’t right now. Coping questions help you to find the areas of resiliency that support people in troubled times. These questions can also help you to identify the personal strengths and other resources that people use to cope and can use to make advances. Coping questions in combination with other questions such as the miracle questions or scaling questions can help you identify what needs to happen to keep coping in the most productive way. Examples of coping questions include:

- What has and is making it possible for you to cope?
- How do you keep making it work for you and your family?
- Given the nature of everything going on in your life what keeps that smile on your face?
- I’m sure there are days you want to pack it up and leave. What helps you stay?
- There are lots things people are asking you to do for your children. What helps you meet those demands?

**Additional Solution-Focused Questions** Often family members have more solutions available than they realize. Solution-focused questions are questions the helper can frame to help the family member direct attention to useful answers that will move him/her forward. These questions can empower family members to find their own solutions. Here are some additional examples of solution-focused questions:

- What are some of your family’s strengths that can be used to accomplish the plan/steps/changes?
- What needs to change to make you feel safe?
- Under what conditions have you been able to make your family safe?
- On a scale of 1-10, how important do you think this decision is to your family?
- What solutions have worked for you in the past regarding _______?
- When was the last time ________________ didn’t happen?
- Who else is interested in helping your family change?
- How have you been able to change/accomplish things that are important to you before?
- What is the role of other family members in helping your family change?
- What do you get from continuing this behavior?
- How will this step/service help you?
- What is happening in your family that keeps you from doing this?
- What would need to be done to help you do this?
- What do you want right now?
- What would make this possible?
- What have you tried that has not worked?
- If you could change one thing, what would it be?
- When are you and your son able to have a good time together?
- When things are going well, what is your family doing?
- Describe the last good day you had together.
- On a scale of 1-10, how important is it that __________?
- What are the common issues that unite your family?
- What do you see as the things that stop you?
- What could help you be more in control and less vulnerable?
- How can you increase the involvement of each family member in the plan?
- On a scale of 1-10, how difficult is it for you to maintain the behavioral plan for Tim?
- Where do you feel stuck?
- How do you describe what it feels like to be stuck?
- What is one step that you could take to move forward?
- What is most important to address for you?
- When and under what circumstances is this behavior likely to occur?
- How and under what circumstances is this behavior likely to occur?
- With whom is this behavior likely to occur?
- What are some ways you can disrupt/change the patterns of behavior that aren’t working for you?
- What are some ways that the positive/effective behaviors could increase?
- What motivates you?
### OBSERVATION OF SKILLS:

Solution Focused Questions

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<th>SOLUTION FOCUSED QUESTIONS</th>
<th>OBSERVATIONS</th>
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<td>Record feedback comments</td>
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<th>Past Success Questions</th>
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<td>SOLUTION FOCUSED QUESTIONS</td>
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<td>Note use of the question</td>
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<td>Scaling Questions</td>
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<td>Coping Questions</td>
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Changes in My Life

Think about a time you decided to change your behavior and were committed to making that change.

Think about a time you were required to change your behavior. The change was imposed and you complied with the need to change.

Were there other people involved in this change? What were their roles? How did you feel toward them?

How did you feel about yourself during this process? Looking back on the experience?

How long did the behavior change last?

What did you learn from this experience? Did this experience affect your attitude about similar circumstances in the future?
### WHICH STAGE OF CHANGE?

1. Who the hell do you think you are, telling me what to do with my kids?

2. If I were to try to move out and live on my own, I could never afford rent.

3. I made dinner for the kids every night last week. I’m working extra hours this week, so by the time I get home I’m just too tired.

4. If I were to go to this treatment program, who would take care of my kids?

5. My dad always used the belt, and I turned out OK. I always hated that old man, though, and I don’t want my kids to hate me.

6. I tried the time out, but Jeremy just wouldn’t sit quietly like the kids on the videos did.

7. I told my friends I wasn’t going to drink anymore, so now I guess it’s official.
8. I went to the job service and got the information we talked about, but some of it doesn’t make sense. Can you look at it?

9. I’ve been walking away from situations where I get angry and dealing with people later, when I’m calm. It was really hard on the weekend, though, when this guy was just picking a fight.

10. I’m not going to say another word until you tell me who reported this.

11. If I don’t spank them, they’ll walk all over me.

12. How can I keep from using now that I’m back with my parents?

13. Quit telling me I have to refrain from further delinquent activity! Spray painting the school with graffiti is my right to free speech!
### Appropriate Motivational Strategies for Each Stage of Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client’s Stage of Change</th>
<th>Appropriate motivational Strategies</th>
<th>Trust-building skills to use</th>
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</table>
| Precontemplation – The client is not yet considering change. | • Establish rapport and trust  
• Explore meaning of circumstances that led to referral to agency  
• Discuss previous experience with agency  
• Elicit clients’ perception of the problems  
• Use open-ended questions  
• Express empathy and concern, including cooperation client shows  
• Offer factual information about consequences | |
| Contemplation – The client acknowledges concerns and is considering the possibility of change but is ambivalent and uncertain. | • Normalize ambivalence  
• Help the client “tip the decisional balance scale” toward change by  
  - Eliciting and weighing pros and cons  
  - Change extrinsic to intrinsic motivation  
  - Examine clients’ personal values related to change  
  - Emphasize clients’ free choice, responsibility, and self-efficacy for change  
• Elicit the clients’ perception of self-efficacy and remove barriers to change  
• Examine options rather than a single course of action  
• Present information in a neutral manner | |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Preparation – The client is committed to and planning to make a change in the near future but is still considering what to do</th>
<th>Motivational Task – Help the client determine the best course of action to take in seeking change.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Clarify the client’s own goals &amp; strategies for change</td>
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<td>• Offer a menu of options for change or services</td>
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<td>• With permission, offer expertise or advice</td>
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<td>• Negotiate a plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider and lower barriers to change</td>
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<td>• Help client enlist support of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Explore the client’s expectation of services</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Elicit from client what has worked in the past personally, or for others</td>
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<td>• Assist the client to address need for child care, transportation, etc</td>
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<td>• Have client publicly announce plans to change</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action – The client is actively taking steps to change but has not yet reached a stable state.</th>
<th>Motivational Task – Help the client take steps toward change.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assure service providers understand their role</td>
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<td>• Support realistic view of change through small steps</td>
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<td>• Acknowledge difficulties for the client in early stages of changes</td>
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<td>• Help the client identify and plan for challenges to change</td>
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<td>• Provide reinforces of positive change and help client identify</td>
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<td>• Help the client assess and build the support system</td>
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<tr>
<th>Maintenance – The client has achieved initial goals and is working to maintain gains</th>
<th>Motivational Task – Help client identify and use strategies to prevent recurrence of old behavior.</th>
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<td>• Support lifestyle changes</td>
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<td>• Affirm client’s resolve and self-efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maintain supportive contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify and plan for challenging circumstances</td>
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<td>• Review long-term goals</td>
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| Recurrence – The client has reverted back to old behavior and must cope with the consequences and decide what to do next. | • Help the client reenter the change cycle and commend any willingness to reconsider positive change  
• Consider the impact of the recurrence of old behavior on child safety or community safety  
• Use recurrence to learn about challenging circumstances, barriers to change, and necessary supports-revisit your plan  
• Remain supportive so that recurrence is not demoralizing. |
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<tr>
<td>Motivational Task – Help the client renew the process of change without becoming stuck or demoralized because of the recurrence.</td>
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Professional Relationships

Who initiates? _______________

Who defines problem? _______________

Significance of “whys?” _______________

Importance of relationship? _______________

Who defines “good enough?” _______________

Who decides we’re done? _______________
What Are Your Triggers?

This is to be used as a basis for discussion with your Supervisor.

1. Identify a situation in which you have had a problem balancing your help and authority roles.

2. I am tempted to over-use my authority when….

3. I am tempted to be too much of a helper when….

4. As I reflect on my own comfort zone on the helper and authority continuum, I think. . .
Interview Strategic Plan

1. Write the expression you will use to open the interview.

2. What is your understanding of the problem?

3. What strengths do you see in the person you will interview?

4. What do you want from the person in moving forward in the change process?

5. What do you think the person needs from you?

6. What techniques will be useful for this interview?
OBSERVER FEEDBACK WORKSHEET

Please lead the discussion of the interview you observed.

1. Ask the person interviewed how they felt during the interview. Also ask them to comment on the skills used by the interviewer.
2. Ask the interviewer what they thought of the interview:
   a. Identify the engaging skills they used
   b. Comfort using the skills
   c. Skills they used the best
   d. Skills they want to work on

Observer Feedback

Strengths

List the skills you observed demonstrated in the interview. Be sure to be behaviorally specific and identify skills with the terms of this training.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Considerations for Improvements

List one or two behaviorally specific suggestions for improvement

__________________________________________________________________
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## Skill Assessment

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<td>What I need to work on:</td>
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<td>What I need to work on:</td>
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RICHARDS’ FAMILY PROFILE

Bonnie Richards is a thirty-four year old mother of five children. Her children are Terry 11, Larry 9, Jerry 7, Carrie 4 and Sherry 2. She and her children were evicted from their home about a month ago because Bonnie’s husband, John Richards, had spent the rent money on other things. Bonnie had asked John to leave the month before she was evicted. John has a long history of physically abusing Bonnie. When he left Bonnie, John moved in with a female friend.

Two weeks ago, Bonnie left her children with her cousin, Shirley Peters. She told her cousin that she needed help for the weekend and would be back to get the children Sunday afternoon. Ms. Peters has a seven-year-old child and lives in a two-bedroom apartment with her husband. When Bonnie did not return on Monday, Ms. Peters called DCFS.

DCFS also received a separate complaint about the youngest two children the same day. The day care center called to report concerns about neglect regarding Carrie and Sherry. They said Sherry had a severe diaper rash. They said neither Carrie nor Sherry appeared to have been bathed in the previous week. They repeatedly wore dirty clothes. Both came to the day care center hungry each day. A day care staff member, Carol Jones, had tried to talk to Ms. Richards about her concerns but said Bonnie just burst into tears.

Ms. Richards’ parents may be willing to help her. However, they live in a small trailer and do not have room for five children and their daughter. Ms. Richards is also reluctant to ask her parents for help because she believes they will shame her and make her feel guilty. Bonnie belongs to an evangelistic church and her pastor thinks she should reconcile with her husband.

Bonnie works at Wal-Mart and is making $7.00 per hour. She often has to work weekends. John had watched the children on weekends. John has been working temp jobs and gives Bonnie financial help for the children irregularly.

Bonnie has a good friend, Jan Milson, with whom she and the children had been living after she was evicted. Jan has been laid off from her job and is looking for work. Jan has a one-bedroom apartment. Jan wants to help Bonnie but she does not have room for the children. Jan is also afraid of John Richards and had taken Bonnie in once before after John had beaten Bonnie.

Bonnie has been very depressed since she was evicted. She has missed several days of work and is concerned about losing her job.

Jan is concerned for the children and Bonnie and has made a report to your office. You have located Bonnie and have scheduled to meet with her to find out what is going on.
STEVENS’ FAMILY PROFILE

Nancy Stevens, age 23, is the mother of three boys: Mike 4, Shane 2 and Jeremy, 7 months. Ms. Stevens has been seriously depressed since her pregnancy with Jeremy. Shortly after Jeremy was born, the children’s father left Ms. Stevens and the children. Ms. Stevens recently lost her job for lack of attendance at work. She finds it almost impossible to concentrate on even small tasks.

Nancy’s mother, Betty Boyd, comes and takes the two older children frequently. Mrs. Boyd has talked to Ms. Stevens about the condition of the house. She asked Nancy to change the baby’s diapers more often. Ms. Stevens believes her mother feels she cannot do anything right. Ms. Boyd is beginning to believe that too. When Ms. Stevens took Jeremy for his six-month check-up, the doctor expressed concern about Jeremy’s slow weight gain. Nancy’s mother raised three children alone. Nancy never wanted to be in that position. Now she is. Nancy finds she cries herself to sleep many nights. On nights that she cannot sleep, she gets up and drinks cold vodka.

The doctor asked Ms. Stevens to bring Jeremy back in two weeks. When she went, Jeremy had not gained any weight. The nurse asked Ms. Stevens if she had picked up the special formula that had been recommended. When Ms. Stevens told the nurse that she had not, the nurse seemed disgusted. Jeremy’s paternal grandmother, Sue Wilson, drove Ms. Stevens to the doctor’s office. On the way home she told Nancy “get your act together, or the welfare people will be coming for your kids.” Ms. Stevens does not want to lose her children. Right now she does not feel that she can control anything in her life.

The day after the latest visit to the doctor’s office, Mrs. Wilson, Jeremy’s grandmother, came to visit Ms. Stevens. The house was a mess; toys and clothes were everywhere. The dishes were piled high in the sink and the trash was everywhere. Shane walks in carrying a sharp top from a can and announces that he is hungry. Mike goes to take the can top from Shane and Shane cuts his hand. Mrs. Wilson goes to help Shane. Ms. Stevens has nothing for a bandage, nor does she have any medicine to put on the cut.

The public health nurse has called to make a complaint, as has Mrs. Wilson. You had a conversation with your supervisors who told you to make contact with Ms Steven and assess the safety of the children as well as Ms Stevens.
HANEY FAMILY PROFILE

Tom Haney, age 29, is the father of four children. He has a daughter Sara, who is 8; a daughter Ashley, age 6; a son Zack, age 4 and a son Travis, age 2. The Haney children came into care when their mother, Melissa Haney, went to jail for selling drugs. Tom and Melissa were separated at the time Melissa was arrested. Tom was on probation for burglary. He said that he had stolen things to support Melissa’s drug habit. He said that he loved Melissa; but he wasn’t going to get into that kind of trouble again. Melissa had been arrested on drug charges before. She is currently sentenced to 15 years in jail. The Haney children have been in foster care for 14 months.

Tom Haney has done a lot to turn his life around in the past year. He has a job in a local plastics factory and has received several increases in responsibility and pay. He has kept a regular visiting schedule with his children. The foster parents who have his four children have become part of his extended family. He has worked hard to progressively provide more care for his children. He has increased his visitation from visits at the office, to taking the children for the entire day, to caring for them full time on weekends. The plan was that he would have his children returned in the next month or two.

About six months ago, Tom began seeing someone that he had known in high school, Cathy Ellis. Cathy is recently divorced and has two children. When he first started seeing Cathy, she and her children and Tom and his children did a lot of things together. Now Tom is planning to get a divorce and he and Cathy are planning to get married. Two months ago, Tom moved in with Cathy. Once they moved in together, problems started with the visits with Tom’s children. Cathy’s house has three bedrooms. Cathy has two children Cody, age 4 and Casey, age 2. They have tried putting the two girls in one bedroom and four boys in the other room; however Zack picks on the other kids. He starts fights. He bits and hits. He has started wetting the bed both on visits and at the foster home. He refuses to take direction from Cathy and tells her, “You aren’t my mother”.

Tom does not know what to do about Zack’s behavior. Cathy is getting so frustrated that she wants to stop the visits, or at least not bring them to the house for overnight visits. Tom doesn’t want to lose the ground he has gained with the children. He is beginning to believe that moving in with Cathy was a mistake for the children. He loves Cathy and does not want to lose the progress he has made with his children. Tom’s children seem upset every time the visits end. Even though they want to come for visits, they don’t seem to enjoy themselves as much as they used to.

Tom is losing his patience. Last week when the kids were with him, Cody and Casey were in the bath together. Zack pushed Casey down in the tub. Casey got a big bump on his forehead. Tom whipped Zack with his belt. Zack told his foster mother what happened. Tom now has to go and talk to the caseworker about the incident with Zack. He is feeling overwhelmed and defensive. Tom believes that the foster father is angry with him. This has made things difficult with Tom and Cathy. The foster mother told him that Zack’s behavior has become impossible. She also
told him that he is confused; he sits on his rocking horse saying “one mommy, two mommies, three mommies”. Tom does not know what is best for his and Cathy’s children. The foster mother, Mrs. Crithen, has been supportive of Tom, but now seems very upset. Tom’s own mother had a serious alcohol problem and was emotionally abusive to him. His mother died four years ago, shortly after he was arrested for the burglary. Both Mr. and Mrs. Crithen have treated Tom as though he were part of the family. Tom’s relationship with Mrs. Crithen is similar to one he has always dreamed he could have with a mother.