

INFORMATION PACKET

TOPIC 5: Connections and Healing

2014

(From the: Trauma Informed Caregiving for Resource Families Series)

CREDITS:

Material originally used in the ACRF Rural Teleconference Series “Trauma Informed Caregiving for Resource Families and taken from the Participant Handbook developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network Curriculum for Resource Families
http://nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/rpc/RPC_ParticipantHandbook_FINAL.pdf

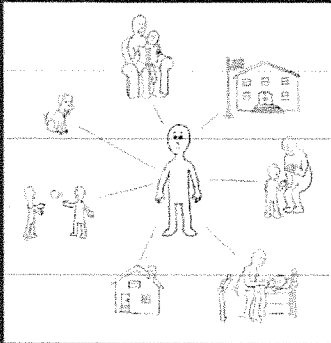


The following information packet contains several articles on the above topic. If you wish to receive training credit for reading this packet, please fill out the “Information Packet Questionnaire” at the back of this packet. Return the questionnaire to the Alaska Center for Resource Families for 1.0 hour of training credit. The articles are yours to keep for further reference.

Alaska Center for Resource Families
815 Second Ave Suite 101
Fairbanks, AK 99701
1-800-478-7307
479-7307 (Fairbanks/North Pole)

www.acrf.org

The Alaska Center for Resource Families, a project of Northwest Resource Associates, is under contract with the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services to provide training and information to foster parents statewide.



Module 6: Connections and Healing

Illustrations by Erich Ippen, Jr. Used with permission.

*When you feel connected to something,
that connection immediately gives you a
purpose for living.*

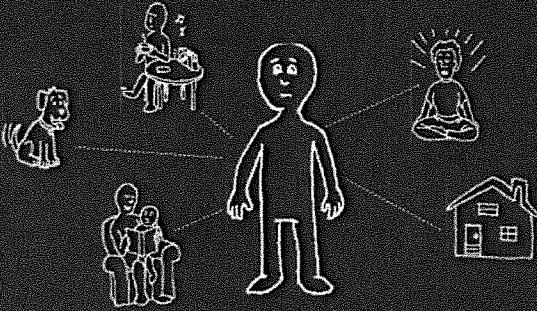
—Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD

What keeps you connected?



- Relationships
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Co-workers
- Life Stories – Past, Present, Future
 - Personal
 - Family
 - Cultural
- Places, things, rituals, and practices

Name Your Connections . . . (Group Activity)



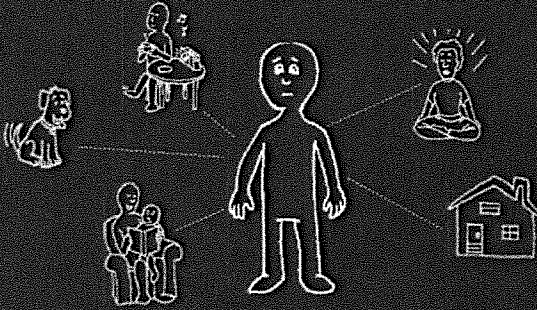
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Name Your Connections . . . (Continued)



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Children Define Themselves Through Their Connections



- Who am I?
- What is lovable about me?
- What am I capable of?
- How can I survive and make sense out of what's happened to me?
- Who will I be in the future?

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A Family Tale *(Continued)*



- Jane's father was an alcoholic who was sometimes violent
- Children often saw Jane passed out on the floor
- Once when Jane was passed out and bleeding from a head injury, Sandy feared she was dead
- Children witnessed violent fights between their parents
- Their father left two years ago without saying good-bye

(Continued)

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A Family Tale *(Continued)*



- Jane has had periods of sobriety and many relapses.
- Sober for the last five weeks, Jane called the children every Thursday night and visited them every Sunday.
- On each visit, Jane told the children, "We will all be together again soon."

(Continued)

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A Family Tale *(Continued)*



- Joey misses and worries about his mother. Is nervous and clingy just before her calls. Asks when he is going to see "my Sandy" over and over again.
- Sandy remembers having fun with her mother when she wasn't "loaded." Has nightmares about her mother passed out on the floor. Angry at her father for leaving and wonders if he is dead.
- John was close to his father. Blames his mother for the split. Doesn't trust women. Feels "old enough" to be on his own.

(Continued)

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A Family Tale *(Continued)* (Group Activity)



On Thursday, Jane didn't call.

- What might each of the family members feel and think?
- How might they behave?
- How might their past trauma and Invisible Suitcases influence their reactions?

(Continued)

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A Family Tale *(Continued)*



- Joey: worried, clingy, focused on how he would give Jane a present on Sunday
- Sandy: upset and angry, argued with Rana about going to the Sunday visit
- John: withdrawn, said he didn't care about Jane
- Thelma: worried, angry, ashamed; remembered her husband's drunken nights
- Rana: worried but judgmental

(Continued)

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A Family Tale *(Continued)*



- On Sunday, Jane didn't show up for the visit.
- Joey threw a tantrum, insisting his mother would come.
- Sandy became upset and angry, tried to protect Joey, and lashed out at Thelma and Rana.
- John acted withdrawn and disinterested, but lashed out at Rana and Sandy in the car on the way home.

(Continued)

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What can be done? (Group Activity)



- How can Rana and Thelma help the children cope with Jane's behavior and maintain healthy connections?
- How can they help themselves?

What about Jane? (Group Activity)



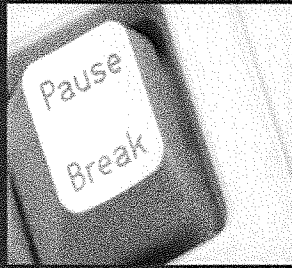
Trauma is intergenerational

- Grew up with an alcoholic and sometimes violent father
- History of abusive relationships
- Repeatedly tried to quit drugs and alcohol
- Loves her children even as she seems to "fail" them

Lessons from Joey, Sandy, and John (Group Activity)



- Every child in a family has a unique relationship with his or her parents and siblings.
- Even children with the same trauma history will understand those events differently. They may have different trauma reminders and react differently to them.
- Caregivers must take care not to burden children with their own strong and complicated feelings toward birth parents.



Let's take a break!



*It takes two to speak the truth.
One to speak, and another to hear.*

—Walt Whitman

Making It Safe to Talk



- Makes the "unmentionable" mentionable
- Reinforces the message that the child is not responsible for the trauma
- Provides an opportunity to correct mistaken beliefs
- Teaches children that trauma does not have to define their lives

Harry: *I just feel so angry all the time. . . . What if after everything I've been through, something's gone wrong inside me? What if I'm becoming bad?*

Sirius: *I want you to listen to me very carefully, Harry. You're not a bad person. You're a very good person who bad things have happened to.*

From *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Warner Brothers, 2007)

Talking About Trauma



- Expect the unexpected.
- Be aware of your reactions.
- Don't make assumptions.
- Be ready to listen and talk openly with your child, rather than avoiding the topic.

(Continued)

Talking About Trauma (Continued)



- Stop what you are doing and make eye contact.
- Listen quietly.
- Provide simple, encouraging remarks in a calm tone of voice.
- Avoid "shutting down" the child.

(Continued)

Talking About Trauma *(Continued)* (Group Activity)



- Offer comfort without being unrealistic.
- Praise the child's efforts to tell what happened.
- Provide constructive feedback.
 - Focus on the *behavior* of the caregiver, rather than making judgments.
- Be ready to share information with the child's therapist, and to report abuse or neglect that has not yet been reported.

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Building New Connections



Build connections across the disruptions in your child's life:

- Document positive events and experiences (photos, scrapbooks, journals, etc.).
- Help "reconstruct" past experiences.
- Encourage your child to look forward to future goals and dreams.

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Helping Your Child (Group Activity)



Think about the child in your My Child Worksheet. How can you help this child. . . :

- Feel safe when talking about trauma?
- Build connections across disruptions?
- Look positively towards the future?

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Module 8: Taking Care of Yourself

Additional Resources

Online Resources

Family Education Network

<http://school.familyeducation.com/learning-disabilities/treatments/37812.html>

Information page on relaxation techniques for children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

First Home Care: Foster Parent Resource Center

<http://firsthomecareweb.com/fosterparents/resources/parents.php>

Fact sheets on foster parent burnout and on relaxation techniques

Relax-Online

<http://www.relax-online.com/imageryonline.htm>

Features a free, daily “meditative moment” audio clip

University of Maryland Medical Center Sleep Disorders Center

http://www.umm.edu/sleep/relax_tech.html

Resource page on relaxation techniques

University of Michigan Health System

http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/aha/aha_breathex_sha.htm

Information page on breathing exercises

Books

Carlson, B., Healy M., & Wellman, G. (1998). *Taking care of me: So I can take care of my children*. Seattle: WA: Parenting Press.

Davis, M., Eshelman, E. R., & McKay, M. (2008). *The relaxation & stress reduction workbook (6th ed)*. Oakland, CA: Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Audio CDs

Cox, B. (2005). *Guided imagery and relaxation techniques for parents*. San Diego, CA: Barbara Cox, PhD.

Innovative program of guided imagery and relaxation techniques for parents (aimed at parents of infants to age 10 approximately). It uses the power of your imagination to change self-limiting beliefs and to help you become a more effective and relaxed parent. The background music of rich and soothing tones was created to assist you in achieving a relaxed and healing state of mind.

INFORMATION PACKET QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC 5: Connections and Healing

1.0 Hour

NAME: _____ **PHONE NO.:** _____

Only one person per questionnaire. Feel free to make additional copies if needed.

ADDRESS: _____
Street or Post Office *City/State* *Zip*

EMAIL: _____

YES! I would like to receive ACRF email. *(Includes Training Tracks Newsletter, training reminders and community events or training of interest for Resource Families)*

Are you a foster parent? YES NO If YES, what is your Foster Home License #: _____

If NO, please check one: Pending Foster Parent OCS Birth Parent Adoptive Parent

Residential Treatment Facility (License #: _____) Agency: _____

Other *(please specify)*: _____

Please read the information packet. Then fill out this questionnaire and RETURN TO: ACRF, 815 Second Avenue Suite 101, Fairbanks, AK 99701. Or fax it to: 907-479-9666, you will be credited with 1.0 hour for completion of this worksheet.

1. This packet presents concepts and ideas that may be useful to your foster parenting experience. Please list two (2) specific ideas or concepts which you learned or reaffirmed from reading this packet. Write a short sentence or two describing how you can use them in your family.

a)

b)

INFORMATION PACKET QUESTIONNAIRE

2. List each title in this packet. In a few sentences for each article, summarize the main purpose or key points for each article in this packet.