

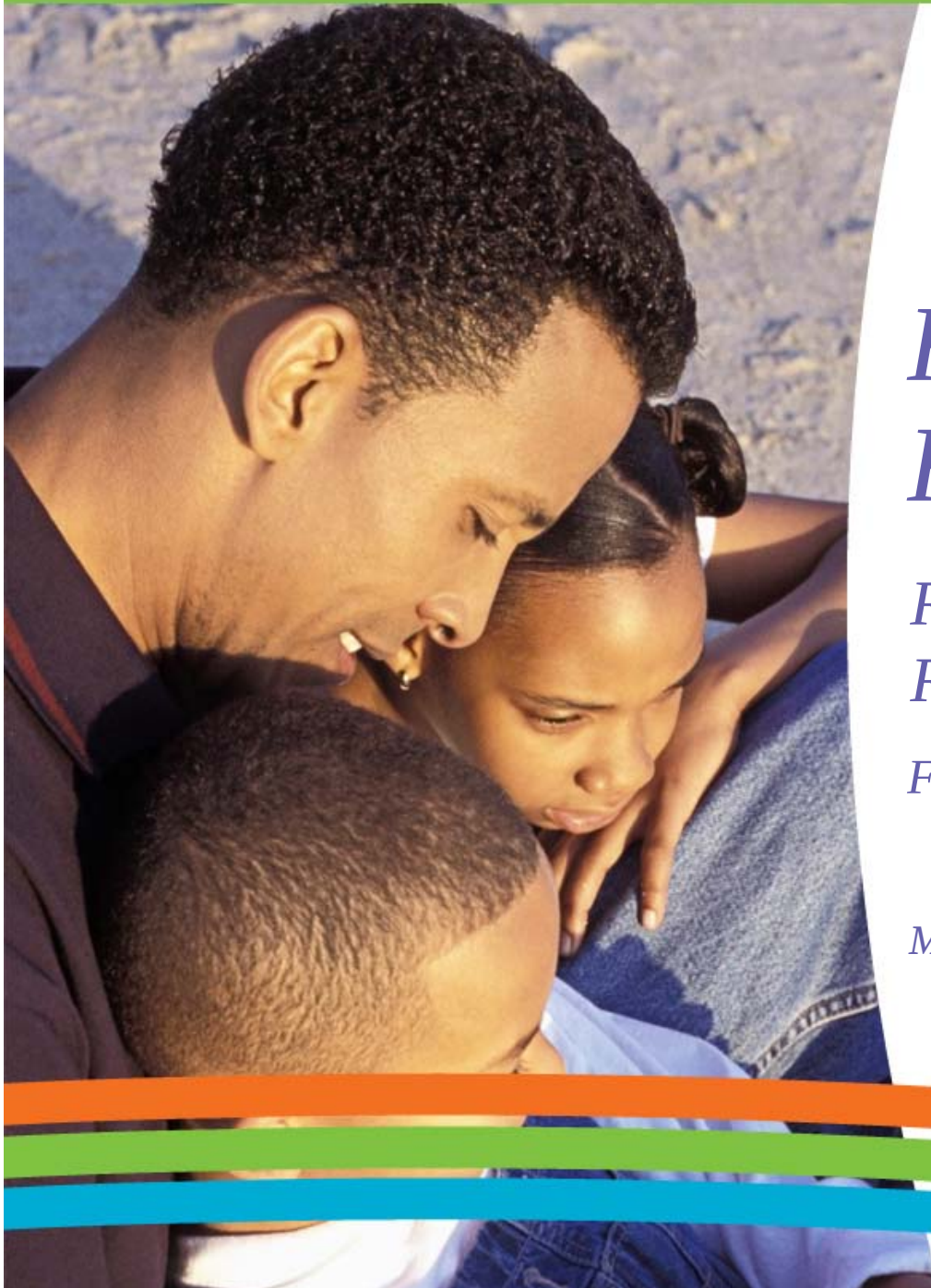


FOCUS on Foster Families

Reducing Stress and Building Resilience for Providers

Friday, February 23rd, 2018

Mary Fortson-Harwell, PhD, LCSW





Trainer Introductions



- Mary Fortson-Harwell, PhD, LCSW
- 

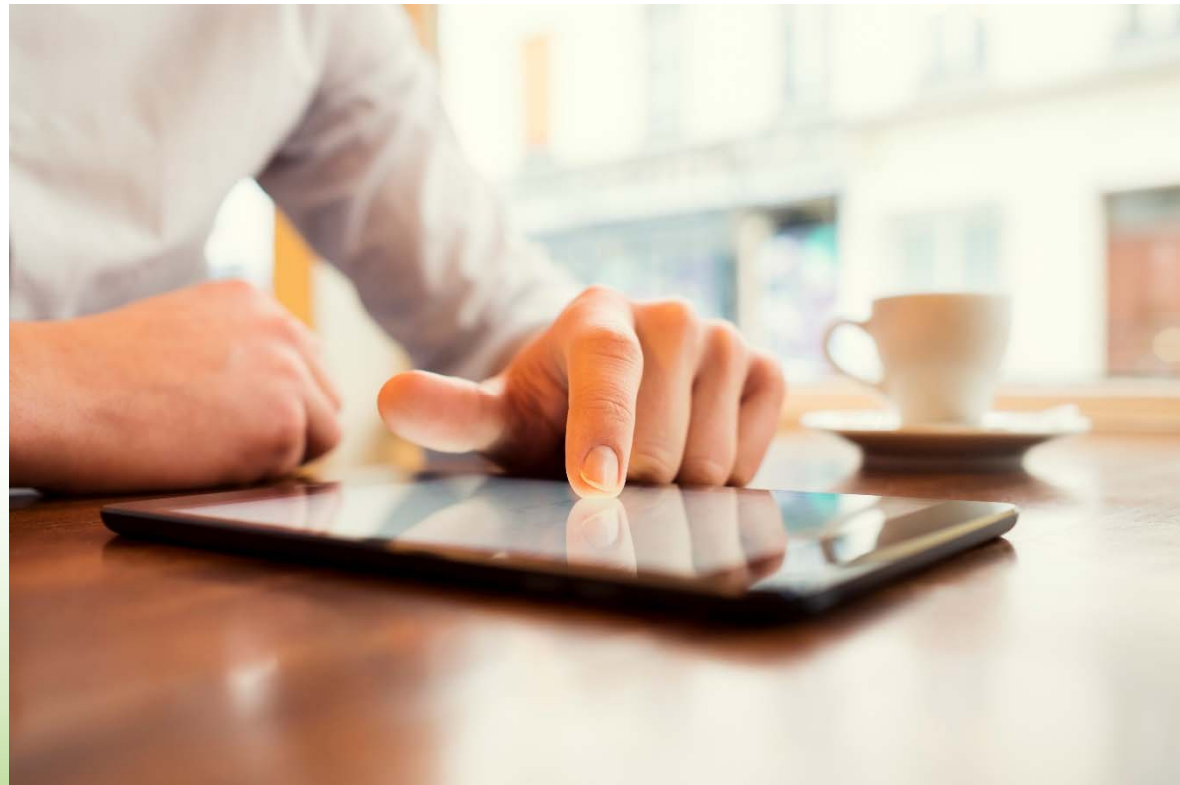


Neighbor Introductions

- Name
 - Role
 - Experience working with Foster Families
 - One thing you're hoping to get out of this training
 - One thing you do to practice self-care
- 

Housekeeping

- Restrooms
- Cell Phones
- Parking Lot



Today's Agenda

- Background
- Exploring the Value of Narrative Reflection
- Mechanisms of Risk and Resilience
- Providing Trauma-Informed Care
- Common Behavioral Challenges in Child Welfare
- Emotional Regulation
- Self-Care Strategies

Training Goals & Methods

- **Training Objectives:**

- Identify themes within personal and family narrative construction and adaptive meaning making.
- Discuss factors affecting parents' ability to help children develop the skill of adaptive meaning making, especially when faced with challenging and/or traumatic events.
- List common behavioral challenges in child welfare and apply a trauma and resiliency lens in discussing how to respond to these challenges.
- Describe developmental reactions to stress and trauma and methods to support children and families.
- Explain the window of tolerance and stress responses and identify emotional regulation tools.
- Apply the ABCs of self-care to further develop adaptive self-care strategies.

- **Training Methods:** Discussion, activities, lecture, and videos

UCLA Division of Population Behavioral Health Core Activities



*UCLA Behavioral Health Checkup Assessment
Platform and Data Management Services*



*Behavioral Health Integration Implementation and
Evaluation/Innovative Technology Consultation*



Behavioral Health Training Institute



*Behavioral Health Integration Consultation
Package*

UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center Services and Programs

Education and Support Services

- Training Institute
- Family Resource Center
- TIES for Families
- Stress, Trauma and Resilience (STAR) Clinic

Family Prevention Programs

- Family Development Project
- FOCUS for Families
- FOCUS for Couples
- FOCUS for Parents
- FOCUS Skill Building Groups
- SEEDS
- STRIVE

Military Family Initiatives

- Veteran Family Wellness Center
- Operation Mend
- Project FOCUS
- Star Behavioral Health Program
- Welcome Back Veterans Center

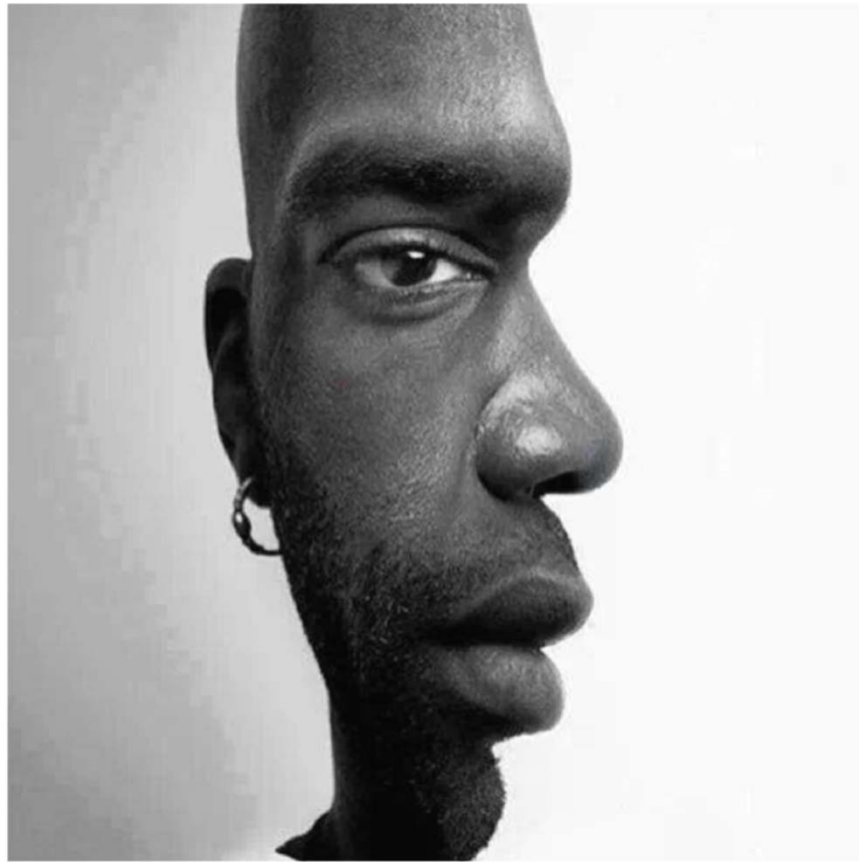


Activity

Exploring the Value of Narratives



Which way is the man facing?



Circular movement (or not)?

youtube.com/brusspup

Memory



Experiment:

Remember as many of the below words as you can.

sour-candy-sugar-bitter-good-taste-tooth-knife-
honey-photo-chocolate-heart-cake-tart-pie



Memory

Was this word on the list?

sugar.....	yes
bitter.....	yes
car.....	no
sweet.....	no

So, what's the point?

- Our perceptions don't always equal reality
- We remember what we attend to
- Our brain is a pattern recognition machine



Perspective Taking: Hero vs. Coward



The Stories We Tell

“Everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.”

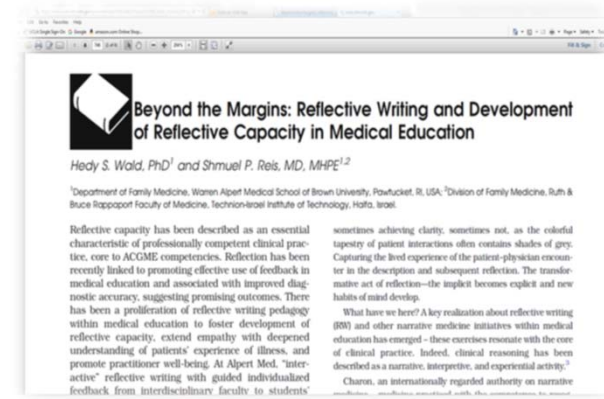
– Patrick Rothfuss, author



Reflection & Narratives

Reflection is the process by which personal experience is analyzed to inform practice and create expertise

Extensive research has revealed that when people put their emotional challenges into words, physical and mental health markedly improves



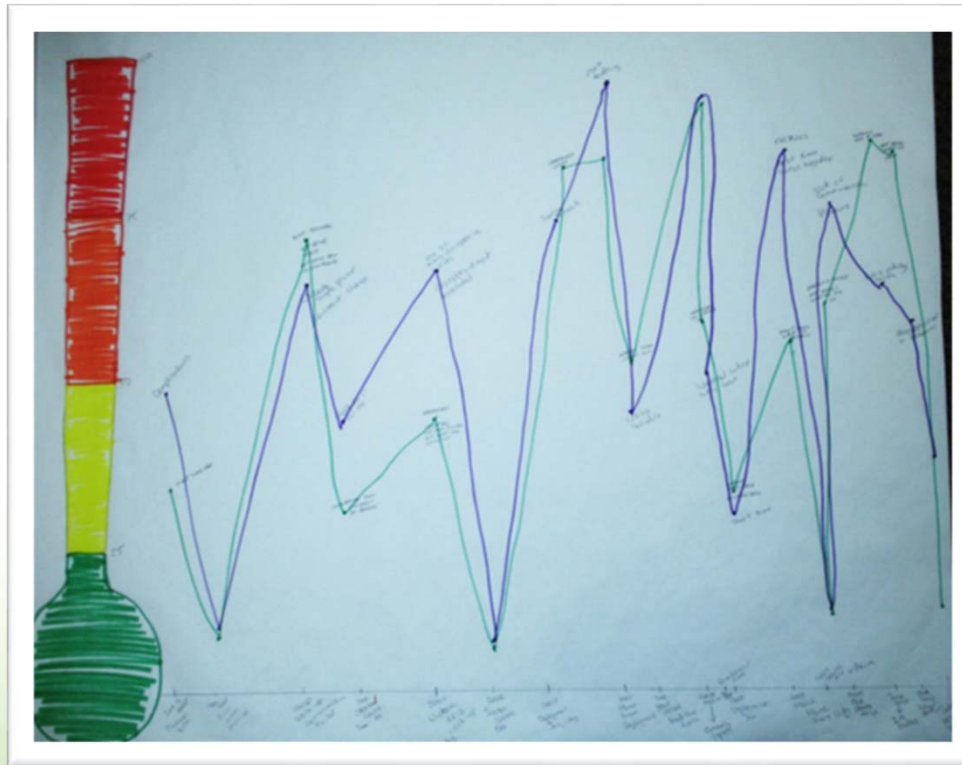
How are narratives formed?

- Narratives are formed to create meaning and signification rather than preserving facts
- Formed in relationship with others and one's environment
- May be influenced by individual, family, community, cultural and spiritual meanings
- Links past to present and possible futures

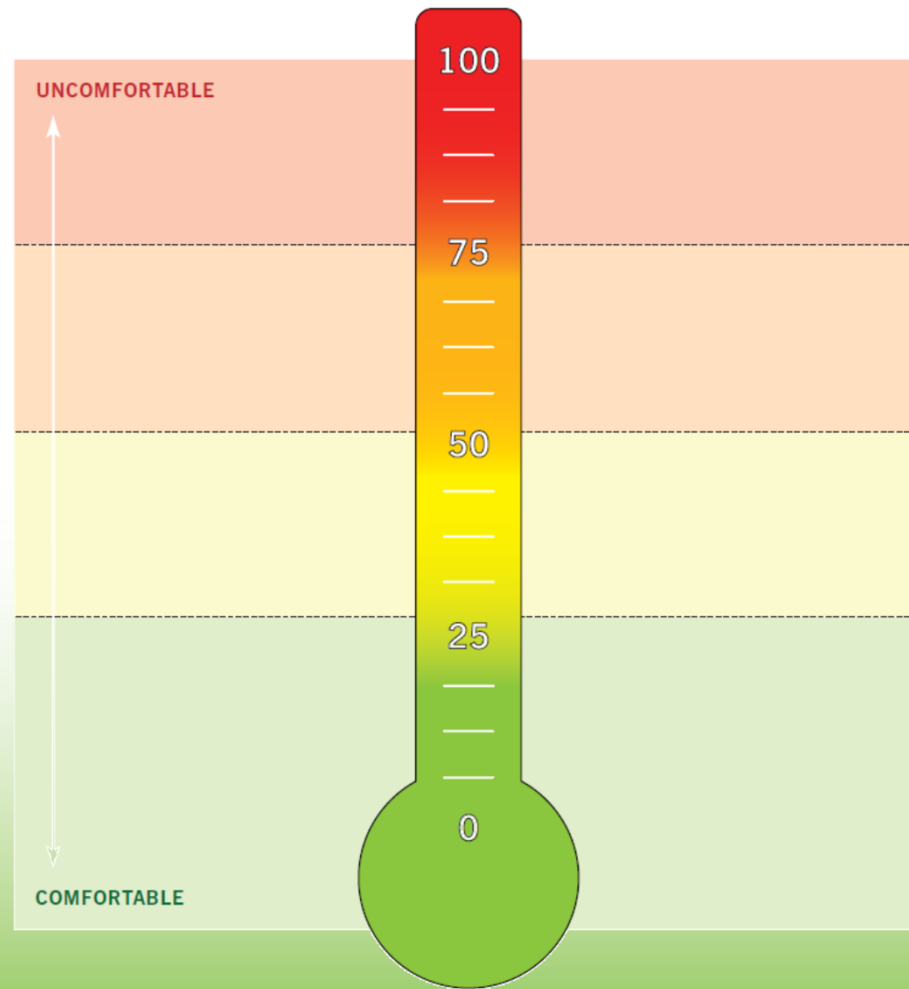
Narrative Identity

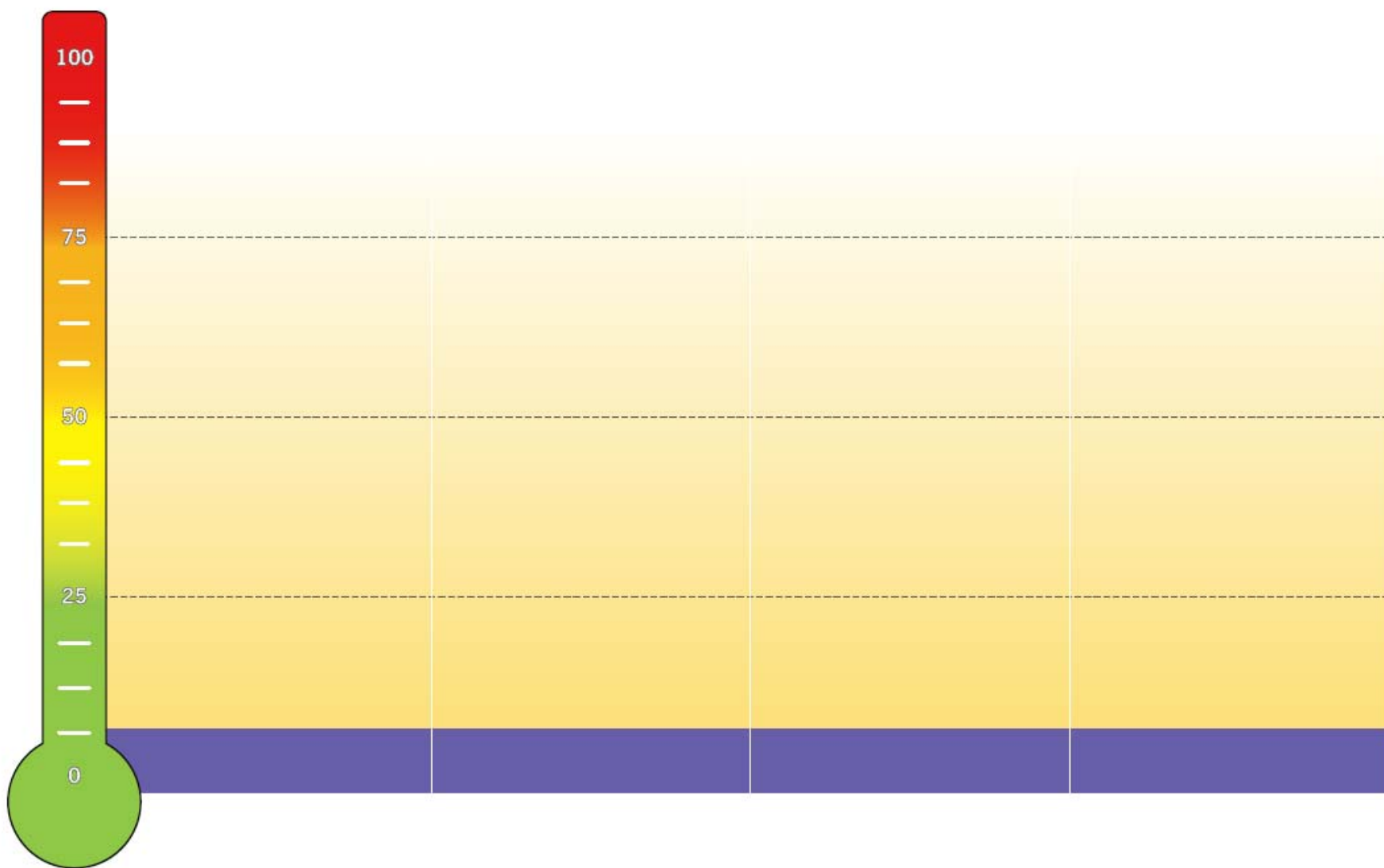
- Narrative identity is the construction of an evolving and integrative story of one's life that influences beliefs about the future
- Constructed from autobiographical memory
- “Through narrative identity, people convey to themselves and to others who they are now, how they came to be, and where they think their lives may be going in the future.” (McAdams and McLean, 2013)

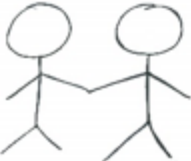
Activity: Create Your Own Narrative Timeline



The Feeling Thermometer





Getting into graduate school 	Grateful family good client/patient outcome 	Clinical error OOPS!	First day of graduate school 	Moving 	Failing a class or important test F
Passing board exams 	Getting engaged 	Very difficult client/patient situation 	Graduation 	New baby 	Your own illness/injury 
First day as a resident or intern 	Trip/Vacation 	New pet 	Love 	Award/Achievment 	Death of a client or patient 
Indecision/Confusion 	Breakup 	Getting married 	Death of friend or family 	Money won/received \$	Money lost 
Met important mentor or friend 	Conflict with colleague/supervisor 	New work project 	Studying for exam 	Looking for housing 	Mentoring another 

Discussion

1. How was that activity for you?
2. Why is reflection so important, even though it can be so uncomfortable?



Meaning Making and Helpful Beliefs

- Making meaning out of trauma and loss...
 - Normalizes and contextualizes distress
 - Allows for the gaining of a sense of coherence as challenges are shared: comprehensible, manageable, meaningful
- Positive Outlook
 - Hope and encouragement
 - Strength affirming
 - Build on potential and master the possible
 - Accept what can't be changed

(Walsh, 2007)

Meaning Making and Helpful Beliefs

- Transcendence and Spirituality
 - Faith
 - Rituals (e.g. prayer, meditation, ceremony)
 - Sense of purpose and meaningful bonds to others
 - Learning, growth, transformation
 - Appreciation
 - Activism and helping others



(Walsh, 2007)

Narrative Co-Construction: Telling Stories Together

- Parents help children learn the process of assigning meaning to events and their own reactions
- Parents' ability to help children tell helpful stories relies on:
 - Their ability to regulate their own emotions
 - Use developmentally appropriate language
 - Track their child's reactions
 - Encourage two-way interaction (avoid lectures)



(Saltzman, 2013)



Break

Please be back at 10:45

What is Resilience?



Mechanisms of Risk and Resilience

Saltzman et al., 2011

Risk

- Incomplete understanding of the impact of the stressor condition (e.g., trauma, death, illness, injury) and inaccurate developmental expectations
- Impaired family communication
- Impaired parenting practices
- Impaired family organization
- Lack of guiding belief systems

Resilience

- Psychoeducation and developmental guidance
- Developing shared family narrative
- Supporting open and effective communication
- Supporting effective and coordinated parent leadership
- Enhancing selected family resiliency skills
- Creating strong connections to social supports

Risk

Resilience

Relevance of Family-Centered Prevention & Care

- Well-being of children and teens and their families are inextricably linked
- Family members can play a significant role in enhancing or impeding the recovery of youth affected by trauma or adversity
- Families represent an opportune point of entry for prevention and intervention efforts
- Families prefer family approaches over individual approaches for mental health care

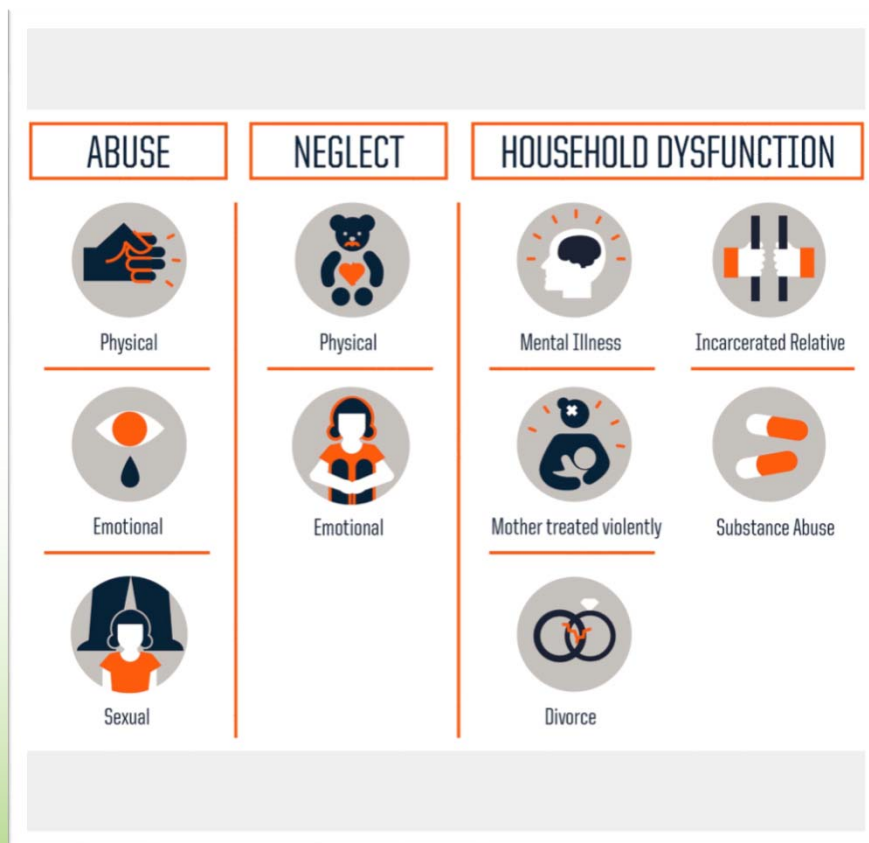


Background on Foster/Adoptive Youth

- 415,219 children in foster care in the United States on September 30, 2014
- Three years is the average length of time a child in foster care waits to be adopted
 - 55% of these children have had 3 or more placements
- In Los Angeles foster youth tend to be
 - African American (disproportionately represented)
 - Latino
 - Native American/American Indian (disproportionately represented)
 - A member of a sibling group
 - Higher risk for having special medical, emotional, or education needs

Effects of Trauma:

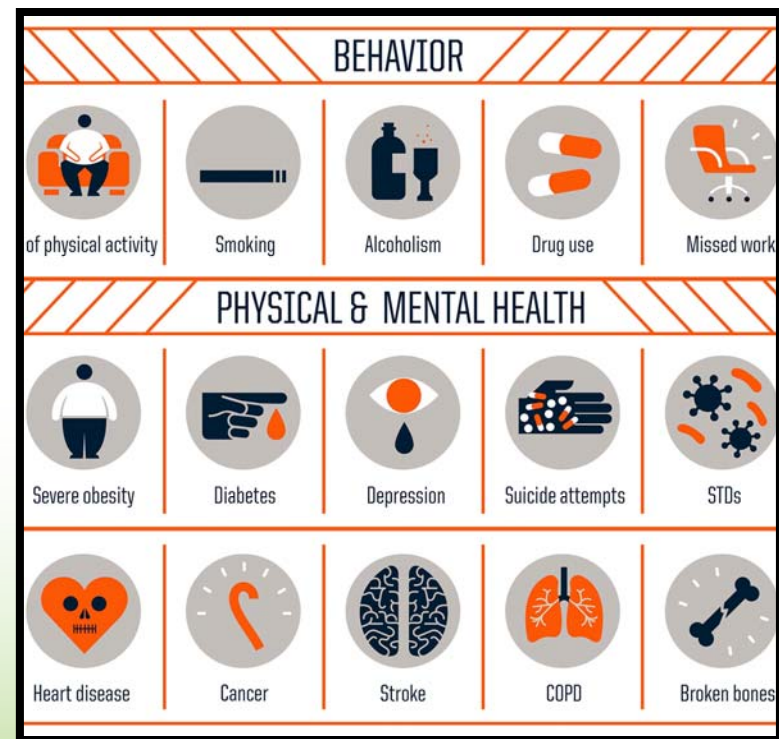
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study



- Original study conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995-1997
- ACEs categorized into 3 groups
 - Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Family/Household Challenges

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Almost 2/3 of the study population reported at least 1 ACE
- Studies show a dose-response between ACEs and poor health outcomes



As the number of adverse childhood events increases, so does the risk of:

- COPD
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Ischemic heart disease
- Myocardial infarction
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Disability
- Substance misuse
- Low income
- Health problems
- Low education
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- IPV and sexual violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- STDs/STIs
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Fetal death
- Poor academic achievement

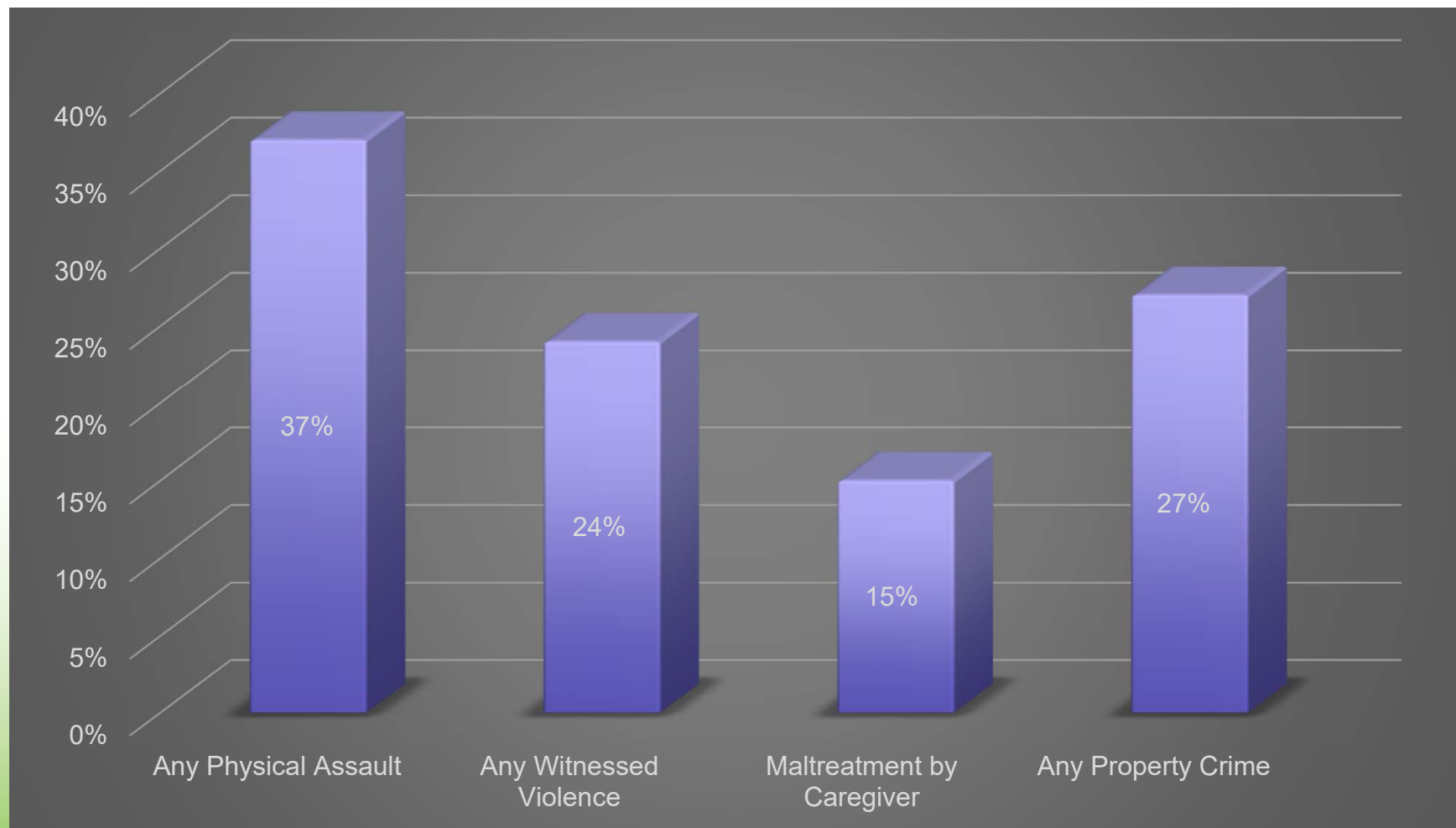
Effects of trauma exposure

Effects of trauma can lead to:

- PTSD
- Depression
- Problems coping with difficult situations
- Problems parenting
- Difficulties trusting others
- Problems functioning (finding employment, housing)



Prevalence in Youth: Violence Exposure in Past Year for US Children 0-17 years old (n=4000)



(Finkelhor, 2015)



Trauma Informed Care



- Treat every client as though they have experienced trauma...
chances are they have.



What is Trauma-Informed Care?

- Trauma-Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

(p. 82, Hopper et al., 2010)

What Makes Services Trauma Informed?

- Understand the prevalence of trauma and common consequences
- Individualized services
- Increasing a foster/adoptive child's sense of trust and safety
- Promoting emotional regulation
- Taking a strengths-based approach
- Shift from what's wrong with you to what happened to you



(Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2012)

Core Principles of Trauma Informed Care

- Trauma Awareness
- Safety
- Trust
- Collaboration
- Empowerment and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues
- Strengths-Based





Bottom Line



Understand concerning behaviors in the context of the child's previous history.

A shift in perspective from:

“What is wrong with this child?”

to

“What has this child been through?”



What is a Child Welfare (CW)- Competent Trauma Lens?

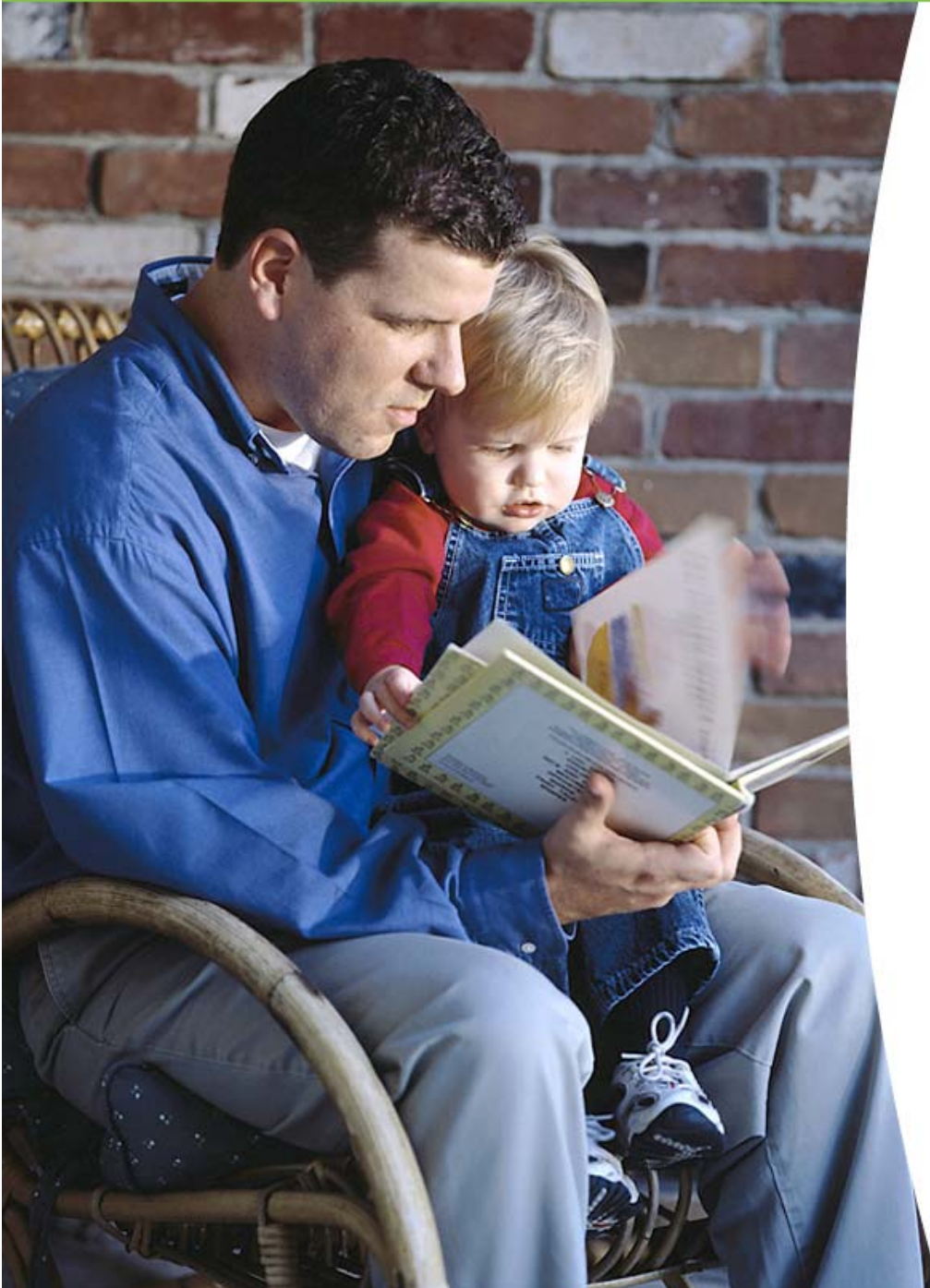
- A shift in perspective from:
“What is wrong with this child?”
to “What has this child been
through?”
- CW history
- Experience with
discrimination/marginalization
- Now...we have to use this lens
in our approach



What Does a Resiliency Lens for Foster Care Look Like?

- A shift from deficit to adaptive strength
- Focus on the wins
- Building connection while providing boundaries, structure, and security





Understanding Externalizing Behaviors in the Context of Foster Care

- Lying
- Stealing
- Hoarding
- Tantrums
- Running Away
- Fighting/Biting
- Bed Wetting/Encopresis

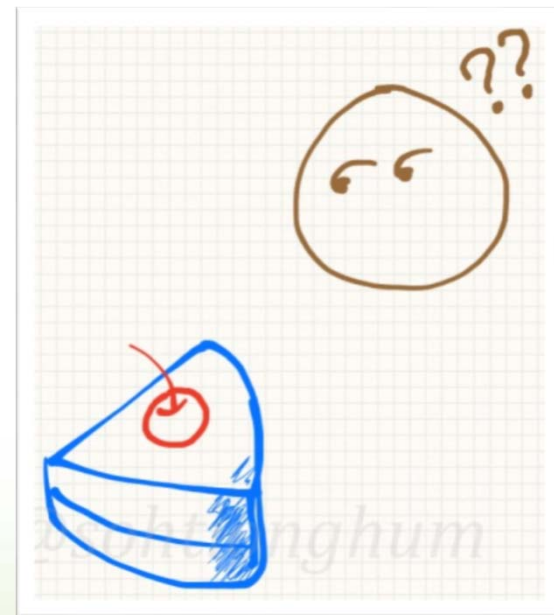
Behaviors occur within a context and are impacted by what a child has been through

- Attachment
- Neglect
- Control
- Testing boundaries
- Modeled behavior/patterns
- PTS Triggers
- Re-enacting
- Pulling for parental behavior that reinforces their beliefs



Stealing

- Meaning for caregiver?
- Context: Deprivation history
- Role/Adaptation: Survival (for needs and trades), creates predictability in an uncertain environment; self-reliance



Stealing

- Strategies:
 - Acknowledge the behavior in the context of the child's life story.
 - Provide a venue for the outlet that is acceptable (basket of "steal-ables")
 - If child steals from others outside the home, return and apologize
 - Eventually, as the context becomes secure, stealing behavior will decrease with a new solid history of needs being met.

Hoarding (food or otherwise)

- Meaning for caregiver?
- Context: Neglect, chaos, and unpredictability
- Role/Adaptation: Survival (theirs and potentially others), creates predictability in an uncertain environment; self-reliance
- Increases sense of control



Hoarding (food or otherwise)

- Strategies:
 - Acknowledge the behavior in the context of the child's life history
 - Have some food they like/look for out in the open and accessible at all times (fruit bowl, snack drawer, etc.)
 - Do not lock up food or restrict hours
 - Gradual dietary changes that don't lead to sense of restriction – do not personalize food dislikes – look at what they have been accustomed to and acknowledge
 - Include child in snack and meal planning, even cooking

Lying

- Meaning for caregiver?
- Context: Loss/attachment, curiosity, re-enactment
- Role/Adaptation:
Protection/survival, piecing a narrative together where information is missing, fantasy fulfillment



Lying

- **Strategies:**

- Acknowledge the behavior in the context of the child's life story
- Do not label as lying when it serves another purpose (e.g., child says they'll do their homework and then they don't)
- Do not corner child in a lie
- Children without a stable base of attachment do not trust in your unconditional love and feel safe enough that you won't reject them at a deep emotional level if they tell the truth
- Reinforce when children are honest and forthcoming
- Don't ask—"why did you lie about that?". Children often don't know or act impulsively and if cornered they will further confabulate
- Reflect confabulation as a wish—"You wish your mom had taken you to Disneyland. What a wonderful day."
- Eventually as the context and attachment becomes secure, children will feel more comfortable telling the truth

Running Away

- Meaning for caregiver?
- Context: survival-exit strategy; impulse to take off when overwhelmed/dysregulated; fear: not sure what comes next
- Role/Adaptation: protected them in escalating situations, survival coping strategy, a response always available to them, avoidance is immediately reinforcing; want to hide and know that they are WORTH ENOUGH to come after/find.



Running Away

- **Strategies:**

- Acknowledge the behavior in the context of the child's life story.
- Help child develop alternate self-regulation strategies (labelling feelings and using words to communicate needs, having a time out word/space, relaxation techniques, cognitive coping, problem solving)
- Recognize triggers and predict, diminish, and strategize
- Remind them of their worth—hold it for them even when they cannot



Supporting Caregivers in Setting the Tone

- Providers can work to help caregivers to:
 - Take a moment to reflect on their child's positive characteristics and strengths
 - Make a plan for how to support their strengths each week and record what they did, how the child reacted, and how they felt about it
 - Accept that each child's strengths may be different than their own or their own wishes/fantasies for the child
 - Understand concerning behaviors in the context of the child's previous history



Invisible Suitcase

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 3: Understanding Trauma's Effects

My child's "Invisible Suitcase"

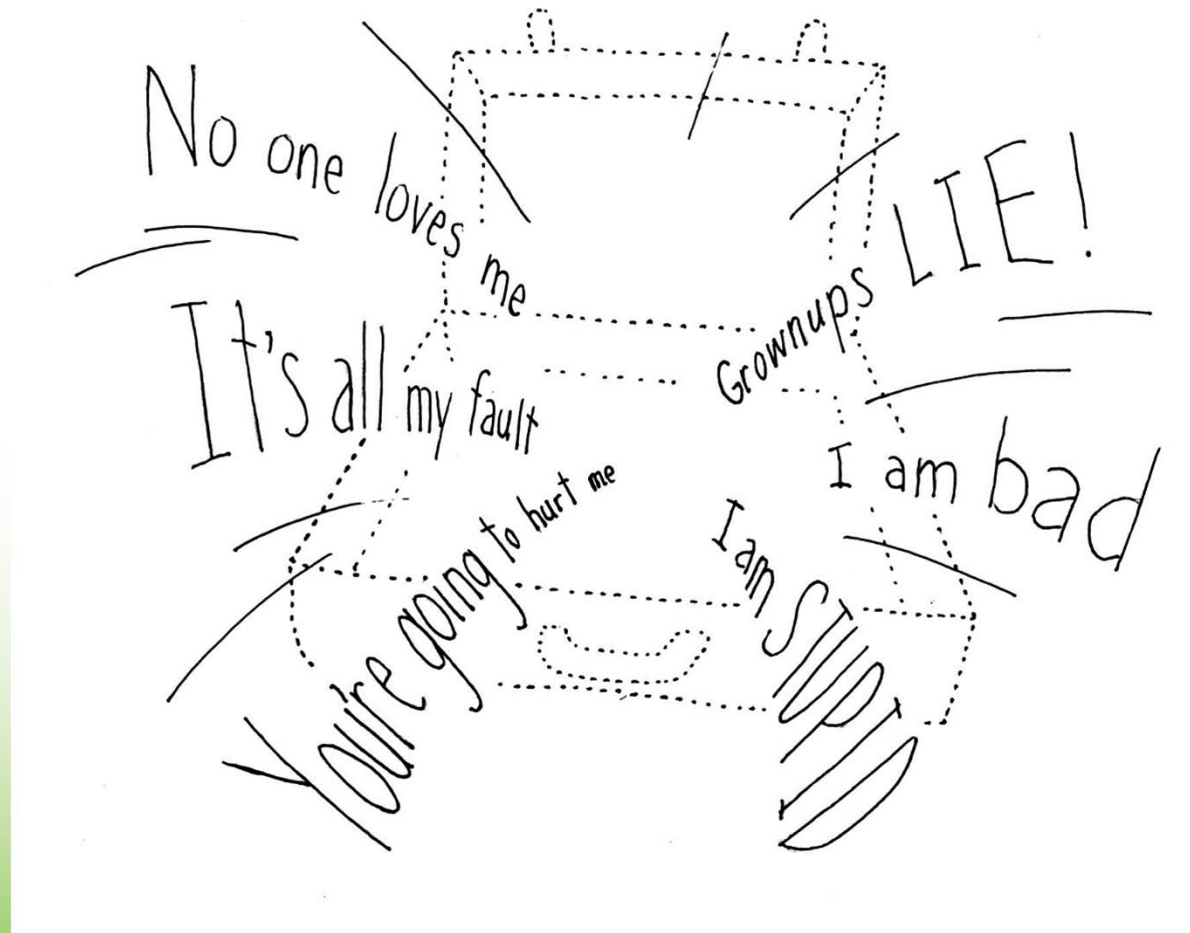
Beliefs about self

Beliefs about caregivers

Beliefs about the world

Repacking the Suitcase: things I can do to help my child feel safe, capable, and loved

The Invisible Suitcase



“Repacking” the Suitcase

- How can we “repack” this suitcase with positive experiences and beliefs?
- How can we promote resilience in this child by making him or her feel:
 - Safe?
 - Capable?
 - Lovable?



What Trauma-Informed Parenting Can Do

When we protect them from harm...

...children learn that the world is safe.

When we support, nurture, and respond to them...

...children learn that they are capable.

When we give them affection and love...

...children learn that they are loveable.





Lunch Break

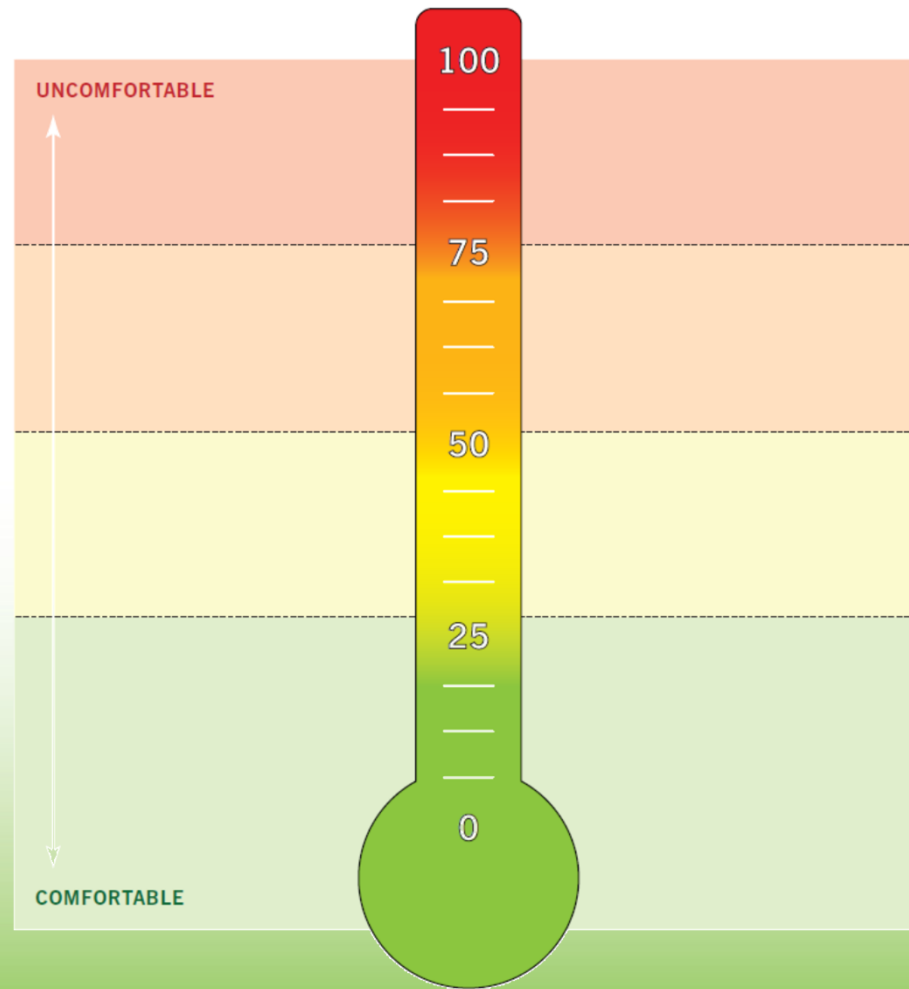


Welcome Back

Activity:

- Abdominal Breathing & Feeling Thermometer

The Feeling Thermometer



Introduction to Emotional Regulation



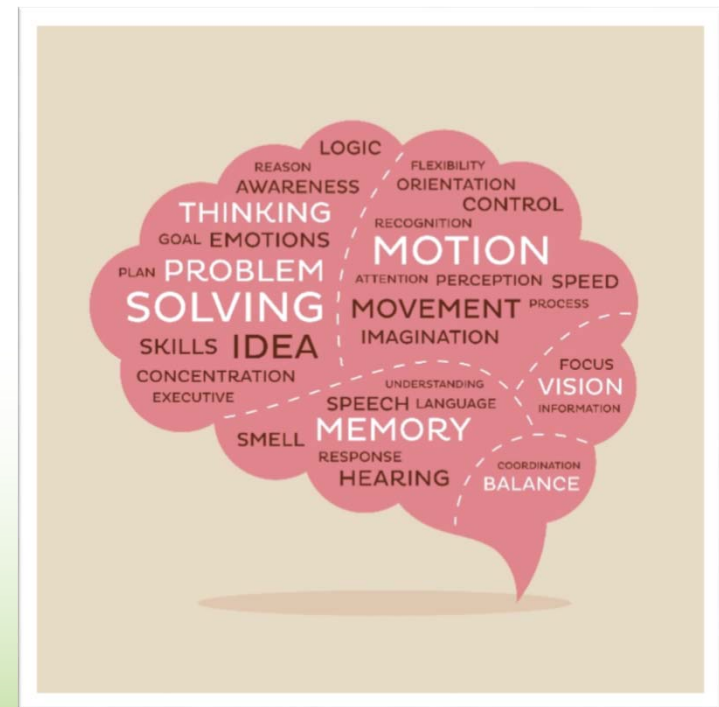
Emotional Regulation

- Emotional self-regulation is the ability to respond to ongoing demands with a range of emotions that are socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit *spontaneous* reactions as well as the ability to *delay* spontaneous reactions as needed.



Attention Control & Cognitive Reappraisal

- **Attention control** consists of selectively paying attention toward or away from certain stimuli (either internal or external) in order to change their emotional impact.
- **Cognitive reappraisal** is reframing a situation (thinking about a situation differently) in order to change its emotional impact.



Stress Responses

STRESS SYMPATHETIC

PUPILS EXPAND

FAST & SHALLOW
BREATHS

HEART PUMPS
FASTER

GUT INACTIVE

CALM PARASYMPATHETIC

PUPILS SHRINK

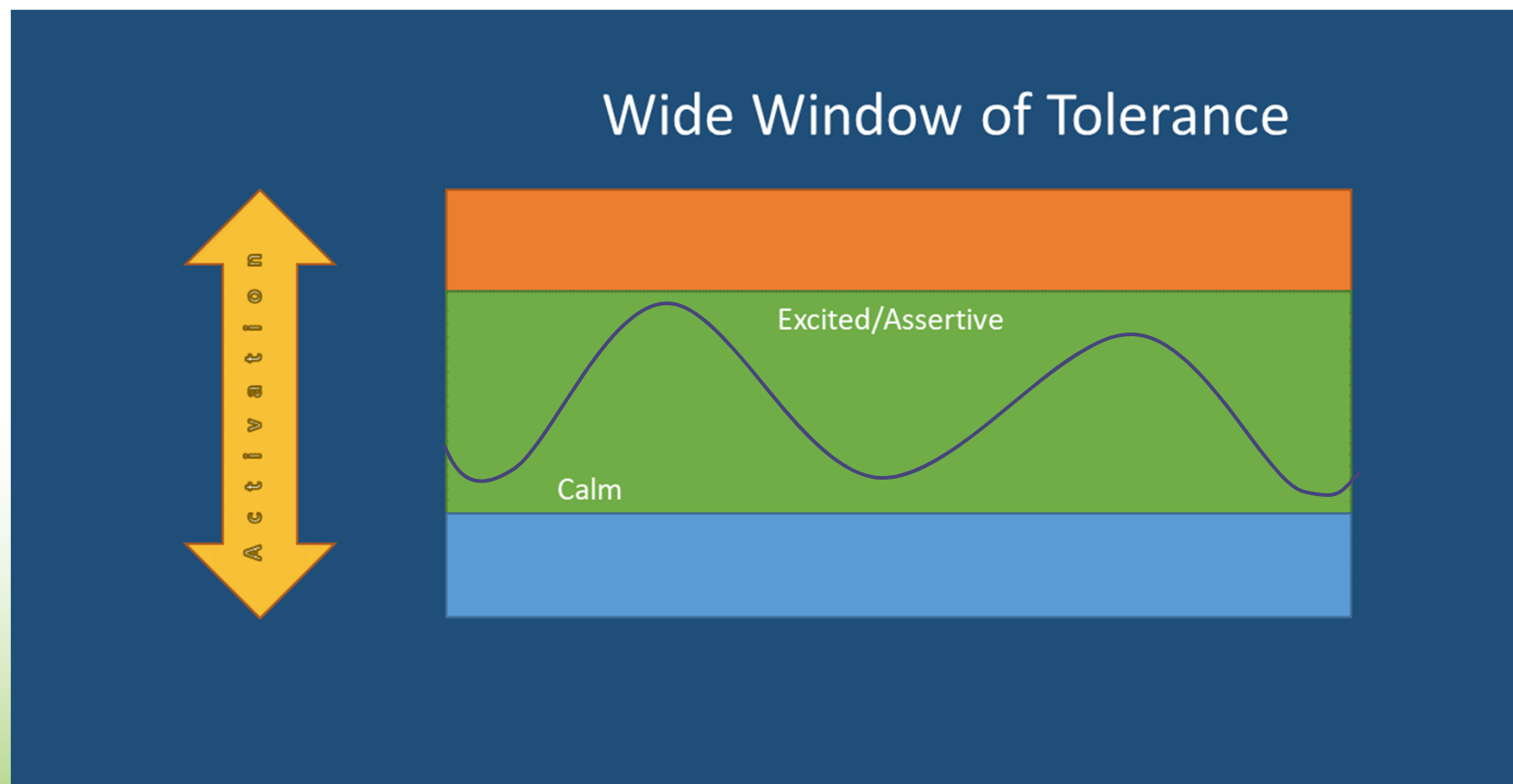
SLOW, DEEP
BREATHS

HEART SLOWS

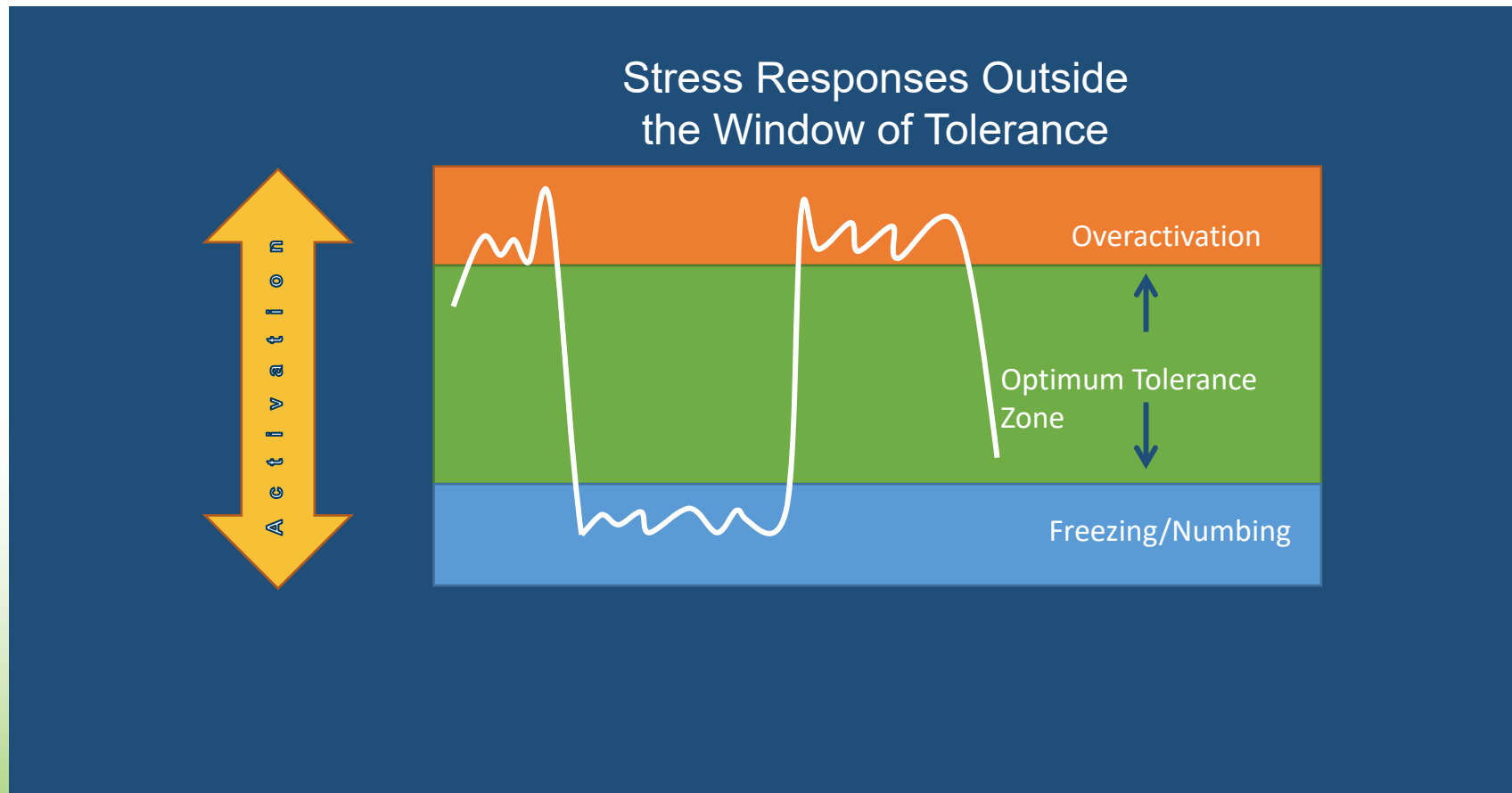
GUT ACTIVE



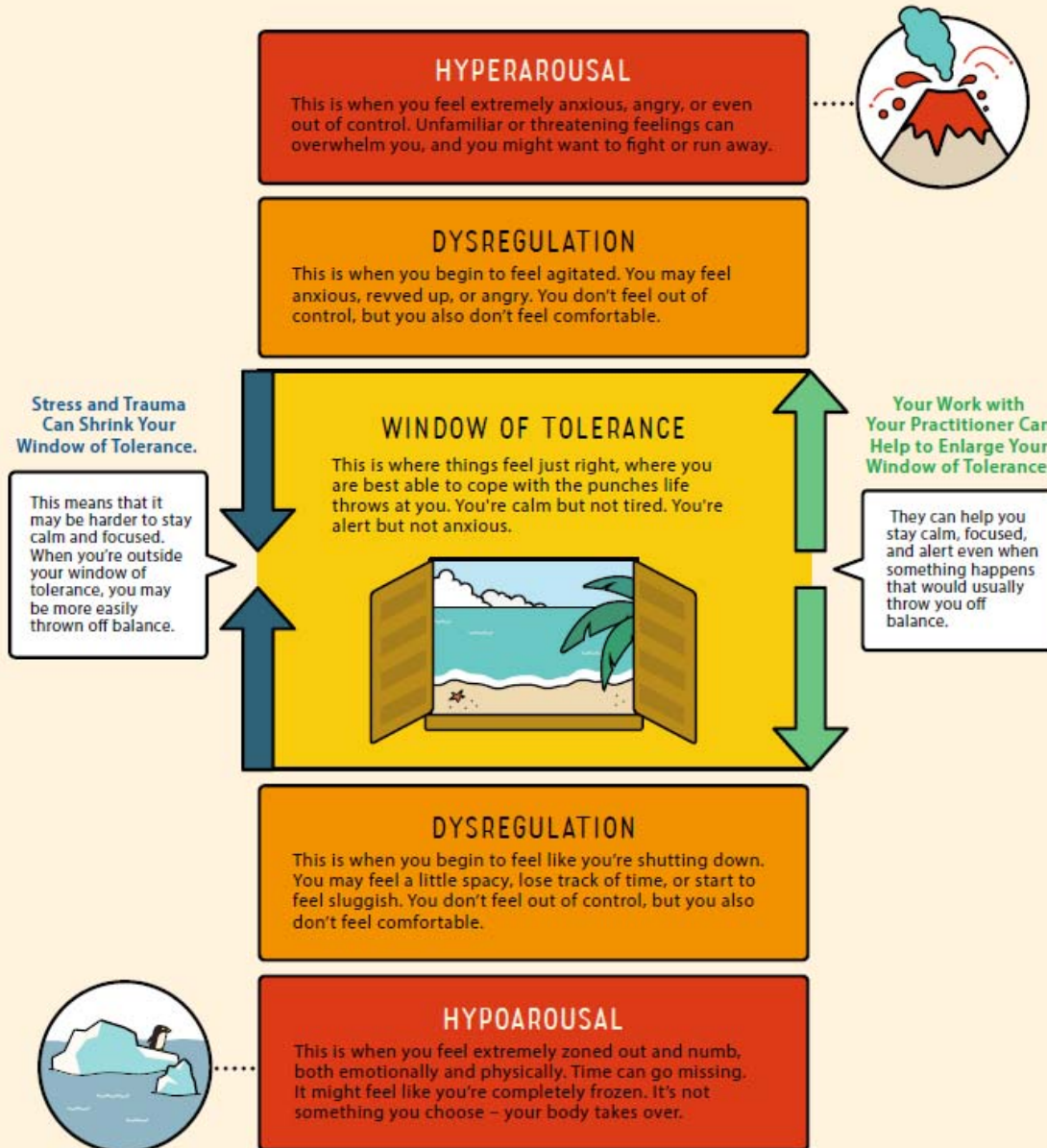
Stress Response



Stress Response



How Trauma Can Affect Your Window of Tolerance



Relaxation Response

- Dr. Herbert Benson, 1975
- Harvard Mind/Body Medical Institute
- Elicit deep state of relaxation
- Deactivate Fight-or-Flight stress response
- Key Elements:
 - Single focus (music, running, drums...)
 - Nonjudgmental stance or passive attitude



Mindfulness is...

- “The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” *Jon Kabat-Zinn*
- “An orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance.” *Bishop et al*
- “The intentional process of observing, describing, and participating in reality nonjudgmentally, in the moment, and with effectiveness.” *Dimidjian & Linehan*
- “Monitoring one’s present-moment experience with acceptance.” *Quaglia et al*



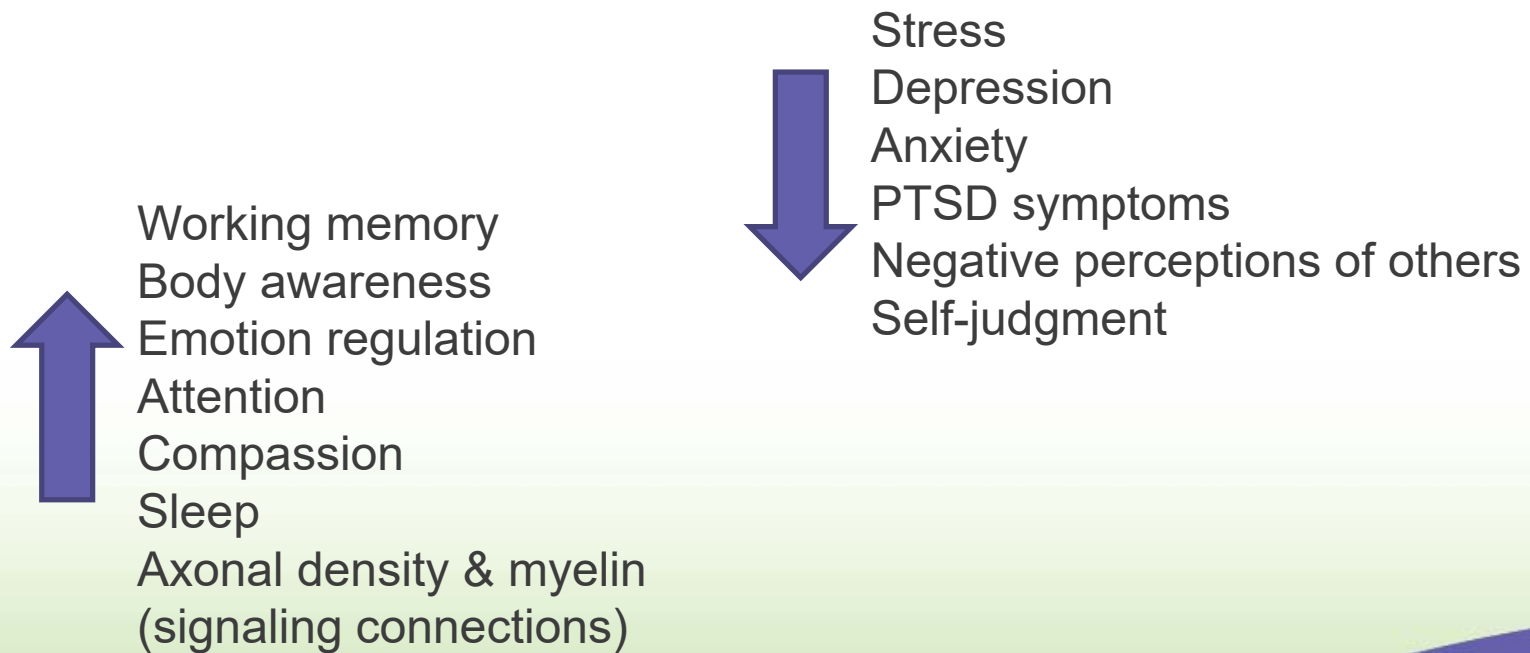
Mindfulness is a Superpower

WHY MINDFULNESS IS A SUPERPOWER

NARRATED BY DAN HARRIS

ANIMATION BY KATY DAVIS

Benefits of Mindfulness



Benefits of a Mindfulness Practice

- The word **practice** is important, as it is in repetition that our brains can receive the potential benefits – just as your muscles would receive potential benefits from a regular physical workout rather than a one-time marathon



*what **FIRES** together*
***WIRES** together*

*under **STRESS***
*we **REGRESS***



Gratitude



- Increases social connections
- Better physical health
- Reduces toxic emotions
- Increases prosocial behaviors
- Improves sleep
- Reduces envy and discontentment
- Combats trauma, fosters resilience

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-gratitude>





The Gifts I Bring...

The gifts that I bring to my work with families are...

The gifts that I bring to my work with children are...

The gifts that I bring to my work with parents are...

My own family experience has taught me...

My own childhood experience has taught me...

My own parenting experience has taught me...

My experiences of stress and/or anxiety have taught me...

When I think of family, I am inspired to...

When I think of family, I am reminded of...

When I think of family, I am moved to...

When I think of family, I envision...

The gifts that I contribute to my team/agency/community are...

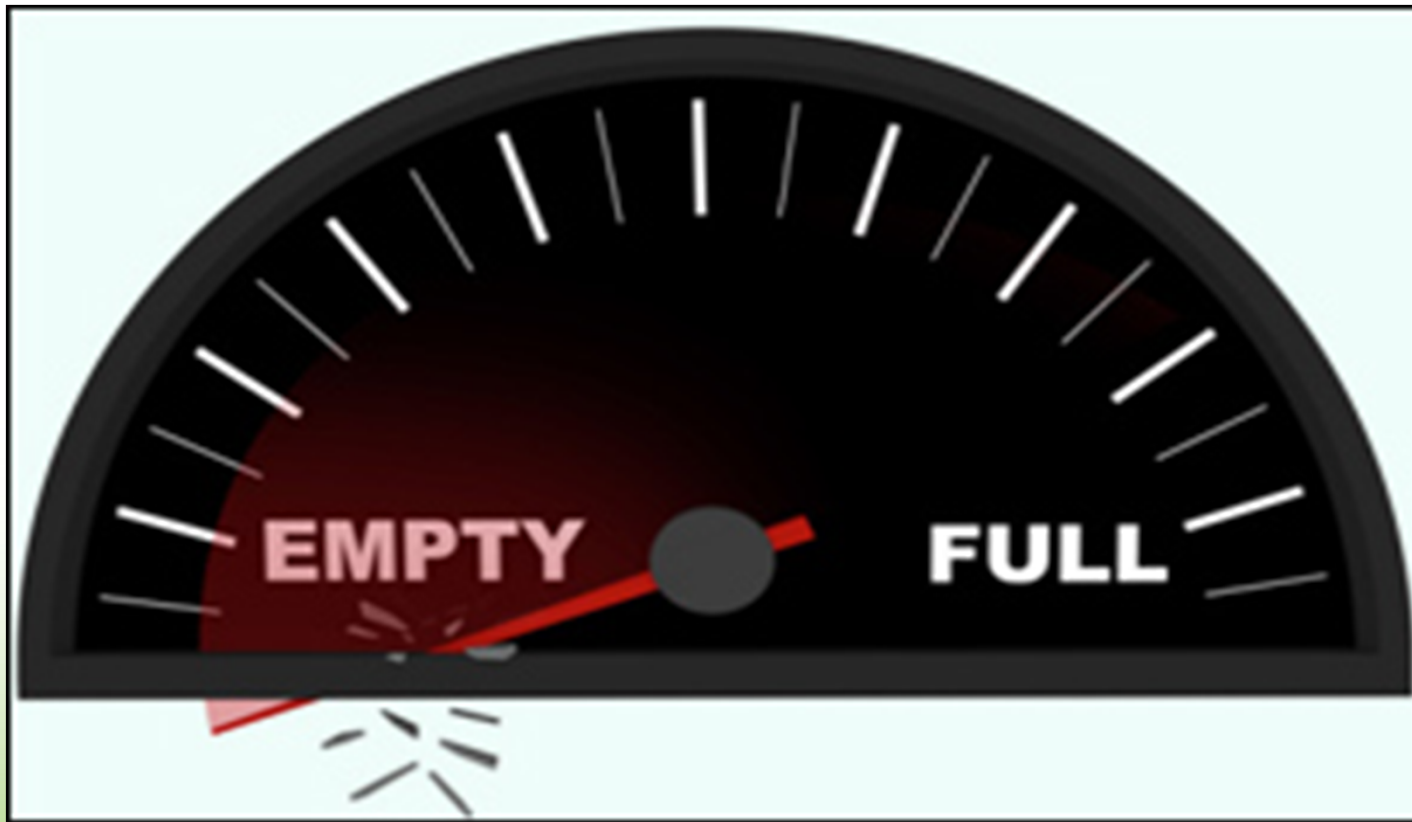
The gifts that I receive from this work are...

Basics of Self-Care

- Check-in with yourself
- Are you stressed?
- What's draining you?



What self-care strategies do you currently use to fill up your tank?



Self-Care at Work

- Utilize supervisors and colleagues
 - Ask for and give feedback
 - Ask for clear expectations
- Monitor your workload (as possible)
- Understand how your agency's mission is supported
- Reorganize or restructure your work routine
- Take breaks
- Seek help



Self-Care Strategies

- Exercise
- (Try to) get enough sleep
- Talk with someone who knows you well
 - Your best friend
 - Your dog
 - Your parent
- Keep or rediscover your hobbies
- Find a creative outlet
- Check in with yourself and with each other
- Create a sense of meaning or purpose
- Cultivate gratitude



Getting to Green

- Look into an aquarium
- Make a snow angel
- Knit a scarf
- Throw a penny into a wishing well
- Play an instrument
- Turn off your email and cell phone
- Walk along the beach
- Find a four leaf clover
- Make a scrapbook
- Say a prayer
- Get a massage
- Take a road trip
- Meditate
- Send a "thank-you" card
- Review a photo album
- Organize your desk
- Think positive thoughts
- Paint a portrait
- Give a compliment
- Drink a cup of tea
- Get lost in a book
- Cuddle with your pet
- Read a story to a child
- Plan a picnic
- Find a constellation
- Smell some flowers
- Exercise
- Smile at a stranger
- Join a cause
- Dance in the rain
- Look for the silver lining
- Practice forgiveness
- Garden
- Laugh
- Take a long bath
- Watch a movie
- Cook a warm meal
- Order dessert
- Stretch
- Hug a loved one
- Take a nap
- Appreciate the little things in life
- Take the day off
- Do a kind gesture
- Make up a song
- Eat a piece of chocolate
- Go on a hike
-

The ABCs of self-care

- Become **aware** of what issues are getting to you
- Seek **balance** among work, rest, play, and alone time
- **Connect** with people you trust, respect, and for whom you care



Focusfoster.org



Nathanson Family Resilience Center
Strong Families. Healthy Lives.

News | Events | Jobs | 855-231-9500

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FOCUS on Foster Families



UCLA Health

Welcome to the FOCUS on Foster Families Web Portal! Please explore the section that best fits your role as a provider, foster youth, or caregiver. You can also view videos straight from our video index, download FOCUS handouts and tip sheets from the Resource Library or download the app to your mobile device using the links below.

We're so glad you're here and hope you enjoy FOCUS on Foster Families!



For Caregivers



For Youth



For Providers

Featured Video



I believe in you
Learning new skills can help you build on your current strengths and achieve your goals.

FOCUS Tools

Use these worksheets to practice key FOCUS skills

- Effective Communication Strategies
- SCORE Goal Setting



About the App

Videos

Resource Library

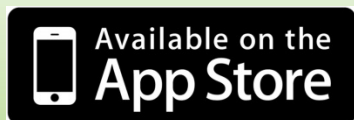
Online Tools

Select Language ▾

Powered by 

Powered by the Starting Line

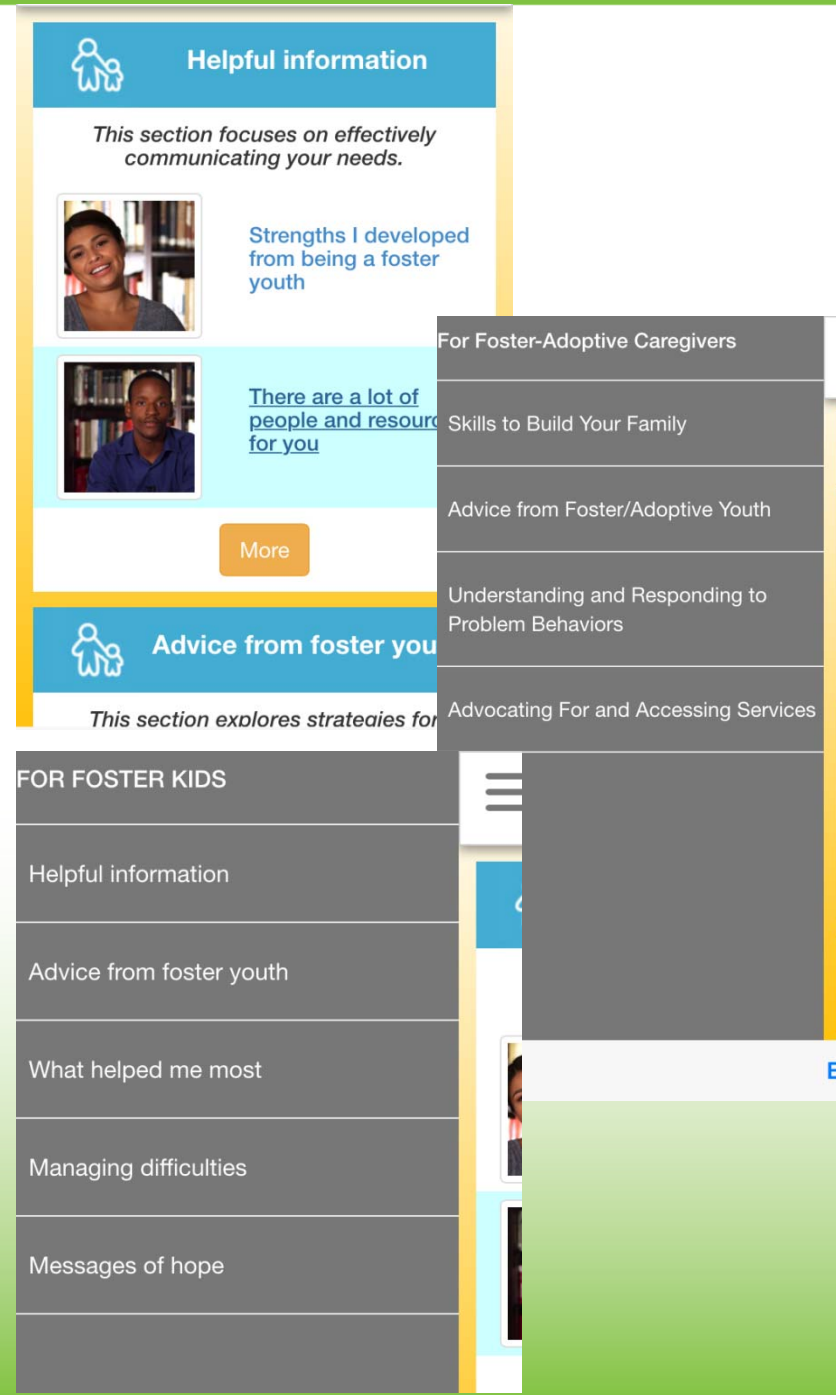
FOCUS on Foster Families



Search FOCUS on Foster Families in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and download the app FREE!

Resources

- Candid interviews with current and past foster/adoptive youth, parents and grandparents, and experts on the foster/adoptive process
- Training videos to offer instruction on helpful ways to deal with common challenges
- Online resources for foster/adoptive youth and parents



Games



Bear Necessities

- Problem-Solving
- Coping Skills



Bear Chill

- Emotional Regulation



Feeling Finder

- Feeling Vocabulary



Comic Creator

- Creating a Narrative

Thank you!



Mary Fortson-Harwell, PhD, LCSW

310-794-1223

MFortsonHarwell@mednet.ucla.edu

UCLA Health

Nathanson Family Resilience Center
Strong Families. Healthy Lives.