



# *The Inherent Strengths in Kinship Families*

*Facilitator's Guide*  
**Module: Adaptability**

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# Introduction

*The Inherent Strengths in Kinship Families* is a training series developed by Dr. Joseph Crumbley for kinship caregivers. The series takes a strength-based perspective in outlining different topics that are unique to kinship families and providing strategies for caregivers. The training is designed for a small group setting with a facilitator.

Purpose of each Module's Tasks:

- To review the module's learning objectives by highlighting and summarizing key issues discussed in each video
- To allow caregivers to develop practical approaches for applying the videos content in the provision of permanency, protection well-being of the children in their care

The complete training toolkit consists of six modules. The entire training toolkit can be delivered in a series, or each module can be delivered individually as a stand-alone training. The available modules, recommended in the following order, are:

- Attachment
- Legacy
- Identity
- Healing
- Adaptability
- Co-parenting

Each module includes a facilitator's guide, module video, and caregiver worksheet.

The facilitator's guide includes:

- Module purpose and learning objectives
- Outline of the module
- Optional discussion questions during the video
- Scripts and discussion questions for worksheet activities following the video
- An appendix with the caregiver worksheet and warm-up activity ideas

The videos for each module are about 1 hour in length. To accommodate differing timeframes, each module is split into two 30-minute parts. Part 1 of the videos in each module addresses **why** the attribute being highlighted is a **strength**. Part 2 of the videos explains how the **strength** is used by caregivers in parenting and caring for their children. (The Legacy Module is the only single video that includes both part 1 and 2, and its length is approximately 30 minutes.)

On average, the time for discussion and the caregiver worksheet may match or exceed the length of the video. The facilitator should determine the best format, setting, and timing of the training, which could be delivered online or in-person. It should be noted that the caregiver worksheet is optional and the facilitator can use the questions in the facilitator's guide as a guided discussion. The worksheet can be completed by caregivers after the meeting or as "homework" as well.

The facilitator should adapt the guide to best meet the needs of the current group. There are different methods for viewing each module. For example:

- Watch the entire module and complete interactive activities and discussion after the video
- Pause the video and complete discussion and worksheet as different issues come up throughout the video
- Include discussion during the video and then complete the worksheet after the video

## Tips

### *Module Content*

- You can pause the clip and check-in with the group during the video to gauge caregivers' feelings about the content as well as questions. This also may also help to transition between topics and keep the groups' attention.
- Consider pausing the video and preview activities on the worksheet that goes along with the content introduced in the video

## *Group Discussion*

- Decide the appropriate group discussion set-up. Some options include a discussion with the whole group, discussing in small group (3 – 6 people), or discussing in partners. This format may depend on the size of your group as well as the format (online or in-person).
- If discussing in small groups, it is suggested to reconvene as a big group to discuss responses and questions.

## *Considerations for Online Format*

- If the training is delivered online, it is recommended to mail printed module worksheets to participants for optimal participation and accessibility.
- Encourage participants to keep their camera's on to read nonverbal language of the group throughout the training
- Encourage participants to use headphones when around others and complete the discussion in a private space
- The chat is a great resource to use for comments and discussion, especially during the video.

## **Intended Audience**

Kinship caregivers, or those caring for relatives or family friends that are not their biological children, are the intended audience of the current modules. The training can also be referenced by professionals looking to learn more on topics related to kinship care.

## **Facilitator Qualifications**

Facilitators should be knowledgeable about family dynamics and mental health, as well as familiar with different systems that affect kinship families. If the facilitator does not have specific knowledge on these topics, they should partner with a co-facilitator and/or local agencies who have worked with kinship families for support.

Additionally, the modules were created with an informational and therapeutic approach. Some content may bring up different emotions, memories, and experiences for caregivers, some of which may be painful or difficult to process. It is left to the discretion and expertise of the facilitator to proactively plan to support caregivers' mental health and wellbeing throughout the module. It may be helpful to have a list of community and mental health resources for further support available.

## **Acknowledgements**

The facilitator's guide and caregiver worksheets were compiled with the expertise of Dr. Angela Tobin, a support group leader and researcher in the field of kinship care.

# **Module: Adaptability**

## ***Description and Objectives***

This module focuses on the strength of the kinship family's adaptability to keep children in the family when they are unable to remain with their parents. Caregivers are provided approaches in assisting the family in adjusting and adapting to changes in family dynamics, roles, and relationships.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Define and explain why adaptability is a strength in kinship families
- Describe how kin adapt as caregivers
- Identify tasks for caregivers in facilitating the family's adjustment and adaptation of becoming a kinship family

### **A Note on the Facilitator's Guide:**

This guide provides suggestions for integrating module videos into a group session to provide discussion and caregiver takeaways. It also includes scripts as a guide for introducing topics and questions. All materials are completely flexible. You are encouraged to review module content ahead of time to prepare and tailor them to specific needs of your group. A space for notes can be found in the Appendix. Time considerations should also be taken into account when planning materials and questions to include in the discussion.

See the caregiver worksheet as part of the Appendix to follow along with participants

### **Materials:**

- Computer
- Projector & speakers (if in-person)
- Module Video
- Facilitator's guide
- Caregiver worksheets

# Module: Adaptability Part 1

## Warm-Up Activity (Optional)

See Appendix for ideas

## Introduce module topic and video

Script:

*Today we will be talking about adaptability within kinship families, specifically your strength as a caregiver to recognize and embrace changing family dynamics. We will discuss how stepping in as a primary caregiver really does change the entire family system and strategies for guiding yourself and the family through this process.*

*This video is about 30 minutes long. Important points and notes are on the summary sheet at the end of the Module worksheet so you don't need to worry about writing everything down. However, you can feel free to add additional notes there if you would like.*

*(Optional: We may pause the video for a short time for quick answers, but will then have a longer discussion for the activity at the end of the video).*

## Play module video



### Optional Questions:

These are places where the video can be paused, and questions can be opened to the group (quick discussion or online chat) for engagement. The facilitator can determine which questions (if any) should be used and length of time spent on questions to ensure there is time for follow-up activity after video.

Video Time	Discussion Questions following along with Dr. Crumbley
13:36	<i>What did other relatives (like your children) say to you when you decided to raise the child in your care?</i>
17:12	<i>How did the birth parents feel about you raising the child as if you were the parent?</i>
24:20	<i>How did the birth parents feel about your shifting in loyalty?</i>

## Discussion questions and activities

The worksheet for caregivers that goes along with the questions below is located in the Appendix that you can refer to as you lead the group. However, the worksheet is optional the questions below can be used solely to guide discussion as well.

### Script:

*We are going to transition to a group discussion about different aspects of adaptability as presented by Dr. Crumbley in the video. You can think about one or two children in your care when answering these questions. Feel free to share with the group (or a partner). If it is helpful, you can also write ideas on your caregiver worksheet. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions, and if you don't have time to answer all of them, that is okay as well.*

Discussion Questions:

### **Family Tree Activity**

*As Dr. Crumbley encouraged us at the end of the video, today we are going to create family genograms representing your own families. The genogram on your worksheet is only a template, and you are encouraged to adapt it to your own family. Feel free to add names, new boxes, and lines that represent relationships. You could also use a blank paper to create one from scratch to better represent your kinship family dynamic.*

- *Create a family genogram representing the familial relationships before the child(ren) you are caring for came in your care.*
- *Now thinking of how Dr. Crumbley adapted the genogram in the video, reflect on how family relationships have changed since you have become a primary caregiver to that child. Change the family genogram to how relationships looks like now. You can draw new boxes and cross out former boxes/lines to reflect this change.*

### **Family Support Activity**

*We are going to take it one step forward and reflect on how a few family members feel about the shifting family dynamics and your role as a caregiver. This will really come full circle when we talk about strategies for getting family members “on board” who may not currently be as supportive.*

- *When looking at the genogram, think about family members who are a support to you currently, those who have more difficulty accepting the current family dynamics, and others in between. Identify where a few of them fall on the spectrum by marking their name or initials where you think they fit on the line below.*

## **Module summary**

Script:

*Today we talked the strength in recognizing and adapting to the changing family dynamics that come along with taking a child into your care as a kinship caregiver. I appreciate everyone being open and sharing their experiences and ideas.*

*(As we close out, does anyone have major takeaways or “aha” moments from the session today that they would like to share? Does anyone have any questions?)*

# Module: Adaptability Part 2

## Warm-Up Activity (Optional)

See Appendix for ideas

## Introduce module topic and video

Script:

*In Part 1 of the module, we discussed how a shift in caregiver roles can impact the entire family system and reflected on your own family tree. Today we will continue talking about your strengths as a kinship caregiver in adapting to these continually changing family dynamics. This module will present strategies for talking with and seeking support from other family members, as well as the importance of caring for yourself.*

*This video is about 30 minutes long. Important points and notes are on the summary sheet at the end of the Module worksheet so you don't need to worry about writing everything down. However, you can feel free to add additional notes there if you would like.*

*(Optional: We may pause the video for a short time for quick answers, but will then have a longer discussion for the activity at the end of the video).*

## Play module video

### Optional Questions:

These are places where the video can be paused, and questions can be opened to the group (quick discussion or online chat) to the group for engagement. The facilitator can determine which questions (if any) should be used and length of time spent on questions to ensure there is time for follow-up activity after video.

<b>Video Time</b>	<b>Discussion Questions following along with Dr. Crumbley</b>
2:45	<i>How did other family members feel about the children coming into your care?</i>
7:06	<i>Think about all the people that have helped you in caring for these children, who are they providing help for? You, the children, or both?</i>
18:15	<i>What are some of the difficult things and changes that birth parents experience?</i>

## Discussion questions and activities

The worksheet for caregivers that goes along with the questions below is located in the Appendix that you can refer to as you lead the group. However, the worksheet is optional the questions below can be used solely to guide discussion as well.

### Script:

*We are going to transition to a group discussion about different aspects of adaptability as presented by Dr. Crumbley in the video. Feel free share with the group (or with a partner). If it is helpful, you can also write ideas on your caregiver worksheet. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions, and if you don't have time to answer all of them, that is okay as well.*

Discussion Questions:

### **Scripts Activity**

*Dr. Crumbley presented many helpful scripts for discussing the changing family dynamics with different family members, and we will really focus on these today. On your worksheet, you will see some of the scripts from the videos as examples of how you can discuss different themes and topics with your family. You can use the activity from part 1 to identify specific family members some scripts may be helpful to use with.*

- *As you listened to the video and review the scripts now, do any stand out to you? You can choose a relevant script and practice saying this to yourself or a partner.*

### **Reflection Questions**

*Now we will transition to a discussion and reflection to go along with the scripts presented.*

- *Dr. Crumbley mentioned the importance of getting buy in from those around you and also sharing care for your perspective. What do you think of using nurturance of others as a tool to get them “onboard”?*
- *Identify any family members you may consider seeking additional help or support from. You can refer to the activities from Module 5 Part 1 for guidance*

## **Module summary**

Script:

*Today we talked about strategies for guiding the family to adapt to you stepping in as a caregiver for a child. We also talked about the importance of leaning on others and asking for support. I appreciate everyone being open and sharing their ideas.*

*(As we close out, does anyone have major takeaways or “aha” moments from the session today that they would like to share? Does anyone have any questions?)*

## **Appendix:**

**Caregiver worksheet  
Warm-up activities**

# Caregiver “Take-Away” Sheet: Adaptability Part 1

*These questions are guides to help connect different topics from the video to your own experience as a caregiver. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers and you do not need answer all of them. It can be a starting point for discussion with other caregivers and/or something to refer to after the sessions.*

## Family Genogram

This genogram is only a template, and you are encouraged to adapt it to your own family. Feel free to add family names, new boxes, and lines that represent relationships. You could also use a blank paper to create one from scratch.

- 1. Create a family genogram representing the familial relationships before the child(ren) you are caring for came in your care.*
- 2. Now think about how family relationships have changed since you have become a primary caregiver to that child. Change the family genogram to how relationships looks like now. You can draw new boxes and cross out former boxes/lines to reflect this change.*

Grandparent(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Aunts/Uncle  
\_\_\_\_\_

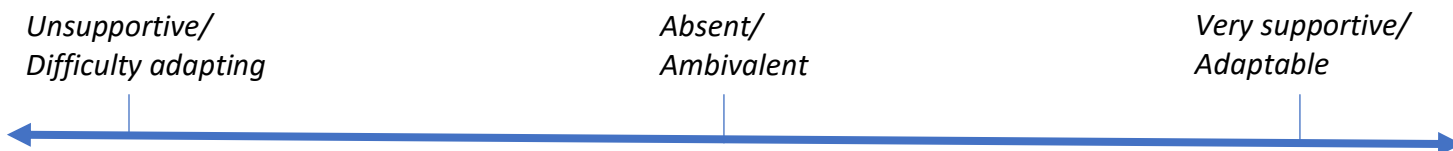
Birth parent(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Aunts/Uncle  
\_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren) in care  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Taking it one step further...

When looking at the genogram, think about family members who are currently a support to you, those who have more difficulty accepting the current family dynamics, and others in between. Identify where a few of them fall on the spectrum by marking their name or initials where you think they fit on the line below.



## Caregiver “Take-Away” Sheet: Adaptability Part 2

Review the following scripts and strategies you can use in conversations with other family members. You can tailor these to fit your family situation.

<p><b>Determine how Kinship care has changed family:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Roles</li> <li>• Responsibilities</li> <li>• Authority</li> <li>• Relationships</li> </ul>	<p><i>“I’m raising your niece as if she was my child and she was your sibling. So, we need to accept her as a family member who lives here, not as a visitor.”</i></p> <p><i>“She has the same rights and responsibilities as a family member to be protected and cared for as you do as a member of this family.”</i></p>
<p><b>Engage Family members Impacted by the Changes and Importance of Their Roles</b></p>	<p><i>“I’m going to need you to care and protect your niece as if he was your sister. She’s going to need to listen to you as if you were her big sister, since she’s younger than you.”</i></p> <p><i>“Let’s talk about how you and I will still spend time together as mom and daughter and how you’ll still have your privileges even though your niece now lives with us.”</i></p> <p><i>“I need your input and support in order for the changes to work.”</i></p>
<p><b>How changes can impact family:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closeness</li> <li>• Stress/relief</li> </ul>	<p><i>“Let me know if you feel as if you’re being replaced or if I care more about your niece than I care about you.”</i></p> <p><i>“If I think you’re feeling someday I’ll bring it up.”</i></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss/support</li> <li>• Trust/mistrust</li> <li>• Healing/triggers</li> <li>• Loyalty/disloyalty/betrayal</li> </ul>	<p><i>“If I’m making changes that will affect you (.ie. privacy, responsibilities), I’ll make sure I get your input and ask how you feel about the changes.”</i></p>
<p><b>Get Buy-In/Support for Changes (via individual/family meetings/therapy)</b></p>	<p><i>“We don’t want our children going into system. That needs to be a goal in our family.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our role is temporary until the children can return to their parents.”</i></p> <p><i>“Let’s give the parents time to get themselves together so the children can be returned to their parents.”</i></p> <p><i>“What’s the plan if the children can’t return to their parents.”</i></p>
<p><b>Identify/reconcile challenges to goals (family/external)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to earn trust</li> <li>• How to make amends</li> <li>• How to forgive</li> <li>• How to survive loss issues</li> </ul>	<p><i>“What do we need to do to make our family stronger and heal from the shock, loss or embarrassment we’re feeling, so we don’t hurt or turn on each other?”</i></p> <p><i>“Remember, you may need help (ie. kinship care) with your children one day. That’s why it’s important that we work together, so that our children won’t have to go into the system.”</i></p>
<p><b>Refer to Family Legacies, Values, Identity</b></p>	<p><i>“Let’s remember we’ve always taken care of our own and our Faith will get us through.”</i></p> <p><i>“We’ve survived in the past and will do it in the present.”</i></p> <p><i>“We’re no longer just survivors, we’re also thrivers, as well.”</i></p>

### Concluding Reflection Questions

<p><i>What do you think of using nurturance of others as a tool to get them “onboard”?</i></p>	<p><i>Identify a few family members you may consider seeking additional help or support from:</i></p>

# Adaptability Summary Sheet

**Adaptability** describes the kinship family's ability to assume the roles and responsibilities necessary for providing permanence, well-being, protection, and stability for children in the absence of their parents.

For others to give,  
they have to get  
nurturance from  
you

A birth parents'  
primary  
responsibility is  
to themselves

You need to  
ask for help.  
You can't do  
this alone.

## ***The Strengths of Adaptability in Kinship Families***

- The ability to reassign roles that then allow children to remain within the family.
- The ability to reunify children with their parents and then remain involved with the birth family after reunification, as a support, respite and safety net.
- The ability to provide permanency, if reunification does not occur, while also keeping the child in the family and connected to their birth family (parents and siblings)
- Minimizing the trauma of separation and loss by reassuring the children they will always remain with family, if not with their parents.
- Maintaining and increasing the potential access and connections of children to family, siblings and birth parents as a result of living with kin

## ***Approaches in Facilitating Adaptation***

- Determine how Kinship care has changed family
- Engage family members affected by changes to discuss impact
- Get buy-in/support for changes (via: individual/family meetings/therapy)
- Refer to family Legacies, Values, Identity
- Discuss contact and shared parenting with the birthparents
- How to provide support to caregivers and the Kinship Family

**Main Takeaways and/or Questions from Module:**

## Resources for Warm-Up Activities

### Feelings “Check-in” with visual

- Caregivers can describe how they are feeling using a visual aid as guidance
- Simple feelings wheel (see next page)
- Emotion faces:
  - <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/printable-emotion-faces>

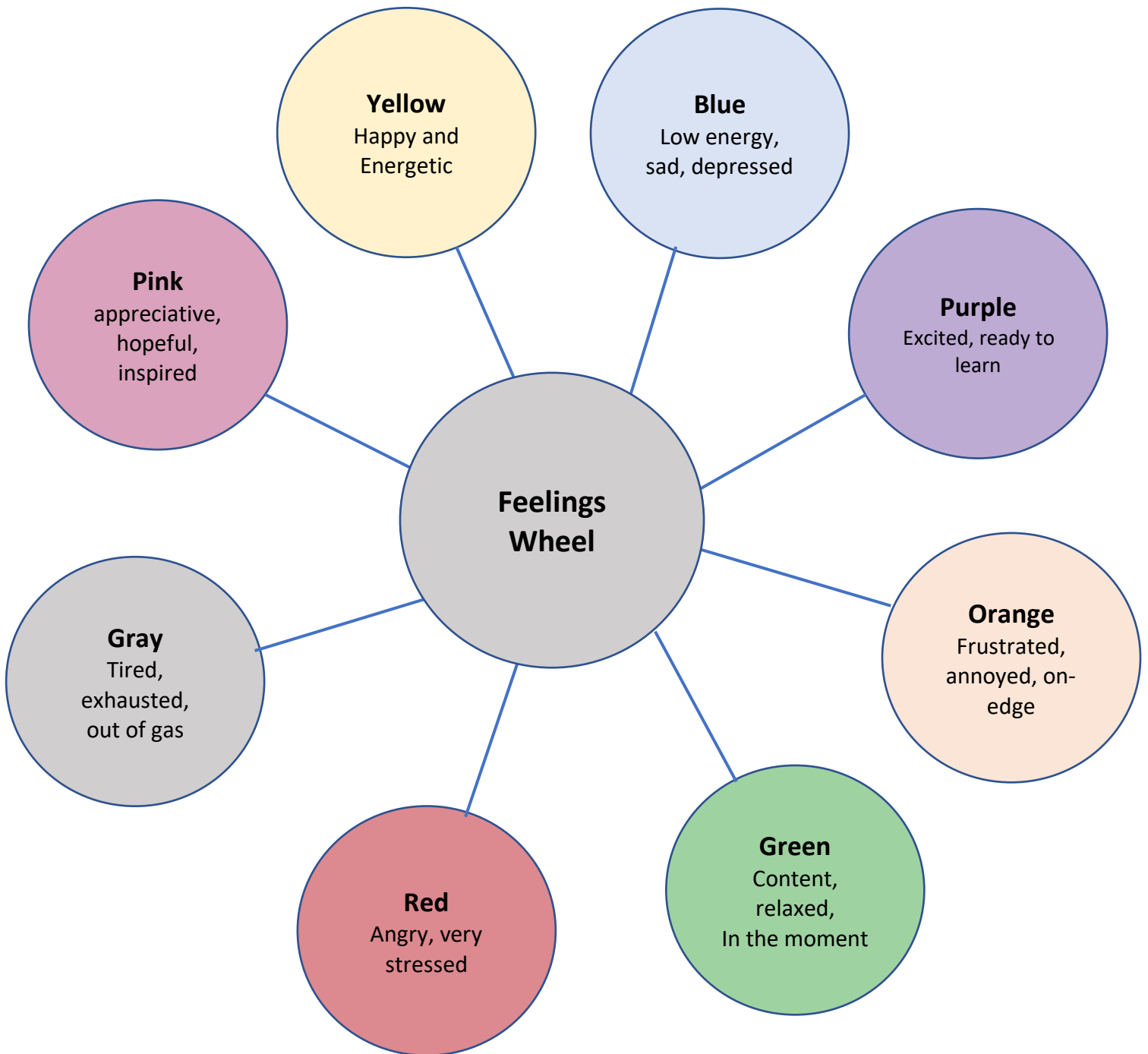
### “Get to Know You” Introduction

- Have each caregiver share their name, how many children they are caring for, how the children are related to them, etc
- Include an “out of the box question” such as...
  - Favorite memory from childhood or adulthood
  - 3 words they would use to describe themselves
  - Favorite activity to do with the child in their care

### Positive Affirmations

- Group leader can read and display multiple positive affirmation statements
- Ask caregivers to choose the affirmation they needed most this week and explain why
- Websites with printable positive affirmations:
  - <https://morganharpnichols.com/blog/30-affirmations-free-phone-wallpapers>
  - <https://thewellnesssociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Affirmation-Cards-Light-Green.pdf>
  - Many more for purchase online

Brainstorm others on your own!



This content is adapted from the National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents which was funded through a Cooperative Agreement with the Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. The full curriculum can be found at [www.ntdcportal.org](http://www.ntdcportal.org)

