



The Inherent Strengths in Kinship Families

Facilitator's Guide
Module: Healing

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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: Healing

Description and Objectives

This module focuses on how kinship caregivers can minimize the trauma of loss children experience when separated from their birth parents. The sharing of loss and grief between children and their caregiver is highlighted as a strength of kinship families.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the emotions and feelings from which children are recovering and healing
- Explain why relatives and kin can be more effective in the recovery and healing process
- Develop approaches in assisting children to heal and be resilient while in kinship care

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: Healing Part 1

Warm-Up Activity (Optional)

See Appendix for ideas

Introduce module topic and video

Script:

Today we will be talking about healing, both for yourself as a caregiver and for the child in your care. This module will emphasize your unique and important role in the healing process.

This video is about 25 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
8:19	<i>Remember reasons for them coming into your care, how did it make you feel?</i>
13:00	<i>Do you think you have more credibility with the children in your care being a relative? Have you thought of this as a strength of kinship care before?</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 healing 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:

Feeling Bubbles Activity

This activity will allow you to reflect on different feelings that may have come up for you and the child in your care when they came into care. As you are completing this, you can think about the sources of these feelings and ones that may still be present today.

- *Thinking back to when your child first came into your care, circle the bubbles the best describe the emotions you were feeling.*
- *Thinking back to this same time, put a star inside the bubbles that you think best describes emotions the children in your care were feeling.*
- *What emotions did you and the child in your care have in common?*
- *What strengths do you have as kinship caregivers in helping your children in coping with or healing from the emotions they may be experiencing?*

Scripts Activity

Dr. Crumbley presented many helpful scripts with guiding the child in your care in the healing process. 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 the kids in your care.

- *As you listened to the video and review the scripts, do any stand out to you? You can choose a relevant script and practice saying this to yourself or a partner and tailor it to your own situation.*
- *Consider some strategies for initiating one of these conversations with the child in your care. You can think about how you might respond to certain questions they might have or how you might bring up the topic yourself.*

Module summary

Script:

Today we talked about connecting with yourself and your emotions, and strategies for using these to connect with the child in your care on the path of healing. 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?)

Module: Healing 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 your sharing of experiences with children in your care can be used as a strength in connecting with them. Today we will focus on different scripts and strategies including having conversations with the children in your care about different topics as it relates to healing.

This video is about 20 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.

Video Time	Discussion Questions following along with Dr. Crumbley
2:00	<i>How can you love someone that hurt you?</i>
10:00	<i>How do you feel about having a conversation with your child about reasons they came into your care?</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 healing 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 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 with different factors of healing and that will be our focus 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 the kids in your care.

- *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.*

Creating a Safe Space Activity

Today, we also heard from Dr. Crumbley about the importance of creating a safe space for children to share and disclose their feelings. Your strength as a caregiver is that you can both relate to them and set an example for healthy coping strategies.

- *Think of a time shared or disclosure something really honest or hard to share with a friend or family member or someone else... What about that person and the setting made you feel comfortable sharing? If you haven't had this experience think about what would have made you feel comfortable?*
- *You can list some of these inside the "safe space" house.*
- *How this might relate to creating a safe space for the children in your care to feel comfortable sharing with you?*

Module summary

Script:

Today we talked more about different aspects of healing and strategies for connecting with the child in your care during this process. 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:

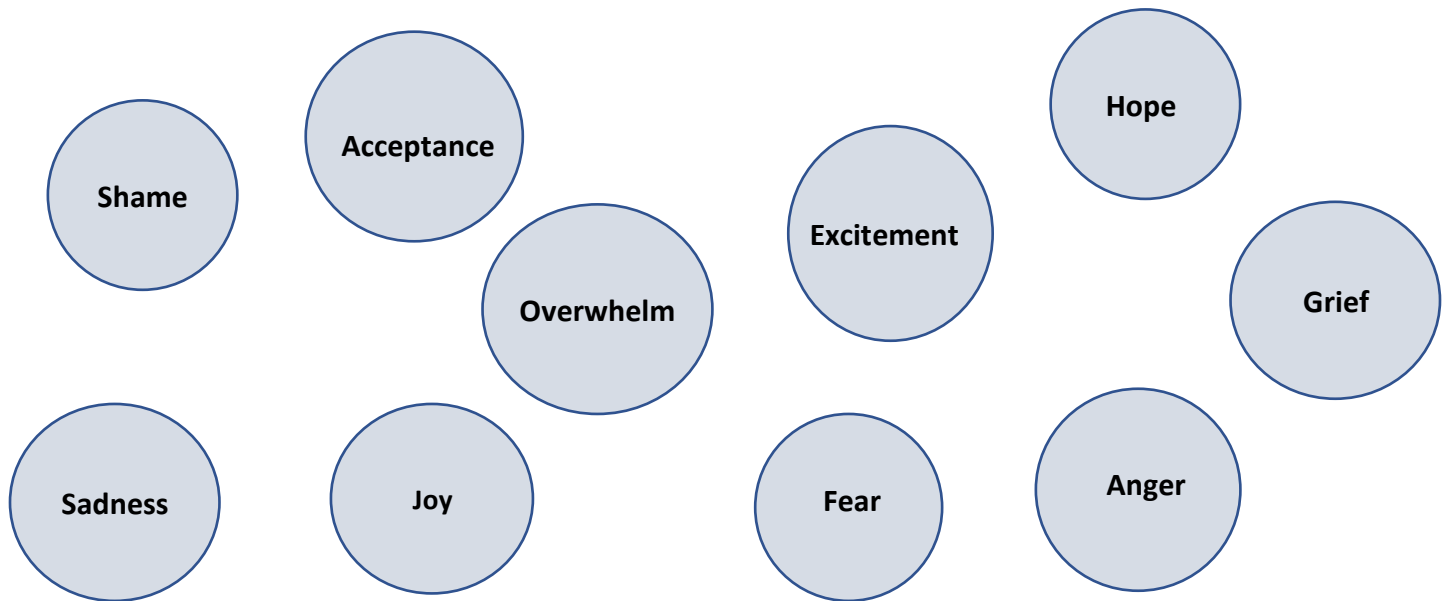
**Caregiver worksheet
Warm-up activities**

“Take-Away” Sheet: Healing 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.

Feeling Bubbles

- 1. Thinking back to when your child first came into your care, circle the bubbles that best describe the emotions you were feeling*
- 2. Thinking back to this same time, put a star inside the bubbles that you think best describes emotions the children in your care were feeling.*



5. What emotions did you and the child in your care have in common?

4. What strengths do you have as kinship caregivers in helping your children in coping with or healing from the emotions they may be experiencing?

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

Approach	Scripts
Validate, Normalize and Label the Emotions and Feelings	<i>"Your feelings are normal, given what you're going through. What you're feeling is (ie anger, shock) is ok."</i>
Use Yourself as an Example	<i>"I felt that way too when I heard what happened."</i>
Give Permission for the Child to Feel without being Judged.	<p><i>"It's OK to express your feelings. You can't help how you feel."</i></p> <p>You DON'T want to say...</p> <p><i>"You shouldn't be angry with your parents."</i></p> <p><i>"Children should forgive their parents."</i></p>
Provide Appropriate Ways of Expressing those Feelings and Emotion	<i>"Let's think of ways that are useful to you for expressing how you feel that won't hurt you or aren't damaging to the people or things around you."</i>
How and Who Deserves Explanations about their Living Situation	<i>"Let's talk about how we're going to explain why you're living with me and not with your parents or where your parents are. Please let me know when you might feel embarrassed about living with me and not living with your parents or siblings."</i>
Write your own!	

Main Takeaways and/or Questions from Module:

“Take-Away” Sheet: Healing Part 2

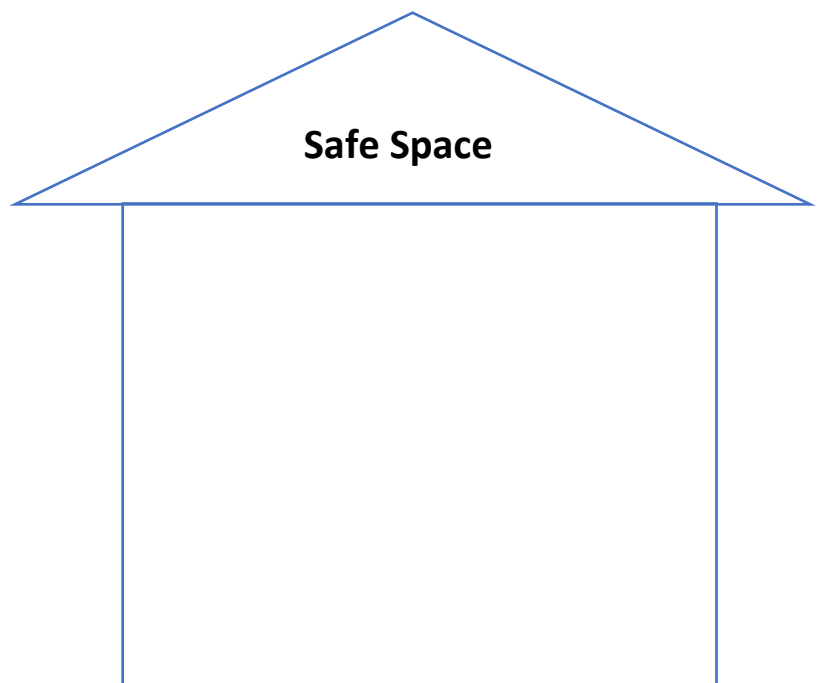
Scripts Activity- See instructions above

<p>De-Triangulate the Child. Allow them their loyalty to their parents without being afraid of losing yours.</p>	<p><i>“It’s ok to still love your parents, even though I know you see how we don’t get along. I know you would prefer to live with your parents and not us, but it’s ok. They’re your parents. I would feel the same way, and we can’t replace them.”</i></p> <p><i>“If I was your parent, I would feel proud and good about my children being loyal to me and wanting to return home.”</i></p>
<p>Bond When They’re in Pain</p>	<p><i>“Let us know if and when you miss your parents. It’s ok to talk about it or cry about it together. When you hurt, I hurt. I hurt, and I want to comfort you whenever you’re hurting.”</i></p>
<p>Make it Safe to Disclose</p>	<p><i>“I know that some wrong or inappropriate things were done to you or in front of you.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whenever you’re ready, we can talk about it together or will find someone for you to talk with.</i> • <i>I believe you, no matter what or who it’s about even it’s about my son, my daughter, my sister, my brother.</i> • <i>If I or any grown-up or adult does anything wrong to you or hurts you, you need to tell someone.</i> • <i>You don’t have to keep anything a secret in this family.”</i>

Instructions:

Think of a time shared or disclosure something really honest with a friend or family member...

What about that person and the setting made you (or would make you) feel comfortable sharing? List some of these inside the “safe space” house.



Healing Summary Sheet

Trauma describes emotional feelings of distress that are associated with events and situations

Quotes from module think about

You must be okay for the children to be okay.

If you label it, you can normalize it.

Share the journey during the pain.

Why Kinship Care (relatives and kin) are Effective:

- **Credibility with the youth:** because of sharing personal feelings similar to the child or youth about the birth parents and reasons for kinship care. “ I can partially understand how you feel, and I also have feelings about the situation because I knew your father as my son (or brother/friend) before you knew him as your Dad”
- **Role-Model :** an example of resilience and how to manage and cope with those feeling and emotions as kin and a relative
- **Bonding:** from the sharing of similar feelings, emotions and ways of coping, that unites and binds the relationship and attachment as kin.

Approaches for Impacting the Child or Youth’s Healing and Recovery Process

- Validate, normalize and label the emotions and feelings
- Use yourself as an example
- Give permission for child to feel without being judged
- Provide appropriate ways of expressing those feelings and emotions
- Identify ways you can share or be a support in sharing the pain or expressing the feelings (bonding moments)
- Let the youth know you’ll be supportive and proactive if you feel they’re in pain or in trouble
- Exonerate the youth of fault or guilt about their situation or their feelings.
- How or who deserves explanations about their living situation
- De-triangulate the child. Allow them their loyalty to their parents without being afraid of losing yours
- Bond when they’re in pain
- Make it safe to disclose

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>

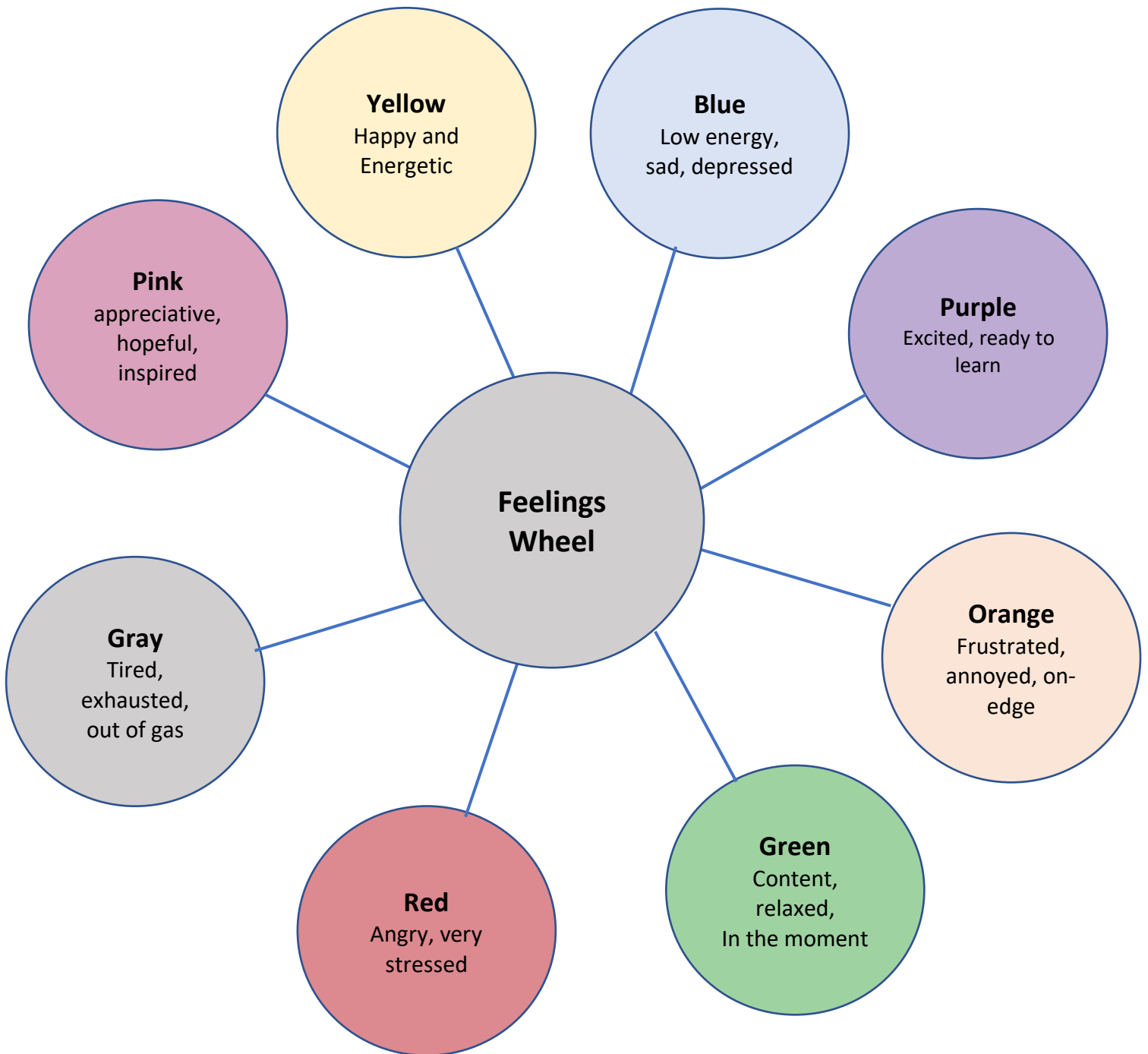
“Get to Know You” Introduction

- 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://morganharnichols.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!



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