



The Inherent Strengths in Kinship Families

Facilitator's Guide
Module: Identity

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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: Identity

Description and Objectives

This module explains the role of caregivers have in the positive identity formation of children in kinship care. Caregivers are also presented approaches to assist their children in making positive choices and decision to avoid and disrupt family patterns based on their own values and identities.

Learning Objectives:

- Define and highlight the importance of identity formation/development
- Explain why Kinship Families have a significant impact on identity formation
- Describe how to impact the development of positive identity
- Identify how to help in the development of identities that disrupt family cycles

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

Module: Identity Part 1

Warm-Up Activity (Optional)

See Appendix for ideas for warm-up activities

Introduce module topic and video

Script:

Today we will be talking about a child's formation of identity and the ways you can positively influence their identity as a kinship caregiver.

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) 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
10:23	<i>How do children attach to you? Do you think it's appropriate to allow them to attach to you as a parent?</i>
12:50	<i>How does that make you feel that you are the primary source of your child's identity?</i>
15:10	<i>How can you recreate the monster and self-fulfilling prophecies? What might you want to avoid saying to the children that recreate the reasons why they came into kinship 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 identity 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:

Mirror Activity

This activity will allow you to reflect on how different qualities that make up identity and how our identities influence one another. As a caregiver, you serve as a mirror to identity for the children in your care.

- *What are some qualities that you see in the children in your care?*
- *What are some qualities that the children in your care see in you?*
- *Which talents, values, qualities would you like to see the children in your care develop more?*
- *In what ways have you or can you influence the identity development of children in your care?*

Module summary

Script:

Today we talked about different factors that influence a child's identity and the positive influence you can have as a family member on your child's identity. 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: Identity Part 2

Warm-Up Activity (Optional)

See Appendix for ideas for warm-up activities

Introduce module topic and video

Script:

In Part 1 of the module, we discussed your strength as a kinship caregiver in shaping identity and ways you can talk with the child in your care about their identity. Today we will continue discussing different scripts and strategies including having conversations with the children in your care about their birth parents.

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) 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
2:15	<i>Why do you want to avoid the birth parents down as a person?</i>
16:27	<i>What do you think of the idea of a child that a child will identify with their birth parents with or without your help? Have you thought of it that way 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 identity 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 identity 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 and tailor it to your own situation.*
- *Consider if you have talked to the children in your care about the reasons they are not living with their birth parents, but rather living with you. How might you approach or continue to have this conversation with them? Consider ways to emphasize the parents' poor choices instead of a poor character.*

Mentorship Activity

Dr. Crumbley talked about the importance of mentorship for children, especially those who are like them. As a caregiver, your role is essential to their identity and wellbeing, but as the saying goes, it takes a village, and having others they can lean on and refer to as examples can be so helpful.

- *Can you identify a current or potential positive mentor to the child in your care? How might you help connect them to others like them?*

Module summary

Script:

Today we talked about how you can guide your child and talk with them about different factors related to identity, as well as the importance of mentorship. 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: Identity Part 1

These questions are guides 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.

Identity encompasses the memories, experiences, relationships, and values that create one’s sense of self.

Identity formation or development is a process during which a person develops a self-concept of their unique values, qualities, and characteristics as an individual and in relationship to others.

Mirror Activity

Write some qualities that you see in the children in your care:

Write some qualities that the children in your care see in you:

Which talents, values, qualities would you like to see the children in your care develop more?

In what ways have you or can you influence the identity development of children in your care?

Caregiver “Take-Away” Sheet: Identity Part 2

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
Avoid recreating the monster and repeating self-fulfilling prophecies	<p><i>“Don’t think you can’t help but turn out like your parents.”</i></p> <p><i>“Don’t believe everything you hear about me, your family and parents.”</i></p>
Differentiate the quality of the person from their actions (where appropriate)	<p><i>“Your parents love you and had the best intentions. Unfortunately, they made poor choices and decisions.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes good people can make poor choices. But they still must live with and be held responsible for the consequences of their decisions.”</i></p>
Make sure the child doesn’t think that not living with their parents or relatives makes them less than their friends	<p><i>“You’re just as important in our family and loved just as much as any of your friends who are living with their parents. It’s not your fault that you’re not living with your parents.”</i></p>
Explain how they are similar but different from family and parents	<p><i>“You may have similar skills, talents, traits or challenges similar to your parents or families, but your decisions about how you use your talents and respond to similar situations makes you different.”</i></p> <p><i>“Your goals and values also make you different from your parents.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s your goals and values that will make your choices and life different from your parents.”</i></p>
Identify alternative choices and decisions that can make a difference	<p><i>“Your dad was pressured to demonstrate he was a man by having indiscriminate or unprotected sex. The hard choice was to say no. But if you can say no, then you won’t be a teen dad like your father was, and you’ll then be free to enjoy your teenage years.”</i></p>
Anticipate situations that children may confront and brainstorm a proactive plan	<p><i>“Let’s make a plan in case you’re suddenly surrounded by drugs or guns.”</i></p>

<p>Develop an action plan for a crisis or when poor decisions have been made</p>	<p><i>“If you’re in a dangerous situation text me this code or call. I will come or send someone. No explanations needed when you call. No questions asked until later.”</i></p>
<p>Share fond and positive memories they have of their parents</p>	<p><i>“I remember when we...”</i> <i>“We had fun when...”</i> <i>“I used to like when your mom..”</i></p>
<p>Write your own! How and when might you approach this conversation with your child about their living situation with you?</p>	



Mentorship

Can you identify a current or potential mentor for the child in your care? How might you help them connect to others like them who set a positive example?

What is your main “takeaway” from this module?

What, if any, questions do you have?

Identity Summary Sheet

Why Kinship Families Have A Significant Impact on Identity Formation and Development

1. A primary source of information about:
 - Child's personal history (What was I like birth, residence, quality of life)
 - Parents' history and identity (What were they like: talents, achievements, values)
 - Family history and identity (What were we like: accomplishments, challenges, values)
 - Community and society history (What was society like: politics, economics, school systems, safety, inequities, opportunities)
2. Credibility: personal contact and experience as a primary source (first-hand information)
3. Family and kin as initial "mirror" and answer to question " Who am I like and can be". Attachment with kin as a role model resulting in emulation out of admiration, respect and loyalty. Child is likely to use caregiver as a mirror because the caregiver is family/kin

The Kinship Family's role in Identity Formation and Development is to assist their youth in

- Discovering and developing their potential and talents
- Choosing one's purpose, values and goals and in life
- Finding opportunities to exercise that potential and purpose.

How to help develop Positive Identities and disrupt destructive/damaging cycles using a combination of the following approaches:

- Avoid recreating the monster and repeating self- fulfilling prophecies
- Differentiate the quality of the person from their actions (when appropriate)
- Make sure the child doesn't think that not living with their parents or living with a relative makes them any less than children living with their parents
- Offer reasons why the outcomes in the child's live can be different from their parents or other members in the family
- Explain how the child is similar and yet different from their parents or other family members
- Identify alternative choices and decisions that can make life altering differences
- Anticipate situations they may confront and brainstorm proactive plans
- Develop action plans for a crisis or when poor decisions have been made
- Share fond and positive memories you have of their parents
- Caring for them is a favor rather than a commitment they deserve

As a Role Model share:

- *What your personality and identity was like that lead to your accomplishments, goals, drive, and motivation.*
- *What challenges you experience.*
- *How you overcame the challenges.*
- *How you beat the odds that were against you while others didn't. What was different about you?*

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>

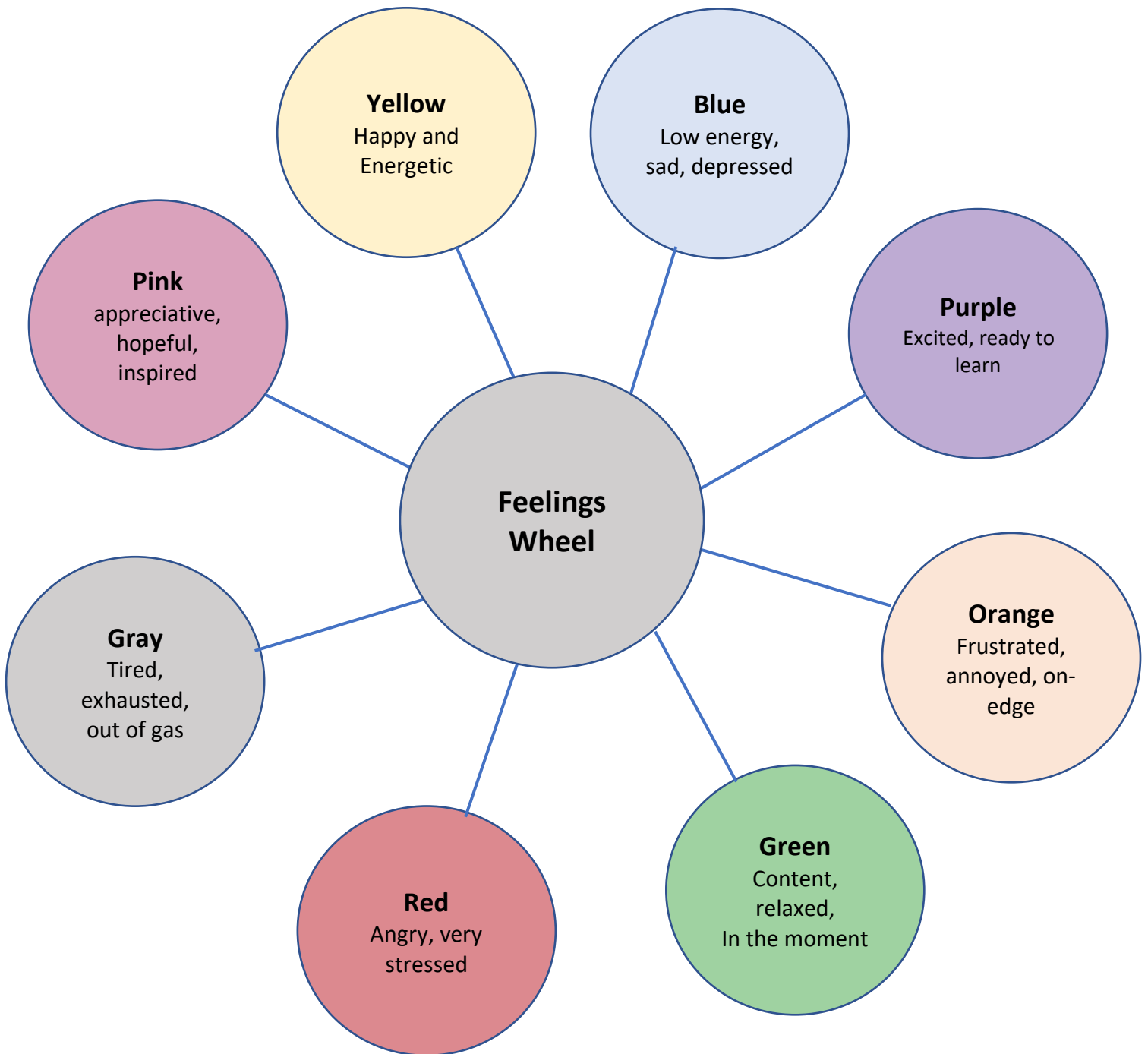
“Get to Know You” Introduction

- 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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