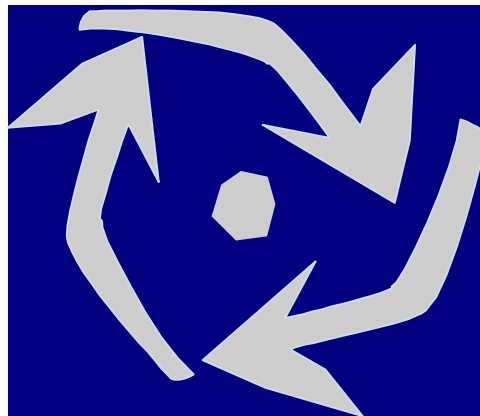


# Teach them to Fish: Working with Youth in Transition from Foster Care

## Participants Manual



### **Institute for Public Sector Innovation**

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## HISTORY AND GOALS OF PROJECT

This project is the result of a federal grant designed to support the development, delivery and dissemination of a training curriculum for child welfare staff throughout New England. The curriculum "Teach Them to Fish: Empowering Practices for Work with Youth in Transition from Foster Care" came about through a collaborative process among social service professionals and young adults throughout New England. The development included the review and assessment of:

- Adolescent caseworker job descriptions from the six New England states;
- Behavioral event interviews with "outstanding workers" where they described key events the highs and lows of their work as Adolescent Caseworkers;
- Behavioral event interviews and focus groups with youth-in-care;
- Analysis of organizational (department) policy manuals and mission statements to determine the contextual skills needed to successfully function within that organizational structure.

The goal of this process was to discover the competencies needed by child welfare staff for effective work with adolescents as they move into adulthood and independent living. These competencies were then used to create this competency-based training. This holistic approach used includes:

- Specific content knowledge – the roles and functions needed by caseworkers including youth development, adolescent psychology, case management, and programming;
- Interpersonal skills – relationship building, communications skills, use of the learning cycle, boundaries, individual/group and family interventions;
- Contextual knowledge and skills – systems knowledge including mandates, service constraints, and ways of dealing with them.

Throughout this project, a youth development approach included the involvement of youth as full partners in the design and delivery of the training.

The goals of the Project are to:

- Deliver a client-sensitive, interactive and integrated training approach that capitalizes on the expertise and experience of both the participants and the training teams;
- Sensitize those who work with children and/or families to the dynamics of youth transitioning out of foster care, and;
- Promote communication and collaboration among service providers in the hope that it will positively impact professional practice.

This training provides a unique opportunity for people from different aspects of the service continuum to collaborate, with the expectation that the workshop experience will set the stage for more intense and frequent collaboration in the field through referrals, consultation and other forms of cooperative efforts. The ultimate goal is for people who work within the foster care system to understand and incorporate a youth development approach and to incorporate the relevant competencies into their daily practice.

## History of the “Teach Me to Fish” Video

The video that accompanies this training was developed through a process that included:

- Individual interviews with former and present youth in care
- A summit held with 9 youth from four New England states who were:
  - racially, ethno-cultural and regionally diverse
  - aged 18 to 21 at time of filming
  - were or had been in foster care
  - engaged in the process of transitioning out of care

A goal of the training was to have youth voices present at trainings, preferably as co-trainers but when not possible to bring their voices and thoughts present through the video.

The video is edited into 8 sections that reflect the subdivisions of the training. During the interviews youth **were not** asked to specifically address topics like coaching, networking etc. but asked general questions concerning;

- what workers had and had not done to assist them in their transition process
- which qualities they found most valuable in effective workers
- things they specifically would like workers trained in.

Youth were involved in all aspects of the process including assisting in the editing from all the taped interviews and the completion of the finished product.

Each section of the video is approximately six minutes long. The video will be shown throughout the training, accompanied by questions designed to help participants listen for what the youth felt was important information.

**“TEACH THEM TO FISH”  
WORKING WITH YOUTH IN TRANSITION FROM FOSTER CARE**

*“If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day.*

*If you teach a man how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime”*

*- Confucius*

**Agenda**

**Day 1**

Registration

Welcome and Introduction

The Competencies- Roles and Functions of Workers

Video- Introduction to "Teach Them to Fish"

BREAK

Youth Development Tool Kit Activity and S.O.S

Video: Youth Development

LUNCH

Adolescent Development: “Looking at You”

Wonder Years Video clip/ Stages of Adolescent Development

Positive Adolescent Development

Video: Adolescent Development

Popsicle Stick Activity (optional)

BREAK

Significant Adult Activity

Video: Coaching

Wrap up

## **“TEACH THEM TO FISH”**

### **WORKING WITH YOUTH IN TRANSITION FROM FOSTER CARE**

#### **Day 2**

Check In

Independent Living Island Cup Exercise

Communication Skills/ Getting Clear Activity

Networking Definition

**BREAK**

Video: Networking

Circles of Support/ Moon Lift

Essential Connections (optional activity)

**LUNCH**

Advocacy Definition

Video: Advocacy

Advocacy Role-play

**BREAK**

Group juggle/ William Bridges stages of transition

Cycle of Transition

Transition Checklist

Video: Transition and Conclusion

Jeopardy and Action Plan

Evaluation

# Session 1

## Setting the Stage

### **Learning Objectives:**

#### **At the end of this session, participants will:**

- Understand a Competency Based Training
- Understand how the training competencies were developed
- Understand what information will be included in this training
- Understand the development of the “Teach Me to Fish” video

# Handout 1A

## Group Resume

Your group has been asked to apply to the New World Foundation for funding to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century model for independent living services for youth in foster care. The selected group will be invited to come to the Foundation headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and attend the international conference in the Fiji Islands.

This pre-application is required to compete for the money. Be prepared to present this information to the group.

1. Total group involvement in the child welfare system (both specific and non-specific to the field)
2. Total years of education for the group (years, special courses etc.)
3. Areas of expertise and education in which individuals in the group excel.
4. Other unique qualities of individuals in the group (don't forget unusual things you've done)
5. Name of your group:

adapted from: Ansell & Morse, Creative Life Skills Training II

# Handout 1B

## An Ode to Ground Rules

Spelling and handwriting aren't important to us,  
if you misspell a word, we won't make a fuss,

If you discuss personal subjects that require privacy,  
take comfort that we strive for confidentiality,

Please be in time, and don't arrive late,  
respect is a virtue, we should all celebrate,

Three minute rule, timeout and free parking,  
we can't get off subject, or get tempers to sparking,

But, if you have an issue, that can be addressed later,  
just mark it down on the list; it's a huge time saver!

There are no stupid remarks, no stupid questions,  
we are open and eager to hear all your suggestions,

If you listen with respect, then others will follow,  
friendships will emerge, and continue beyond tomorrow,

Don't feel that you have to stay glued to your chair,  
get up, move around, and grab some fresh air,

And last but not least, please let there be no blaming,  
because harm only comes from patronizing and shaming.

By Vanessa Santarelli

# Handout 1C

## Roles and Functions of Adolescent Caseworkers

### 1. COACH/ MENTOR/ GUIDE: (70% of caseworker time)

- Caseworkers' roles and functions revolve around their various relationships with the youth they work with; they act as a teacher, role model, guide, friend, companion etc.
- Caseworkers may act as “family” for youth they work with, and may become the only parental figure in the young person's life.

The five functions of coaching are to:

- **Listen:** Workers are there to listen, understand and give youth a voice by providing them the chance to be heard. They help youth identify what they need and want. This is the early stage of developing an in-depth relationship with youth.
- **Plan:** Caseworkers assist youth both formally (using life skills assessment tools) and informally to assess and plan their personal goals and the direction they want to go. The focus is on what youth want and their needs- not necessarily on maintaining compliance.
- **Provide Experience:** Caseworkers create and support “real life” experiences for youth through experiential learning. The setting may be a three-day canoe trip, accompanying the youth through the process of getting a driver’s license or deciding to drop out of a rehab program. Attention is given to providing youth the space necessary to try something first hand, succeed, fail and then try again with supportive adults there when needed.
- **Practice:** This step is similar to the above but is a more planned preparatory experience (such as a semi-independent living program) to help youth prepare for real world situations/events such as job interviews, meetings with care providers, or writing a college essay.
- **Reflect:** In this step the caseworker helps youth to review and decide whether the approach they have taken and decisions they have made have been in their best interest.

## **2. NETWORKER: (15% of caseworker's time)**

- Caseworkers act as a resource broker or an options broker. They know where the resources (e.g. Jobs, apartments, therapist, and scholarships) are for the youth and they help broker those connections for the youth.
- Caseworkers have contacts developed through years of experience working in the field or through personal connections that they have in the community.
- Caseworkers have a commitment to youth getting the resources they need in order to achieve self-sufficiency while maintaining a process that empowers and educates them on how to access and network other resources that they will need in the future.

## **3. ADVOCATE: (15% of caseworker's time)**

- Caseworkers advocate for youth internally in the child welfare system and externally in the community at large.
- Caseworkers are the “life line”- going the extra distance- showing up when no one else does and acting in a way that expresses unconditional acceptance and love for the youth.
- Caseworkers help coordinate meetings on behalf of the youth
- Caseworkers intervene for youth concerning their needs/rights in areas such as education, placement, and mental health or specialized service areas.
- Caseworkers role may cause some friction between the worker and the systems in which they function.
- The longevity of the relationship and at times the “parental” role results in standing by the youth and advocating for them long after others have given up.



## **Session 2**

### **Youth Development**

#### **Adolescent Caseworker Competencies Addressed:**

From: A Competency Model for Adolescent Caseworkers book

V. Technical Knowledge: 37.00 Youth Development (37.01 – 37.05)

#### **Session Goal:**

To understand how a youth development perspective strengthens work with youth.

#### **Session Learning Objectives**

##### **At the end of this session participants will:**

- ✓ Understand the philosophy of youth development
- ✓ Understand the services, supports and opportunities necessary to promote healthy development.
- ✓ Learn how to apply the concepts of services, supports and opportunities to a case situation.

## **Handout 2A**

### **Youth Development Approach to Independent Living**

A Youth Development approach to independent living is an ongoing process of meeting the needs of young people by:

- Empowering youth by valuing their strengths and potential
- Valuing young people, regardless of their situation
- Recognizing the strengths and potential of each youth
- Involving youth in the decisions and processes that affect their lives
- Promoting a young person's development rather than identifying and fixing their problems.
- Enabling young people to participate in and contribute to programs and communities
- Emphasizing services and supports that contribute to healthy development
- Including a wide range of community members and resources to enhance supports and opportunities for youth.

## Handout 2B

### Definitions

**Youth Development:** is the ongoing process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to 1) meet their basic personal and social needs, and 2) build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives.  
(Child Welfare League of America)

### **Youth Development is accomplished through:**

**Services:** are the provision of resources, goods and knowledge to young people.

**Opportunities:** are provided for young people to learn how to act on the world around them, to test out ideas and behaviors and experiment with different roles. These opportunities must be provided in a variety of ways and be perceived as challenging and legitimate to young people. They are done with and by the young person, not things that are done to them.

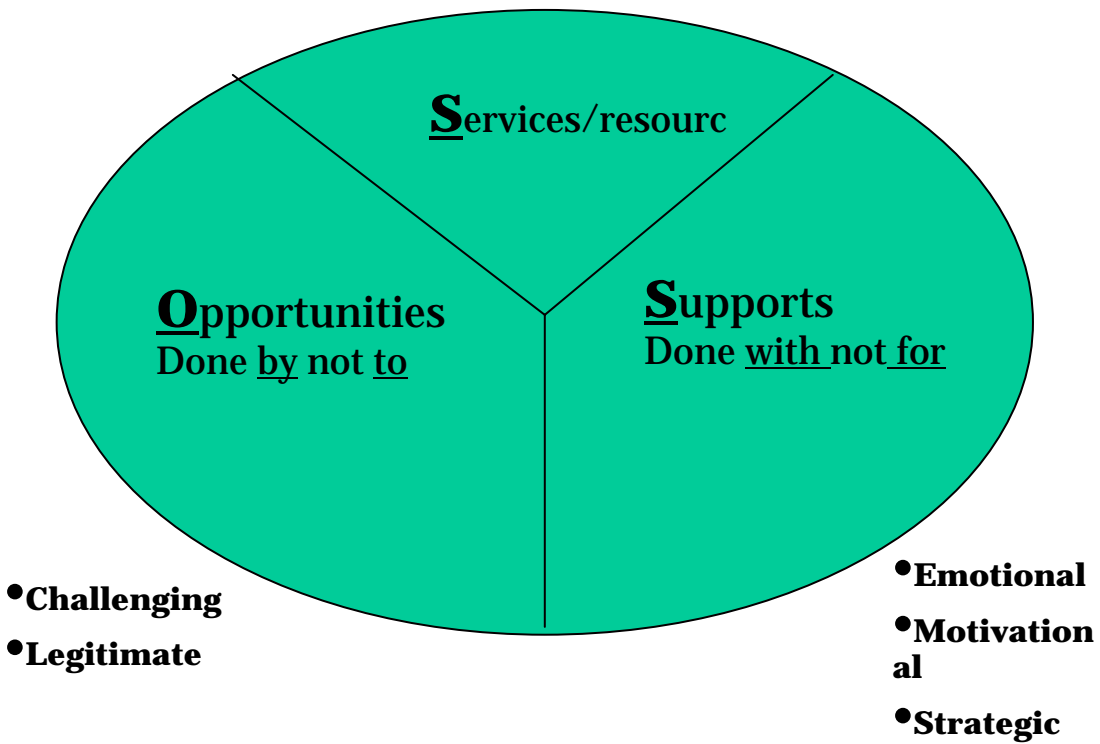
**Supports:** are interpersonal relationships that allow a young person to take full advantage of existing services and opportunities. There are three types of support:

- Emotional support provides a young person with caring individuals to help them meet their needs and discuss issues in a safe environment.
- Motivational support provides high expectations, guidance and/or boundaries
- Strategic support helps young people access resources necessary to build competencies.

Supports **must** be affirming and respectful, ongoing, and offered by a variety of people. Programs can offer a variety of supports by helping youth develop support networks, provide strategic mentors to explore interests, provide activities that allow youth to interact with adults.

**Handout 2C**  
**Services- Opportunities- Supports**

# SOS





## **Session 3**

### **Adolescent Development**

#### **Adolescent Caseworker Competencies Addressed:**

**From:** A Competency Model for Adolescent Caseworkers

V. Technical Knowledge: 32:00 (32:01 – 32:14)

#### **Session Goal:**

To understand critical aspects of adolescent development.

#### **Session Learning Objectives**

When participants complete this session they will:

- ✓ Understand the significant stages, milestones and activities of adolescent development.
- ✓ Understand the stages of adolescents in transition.
- ✓ Understand the particular hurdles faced in adolescent development by youth in care.
- ✓ Understand how significant adults contributed to their own adolescent development.
- ✓ Will be able to apply the basic concepts of adolescent development to a case study example.

## **Handout 3A**

### **Stages of Adolescent Development**

#### **Early Adolescence (11-14):**

- Push and pull of independence vs. dependence
- Biological changes
- Plagued by an excruciating self consciousness
- Worry and wonder Who am I? Where do I belong? as part of identity formation
- Increased dependence on peers manifesting in a need to conform when it comes to things like fashion, music and other aspects of youth culture
- Conscious of their sexuality
- Concrete thinking stage
- Mood swings, boredom and depression

#### **Mid Adolescence (15-17):**

- Independence and identity become extremely important
- Rejection of adult values and ideas
- Ability to think abstractly and plan ahead
- Peer group influence
- Experimentation with adult roles
- Testing out of new values and ideas
- Risk taking-“it can’t happen to me”
- Importance of relationships

#### **Late Adolescence (18-21):**

- Separation from parent
- What do I want to do with my life?
- More comfortable seeking adult advice
- Peers are important but youth can now evaluate their influence and opinions rather than wholeheartedly embracing them without question
- Intimate relationships are important
- Acceptance of adult responsibilities

“In contemporary American society, the transition from childhood to adult status is delayed until well after individuals have attained biological maturity. This transition period commonly called the adolescent or youth era, is currently perceived as extending from approximately 11 to 21 and incorporating specific developmental eras often referred to as “early adolescence” (approximately ages 11 – 14), “mid adolescence” (about 15 – 17), and “late adolescence” (approximately ages 18 – 21).

Understanding Youth Development: Promoting Positive Pathways of Growth U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, January 1997:

## **Handout 3B**

### **Positive Adolescent Development- Four critical areas**

#### **1. Sense of Industry and Competency**

- Occurs through participation in sports, extracurricular activities, art or hobbies, community service, religious organizations, part-time jobs (particularly apprenticeships), and clubs or community organizations.
- Helps individuals' to believe in their own abilities.
- Interactions that engage young people in productive activities where they win recognition for their productivity.
- Fosters the development of a stable identity during adolescence.
- The perception of the self as a potentially productive member of society.

#### **Sense of Industry and Competency for *youth in care*:**

#### **Helpful Strategies**

## **2. A Sense of Control Over One's Fate in Life**

- Occurs when children and adolescents are engaged in interactions where they can successfully predict the outcomes of their actions.
- A belief that their actions can affect their futures.
- When parents or other adults consistently respond to pro-social behaviors with positive sanctions and misbehaviors with negative sanctions- children and adolescents learn that their behaviors are related to particular responses.
- When teachers or other adults in the community respond to adolescents' actual behaviors – rather than preconceived ideas-adolescents learn that they will be treated fairly based on their own actions.

### **A Sense of Control Over One's Fate in Life *for youth in care:***

#### Helpful strategies

### **3. Sense of Connectedness to Others**

- Happens when adults provide social and emotional support to adolescents while permitting them psychological and emotional independence.
- Involves a connectedness to other people, their community and the society.
- Guiding adolescent behaviors by monitoring their activities provides a signal to adolescents that adults in the family or community care about them and are willing to be involved in their lives.
- Peer interactions based on mutual respect and reciprocity help in the development of empathy and intimacy.

**Sense of Connectedness to Others *for youth in care:***

### **Helpful Strategies:**

#### **4. Sense of Identity:**

- Associated with
  - Positive interpersonal relationships
  - Psychological and behavioral stability
  - Productive adulthood.
- Adolescents' sense of competency, connectedness and control lead to their sense of self into a stable and consistent identity.
- Their self- concept becomes integrated into their understanding of society, making them feel part of the larger culture.
- Identity is formed when youth have:
  - An opportunity to become involved in community service
  - When they receive support for their future goals from family members, teachers, and friends
  - When they have opportunities to express and develop their own points of view in their families.

#### ***Sense of Identity for youth in care:***

#### **Helpful Strategies:**

Source: Understanding Youth development: Promoting Positive Pathways of Growth. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, January 1997.



## **Session 4**

### **Coaching**

#### **Adolescent Caseworker Competencies Addressed in this session:**

**From: A Competency Model for Adolescent Caseworkers**  
Section III. Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills 17.00  
Coaching (17.01 – 17.07)

#### **Session Goal:**

Understand and integrate coaching as primary role in strengthening work with youth.

#### **Session Learning Objectives:**

As a result of participating in this session participants will be able to:

- ✓ Name and describe the functions of a coach.
- ✓ Recognize the importance of coaching in preparing youth for life after care.
- ✓ Be able to utilize basic coaching skills.
- ✓ Integrate coaching communication skills into work with youth.
- ✓ Understand the learning cycle.

## **Handout 4A**

### **Significant Adult Activity**

- 1. Name of a significant adult from your adolescence.**
  
- 2. What role did this person play in your life?**
  
- 3. What behaviors did this adult demonstrate towards you?**
  
- 4. How did feel when you were around this adult?**
  
- 5. What did this adult teach you about yourself and the world around you?**

(Adapted from Southeastern Network's Tools of the Trade)

## **Handout 4B**

### **Characteristics of Supportive Adults**

Smart  
Open minded  
Positive minded  
Accepts alternatives  
Keep eyes open for us  
Knows about IL skills  
& program policies  
Educated  
Positive help  
Should be able to relate to teenagers  
Flexible Respectful Make youth feel special  
Be open to explore new things Truly cares about us  
Enthusiastic Individual approach with youth set examples  
Treat youth like normal kids Be available to help at all times  
Show commitment to my needs Nice Hope Know how to network  
Work hard to help us and know us Interesting All ears Options  
Down to earth Thoughtful Dependable Positive attitude  
Be understanding and have realistic expectations  
Optimistic Laid back Outgoing personality  
Encourages positive decision-making  
Have knowledge of available money  
Lots of time Involved with youth  
Stick with youth even after care  
Gives good information  
Take active role  
Spends time  
Reliable Peer tutors  
Patient Caring  
Available Consistent  
Supportive Knows us  
Be real Honest  
Good hygiene Understanding

(From Southeastern Network's Tools of the Trade)



**Handout 4D**  
**Independent Island Cup Activity**  
**Observer's worksheet**

Please note any of the functions used by the Coach and by the person being coached in your group.

<b>Coaching Skill</b>	<b>How Coach shows skill (or doesn't)</b>	<b>How person coached reacts or responds</b>
<b>Listen</b>		
<b>Plan</b>		
<b>Provide Experience</b>		
<b>Practice</b>		
<b>Reflect</b>		

## Handout 4E

### Communication Skills

1. The three parts to good communication.

- Active or Empathic Listening
- Asking Good Questions
- Making Suggestions

**a. Empathic Listening**

In his book, **Seven Habits of Highly Successful People**, Steven Covey talks about listening not only with your ears- but with your eyes, your ears and your heart- listen as though you were putting yourself in that person's shoes for the duration of the conversation.

- Quiet Your Own Mind
- Know when to be quiet
- Listen to understand not to be understood
- Listen with your ears, eyes and heart
- Hear the whole person and all they are saying.

**b. Use of Positive Body Language**

- Nodding
- Smiling
- Attentive posture
- Open posture
- Interested facial expressions
- Eye contact

**c. Use of Positive Verbal Signals**

- "oh"
- "I see"
- "Mmmm-mmm"
- "That's interesting"
- "Really" (not with disbelief but confirmation)
- Prompting by repeating last or most significant words to get youth to elaborate. "Tell me more"

**d. Summarize what you hear**

- "Let me check to be sure I understand . . ."
- "So, you're saying that. . ."
- "As I understand you . . ."
- "Let me see if I've got that . . ."
- "What I hear you saying is . . ."
- "So, our assignments for next week are . . ."]

## 2. Open-ended questions

- Promotes discovery, stimulate thinking and encourage response
- Useful for beginning a conversation
- Help youth start talking about a topic
- Help outline a situation
- Gives a broad description of what happened and their reaction to it
- Helps you to find out what is most important by seeing where a youth takes the question.

### Clarifying Questions:

#### To get more information:

- In what way would this make things easier for you?
- Just how would you go about solving your objectives?
- What would you like to get out of this/that meeting?

#### To get the person to be reflective:

- You're saying you were happy when... How so?
- You say you were happy (or angry) when you heard that? Can you say more about that?
- What do you think needs to be communicated to ensure everyone understands?

### Creative questions

- How have you seen other people handle similar situations?
- Can you explain more about where you're going with that?
- Would you like to talk about that some more?
- What would you do here if you could do whatever you wanted?

## 3. Making Suggestions (carefully)

- Encourage youth to develop own ideas even if they seem to have "dried up"
- Provide prompts to encourage creativity "What about ....?"
- Use your own suggestions as additional thoughts to add to their ideas

## 4. Giving feedback (carefully)

- Feedback describes the behavior not the person.
- Feedback is constructive not negative
- Feedback is factual, specific and accurate – not vague
- Feedback is about behaviors the youth can change, not about situations outside the youth's control.
- Feedback is prompt but respectful of confidentiality and privacy.

## **Session 5**

### **Networking**

**Adolescent Caseworker Competencies addressed in this session:**

**From: A Competency Model for Adolescent Caseworkers**

**I. Work Management Skills: 3.00 Networking (3.01 – 3.03)**

#### **Session Goal:**

To understand and integrate networking as a primary role in strengthening work with youth.

#### **Session Learning Objectives:**

As a result of participating in this session participants should be able to:

- ✓ Understand the functions of networking.
- ✓ Recognize and appreciate the link between essential connections, communities and resources.
- ✓ Understand how to coach youth through the process of developing their own network.

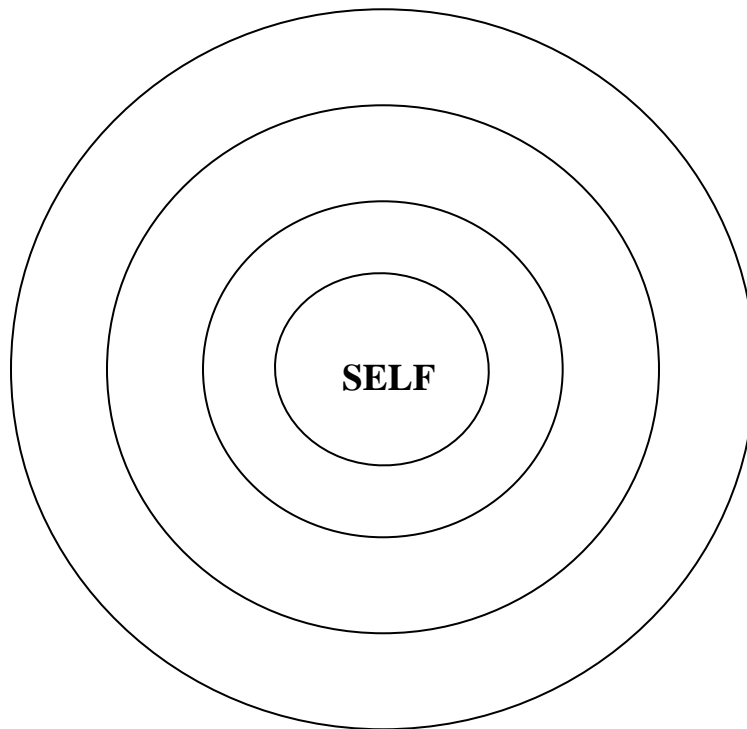


## **Handout 5B**

### **Adult Circles of Support**

**Step One:** Recall your first “home away from home.” Think about the relationships and resources that were supports (emotional, motivational, strategic) for you at this time.

**Step Two:** Put your own name in the middle of the circle. Place the names of those closest to you in the next circle. In the next circle place people who were there for you but not primary. In the outer circle place acquaintances.

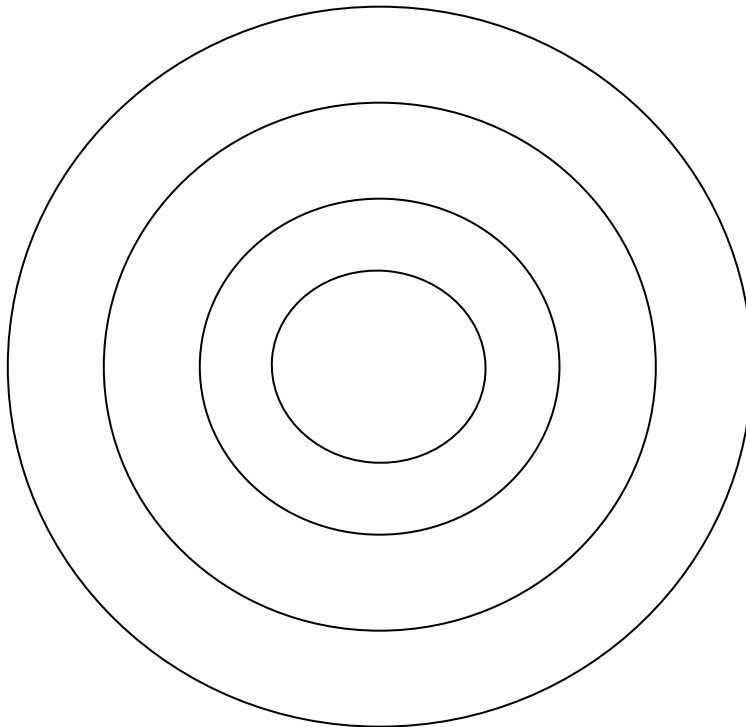


## Handout 5C

### Youth's Circles of Support

**Step One:** Think about the relationships and resources which support a youth you work with (emotional, motivational, and strategic).

**Step Two:** Identify 3 to 5 people in their lives. Put their name in the middle of the circle and then place primary support people for them in the next circle. In the next circle place people who are not primary supports but are there for them. In the outer circle place acquaintances. Some of these people may be immediate family, extended family, close friends, acquaintances, people who work with them and people from the community.



## Handout 5D Essential Connections

Essential Connection	Examples		Needs Met	
	For You	For Youth	For You	For Youth
<b>INFORMATION/ KNOWLEDGE</b> What do I need to know in order to live in the world?				
<b>SIGNIFICANT PERSON</b> Who is important in my life?				
<b>GROUP</b> What groups do I belong to (communities)?				
<b>MEANINGFUL ROLE</b> What do I do that gives my life purpose or meaning?				
<b>MEANS OF SUPPORT</b> How do I financially support myself and my family?				
<b>SOURCE OF JOY</b> What makes me happy?				
<b>SYSTEM OF VALUES</b> In what do I have strong beliefs?				
<b>HISTORY</b> How do I know about and preserve my past?				
<b>PLACE</b> What spaces, places or locations are important to me?				

## **Session 6 Advocacy**

**Adolescent Case Worker Competencies addressed in this session:**

**From:** A Competency Model for Adolescent Caseworkers

I. Work Management Skills: 6.0 Advocacy (6.01 –6.05)

### **Session Goal:**

Understand and integrate advocacy as primary role in strengthening work with youth.

### **Session Learning Objectives:**

As a result of participating in this session it is expected that trainees will be able to:

- ✓ Name and describe the functions of an advocate.
- ✓ Understand the importance of advocacy in the life of a youth in care.
- ✓ Understand appropriate methods of advocacy to a given scenario.
- ✓ Know how to encourage and teach youth to advocate for themselves.

## **Handout 6A**

### **Billie Jo's Role**

#### **Information for Billie Jo:**

You are 17 and living in your 4<sup>th</sup> foster home. You are a senior in high school and are planning to graduate this year. You have been a fairly good student but recently have been skipping some days and recently stopped talking about college- you now seem uninterested. Your caseworker has suggested that you set up a PET meeting at school with the Special Ed Director, your foster parents, herself and you to figure out what will happen after you graduate. You request an initial meeting with your caseworker to plan for the meeting. The concerns you express at the meeting with your caseworker are:

- Your belief that the Special Ed Director doesn't believe that you should go on to college. She has made remarks to you about your learning disability and how you would never be able to "make the grade" in college
- Your fear that the special ed director will not listen to you in the meeting and will just put you down in front of everyone.
- That by missing classes you have fallen behind and will not be able to catch up and graduate with the rest of the class.
- Your desire to get through high school and graduate but fear that you can't do it. You were confident before but now that you're behind you are afraid you can't do it.
- Your belief that there might be some colleges out there that would be right for you but you don't have anyone to help you find them.
- Your desire for your caseworker to do all the talking at the meeting and get everyone to help you.
- Your desire for the caseworker to get the Special Ed Director to change and apologize to you.

## **Handout 6B**

### **Caseworker's Role**

#### **Information for Caseworker:**

This is the first you have heard that Billie Jo was having any problems at school or with her plans for college. You are taken by surprise. Your job is to help her sort out the situation and the issues involved. Some items you might want to explore with Billie Jo are:

- Who should attend the meeting?
- What should be discussed at the meeting?
- What might be the agenda (order of the discussion) for the meeting?
- What might be important for Billie Jo to get out of the meeting?
- How will you encourage Billie Jo to advocate for herself/himself in the meeting?
- What might you be willing to say for her/him (if anything)?
- How might this meeting empower Billie Jo?



## **Session 7 Transition**

Adolescent Case Worker Competencies addressed in this session:

From: A Competency Model for Adolescent Caseworkers

V. Technical Knowledge: 40 Preparation for Transition from Care  
(40.01 – 40.04)

### **Session Goal:**

To have participants understand how to integrate the major concepts of this training into their work with youth transitioning out of care.

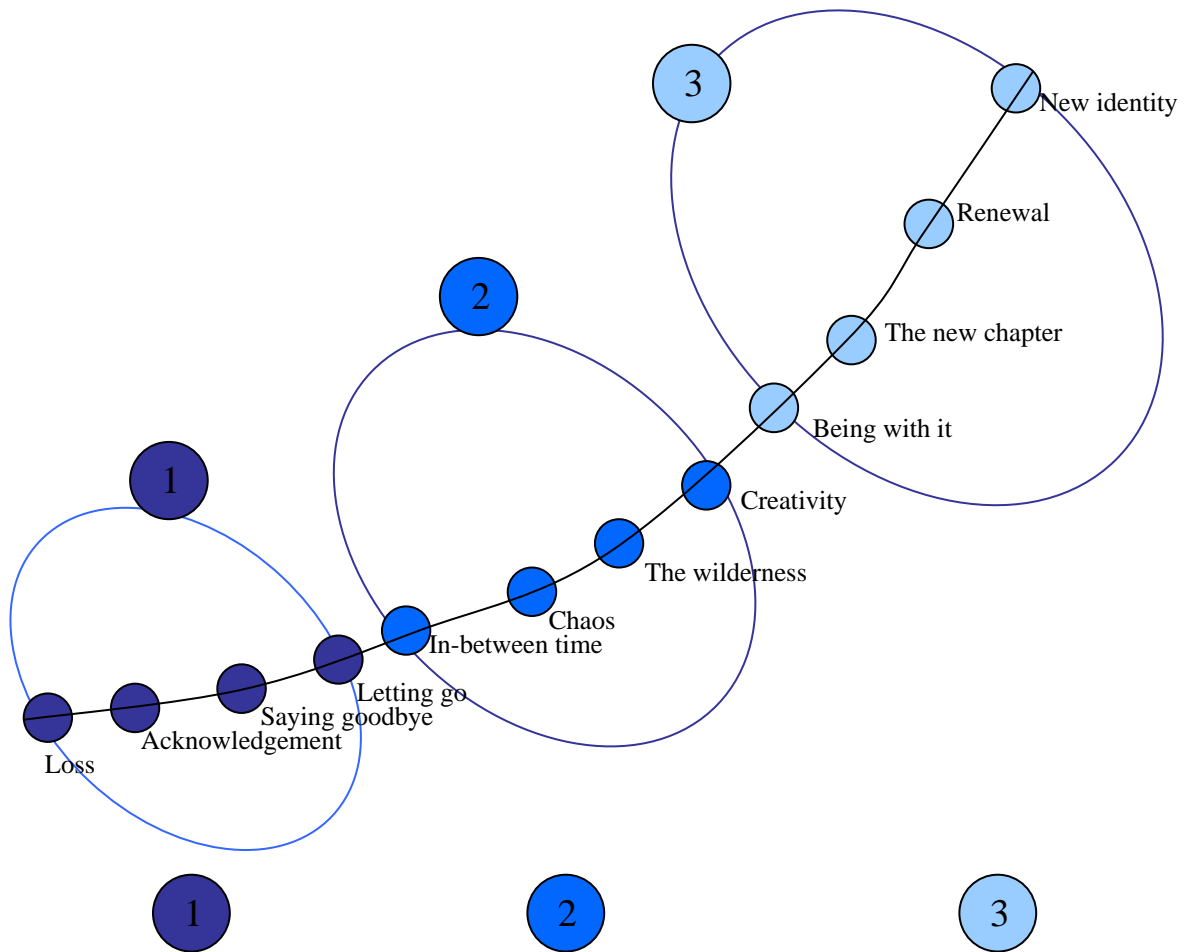
### **Learning Objectives:**

As a result of participating in this session it is expected that trainees will be able to:

- ✓ Define transition.
- ✓ Outline common issues around transition.
- ✓ Reiterate goals for youth in transition.
- ✓ Integrate concepts of this training into their work with youth in transition from foster care.

# Handout 7A

## The Transition Framework



### Endings

For change to work people need to end, acknowledge and let go of the old way-not only in terms of behavior, but also in terms of attitudes, self-image, assumptions, beliefs, and the hopes and fears that motivate behavior. To let go of those things is to experience a loss and one must mourn its passing, even though the old way may have been bad, hurtful, unpleasant, or even destructive.

### Neutral Zones

People not only have to let go of the old way to embrace the new one; they also have to get through an uncomfortable in-between time, when the old way is going, but the new way doesn't yet wholly work or feel comfortable. This "neutral zone," or in-between time, is a very confusing and chaotic time; but it is also a very creative one. Everything is in flux, so it is a time when people can work out innovative ways of doing things; there is less holding people back than at other times. At the same time, people are likely to feel lost and even discouraged about the very change that sounded so good only a little while earlier.

### Beginnings

The final phase of transition is the "new beginning" not the "start," which may occur the very day a change is announced, but the "beginning," which occurs when people (have ended the old and traversed the neutral zone) are actually emotionally ready to do things a whole new way. Like a birth, the archetype of all new beginnings-this third phase of transition happens on its own schedule. Things can start on the day that you say that they will, but the beginning will happen when people are inwardly ready. And that will take a while, so transition always takes longer-sometimes much longer-than change does.

**William Bridges' transition framework**

## **Handout 7B**

### **Stages of Transitions**

**The stages of transition from an independent living program in Oregon describe reactive depression as one common reaction to emancipation. The stages include:**

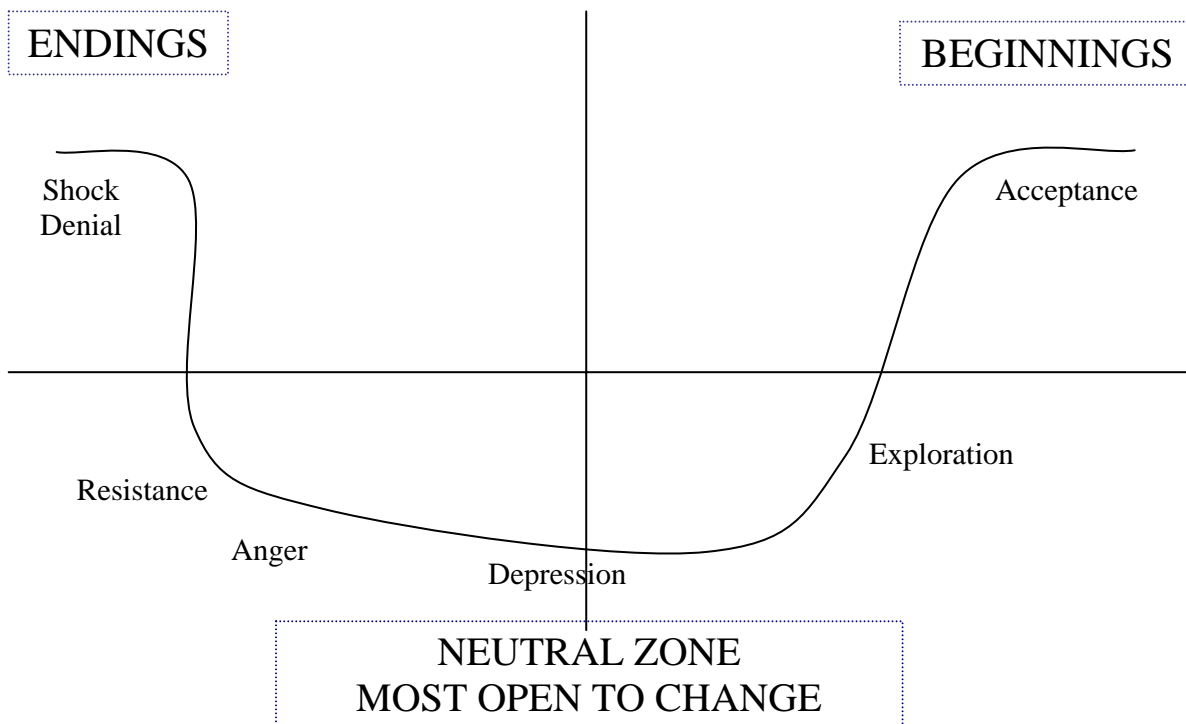
- **Anxiety:** During this stage youth have to “let go” of significant adults. They have numerous fears about moving out on their own. They begin to question their readiness for living on their own.
  
- **Elation:** this phase is short lived usually lasting about a month. Youth tend to “feel free” in their apartment- especially from adult control. However, living on your own requires being responsible for all bills, house cleaning, developing a routine, etc. Youth need strong emotional support during this time from caring adults to help them cope with disappointment.
  
- **Fear and loneliness:** the elation stage doesn’t last long as young people realize that independence is not all that they envisioned. Maintaining a household routine of paying bills, cooking and household management are boring and difficult. Friends are not as available and it is difficult to make new ones. We see young people withdraw and become isolated. The triggers of fear and loneliness may cause some youth to self medicate. Sometimes their depression is often masked by anger and aggression and the system becomes the target of these feelings.
  
- **Quiet confidence:** the transition to this stage is gradual and accomplished through the resolution of the reactive depression. Youth “check in” with their support networks to discuss how they have resolved a particular situation. Young people are developing new and lasting relationships and their life experiences are producing accomplishments.

Source: Building Positive Connections/ (Based on a paper presented by Brian Simonitch at the University of Denver. Graduate School of Social Work, Region VIII Family Resource Center for Regional Youth Services Workshop, October 27-29, 1983) DRAFT.

Curriculum Pilot: Walking the Path, A curriculum for Life’s Transitions, May 2002

## Handout 7C Combined Chart

- Anxiety: Regarding Endings
- Elation: with freedoms → reality of responsibilities
- Fear and Loneliness: Maintaining lifestyle difficult may withdraw and self medicate not able “handle it”
- Quiet Confidence: Resolutions, use of support networks, new and lasting relationships, life experience leads to accomplishment



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## **Handout 7D Transition Checklist**

### **Managing Endings**

- Do I understand the young person's history and the impact leaving foster care will have on him/her? Have I identified who is likely to lose what – including how the loss will impact you as the worker?
- Have I helped the youth acknowledge these losses?
- Have I permitted the young person to grieve and expressed to them your own sense of loss?
- Have I given the youth accurate information about the transition from foster care? Have I repeated this information several times?
- Have I used strengths-based strategies to assess the youth's readiness to transition from foster care?
- Have I found ways to “mark the ending from foster care”?
- Have I been careful not to denigrate their past but have found ways/strategies to honor it?
- Have I made a plan for giving young people a piece of the past to take with them?

### **Managing the Neutral Zone**

- Have I tried to normalize the neutral zone by explaining it as an uncomfortable time which, with careful attention, can be turned to everyone's advantage?
- Have I set short-range goals with youth and identified checkpoints along the way?
- Have I identified services, supports, and opportunities to help youth deal successfully with the neutral zone?
- Have I found opportunities for youth to be connected with the organization?
- Have I identified with youth the connections with people who will offer emotional support?
- Have I worked with youth to promote life skills and problem solving/critical thinking skills?
- Have I helped youth transform the losses into opportunities to try doing things a new way?
- Have I regularly checked in with youth?

## Managing the New Beginning

- Have I paid attention to the ending(s) and the neutral zone, or am I trying to make a beginning happen before it possibly can?
- Have I effectively communicated the transition from care to youth?
- Have I helped youth understand how the change will affect them?
- Have I identified with youth who will help them during this transition process?
- Have I been provided accurate information in my work with youth during this transition process?
- Have I acted as a role model for youth or found supportive resources to help them through the transition process?
- Have I found ways to celebrate the new beginning and the conclusion of the time of transition?
- Have I found ways to symbolize the new identity with youth?
- Have I found ways to give youth a piece of the transition to keep as a reminder of the difficult and rewarding journey we all took together?

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## Jeopardy

<b>Youth Development</b>	<b>Adolescent Development</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Networking</b>	<b>Managing Transition</b>
<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>
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