Building Skills, Transforming Communities, Improving Lives

National Wraparound Implementation Academy

2019

Creating Lasting Change

How to Make Wraparound Powerful for Youth and Families Involved in the Foster Care System

Natalie Richey and Carrie Gould-Kabler

Learning Objectives

- Learn the value of and how to engage biological family, youth, and natural supports in the Wraparound process.

- Gain knowledge and skills of what is needed to transition youth out of foster care with lasting connections and a sustainable plan.

- Understand the data that informs why these elements are important.

Challenges of partnering with children & families in Wraparound who are involved in the foster care system?

Clear our GLITTER

Foster Care Population

The number of children in foster care has increased in recent years, climbing to 443,000 in 2017 from a recent historic low of 397,000 in 2012.

Type of Placement
- In 2017, nearly 1/2 of all foster children lived in non-relative foster homes.
- Nearly 1/3rd lived in homes with relatives—known as "kinship care."
- 13 percent of children in foster care lived in group homes or institutions,
- 4 percent in pre-adoptive families

Time Spent in Foster Care
- 30 percent spent one to two years in care,
- 24 percent spent two to four years in care, and
- 4 percent spent more than five years in care

Placement Changes:
- Move a minimum of 4-6 times while in foster care*

Who do we engage?

Fostering a Sense of Belonging

Consider this …

Of the 3,463 transition age youth

- 2,978 (86%) of youth had data for both their permanency plan as well as the reason for exit.

- 1,262 (42.4%) of youth had successfully achieved their identified permanency plan goal (i.e. independent living, etc.)

- 1,716 (57.6%) of youth had exit reasons that were different from their permanency goal and ended up reunifying with their families.

And this…

- In another study, nearly half (45%) of youth exiting foster care returned to their biological family regardless of their transition/permanency plan

- Research indicates that youth aging out of care have a desire to maintain contact and a relationship with their biological family.

- Hence, it is important that we prioritize family connections for all children and youth in care, no matter what their placement setting or permanency goal.

OUR ROOTS RUN DEEP

Did you know?

- More than half of youth 16 and older who exit foster care have limited connections to biological family, natural supports and their community.

- This leads to higher rates of:
  - Homelessness
  - School drop out
  - Unemployment
  - Incarceration

- It also impacts their ability to trust and form lasting relationships as adults.

Engaging biological family

What information do we need to understand?

- Hopes and dreams for their family

- History of tough times

- How they got through the tough times

- Safety concerns that led us here

- Other family members in their life

Core beliefs inherent in this approach are:

1) Every child has a family, and they can be found if we try.
2) Loneliness can be devastating, even dangerous, and is experienced by most children in out of home care.
3) A meaningful connection to family helps a child develop a sense of belonging, and
4) The single factor most closely associated with positive outcomes for children is meaningful, lifelong connections to family.

The Family Finding Model

What about the child welfare worker?

_____

What information do you think would be important to share and gather from a child welfare worker?

Families
- Perspective of family story & initial conditions
- Strengths of each family member
- Importance of engaging bio family

Process
- Explain the Wraparound process
- Define role in the process

Team
- Purpose of the team
- Benefits of team
- Value of having bio. family on team

Child Welfare Social Worker

Court
- Discuss mandates and how they can be incorporated

Addressing Needs

How We Typically Think About Needs

As something strongly desired

- Example: The family needs to find stable housing in a safe neighborhood.

As an obligation

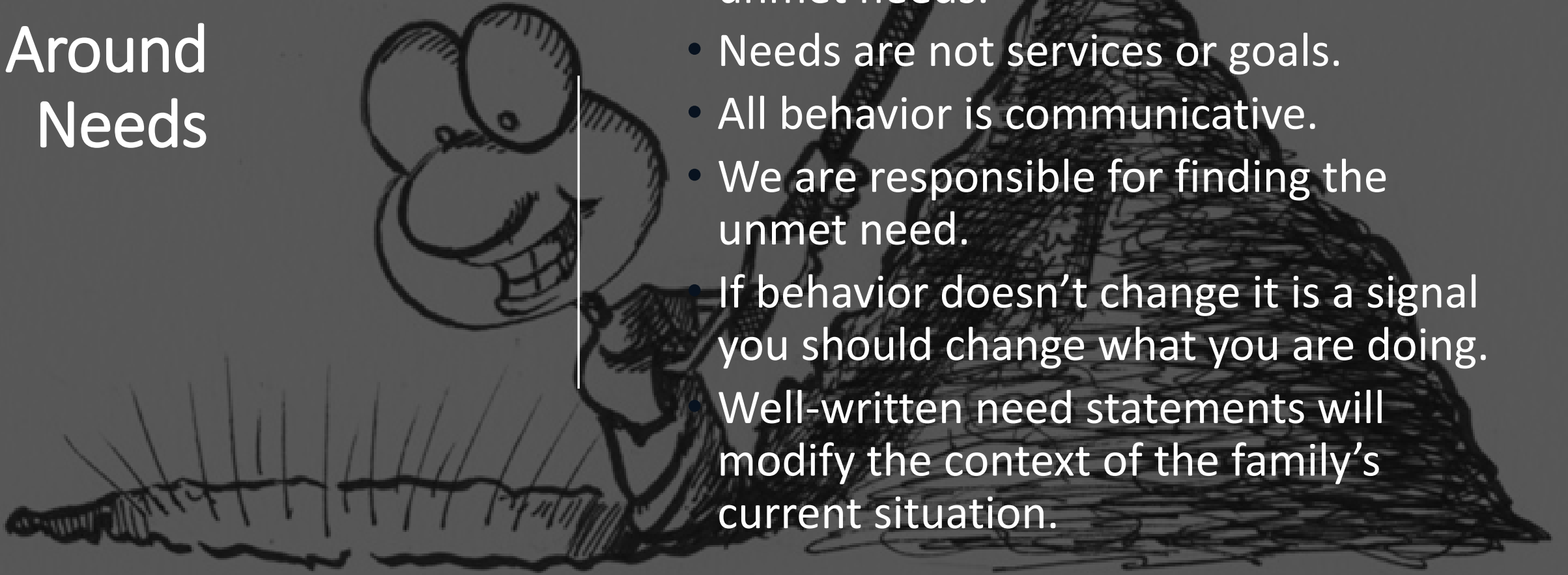- Example: Tim needs to follow all court ordered mandates.

As necessary steps toward accomplishing something

- Example: Susan needs to participate in respite so Ms. Watkins can have a break.

As something missing or lacking that is important to health

- Example: Ms. Roberts needs to be connected to the food bank in order to provide food for her family.

Values Around Needs

- Challenging behaviors are the result of unmet needs.
- Needs are not services or goals.
- All behavior is communicative.
- We are responsible for finding the unmet need.
- If behavior doesn't change it is a signal you should change what you are doing.
- Well-written need statements will modify the context of the family's current situation.

Neglect

Abuse   Cutting   Hording

Run Away   Stealing

Substance Use   Suicide

Family Story

Culture
Values
Trauma
Poverty
Bullying
Racism
Isolation
Support
Greif/Loss
Significant Events

Underlying Needs

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Needs in Wraparound

The set of conditions causing a behavior or situation to occur or not occur and explain the underlying reasons why behaviors or situations happen.

Examples:

- *Carl needs to feel confident he can be the dad Jess would be proud of.*

- *Rose needs to know her voice is powerful too.*

Planning

Ensuring lasting connections & sustainability when planning?

- Include ways for children to feel connected to their family

- Build in connections to community and natural supports

- Include way for children and families to feel more empowered

- Encourage all team members to contribute as wide a range of potential solutions as possible and encourage creative thinking.

- Brainstorm strategies that address the root cause of behavior versus trying to solely contain behaviors.

- For every formal strategy, make sure to brainstorm 2 informal ideas

- Leverage strengths of the youth, family, team members and community.

- Explore options around mandates that relate to the need, strengths and preferences of the youth, family and team.

Let's practice!

What about the mandates?
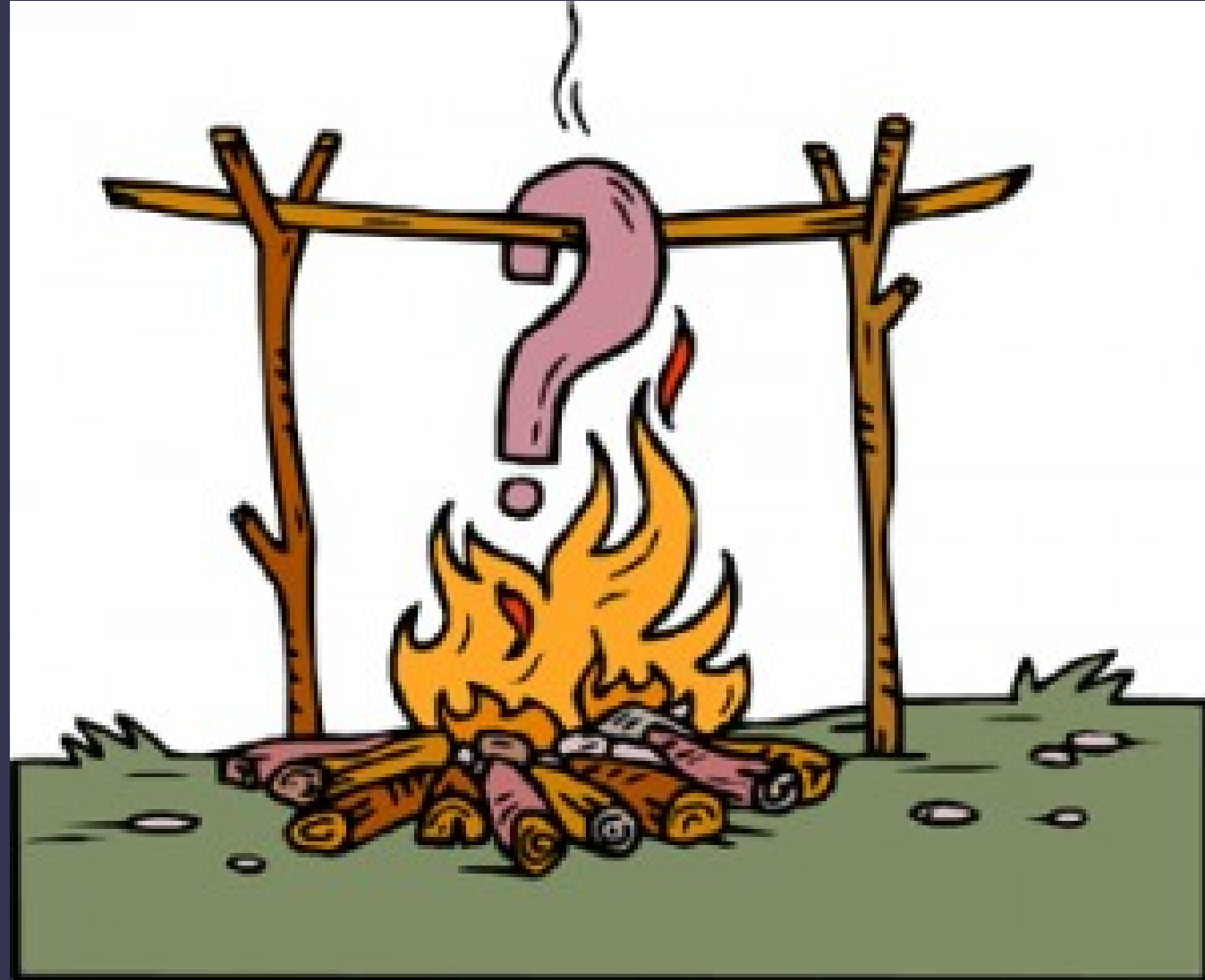
Who chooses
the strategies?

The
FAMILY

What are you going to take with you from today?

- **What are your top 2 biggest takeaways from this session???**

- **How will you apply those when you return to the office?**

- **How will doing those things help to create lasting change for children and families involved in foster care?**

Questions

References

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018, November 13), Fostering Youth Transitions. retrieved: April 12, 2019 from: https://www.aecf.org/resources/fostering-youth-transitions/

Contact Information

National Wraparound Implementation Center (NWIC)
www.nwic.org
Email: nwic@ssw.umaryland.edu

The Institute for Innovation and Implementation
University of Maryland, School of Social Work
525 W. Redwood St
Baltimore, MD 21201-1023
Email: theinstitute@ssw.umaryland.edu
Website: www.ssw.umaryland.edu/theinstitute