

Team Discussion Guide



The Role of Resource Parents in Supporting Family Recovery & Reunification

After viewing the video presentation “*The Role of Resource Parents in Supporting Family Recovery and Reunification*” use this Discussion Guide to facilitate further conversation within your team. Feel free to discuss the questions that are most relevant to your program. At the conclusion of the discussion, formulate and assign specific action steps as a way to move forward.

1 REACTION

Discuss the video presentation, including the story of the birth and resource mothers. What did you hear that stayed with you? What further questions do you have about their story?

2 PRIORITIZE

Review the following list of key strategies shared during the presentation. Select 2-3 strategies which your team or jurisdiction are doing well. Then select 2-3 principles in which you are struggling or need to improve. Were there any strategies that were not mentioned that you are doing or would like to improve?

- Facilitating quality and frequent parenting time
 - Cross-system training on SUD and trauma to resource parents
 - Giving resource parents a voice
 - Building bridges between resource parents and birth parents
 - Building a community of reunification support, which include resource parents
 - Other
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3 PRESENT CASE AND DISCUSS

For upcoming staffing, identify and discuss two cases in your FTC – one case in which the resource parent or kinship caregiver is working well together; then another case in which the resource parent or kinship caregiver is struggling. Discuss contributing factors in both cases and potential solutions.



BUILD CONNECTIONS

Discuss the opportunities your team in the following areas to improve partnerships with resource parents:

1. Quality and frequent family time - How can resource parents support quality and frequent family time? How can they support positive transitions (before and after visits)? How can they provide encouragement, logistical support, and modeling?

2. Build connections – Identify specific points in which support is needed to build connections between resource and birth parents? How can icebreaker meetings and comfort call help upon initial placement? How can family group decision making or team decision making meetings support the partnership immediately after relapse episodes or during reunification transition? How can agencies support an ongoing relationship post-reunification and after case closure? How can resource parents be part of the recovery community that supports families for the long haul?

3. Shared parenting – How can resource and birth parents work together? What can your FTC and partner agencies develop protocols that support shared parenting rather than leaving it up to resource and birth parents to figure it out on their own? How can they clarify the roles so both resource and birth parents know what they can expect from each other?



GIVE RESOURCE PARENTS A VOICE

Discuss opportunities to give both birth parents, resource parents, and kinship caregivers a voice in your FTC. Which of the following ideas could you implement to make sure their voices are heard?

- Gather updates from resource parents and discuss during FTC staffings
- Invite resource parents to FTC hearings – ask them how things are going and if they need anything to be successful; report any challenges and celebrate accomplishments
- Conduct focus groups and report results to Steering Committee
- Create an advisory board or work group to work on specific tasks
- Listen without judgement! Teach the skill of reflective listening which involves first listening and then rephrasing what you hear to show you understand the feelings.



BE A CATALYST FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Discuss opportunities for your FTC to be a catalyst for larger systems change:

1. Discuss opportunities for your FTC to create a system which clarifies and **promotes a shared parenting philosophy** for all cases in CWS. First, train about why shared parenting philosophy is important. Discuss what are current practices and elicit feedback on ideas for enhanced practice. Clarify roles of resources parents and opportunities for birth parents to participate in activities involving the child.

2. How can your FTC provide **ongoing cross-system training** to community stakeholders, including resource parents, about substance use disorders, family recovery, and active reunification? How can your FTC demonstrate and prove that its approach with these families work and it takes everyone to achieve improved outcomes for all families?

3. How can your FTC lead the way in showing **how larger systems can partner with resource parents** by clarifying their role in supporting family recovery and reunification, providing directive and supports to carry out that role through protocols and procedures, and include them throughout the entire process by giving them a voice?

4. How can you **give resource parents and kinship caregivers a voice**? Are there opportunities to include them on internal agency workgroups or governance groups traditionally limited only to staff? How can you help agencies improve overall performance for children and families and encourage resource parents' investment in system-wide changes?



NEXT STEPS

- Identify 1-2 specific practice or policy areas of supporting the role of resource and kinship caregivers that your team should focus on as a result of this discussion. Develop some next steps and if necessary share any challenges to your Steering Committee.
 - Download the Take Action Guide for additional next steps for your team.
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CONTACT INFO

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