

Training Module 2

Module Two trainings are designed to encourage individual participants to consider their roles in the program and how to contribute to program improvements. The trainings also provide an opportunity to review and integrate some of the themes and skills introduced in Module One. This module should occur following the completion of Module One. It is not recommended that modules be delivered independently of each other or in different order than presented.



The goals of Module Two are:

The Program Climate and You: To define the concept of “Program Climate” and provide strategies for staff to contribute to a positive program climate

Accentuate the Positive: To encourage staff to use a strength-based approach with families and colleagues

“What Is Depression?”: To build a program-wide response to depression

The individual or team committed to leading these workshops should understand that they may encounter potential obstacles and/or resistance from some participants to these trainings, as the topics to be discussed can inspire very strong emotions. Each topic is presented in a way that provides guidance for managing such situations to encourage learning, and to open communication and safety for participants.

The order of the trainings allows participants to build skills by first understanding key concepts, and then reflecting on what they bring to their program and work.



The Training Modules

The ***Introduction to the Modules*** is a resource for Workshop Leaders, offering support in facilitating successful trainings. In addition, each training outlines goals, objectives, methods and content while also providing points of preparation and reflection for the individual or team responsible for leading the training. You will find a Workshop Evaluation at the end of each workshop along with a list of other Family Connections materials that can provide additional support to the workshop’s topic and themes.

The Program Climate and You

A positive climate is key to a program's productivity, yet *program climate* is a term that may not be familiar to some early childhood professionals. Identifying the elements of the work environment that most affect each individual, gives participants an opportunity to reflect on how they can contribute to making every child and parent feel welcome in the program.

Goal

To introduce the concept of “program climate,” and provide strategies for staff to contribute to a positive climate in their own program.

Objectives

Participants will

- ▶ learn about the term “program climate”
- ▶ reflect on their own contribution to their program's climate
- ▶ learn how climate affects the work of the Head Start professional
- ▶ generate ideas about how to improve their program's climate

Method and Content

This workshop has three distinct sections, each designed to build on the others.

Exercise One: What affects program climate?

Exercise Two: Reflection worksheet

Exercise Three: Planning for change

- ▶ Exercise One provides participants with the opportunity to brainstorm together in order to identify the many factors that affect program climate.
- ▶ In Exercise Two participants are encouraged to reflect on how their own abilities contribute to the program climate.
- ▶ In Exercise Three participants consider suggestions for change and are encouraged to generate their own ideas for improving the classroom and program climate.

Throughout the workshop it is important to emphasize that everyone plays an important role in establishing a positive climate for adults and children.

Getting Started

What You Need:

- ▶ Time—this training should take 2 hours, not including Workshop Leader preparation. For more information on **Workshop Time Management** see the *Introduction to the Modules*
- ▶ A training space large enough to accommodate the members of the training to participate in large (e.g., 20 people or more) and small group (e.g., 3-6 people) discussions. For large groups, you may want to consider including 2 workshop leaders to help manage and respond to participant needs. For more information on considerations with **Group Size** see the *Introduction to the Modules*
- ▶ Seating for the training group
- ▶ A training packet for each participant that includes a copy of
 - Handout 1: The Program Climate and You: Reflection worksheet
 - Handout 2: The Program Climate and You: Planning for change
 - A Workshop Evaluation
- ▶ A pen or pencil for each participant
- ▶ Three large pieces of paper
- ▶ Two different colored markers for the Workshop Leader

Workshop Leader Preparation

Read through all the workshop materials first. Take time to reflect on your own responses to the exercise questions.

Keep in mind that the climate of a program affects all who enter and yet everyone is sensitive in their own way to the individual elements that make up that climate. For a variety of reasons including culture, temperament, and professional training, one teacher might be very sensitive to the type and level of noise in her classroom, while the director might be very focused on the level of security present upon entering the building. Both are valid elements of a program's climate. It is important to consider one's own answers to the questions posed in this training's exercises before leading the workshop in an effort to be open to the responses of the participants.

It is essential that staff members across all professional roles participate together for this training to be effective. Training multidisciplinary staff together creates an opportunity for individuals to share expertise and learn from each other. That said, having mixed composition in a group can also be challenging. Staff may feel intimidated with directors in the room and/or supervisors may not want to appear vulnerable in front of those they supervise. Perhaps, you can meet with directors/administrators before training to establish ground rules and brainstorm about how to create a comfortable environment for all participants.

Preparing the Workshop Space

- Prepare the workshop space by positioning chairs so that the participants can begin as a large group, but then move easily into smaller groups.
 - Prepare the three large pieces of paper
 - Title one "Parking Lot for Ideas."
 - Reserve one piece for Exercise One.
 - Title the last piece "The Program's Climate and You: Planning for change" for use in Exercise Three.
-
- Display the large pieces of paper so that the whole group can see each and the Workshop Leader can write on them easily.
-
- Provide each participant with a training packet as they enter the training.

Introduction to the Training

The introduction can and should be in the Workshop Leader's own words, but here are some points to include.

The topic of the training is "Program Climate and You." Offer a description of Program Climate in a manner that acknowledges the possibility that some participants may only be familiar with "climate" as a word describing the weather. Start by introducing the term "program climate" to the group.

For example, you might say...

"Just as the climate of our region in the country affects how it feels to live here, the climate of this program includes all the things that influence how it feels for staff and families to be here."

- ▶ Describe the objectives of this training:
 - To learn more about the term “program climate”
 - To reflect your contribution to the program’s climate
 - To learn how climate affects our work
 - To generate ideas about how this program’s climate can be improved
- ▶ Let participants know that the training will give them an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about the program.

For example, you might say...

“Working in your program can be rewarding and challenging. Today’s training will give you a chance to discuss some of the feelings you have about your program’s climate.”

- ▶ Explain the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet as follows: During the training, if a question, suggestion, or concern unrelated to the training exercise, but related to the topic is offered, the Workshop Leader will record it on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet. Refer back to these ideas at the end of the training for further discussion as time permits.
- ▶ Review the *Training Ground Rules*, which is a short list of statements intended to promote a safe, positive environment for all participants. These can be printed on a piece of paper for all to see, but reviewing the rules and asking for group agreement is the most important step before beginning the exercise.

Training Ground Rules

There are no right or wrong answers in any of the activities we will be doing today. Everyone's opinions and feelings are respected here.

One at a time. We want to hear what everyone has to say so it is important to remember that group discussion requires strong listening skills.

Learning takes time. We will not rush one another when trying to understand and participate.

Maintain Confidentiality. While sharing our experiences we do not need to use names of children, parents or staff.

Exercise One: What Effects Program Climate?

Exercise One provides participants with the opportunity to brainstorm together in order to identify the many factors that affect program climate. By creating a visual illustration of how these factors connect to the program climate and interact with one another, the Workshop Leader can encourage deeper reflection on all the elements that affect how it feels to be in the program.

Following the Introduction:

- ▶ Begin with a brainstorming exercise to explore participants’ perspectives. Draw a circle in the middle of the large paper, label it “Program Climate” and ask participants to name some things that affect their feelings about working in their program.
- ▶ Record answers on a large piece of paper by connecting each one to the circle in the center of the paper, creating a web. Write large enough for the whole group to see (see Figure 1).
- ▶ Record responses in groups in order to highlight the various categories that are important to consider (See Figure 1).

Workshop Leader Strategy: Facilitating Brainstorming Exercise

Accept all responses but encourage participants to be specific in their descriptions of what influences the climate. If participants give you a broad and/or limited response, help clarify the specifics by adding connecting circles (See Figure 1) and prompting them to tell you more. For example, if a participant responds with “How it feels to be in the classroom,” add this to the large sheet of paper, but then ask, “What is it about the classroom that affects how you feel in it?” Or, “What about a classroom would change how you felt while inside it?”

It is best to give participants time to come up with their own ideas. However, if the group seems stuck or there is a particular aspect of the program that is crucial and has not yet surfaced, offer a suggestion.

For example you might say...

“We’ve heard a lot of great ideas about what contributes to program climate. I’m also wondering what role you think the classroom climate might play in the overall environment of the program?”

Figure 1: Example of brainstorming exercise web

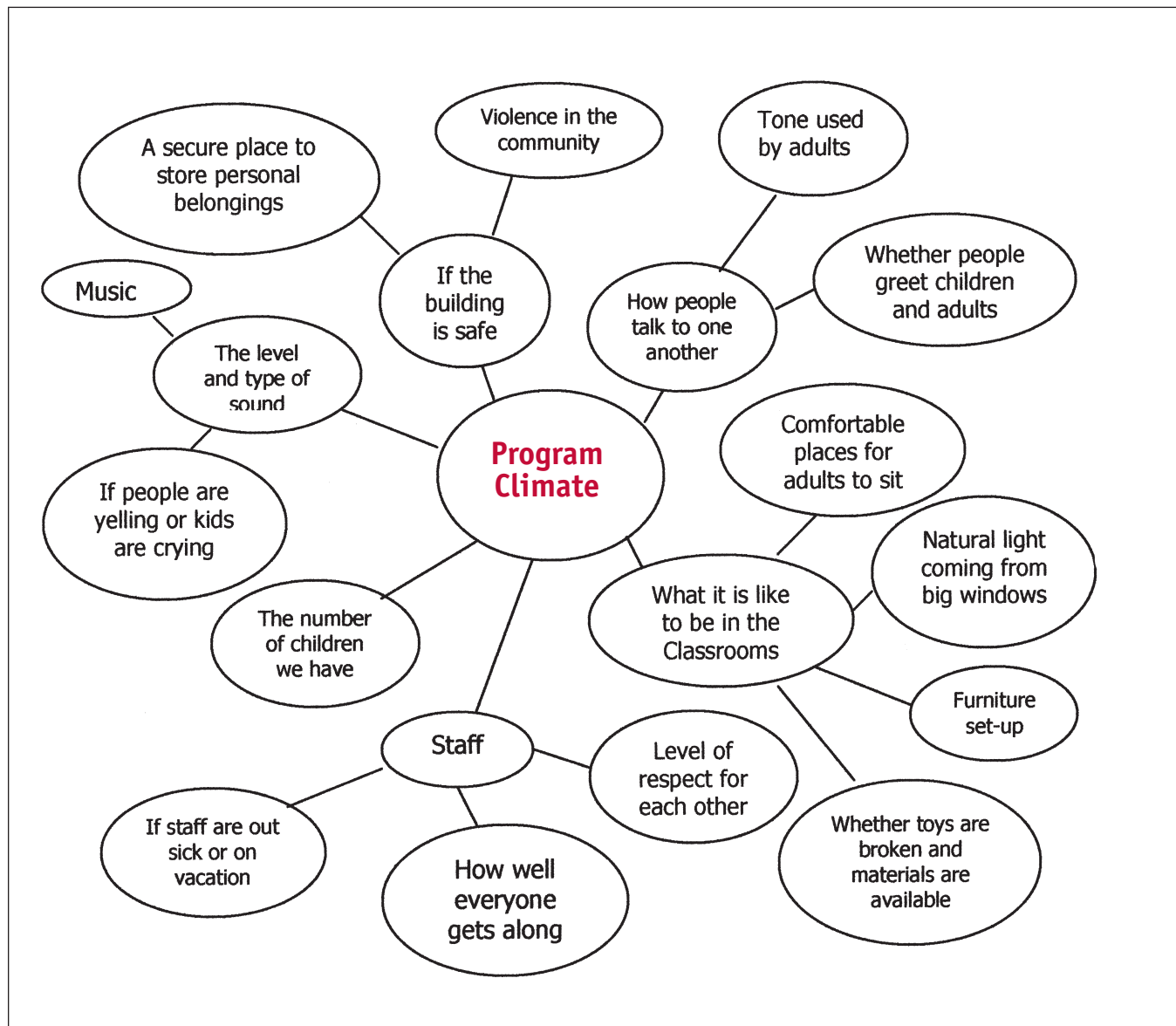


Table 1. Sample responses for Exercise One

Response Category	Examples of potential responses	Themes for Workshop Leader to develop in the discussion
Communication	<p>The tone people use with one another</p> <p>The ways information is shared</p> <p>Whether people speak the same languages</p> <p>Whether swearing or disrespectful language is permitted</p> <p>If people greet each other, say “please” and “thank you”</p> <p>Volume of people’s voices</p> <p>Whether someone speaks your language</p>	<p>Communication is a complex aspect of the climate. Therefore, participants may need help in breaking down which elements of communication seem especially important to them.</p>
The Physical Environment	<p>Amount of sunlight</p> <p>Type of electrical lighting</p> <p>Colors</p> <p>Whether facility is in good repair</p> <p>How the furniture is set up</p> <p>Available comfortable seating</p> <p>A place to store your personal belongings safely</p> <p>Artwork on walls</p> <p>Plants</p> <p>Music playing</p>	<p>Elements of the physical environment can have very different affects on individuals, depending on their personal preferences and experiences. Share this observation with the group as a way to encourage a range of responses and to acknowledge the fact that members of the same staff must practice perspective-taking when assessing how a physical environment in designed.</p>
Materials	<p>Enough art materials to do creative lessons</p> <p>Toys aren’t broken</p> <p>Age-appropriate toys</p> <p>Enough materials so kids won’t fight</p> <p>Reference materials available when we need it</p> <p>Books with no torn pages</p>	<p>Some participants may have received a strong message that they must make the most of the materials they are given, regardless of whether they feel adequate or not. Encourage the group to reflect on the materials they currently have access to and the effect those materials have on the climate. It may be helpful to suggest that they imagine the materials they would like to have and how those materials would affect the climate.</p>
Outside Environment & Community	<p>Safe neighborhood</p> <p>Violence in the community</p> <p>Trees and flowers</p> <p>Whether there is garbage</p> <p>Place big enough for outdoor games</p>	<p>Asking participants to visualize the experience of entering the program’s building can be helpful to those who are having trouble identifying characteristics of the outside environment that affects the program climate. Directing their attention to whether plants can be seen at the entrance, or how safe the surrounding area feels when they arrive and depart from the program can also be helpful.</p>

continued

Table 1. Sample responses for Exercise One *continued*

Response Categories	Examples of potential responses	Themes for workshop leader to develop in the discussion
Staff	How well everyone gets along Level of training Respecting each other Job satisfaction Trust between coworkers Level of teamwork Whether we are short on staff Support from director	The staff are the most powerful element of the program’s climate. In addition to its importance, this topic is a broad one. Encourage participants to reflect on the many aspects of staff members’ performance, behavior, outlook, and skills that affect the climate while taking care to help participants steer clear of comments about individual staff members. Remind the group of the <i>Training Ground Rules</i> if need be.
Support for the Program & the Profession	Enough funding Enough regular supervision Level of pay Respect for early childhood teachers	Encourage the participants to think about support that is offered at the individual, team and staff-wide levels. Once the group has reflected on those levels you can encourage them to consider beyond their own program to the agency, region, and even national level of support or regard the profession of early childhood education receives.

Workshop Leader Strategy: Encouraging Perspective Taking

When facilitating the brainstorming discussion in Exercise One, encourage the group to think about those elements that influence how they feel. But you should also push the participants to consider how the parents and children feel in the program. By doing this you are asking the participants to practice the skill of perspective-taking explored in Module One.

Also consider that some participants may believe that discussing climate is simply an opportunity to complain about the program. **It is important for the Workshop Leader to maintain a workshop atmosphere in which all are encouraged to express the challenges and benefits of working in the program while reflecting on the goal of acknowledging each individual's contribution and the concrete ways the groups can work toward improving the program's climate.** Maintaining this focus will build trust amongst the participants and encourage individuals to think beyond their personal reactions to the possibilities of positive professional action.

Strategies for maintaining a productive atmosphere:

- Make use of the Training Ground Rules by consistently enforcing them
- Encourage the group to think hard about what helps them feel productive or comfortable in their program
- Invite the participants to use their imaginations and be creative in their responses

▶ Ask participants to reflect on the responses generated in Exercise One. Then ask them to name the responses that they as professionals have control or influence over. Circle these responses in a different color.

▶ Look for ways to support and empower participants during this part of the exercise. Acknowledge that big social issues (e.g., violence in the community, poverty, lack of housing) can be overwhelming and make us feel powerless in our work. Give the group a chance to discover what they can feel powerful about (e.g., working as a team, showing respect for families and other staff, celebrating the strengths of the community). Help them identify what role they can play in making positive change.

Transition to Exercise Two

Connect the importance of program climate to the manner in which the individual person contributes to that climate. Emphasize to participants that cultivating and supporting a positive work environment is an important part of doing the best work possible. Stress that they as staff members are a powerful force in the task of improving and maintaining a positive program climate – and that each individual's contribution is valuable. Ask the group to think together about each individual's contribution and how it can be part of a positive program climate.

For example, you might say...

"We've discussed things that affect our feelings about being in this program and identified the elements that we have control over. As we focus on the things we can change, let's first acknowledge how important the contribution of each individual is in this effort. Each one of you has the opportunity to impact the program climate in a positive way. The next exercise helps us reflect on what abilities we bring to the table."

Exercise Two: Reflection Worksheet

In Exercise Two participants are encouraged to reflect on how their own abilities contribute to the program climate.

▶ Draw the group's attention to Handout 1 and read aloud.

▶ Instruct participants to complete it individually.

▶ Remember to inform them that this worksheet is for their eyes only. Participants will be encouraged to share some of their responses with the group, but the worksheet will NOT be collected at the end of the training.

Handout 1

The Program Climate and Your Reflection Worksheet

What do you do well? What are you proud of in your work? How did you become good at it?

What is important to you about being involved in Head Start? Why did you get involved in this work? What is the best part about being involved in this work?

What part of your work would you like to improve? Would you like more information about some part of your work?

- After participants complete the worksheets, facilitate a discussion, encouraging participants to share their responses in order to help individuals recognize what they contribute to the staff group and the program climate.

Workshop Leader Strategy: Facilitating Discussion

The Workshop Leader has several options for facilitating this part of the exercise. When considering the different options keep in mind the objective of this exercise: to help individuals acknowledge what they contribute to the group.

Which option you use will depend on:

- The size of training group
- The constraints of time, and
- The level of trust among the participants

Use the arrangement in which you feel best able to maintain the Training Ground Rules.

Consider the following options:

Option 1: Breaking everyone into small groups so that they can voluntarily discuss their responses. The Workshop Leader then has the participants come back into one large group and asks for a report back from small group discussions.

Option 2: Asking each participant to turn to another participant and share their responses in a pair. The Workshop Leader then asks for volunteers to share one thing that they do well.

Option 3: Asking each participant to take a turn telling one thing he/she does well professionally to the whole group. It is important in this option that every person in the room answers, including the Workshop Leader.

It is also important to remember that it may be very difficult for some participants to share something positive about themselves. This may be because of low self-esteem, a concern that it may sound like bragging, or a fear of being criticized. Try and be sensitive to this while encouraging as much individual participation as possible. As always, if the Training Ground Rules are enforced, participants should be made to feel as comfortable as possible in sharing this potentially sensitive information.

While it is ideal for everyone to contribute, it may be necessary to give individuals the chance to pass training topics, without negative consequences. When the training is finished, you might want to talk to non-participants individually to reinforce their value in the group and find out if there is anything you can do to make the next workshop more comfortable.

Transition to Exercise Three

After participants share their own positive professional qualities, help the group shift their thinking to the way these strengths can be converted to practical ideas for enhancing the program climate.

For example, you might say...

"Each one of you has shared a strength that you contribute to this program. We talked earlier about how there are some things we don't feel like we have much choice about or have little control over. And yet, if we consider how all of these strengths add up, it is easier to consider ourselves a powerful force. Let's talk about some practical ways we can improve the climate of this program as a group and as individuals."

Exercise Three: Planning for Change

In Exercise Three, the group considers strategies for positive change and are encouraged to generate their own ideas for improving the classroom and program climate.

- ▶ Refer participants to Handout 2 in their packets. Read the first two sections aloud to the group and then ask for suggested additions.
- ▶ Record participant responses on a piece of large paper. Invite participants to take notes on the suggestions they find most helpful in the space provided on the handout.

Handout 2

The Program's Climate and You: Planning for Change

Tips for making your classroom feel more comfortable...

- Pay special attention to hellos and goodbyes for parents and children
- Add flowers or plants to your classroom
- Place comfortable pillows in places children and adults like to sit
- Play a variety of appropriate music in your classroom, including jazz and classical

What are your additions?

Tips for making your program feel more welcoming...

- Pay special attention to the physical entrance to your program and consider adding plants or art to create a lively but warm atmosphere.
- Have coffee, tea, or water available for parents and staff.
- Provide helpful signs in the languages spoken by the families, including where to find key administrators, and access to resources.
- Create an attractive display that includes a picture, name, and title for each staff member.
- Create an easily located Parent Resource Area that is maintained on a regular basis. This could be a table or bulletin board that lists safe and inexpensive or free activities for families to do in the community, mental and physical health resources, and information about starting kindergarten.

What are your additions?

▶ Acknowledge to the group that many of the tips included in Handout 2 may require changes that would be best addressed by teams rather than individuals. Encourage the participants to set goals for their classrooms and other program areas through additional conversations with one another.

Wrapping Up

1. Review Key Concepts

The program climate is made up of all the things that affect how it feels to work and receive services here

Each individual plays an important role in creating the program climate

We can support one another in our efforts to maintain a positive program climate

2. End on a positive note. Encourage the group to continue thinking about the role the program climate plays in their day-to-day experiences and how they can use this last exercise to work towards making the program even better.

3. If time permits, **review some or all of the comments written on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet posted on the wall.** Consider responding to one comment, then asking participants which of the others they would like discussed in the time remaining. These comments should also be considered in preparation for the next training.

4. Express your appreciation. Let the group know how much you appreciate their time and hard work. Thank them for sharing their ideas and for being willing to think about change together.

5. Make yourself available. After the training, be willing to answer questions and respond to concerns on an ongoing basis. If a workshop leader cannot be available, an on-site staff member should be designated in this role and announced at the end of the training.

6. Collect Attendance and Evaluation Forms.

Ask participants to sign an attendance sheet and complete an evaluation form. Remind participants that these forms are anonymous and collected for the purpose of improving future trainings.

Extending Learning and Supporting New Skills

In order to extend the workshop's content to changes in professional skill and behavior, the Workshop Leader and administrators should consider these followup activities:

Provide Supportive Supervision for Individuals and Teams: Teachers and case managers need additional opportunities to discuss the program's climate with a member of the administration or mentor in order to understand better what they as teams or individuals might want to improve.

Implement Classroom Observation & Social Service Support: Staff supervisors can gain valuable insight by observing and reviewing the efforts made to improve the program's climate within their real day-to-day context. This need not involve large blocks of time, but should be done consistently over time in order to observe the challenges and successes of the staff.

Create Action Plans: Staff members can benefit from follow-up discussion concerning the steps involved in achieving the goals they have set for themselves. This is also an opportunity to understand the resources required.

Workshop Leader Reflection

The Workshop Leader should take some time to review the training experience once it is over, read through and tally the evaluation forms, and review the results. Some additional questions to consider are:

Was I prepared? Did I have all the materials I needed? Was the room adequate? Did I feel confident with the topic?

Did the training go as I imagined it would? Did the group respond the way I thought they would? Were there any surprises? Were there any elements of the training that went especially well?

Were the participants engaged? Did the group size seem appropriate? Who seemed comfortable enough to share their thoughts with the group? Who did not seem comfortable? Do I know why? Did I get the feeling that the participants understood the exercises and materials? Who was present and who was missing today?

What were some of the themes that people talked about in this training? Was there a group of issues that the responses and discussion had in common? Are any of those issues a surprise? How can I use those issues in future trainings to make the exercises more effective?

What would have made this training better? In hindsight, what could I have done differently? Why? How can I use that information to make the next training even more successful?

Did I gain new knowledge from this training? What did I learn? In addition to new information on the training topic, did I gain any new knowledge about the training group or individuals in the training group? Did I learn something new about myself as a Workshop Leader?

Workshop Evaluation

Title of the Workshop: Program Climate and You

Location _____ Date _____

Please rate how well the training met the objectives below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not Good
Objective 1: To learn more about the term "program climate"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 2: To reflect on your own contribution to the program's climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 3: To learn how climate affects your work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 4: To generate ideas concerning how this program's climate can be improved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall rating of this workshop:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of information presented:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's knowledge of subject:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's presentation style:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like to learn that was not presented in this workshop?

Would you like more trainings that expand on this topic? Yes No (Please circle one)

I would like more training on:

Additional Comments:

Additional Resources

For more support on this topic please see the following Family Connections materials:

Short Papers for Staff

Encouraging an Expressive Environment: Supportive communication from the inside out

Better Parent Communication: What do I say when a parent tells me something difficult?

Supportive Supervision: Promoting staff and family growth through positive relationships

The Challenges and Benefits of Making Parent Connections

Parenting, Depression, and Hope: Reaching out to families facing adversity

Fostering Resilience in Families Coping with Depression

Self Reflection and Shared Reflection as Professional Tools

Short Papers for Parents

Parenting through Tough Times: Coping with depression

The Ability to Cope: Building resilience in yourself and your child

Self Reflection in Parenting: Help for getting through stressful times

Accentuate the Positive

Often an individual's or a program's shortcomings are what get the most attention. While it is important to acknowledge those problem areas, there are also benefits to taking note of the strengths a person or group possess. The opportunity to accept and provide positive feedback can give a hands-on illustration of what is meant by a "strength-based approach," and generate discussion on how this approach can be useful for parent engagement.

Goal

To foster team-building and encourage positive information sharing among staff and in their work with parents.

Objectives

Participants will:
 reflect on the strengths and expertise of each staff member
 learn about the importance of self-care in professional practice
 learn about the differences between a strength-based and deficit-based approach to working with people
 learn strategies for applying the strength-based approach when working with families

Method and Content

This workshop has three distinct sections, each designed to build on the others.

- ▶ [Exercise One](#): A Moment of Self-Care
- ▶ [Exercise Two](#): Positive Qualities in Us All
- ▶ [Exercise Three](#): Positive Team Work

Exercise One provides participants with the opportunity to pamper themselves for a moment in order to encourage the workshop's focus on the positive.

In Exercise Two, participants are invited to consider the strengths in each of their coworkers.

In Exercise Three, participants break into groups and plan for how their own positive qualities can impact their work as a team.

Throughout the workshop, it is important to emphasize that the practice of identifying the positive in ourselves and others helps us support a strength-based approach in our work with children and families.

Getting Started

What You Need

- ▶ Time—this training should take 1 to 2 hours, not including Workshop Leader preparation. For more information on **Workshop Time Management**, see the **Introduction to the Modules**
- ▶ A training space large enough to accommodate the members of the training to participate in large (e.g., 20 people or more) and small group (e.g., 3-6 people) discussions. For large groups, you may want to consider including 2 workshop leaders to help manage and respond to participant needs. For more information on considerations with **Group Size**, see the **Introduction to the Modules**.

▶ Seating for the training group. Chairs can be arranged in a circle for larger group activities and then moved for smaller discussion groups.

▶ One large piece of paper

▶ A pen or pencil for each participant

▶ A training packet for each participant that includes:

A blank piece of paper

Handout 1: “Accentuate the Positive” Team Plan

A Workshop Evaluation

▶ Hand lotion, perhaps two choices, with one unscented

▶ Nutritious food/beverages. This need not be elaborate or expensive. Some fruit and whole grain crackers with chilled water can be refreshing and appreciated as another level of self-care.

▶ Calming music or recording of sounds from nature

Workshop Leader Preparation

First, read through all of the workshop materials. Take time to reflect on your own responses to exercise questions.

This training is best conducted with a group of people who know each other well and who have demonstrated the ability to be positive and productive in trainings. Previous positive experiences with the Workshop Leader can encourage confidence in the participants that the training will remain a safe place to express oneself.

Preparing the workshop space

- Ideally, seating should be arranged around a large table. If that is not possible, arrange the chairs in a circle and help participants find a flat surface to lean on while writing.
- Prepare large of piece of paper by entitling it, “Parking Lot for Ideas.”
- Display the large piece of paper so that the whole group will be able to see it and the Workshop Leader can write on it easily.
- Set the mood for the training by turning on music that is soothing and positive (i.e., instrumental or nature sounds/ocean).
- Prepare and lay out refreshments.

Introduction to the Training

The introduction can and should be made in the Workshop Leader’s own words, but here are some points to include:

▶ The topic of this training is “Accentuate the Positive.” Offer a description of what this means. *For example, you might say...*

“When we’re faced with so many challenges, it can be difficult to find positive things in our work and our lives. We want this workshop to be an opportunity for us to think of the positive, and remind us of the great work that we do. ‘Accentuate the positive’ means to focus on our strengths and successes.”

- ▶ Describe the objectives of the training:
 - To reflect on the strengths and expertise of each staff member
 - To learn about the importance of self-care in professional practice
 - To learn about the differences between a strength-based and deficit-based approach to working with people
 - To learn strategies for applying the strength-based approach when working with families

- ▶ Explain the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet as follows: during the training, if a question, suggestion, or concern unrelated to the training exercise but related to the topic is offered, the Workshop Leader will record it on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet. Refer back to these ideas at the end of the training for further discussion as time permits.

- ▶ Review the *Training Ground Rules*, which is a short list of statements intended to promote a safe, positive environment for all participants. These can be printed on a piece of paper for all to see, but reviewing the rules and asking for group agreement is the most important step before beginning the exercise.

Training Ground Rules

There are no right or wrong answers in any of the activities we will be doing today. Everyone's opinions and feelings are respected here.

One at a time. We want to hear what everyone has to say, so it is important to remember that group discussion requires strong listening skills.

Learning takes time. We will not rush one another when trying to understand and participate.

Maintain Confidentiality. While sharing our experiences we do not need to use names of children, parents, or staff.

- ▶ Invite the participants to help themselves to refreshments before beginning Exercise One.

Exercise One: A Moment of Self-Care

Exercise One provides participants the opportunity to pamper themselves for a moment in order to encourage the workshop's focus on the positive.

- ▶ Invite each participant to take turns selecting a hand lotion. Give the group enough time to rub the lotion into their hands and encourage participants to comment on how it feels.

- ▶ Explain that the reason for this exercise is to explore how self-care can be thought of as a professional skill.

For example, you might say...

“Let's take a moment to take care of ourselves. Why? Because in doing so we are more equipped to do the work that we do. When we're not taking care of ourselves, it's harder to find the energy we need. This can make us stressed and stress can make us feel less optimistic about the challenges that come our way.”

Workshop Leader Strategy: Encouraging reluctant participants

Be mindful that some participants may not be used to thinking about how they take care of themselves. The self-care activity may cause some uncertainty or even anxiety. Participants may express this by asking if they might pass on the activity, giggling or poking fun at one another. One way to anticipate this is to model your own response to the lotion, "That feels good. Now I feel like I'm ready to work."

Also, if you begin the sharing of strengths section in Exercise 2 with someone who is comfortable with public speaking, it will help set the tone for others to participate.

Assure participants that this training will help the group to think about recognizing strengths in themselves and others, a key skill for reaching out to families.

For example you might say, "Sometimes people feel silly doing this activity or talking about personal strengths. As child care providers, we spend all day taking care of others so it's important to take time to be good to ourselves. By doing this, we are also reminded of how important it is to see the best in the families we serve."

Exercise Two: Positive Qualities in Us All

Explain that the goal of this exercise is to get participants to think about the positive qualities of their coworkers in order to better value and nurture one another. And therefore, it is very important that all participants go about this exercise in a thoughtful way.

- ▶ Call attention to the blank piece of paper included in the training packet
- ▶ Instruct participants to write their name at the top of the paper and then pass it to the person on their right
- ▶ Ask participants to read the name of the person at the top of the paper and take a moment to really think about that person
- ▶ Ask participants to write at least one positive thing about that person on their paper (sentences or single words).

For example, you might say,

"This is an excellent opportunity to make someone feel great with a compliment about something positive and genuine. Let's be careful to offer sincere and kind feedback, rather than jokes, sarcasm or even good-natured teasing."

- ▶ If you find that a participant is being negative, discreetly take them aside and remind them of your instructions and the purpose of the training. Remind them of the *Training Ground Rules* if necessary.
- ▶ Table 2 presents examples of participant responses and themes to develop

Table 2. Examples of Participant Responses

Response Categories	Specific responses
Phrases	Great smile You always have so much energy Imaginative lesson plans She’s a good listener A strong leader Good with the kids Really dependable He is always ready to learn something new Knows a lot of great Circle Time songs
Single Words	Funny Patient Caring Smart Supportive Mature Positive Happy

► After participants have completed their comments, instruct everyone to pass their paper to the participant on their right. Continue the process until papers make their way around the whole group.

Workshop Leader Strategies: Keeping the workshop environment safe

Inviting feedback makes each participant vulnerable. For those who do not trust their coworkers or the workshop environment, this exercise can be unsettling. Keep the training environment emotionally safe for all participants:

- Monitor participation by glancing at the responses during the exercise and taking note of participants' comfort level and behavior.
- Encourage participants to relax.
- Remind participants of the Training Ground Rules as necessary.

-
- ▶ After each participant has received their completed sheet, ask them to read the comments silently to themselves
 - ▶ Ask participants how it feels to read positive comments about themselves
 - ▶ Ask each participant to share one comment from his or her sheet. As a way to help them pick which one, ask if any of the comments meant a lot to them, or if any comments surprised them
 - ▶ After each member of the group has shared something, make the connection between this workshop experience and experiences that involve children and parents through the concept of a strength-based approach

For example, you might say...

"This exercise is an example of a 'strength-based approach' because it focuses on an individual's strengths. We use a strength-based approach any time we focus on the strengths of a child, parent, or family. In contrast, a 'deficit-based approach' would focus on the shortcomings of a child, parent, or family. Hearing praise and positive feedback is an incentive for positive behavior. Individuals who receive praise feel empowered and motivated to live up to the praise."

- ▶ If the modules have been done in the order of the training curriculum, it is useful to make connections between this approach and the strategies and exercises from previous workshops. For example,

"In *The Benefits and Challenges of Engaging Parents* the group discussed how each parent interaction should start with a positive comment about the parent or the child. In this workshop the group had an opportunity to experience hearing positives about ourselves. In many ways we are not that different than the parents we work with. We want to be valued for who we are and what we do well."

"In *Perspective Taking* we considered how a situation feels to another person, and today we had the chance to feel how praise can be encouraging."

"In *What Is Depression?* 1 we discussed how depression can affect a person's self-esteem and understanding of how others feel about them. Sincere praise can be a way of connecting to someone who is struggling in this way. Sometimes there can be a real disconnect between how we see ourselves and how others might see us. Often you may see strengths in parents and coworkers that they don't see in themselves. It can be helpful to hear how others see us as a way to think about our strengths."

"In *Program Climate and You* we had the chance to discuss how important each individual is in creating a positive atmosphere."

"Today we considered each other's strengths, and also considered how taking care of ourselves is a way of nurturing our own strengths. Taking care of ourselves and recognizing our own strengths helps us model the same behavior for the parents and children with whom we work in our program."

Transition to Exercise Three

As a way of transitioning into the next exercise, help the group shift their thinking from the identification of an individual's strengths to the strengths of a team.

For example you might say...

"Now that we have identified some strengths that we possess as individuals, let's consider what we can do when those strengths are integrated into team work."

Exercise Three: Positive Team Work

Exercise Three is designed to help the group think about how the strengths of the individual can also be used effectively within a team when there is an agreed upon plan for supporting one another.

- ▶ Divide participants into teaching teams or small groups according to role (i.e. case managers, administrators, etc.) and direct each group to work on Handout 1 together. Point out that the teams that will be working together on this activity are like the various groups that work within the program (teaching teams, management groups, home visitors)
- ▶ Encourage the groups to think about what they can contribute as individuals and what outside resources they might need (i.e. materials, information, guidance) in order to achieve their team's goals

Workshop Leader Strategy: Encouraging participants to think about their strengths

Some teams may need help thinking about their strengths as a group. Share some examples to stimulate the team's thinking. For instance, you can ask:

- "How is communication in your team? Does everyone feel as if they know what is going on?"
- "Do you come up with interesting ideas for activities? Do you draw ideas from one another's work?"
- "Do you support one another? Do you all work towards getting along?"

Be sensitive to those groups who may need extra support, particularly teams or small groups that struggle to get along or have a new member. You may need to guide the group through the exercise by referring to their sheets from Exercise Two and asking the group to find common positive traits. You may also need to encourage them to set modest goals (i.e., "Greet one another regularly," "Identify a positive thing about the team each week," etc.).

Handout 2

"Accentuate the Positive" Team Plan

Created by:

Date:

List three positive things about this team:

List three goals for your team for this year:

What does this team need in order to accomplish these goals?

Review Key Concepts:

Taking care of ourselves helps us do good work

Identifying positive qualities and strengths in one another is an example of using a “strength-based” approach

Using this “strength-based” approach helps us promote growth and positive interactions with our co-workers and the families we serve

End on a positive note. Encourage staff to continue talking about the goals they set in this training. Urge them to consider posting their Team Plans so that the goals can function as a source of encouragement to the team.

If time permits, **review some or all of the comments written on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet posted on the wall.** Consider responding to one comment, then asking participants which of the others they would like discussed in the time remaining. These comments should also be considered in preparation for the next training.

Express your appreciation. Let the group know how much you appreciate their time and hard work. Thank them for sharing their ideas and for being willing to think about change together.

Make yourself available. Be willing to answer questions on an ongoing basis and respond to concerns after the training. If you cannot be available, an on-site staff member should be designated in this role and announced at the end of the training.

Collect Attendance and Evaluation Forms. Ask participants to sign an attendance sheet and complete an evaluation form. Remind participants that these forms are anonymous and collected for the purpose of improving future trainings.

Extending Learning and Supporting New Skills

In order to extend the workshop's content to changes in professional skill and behavior, the Workshop Leader and administrators should consider these follow-up activities:

Provide Supportive Supervision for Individuals and Teams: Supervisors should use the Team Plans as a topic for supervision, asking the team to reflect on how they rely on their team members.

Implement Classroom Observation & Social Service Support: Skill support is more effective when individuals are informed by first-hand knowledge of the unique context and when teams are trying to improve. Make it a priority to spend time with these professionals while they are practicing these skills. Pay attention to the quality of interactions between staff and among teams. Document whether staff are actually accentuating the positive and acknowledge the times you observe it happening.

Create Action Plans: Use the Team Plans as blueprints to prioritize each team's goals. Ask the individuals in the team which goal they would like to tackle first and what materials or training they might need in order to achieve them.

Workshop Leader Reflection

The Workshop Leader should take time to reflect on the training experience once it is over, read through and tally the evaluation forms, and review the results. Some additional questions to consider are:

Was I prepared? Did I have all the materials I needed? Was the room adequate? Did I feel confident with the topic?

Did the training go as I imagined it would? Did the group respond the way I thought they would? Were there any surprises? Were there any elements of the training that went especially well?

Were the participants engaged? Did the group size seem appropriate? Who seemed comfortable enough to share their thoughts with the group? Who did not seem comfortable? Do I know why? Did I get the feeling that the participants understood the exercises and materials? Who was present and who was missing today?

What were some of the themes that people talked about in this training? Was there a group of issues that the responses and discussions had in common? Are any of those issues a surprise? How can I use those issues in future trainings to make the exercises more effective?

What would have made this training better? In hindsight, what could I have done differently? Why? How can I use that information to make the next training even more successful?

Did I gain new knowledge from this training? What did I learn? In addition to new information on the training topic, what did I learn about the training group or individuals in the training group? Did I learn something new about myself as a Workshop Leader?

Workshop Evaluation

Title of the Workshop: Accentuate the Positive

Location _____ Date _____

Please rate how well the training met the objectives below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not Good
Objective 1: To reflect on the strengths and expertise of each staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 2: To learn about the importance of self-care in professional practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 3: To learn about the differences between a strength-based and deficit-based approach to working with people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 4: To learn strategies for applying the strength-based approach when working with families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall rating of this workshop:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of information presented:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's knowledge of subject:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's presentation style:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like to learn that was not presented in this workshop?

Would you like more trainings that expand on this topic? Yes No (Please circle one)
I would like more training on:

Additional Comments:

Additional Resources

For more support on this topic please see the following Family Connections materials:

Short Papers for Staff

Encouraging an Expressive Environment: Supportive communication from the inside out

Better Parent Communication: What do I say when a parent tells me something difficult?

Supportive Supervision: Promoting staff and family growth through positive relationships

The Challenges and Benefits of Making Parent Connections

Parenting, Depression, and Hope: Reaching out to families facing adversity

Fostering Resilience in Families Coping with Depression

Self Reflection and Shared Reflection as Professional Tools

Short Papers for Parents

Parenting through Tough Times: Coping with depression

The Ability to Cope: Building resilience in yourself and your child

Self Reflection in Parenting: Help for getting through stressful times

What Is Depression? Part 2

What Is Depression? 2 provides an opportunity to learn how to use the information about the signs and symptoms of depression discussed in *What Is Depression? 1*. Through a vignette exercise and group discussion, participants are asked to review the program's current systems and strategies to engage parents who may be experiencing depression. The concept of "Mental Health First Aid" is introduced as a way to organize the response – at the staff member and programmatic level – for the mental health needs of the families served.

Goal To introduce the concept of "Mental Health First Aid" and to begin the process of developing a program strategy for responding to depressed individuals.

Objectives Participants will:

- learn how observation and conversation can be used to identify the signs and effects of depression
- review current systems within the program that can be used to respond to depressed individuals
- learn about the concept of "Mental Health First Aid" as a way to organize a response for an individual with potential mental health issues
- discuss the limitations and opportunities for each staff member when responding to depressed individuals

Method and Content

This workshop has three distinct sections, each designed to build on the others.

- ▶ Exercise One: Scenario
- ▶ Exercise Two: Examining Levels of Response

Exercise One provides participants with the opportunity to explore a family vignette together. In Exercise Two participants are encouraged to imagine how that family could be supported, using the levels of response described in Mental Health First Aid.

Throughout the workshop, it is important to emphasize that by reflecting on the program's responses to families facing adversity, we are given the chance to grow stronger as a group and as individual professionals.

Getting Started

What You Need

- ▶ Time – this training should take 2 hours, not including Workshop Leader preparation
- ▶ A training space large enough to accommodate the members of the training in large and small group discussions
- ▶ Seating for the training group
- ▶ Six large pieces of paper
- ▶ Markers for Workshop Leader
- ▶ A pen or pencil for each participant

- ▶ A training packet for each participant that includes a copy of:
 - Handout 1
 - Handout 2
 - Handout 3
 - Workshop Evaluation form

Workshop Leader Preparation

Read through the section of the Family Connections materials entitled, *Mental Health First Aid I: Developing a plan for response to the mental health needs of families in early care settings* to learn about the concept of mental health first aid and to prepare for the workshop.

Ensure that administrators, teachers and case managers know that their attendance and participation is expected and valuable. It is essential that staff members across all professional roles participate together for this training to be most effective.

Inform program administrators ahead of time that the training will be an opportunity to learn more about engaging depressed parents and to reflect on the program's existing practices and procedures. Remind them that their participation is essential for making positive growth happen.

Encourage administrators to read the description of Mental Health First Aid provided in *Mental Health First Aid I: Developing a plan for response to the mental health needs of families in early care settings* as a way to prepare themselves for the elements of the program to be discussed.

Preparing the Workshop Space:

- Position chairs so that the participants can begin as a large group, but then move easily into smaller groups.
- Prepare the six large pieces of paper:
 - Title one “Parking Lot for Ideas”
 - Use three to recreate the categories represented in Figure 2
 - Use one to record the additional questions generated in Exercise One, and
 - Recreate the grid shown on Handout 3 on the last piece
- Display the large pieces of paper so that the whole group can see them and the Workshop Leader can write on them easily
- Provide each participant with a training packet as they enter the training

Introduction to the Training

The introduction to the group can and should be the Workshop Leader's own words, but here are some points to include:

▶ The topic of this training is “What Is Depression? Part 2.” Explain how this workshop is a follow-up to “What Is Depression? Part 1,” but will also incorporate the skills and strategies participants have practiced in “Engaging Parents,” “Perspective Taking,” “Program Climate and You,” and “Accentuate the Positive.”

For example, you might say...

*“In the *What is Depression?*1 training, we discussed the signs and symptoms of depression. Today's workshop is a chance to take the next step with that work - to discuss how we can use that information in our interactions with a parent who could be depressed. The skills and strategies we have learned in the other workshops to improve communication between ourselves and parents will also be called upon today, so keep in mind the principles of a strength-based approach (acknowledging the positive in a child, parent or family) and how each person on this staff has something to contribute to the discussion about how it feels to be in this program.”*

- ▶ Describe the objectives of this training:
 - To learn how observation and conversation can be used to identify the signs and effects of depression
 - To review current systems within the program that can be used to respond to depressed individuals
 - To learn about the concept of Mental Health First Aid as a way to organize a response for an individual with potential mental health issues
 - To discuss the limitations and opportunities for each staff member when responding to depressed individuals

- ▶ Explain the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet as follows: during the training, if a question, suggestion, or concern unrelated to the training exercise, but related to the topic is offered, the Workshop Leader will record it on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet. Refer back to these ideas at the end of the training for further discussion as time permits.

- ▶ Review the *Training Ground Rules*, a short list of statements intended to promote a safe, positive environment for all participants. These can be printed on a piece of paper for all to see, but reviewing the rules and asking for group agreement is the most important step before beginning the exercise.

Training Ground Rules

There are no *right or wrong* answers in any of the activities we will be doing today. Everyone's opinions and feelings are respected here.

One at a time. We want to hear what everyone has to say so it is important to remember that group discussion requires strong listening skills.

Learning takes time. We will not rush one another when trying to understand and participate.

Maintain Confidentiality. While sharing our experiences we do not need to use names of children, parents or staff.

Exercise One: Scenario

Exercise One provides the opportunity for the group to explore a family vignette, and reflect on signs of concern.

Following the Introduction,

- ▶ Read the Handout 1 scenario aloud.

- ▶ Ask participants to reflect on the questions presented in Handout 2. Then, ask them to record their own responses.

Scenario

Clara is a 28-year-old single mother. She has two children: Roberto, who is 4 ½ years old and Giselle, a 3-year-old. Roberto has attended the neighborhood Head Start for the last 1 ½ years and Clara recently registered Giselle as well.

Roberto's teacher, Ms. Alice, is very fond of him. Although she had been worried that Roberto's level of activity seemed higher than the other children in her group, he has since become attached to her and follows the rules of the classroom. However, in recent weeks, Ms. Alice has noticed that Roberto seems to have a great deal of angry energy. He breaks toys, demands Ms. Alice's attention, cries when she spends time with other children, and has wet his pants several times.

Ms. Alice has also noticed that Roberto's aunt is now the person who drops him off in the morning instead of his mother. When Clara does come to the center, Ms. Alice has noticed changes in how she looks. She seems very tired, is quiet, and her shoulders are hunched. A week ago, Clara arrived to pick up her son and Ms. Alice approached her to talk about Roberto's behavior. While they were talking, Ms. Alice noticed Clara was looking at her, but seemed to be thinking about something else – maybe something very sad because after a few minutes Clara seemed as if she might cry and said she had to go. Since that afternoon her children have continued to attend the program, but Clara has not returned, leaving pick-up and drop-off to other family members.

Ms. Alice decided to talk to Giselle's teacher, Ms. Margot. Ms. Margot reported that Giselle is a clingy child who is not popular with the other children. She also mentioned that she has seen Clara only a few times and has found her "difficult." Ms. Margot wondered if the mother had several jobs because she seemed tired, angry, and always in a big rush. Both Ms. Alice and Ms. Margot agreed that the children were always clean, well fed and appeared physically healthy. Still, Ms. Alice can't help feeling there is more that needs to be done.

Handout 2

What Is Depression? Part 2

Respond to the following:

What are your concerns about Roberto?

What are your concerns about Clara?

What steps has the teacher taken regarding Roberto?

What steps has the teacher taken regarding Clara?

What are the next steps?

Small Group Exercise

- ▶ The Workshop Leader breaks the participants into small groups, no larger than four or five
- ▶ Ask participants to break into small groups of 3-5. Instruct the groups to discuss participants' individual responses to the questions on Handout 2 while stressing that they need not agree on their answers, only share them and try to gain insight from others' perspectives
- ▶ Walk among the small groups to observe discussions. Are some groups stuck, unsure how to proceed? Is there conflict among some participants who disagree? Consider sitting in with a group for a while to facilitate the sharing of responses. Use the *Training Ground Rules* to support positive communication.
- ▶ After twenty minutes of small group work, ask participants to rejoin the larger group to share their thoughts and reflections in discussion
- ▶ Record participant responses on a large sheet of paper (See Figure 2)

Figure 2. Example Documentation of Participant Responses

Concern about Roberto	Concerns about Clara	Next Steps
Teacher's Actions for Roberto	Teacher's Actions for Clara	

- ▶ Table 3 presents examples of participant responses and themes to develop

Table 3. Examples of participant responses to Handout 2.

Response Category	Examples of potential responses	Themes for Workshop Leader to develop in the discussion
<p>1. What are your concerns about Roberto?</p>	<p>Has recently become angry Unable to share teacher’s attention Breaking toys Demanding a lot from the teacher Wetting pants</p>	<p>Participants may mention concerns that are not linked directly to information in the scenario. Refer to <i>Workshop Leader Strategy: Working with the information we have below</i> on ways to respond.</p>
<p>2. What are your concerns about Clara?</p>	<p>Changes in behavior and looks Quiet Tired Looked like she was going to cry Didn’t come back to program</p>	<p>Participants may mention concerns that are not linked directly to information in the scenario. Refer to <i>Workshop Leader Strategy: Working with the information we have below</i> on ways to respond.</p>
<p>3. What steps has the teacher taken regarding Roberto?</p>	<p>Observation Tried to talk with mom about her concerns regarding Roberto</p>	<p>Ms. Alice uses careful observation as a first step in her response to her concerns regarding Roberto. Observation is something many early childhood professionals use regularly, but may not acknowledge as an important skill because they perform it automatically.</p> <p>Ms. Alice did not give up on the situation after the difficult conversation with Roberto's mother. Follow-up often takes a great deal of patience and perspective taking.</p>

continued

Table 3. Examples of participant responses to Handout 2. *continued*

Response Category	Examples of potential responses	Themes for Workshop Leader to develop in the discussion
<p>4. What steps has the teacher taken regarding Clara?</p>	<p>Observation Tried to talk with mom Talked with Giselle’s teacher to compare her observations</p>	<p>Ms. Alice uses careful observation as a first step to address her concerns regarding Clara. Observation is something many early childhood professionals use regularly, but may not acknowledge as an important skill because they perform it automatically.</p> <p>Ms. Alice was careful not to take Clara’s response to the conversation as a personal reaction to her. By keeping this in mind she allows herself to think about the “big picture,” and therefore the needs of this whole family.</p> <p>Clara also recognized the value of listening to another staff member’s perspective on the family. Viewing staff members as a part of one’s <i>team</i> can reduce feelings of isolation and broaden one’s understanding of the issues in question.</p>
<p>5. What are the next steps?</p>	<p>Talk to the director Talk to case manager Talk to mental health consultant Call Clara at home and ask her what is wrong Ask Roberto what is wrong</p>	<p>Responses to question 5 could vary widely. Be careful not to edit or challenge these responses at this point even if you disagree.</p>

Workshop Leader Strategy: Working with the Information We Have

If a participant mentions a concern not found in the scenario, ask, “Do we know that about Roberto/Clara from this scenario?” Ask them to check the scenario. This is a reminder to differentiate between what we have observed or learned vs. what we have assumed or interpreted.

Have the group reflect on the common experience of not having enough information to know exactly what is going on with a child or family. Participants may have questions like:

- “Have there been any other changes in this family's home life?”
- “How long has Clara been a single parent?”
- “Is Roberto's father part of his life?”

Write participant questions on the large piece of paper that you prepared for additional questions generated in Exercise One and ask them to think about why they want to know these things. Would it shed more light on the reasons for the child's or mother's behavior? You can refer back to these questions during the last exercise in this workshop.

Transition to Exercise Two

Introduce the concept of “Mental Health First Aid” by acknowledging the different levels of response represented in the suggestions for “Next Steps.”

For example, you might say...

“We've discussed how this individual teacher responded to this family and how we would like to see her follow-up. Now let's shift gears and do an exercise designed to teach us about something called Mental Health First Aid as a way of organizing how we can respond to the mental health needs of the families we serve.”

Workshop Leader Strategies: Identifying how participants respond to individuals with depression

Discussing program procedures already in place can make participants uncomfortable for a variety of reasons. Teachers may feel they are being quizzed on whether they have memorized policy. Administrators and Supervisors may feel criticized about their procedures and styles of leadership.

Be prepared to reassure participants at the beginning and throughout the training that the goal is to understand the ways the program responds to mental health needs in order to create a plan that will make those responses even better. Some other strategies could include:

- Enforcing the Training Ground Rules
- Reminding the group that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers in this workshop and that the exercise and discussion is a first step for understanding how we respond to depressed individuals as a program
- Reassuring participants that the focus of the workshop is simply to describe what steps we currently know, and that future discussions will determine whether anything must change and what the steps towards such change might be.

Exercise Two: Examining Levels of Response

Describe the concept of “Mental Health First Aid” using the introduction to *Mental Health First Aid: Developing a plan for response to the mental health needs of families* as a resource.

For example, you might say...

“Mental Health First Aid is a way of understanding how to respond to mental health issues in our program. Just as we learn about medical first aid in order to know what to do if another person is injured or ill, learning about Mental Health First Aid will help us know what to do if a parent or child is struggling with their mental and emotional health. Regular first aid training does not train us to be doctors - we are taught to recognize what we can handle, when we should get medical advice, and when to call the ambulance. In this same way, Mental Health First Aid does not train us to be therapists or psychiatrists, but to address immediate mental health issues within our roles.”

“I am going to share a worksheet to help us organize how we think about responding to mental health needs. Let’s use it to think about how our own responses to the Next Steps question compare with the current procedures in this program.”

► Draw the group’s attention to Handout 3 and read the categories aloud.

“**Take a Temperature**”

What can any one of us do to reach out to a child or adult about whom we have concerns?

“**Call the Doctor**”

How can we get more information and support with our concerns?

“**911**”

What is a mental health emergency and what do we do if one happens?

Handout 3

<p>“Take a Temperature” Individual Response What can any one of us do to reach out to a child or adult we have concerns about?</p>	<p>“Call the Doctor” Team Response How can we get more information and support with our concerns</p>	<p>“911” Emergency Response What is a mental health emergency and what do we do if one happens?</p>

-
- ▶ Point out to the participants that these categories have been named this way in order to help them understand the similarities between this approach and that of medical first aid
 - ▶ Referring to the answers already recorded from the first exercise, ask the group which steps Ms. Alice took that might be considered on the first level of response or “Take a Temperature”
 - ▶ Record the group’s responses on the large sheet of paper that includes the grid from Handout 3.
 - ▶ Continue with each category, asking participants to include what they suggest as next steps in the vignette and what might be the next steps within their own program.
 - ▶ Table 4 presents examples of participant responses and themes to develop

Table 4. Example responses to Handout 3.

<p>“Take a Temperature” Individual Response What can any one of us do to reach out to a child or adult we have concerns about?</p>	<p>“Call the Doctor” Team Response How can we get more information and support with our concerns</p>	<p>“911” Emergency Response What is a mental health emergency and what do we do if one happens?</p>
<p>Ms. Alice observed Roberto’s behavior and changes in his behavior</p> <p>Ms. Alice observed Clara’s behavior and changes in her behavior</p> <p>Ms. Alice approached the mother and discussed Robert’s behavior</p> <p>Observe comments, behavior and action</p> <p>Record our observations and concerns</p> <p>Share observations responsibly with another staff member in order to get his/her reaction</p> <p>Talk to the child or adult about how they are feeling</p> <p>Bring concerns to a supervisor or Team Meeting in which families are discussed confidentially</p> <p>“Check in” with parent and child as time goes on</p>	<p>Ms. Alice discussed the mother’s and children’s health with another teacher to get her perspective.</p> <p>Bring up concerns in a Team Meeting in which families are discussed confidentially</p> <p>Decide as a team who might be best to approach parent</p> <p>Discuss concerns with parent</p> <p>Devise a plan with parent about what might happen in response to needs</p> <p>Provide resource and referral options to parent</p> <p>Receive mental health consultation from a professional</p> <p>Devise plan for best follow-up with the family over time</p>	<p>Devise a plan for how an emergency would be handled in the building, including how to best separate the individual experiencing the crisis from the children</p> <p>Devise a plan for decisions concerning when and which staff members should call for outside help (i.e. ambulance, police), including a plan to have at least one other staff member present to assess a situation where someone appears to be having a mental health emergency</p>

▶ Engage participants from all the different staff roles in this discussion. When participants provide suggestions for next steps, remember to follow up with questions concerning which professional roles or staff members would be responsible for each step. This will clarify what boundaries exist in professional roles and also when an action may be carried out at the individual level (“Take a Temperature”) or the team level (“Call the Doctor”)

Wrapping Up

1. Review Key Concepts:

- ▶ Everyone can play an important role in reaching out to depressed parents
- ▶ A “Mental Health First Aid” plan is a way of understanding how to respond to the mental health needs of the families we serve
- ▶ Discussing possible responses to mental health needs ahead of time can help individuals and programs to be prepared

2. End on a positive note. Reassure participants that **this workshop is a first step** for identifying the program’s strengths and challenges when responding to the mental health needs of staff and families served. Encourage participants to bring any questions they may have to the Workshop Leader or supervisor.

3. If time permits, **review some or all of the comments written on the** “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet posted on the wall. Consider responding to one comment, then ask participants which of the other comments they would like discussed in the time remaining. These comments should also be considered in preparation for the next training.

4. **Express your appreciation.** Let the group know how much you appreciate their time and hard work. Thank them for sharing their ideas and for being willing to think about change together.

5. **Make yourself available.** Be willing to answer questions and respond to concerns on an ongoing basis after the training. If you cannot be available, an on-site staff member should be designated in this role and announced at the end of the training.

6. **Collect Attendance and Evaluation Forms.** Ask participants to sign an attendance sheet and complete an evaluation form. Remind participants that these forms are anonymous and are collected for the purpose of improving future trainings.

Extending Learning and Supporting New Skills

In order to extend the workshop's content to changes in professional skill and behavior, the Workshop Leader and administrators should consider these follow-up activities:

Provide Supportive Supervision for Individuals and Teams: This workshop may bring up questions for staff about policy and/or the needs of families being served currently or in the past. Supervisors should be prepared to hear these questions, offer answers when possible, and assure staff members that such questioning is a positive part of the learning process.

Implement Classroom Observation & Social Services Support: Head Start staff may need the chance to have their skills supported when responding to parents in the classroom, during a home visit, or in a team meeting. Supervisors and mentors should be available whenever possible to offer this “hands-on” feedback and assistance.

Create Action Plans: Because it is designed as a stepping off point, **this workshop must be followed-up with the development of a Mental Health First Aid plan.** The section of the Family Connections materials entitled *Mental Health First Aid Guide I: Developing a plan for response to the mental health needs of families in early care settings* lists several next steps a program can take in order to accomplish this task. These steps may be taken in small work groups or as part of whole group staff meetings, depending upon the needs of the program and leadership style of the director. This is an ideal time to encourage the participation of individuals across roles in order to represent fully the concerns and needs of the whole program. *Mental Health First Aid Guide II: Responding to Mental Health Crises and Emergencies* can offer additional support in the development of a Mental Health First Aid plan.

Workshop Leader Reflection

The Workshop Leader should take some time to review the training experience once it is over, read through and tally the evaluation forms, and review the results. Some additional questions to consider are:

Was I prepared? Did I have all the materials I needed? Was the room adequate? Did I feel confident with the topic?

Did the training go as I imagined it would? Did the group respond the way I thought they would? Were there any surprises? Were there any elements of the training that went especially well?

Were the participants engaged? Did the group size seem appropriate? Who seemed comfortable enough to share their thoughts with the group? Who did not seem comfortable? Do I know why? Did I get the feeling that the participants understood the exercises and materials? Who was present and who was missing today?

What were some of the themes that people talked about in this training? Was there a group of issues that the responses and discussions had in common? Are any of those issues a surprise? How can I use those issues in future trainings to make the exercises more effective?

What would have made this training better? In hindsight, what could I have done differently? Why? How can I use that information to make the next training even more successful?

Did I gain new knowledge from this training? What did I learn? In addition to new information on the training topic, did I gain any new knowledge about the training group or individuals in the training group? Did I learn something new about myself as a Workshop Leader?

Workshop Evaluation

Title of the Workshop: What is Depression? 2

Location _____ Date _____

Please rate how well the training met the objectives below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not Good
Objective 1: To learn how observation and conversation can be used to identify the signs and effects of depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 2: To review current systems within the program that can be used to respond to depressed individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 3: To learn about the concept of "Mental Health First Aid" as a way to organize a response for an individual with potential mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 4: To discuss the limitations and opportunities for each staff member when responding to depressed individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall rating of this workshop:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of information presented:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's knowledge of subject:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's presentation style:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like to learn that was not presented in this workshop?

Would you like more trainings that expand on this topic? Yes No (Please circle one)
I would like more training on:

Additional Comments:

Additional Resources

For more support on this topic please see the following Family Connections materials:

Short Papers for Staff

Better Parent Communication: What do I say when a parent tells me something difficult?

The Challenges and Benefits of Making Parent Connections

Parenting, Depression, and Hope: Reaching out to families facing adversity

Fostering Resilience in Families Coping with Depression

Self Reflection and Shared Reflection as Professional Tools

Encouraging an Expressive Environment: Supportive communication from the inside out

Supportive Supervision: Promoting Staff and Family Growth through Positive Relationships

Guides

Mental Health First Aid Guide I: Developing a plan for response to the mental health needs of families in early care settings

Mental Health First Aid Guide II: Responding to Mental Health Crises and Emergencies

Short Papers for Parents

Parenting through Tough Times: Coping with depression

The Ability to Cope: Building resilience in yourself and your child

Self Reflection in Parenting: Help for getting through stressful times

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