

# Kinship Care







# NCCWE

National Center for Child Welfare Excellence

*at the Silberman School of Social Work*

Building and translating practice knowledge and evidence into child welfare excellence

# Kinship Care

Assessing Adult Relatives as Preferred  
Caretakers in Permanency Planning:  
A Competency-Based Curriculum



# Module One

## Kinship Care— History and Current Trends



# Competencies and Learning Objectives

Mod. 1: Kinship Care—History and Current Trends

Mod. 2: The Impact of Culture

Mod. 3: Engaging Families

Mod. 4: Family Search and Engagement

Mod. 5: Family Assessment Process

Mod. 6: Family Support Plans



# Introductions

- Your name (or family nickname)
- Meaning or story behind your name



# Bevanjae's Story

- Digital Story

[http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital\\_stories/PP\\_Kelly\\_B/](http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital_stories/PP_Kelly_B/)



# Kinship Care

“Kinship care is the full time nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents or any adult who has a kinship bond with the child.”

(Kinship Care: A Natural Bridge. CWLA, 1994).



# Benjamin's Story

- Digital Story

[http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital\\_stories/\\_FM\\_Benjamin\\_M/index.htm](http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital_stories/_FM_Benjamin_M/index.htm)





# Saudah—Benjamin's Aunt

- Digital Story

[http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital\\_stories/FM\\_Saudah\\_S/index.htm](http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital_stories/FM_Saudah_S/index.htm)



# Shanay—Benjamin's Cousin

- Digital Story

[http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital\\_stories/\\_FM\\_Shanay\\_S/index.htm](http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital_stories/_FM_Shanay_S/index.htm)



# Shareefah—Benjamin's Aunt/ Adoptive Mother

- Digital Story

[http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital\\_stories/\\_FM\\_Shareefah\\_P/index.htm](http://www.nrcpfc.org/digital_stories/_FM_Shareefah_P/index.htm)



# Video Discussion

Identify Effective & Ineffective Practices regarding:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Well-Being
- Family Connections





# Benefits of Kinship Care for Youth

- Experience fewer placement changes
- Are more likely to live with their siblings
- Are less likely to change schools
- Have scores in physical, cognitive, emotional and skill-based domains that are more like children who are able to remain at home after child abuse and neglect investigation
- Are, after reunifying with their parents after kinship care, less likely to reenter foster care



# Benefits of Kinship Care (cont.)

- More likely to report liking those with whom they live
- More likely to want placement to be permanent home
- Less likely to report having tried to run away
- More likely to report they “always felt loved”
- More likely to be rated by teachers and caregivers with fewer behavioral problems than peers in out of home care



# Module Two

## The Impact of Culture



# Personal Journey

- How have your experiences affected your work?
- How do you identify yourself culturally?
- What were the messages given to you about establishing relationships with people from a different cultural group than your own?
- When did you notice that people are treated differently due to their cultural and racial heritage?





# Culturally Responsive Practice

- Recognize cultural differences, without imposing a stereotype on an individual
- Acknowledge one's own personal biases towards different cultures or backgrounds
- Transcend the differences in order to work productively



# Module Three

## Engaging Families



# Engagement Strategies

- Mutual Respect
- Empathy
- Genuineness



# Module Four

## Family Search and Engagement





# Family Search and Engagement

- The art of creating life-long connections and building a supportive network for children and their families
- Real family centered practice
- Exploring multiple ways to engage relatives to increase safety, stability, and improve permanency outcomes



# Guiding Principles—Family Finding

- Finding a family is a youth-driven process.
- Every youth deserves, and can have, a permanent family
- Youth have the right to know about their family members; family members have the right to know about their youth
- Youth should have connections with the biological family, regardless of whether they will live with them, unless there is a compelling reason not to



# Guiding Principles—Family Finding (cont.)

- With support, most youth can live in a home rather than in foster care or institutions
- Family and fictive kin help develop, plan and achieve the youth's permanence
- The goal of Family Search and Engagement (FSE) is permanency, through reunification, guardianship, adoption or another form of permanent commitment



# Six Steps of FSE

- Setting the Stage
- Discovery
- Engagement
- Exploration and Planning
- Decision Making and Evaluation
- Sustaining the Relationship





# Setting the Stage—Goal

Youth, social worker, supervisor, caregivers, professionals – gain clear understanding of the FSE process & how to safely & successfully support these activities



# Setting the Stage—Practice Steps

- SW & supervisor discuss definition of permanency, philosophical & clinical issues regarding permanency
- SW & supervisor determine timing of youth initial participation
- SW & supervisor decide who should work w/youth
- Designated person introduces FSE to youth
- Designated person & youth explore known family network
- Youth and SW identify & involve partners



# Discovery—Goal

Knowledge of a large pool of family members and significant adults, some of whom will establish connections and join the team to assist and support the youth's quest for permanency



# Discovery—Practice Steps

- Talk to the youth
- Review people in youth's network
- Contact parents and others
- Follow agency guidelines for due diligence, permissions and confidentiality
- Mine the file and other records
- Use Internet search engines
- Document findings
- Start engaging connections
- Keep youth, team, and contact informed
- Talk to youth again



# Engagement—Goal

Those who have an inherent, or historic, connection to the youth share information about the youth, are cleared on safety as needed, begin to establish a connection with the youth, and, if they are not already on the team, join the team





# Engagement—Practice Steps

- Develop individual engagement strategy for each person
- Prepare for first in-person visit
- Keep youth informed



# Exploration and Planning—Goal

A functioning team composed of the youth, family, professionals, and important others explores options and takes responsibility for finding permanency for the youth



# Exploration and Planning— Practice Steps

- Merge newly identified family members with existing youth permanency team
- Prepare self, youth & others for participation
- Clarify goal and expectations
- Help team explore options and assign tasks
- Set timelines and monitor progress
- If you does not choose to meet with team, keep youth informed



# Decision-Making & Evaluation— Goal

The team, including the youth and social worker, develops an individualized plan for legal and emotional permanency, a timeline for completion, a process for ongoing monitoring of progress, and a contingency plan



# Decision-Making & Evaluation— Practice Steps

- Team evaluates permanent possibilities
- Teams devises primary and backup plans
- Explore legal issues





# Sustaining Relationship—Goal

The youth, family and team has a plan to support the young person and her family, has achieved legal or non-legal commitments, and has organized the necessary resources to maintain permanency



# Sustaining Relationship— Practice Steps

- Review contingency plans
- Review legal status & less formal commitments
- Review formal & informal resources for family members
- Prepare team to be self-sustaining



# Module Five

## Family Assessment Process



# Anticipatory Planning Phase

- What are your initial reactions to this family's case situation?
- What strengths do you see?
- What red flags pop up for you?
- What might you say to Geneva and her fiancée about how you would work with her?
- What might you want to be sure to tell her in the first interview about process and next steps?



# Initial Interview

- What will be expected of them
- Why their help and the help of other family members is so important for children
- Whether or not they are able or want to provide a safe home environment





# Protective Factors

- Cognitive Ability
- Emotional Investment/Commitment
- Behavioral History



# Module Six

## Family Support Plans



# Potential Impacts of Placement

- Daily routine
- Family life and relationships
- Job/daily activities
- Budget
- Leisure time and rest
- Volunteer activities
- Time with friends and extended family
- Physical health
- Mental health



# Kinship Assessment

## Questions Specific to Each Assessment Category

- What issues/concerns might emerge for relative caretakers related to each respective category?
- What supports might be put in place to resolve the concerns?
- How would you know that the concern has been addressed and resolved?



# Effective Support Planning

- Individualized
- Strength-based
- Comprehensive
- Flexible

