



**CHARTING THE COURSE TOWARDS
PERMANENCY
FOR CHILDREN IN PENNSYLVANIA:
A Knowledge and Skills-Based Curriculum**

**MODULE FOURTEEN (14)
WHEN REUNIFICATION IS NOT IN THE BEST
INTEREST OF THE CHILD**

A Training Outline

**Developed by:
The Pennsylvania Child Welfare
Training Program**

**University of Pittsburgh,
School of Social Work
Pittsburgh, PA**

August 2007

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

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Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Agenda for One-Day Workshop on Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Estimated Time	Content	Page
45 minutes	Section I: Introduction	3
45 minutes	Section II: An Overview of Adoption/Permanent Legal Custodianship	7
1 hour, 30 minutes	Section III: Making Permanency Planning Decisions	14
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1 hour, 30 minutes	Section V: Preparing the Child and Family for Permanency	30
30 Minutes	Section VI Transfer of Learning and Self Assessment	34

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Section I: Introduction

Estimated Length of Time:

45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Recognize the competencies and learning objectives for this workshop;
- ✓ Recognize the effects of multiple placements on a child.

Methods of Presentation:

Lecture, Video, Individual Activity

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Colored markers
- ✓ Name tents
- ✓ TV
- ✓ VCR/DVD Player
- ✓ **Handout #1 (Learning Objectives and Competencies)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda)**
- ✓ **Video (Multiple Transitions)**

Outline of Presentation:

- Prepare the training room
- Welcome trainees to Charting the Course for Children in Pennsylvania
- Introduce himself/herself to the group
- Facilitate trainee introductions
- Review the learning objectives for the session using **Handout #1 (Learning Objectives and Competencies)** and **Handout #2 (Agenda)**

Section I: Introduction

Trainer Note: Prepare a poster for the wall entitled WIIFM (What's In It For Me)?

Trainer Note: If the trainer passes out all of the handouts at one time, i.e. in a packet, the trainer should remove **Handout #6 (Factors to Review When Considering Changing the Goal to Adoption)**, **Handout # 9 (Process for Locating Absent Parents)**, and **Handout #11 (Locating a Missing Parent)** as they contain the answers to the activity immediately preceding their reference in the curriculum.

Trainer Note: Prepare the training room in advance by placing name tents, markers, and handout packets (if using) at each table. As participants arrive, greet each one.

Have the **Video (Multiple Transitions)** ready to play.

Trainer Note: Transfer of Learning Assignments for this module: Prior to attending the training, the participants were to gather the following information:

1. Discuss with your supervisor and/or the placement/adoption supervisor what are your agency's policies, procedures, and general philosophy pertaining to termination of parental rights, both voluntary and involuntary.

This assignment should be discussed at the beginning of Section III.

Step 1: (5 minutes)

Lecture

Start the training session promptly at 9:00 AM. Reinforce the established training room culture. Later—during introductions—reinforce other important guidelines as needed.

Trainer Note:

If this training is for a cohort group, participants will not need to review each guideline unless you feel they need to be reinforced to ensure they are being followed. If this training session is not part of a cohort group, guide participants through reviewing all of the training room guidelines.

Welcome participants to the training and introduce yourself.

Review the identified training room guidelines:

- ✓ Be on time
- ✓ Training schedule 9:00 to 4:00 with breaks
- ✓ Document your presence -sign-in sheet
- ✓ Provide Constructive and Motivational Feedback
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Risk- taking

- ✓ Practice makes permanent
- ✓ Focus on Learning - No cell phones & contact office only for emergencies

Step 2: (5 Minutes if necessary)
Individual Activity

Again, if this training is for a cohort group of participants, they will complete their name tents upon arrival and this step may be deleted and trainees can just place their names on their name tents.

If this training session is not part of a cohort group, guide participants through the completion of their name tents.

County	Unit/Department
Length of time in position	One or two guidelines that make(s) training effective for them

The trainer instructs participants to write the county in which they work in the top right corner of the name plate. The trainer instructs participants to write their positions in the agency in the top left corner.

The trainer asks participants to write the amount of time they have been in their position in the bottom left corner. The trainer asks participants to write two guidelines to make training effective for them. (An alternative: have participants list what they believe to be two key reasons for placing a child)

When the name and four corners are complete, the trainer asks participants to stand their name tents in front of them.

The trainer asks participants to share introductory information from their name tents with the others seated at their tables.

Step 3: (1 minute)
Lecture:

Explain to participants that in the previous trainings they reviewed the Juvenile Court process as it relates to out-of-home placement. They learned how to plan for permanency in a timely fashion. They learned why a child needs permanency and the impact separation and loss have on a child’s social and emotional development. In this module they are learning how to finalize the permanency plan through adoption, permanent legal custodianship or independent living. To begin, they are going to view a video that presents a child who did not achieve permanency in a timely manner. They are going to hear from a child who was bounced from place to place.

Instruct participants to tune in to others and consider the emotional impact that multiple placements have on a child. Also to tune into self and acknowledge how they are feeling in response to this child's situation.

Step 4: (10 minutes)

Video

Show the **Video (Multiple Transitions)**. Remind participants to tune in to self and others as they watch the video.

Trainer Note: The objective of this activity is to elicit participants' feelings about separation and loss and the impact of multiple placements. This video will raise powerful emotions that must be processed.

Step 5: (15 minutes)

Individual Activity

After the end of the video ask each participant to take a few minutes to tune in to self and others. Ask them to write their thoughts and feelings on sheets of blank paper that are provided on the tables. Give participants at least 3 minutes to do this.

Then go around the room, and in a round-robin fashion, have all participants state what they felt when they tuned in to self and the little girl. Allow participants to make their statements, and then move on to the next participant. Do not process the statements.

Conclude the activity by acknowledging that it is understandable that a range of emotions was expressed. It is important that they stay in tune with those emotions to maintain the vital awareness that children must have timely permanency.

They must use all the knowledge and skills they acquired in the previous modules to achieve permanency—specifically, engagement skills, family service planning, and all levels of assessment. In this module, they will learn the final steps to permanency for a child whose safety cannot be ensured in his/her primary home (usually the home of the biological parents).

Step 6: (9 minutes)

Lecture

Tell participants that during the training they will learn the following knowledge and skills. Review the training day using **Handout #1 (Learning Objectives and Competencies)**, and **Handout #2 (Agenda)**.

Trainer should ask participants to think of one thing that they want to learn about when reunification is not in the best interest of the child and take back to their agency practice. Participants should write this thought on the WIIFM poster. At the end of the training, review the WIIFM poster and make sure that all of the concerns and questions have been addressed.

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Section II: Overview of Adoption/Permanent Legal Custodianship

Estimated Length of Time:

45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Recognize court-ordered permanency decisions and alternate living arrangement options explored during the concurrent planning process
- ✓ Recognize the legal process involved in finalizing adoption and legal custodianship
- ✓ Recognize the permanency goal that is in the best interest of the child

Methods of Presentation:

Lecture

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Overhead Projector and Screen
- ✓ **Handout #3 (Schedule of Juvenile Court Hearing)**
- ✓ **Handout #4 (Legal Steps in the Adoption Process)**
- ✓ **Overhead #1 (Permanency Options)**

Outline of Presentation:

- Review permanency options
- Review the schedule for Juvenile Court hearings
- Review the legal steps in the adoption process

Section II: Overview of Adoption/Permanent Legal Custodianship

Step 1: (20 minutes)

Lecture

Explain that when we refer to “achieving permanency,” we are, talking only about the cases in which children have been placed out of the home. With in-home services cases, the children already are in permanent living situations with their birth parents. As we discussed with concurrent planning, federal and Pennsylvania laws place strict mandates on child welfare practitioners/agencies in order to achieve permanency for children in out-of-home placements. The agency will be required to file involuntary termination of parental rights petitions against the birth parents of most children who have been in placement for 15 of the last 22 months. The reason for this tight time frame relates to all we have discussed about children’s attachment needs-namely, children need permanent caregivers in order to grow and develop well. And we know from many years of data that the longer children remain in foster care, the less likely they are to ever achieve permanency. These children are also more likely to experience multiple placements. We want children to be in a permanent home no later than 15 months after they enter care. Of course, it is preferable to have this happen much earlier in the child’s placement. Many children are reunited with their birth parents long before the 15-month mark. In many cases, the permanency plan is changed from reunification to adoption, permanent legal custodianship, placement with a fit and willing relative, or another planned living arrangement intended to be permanent prior to the 15th month of the child’s placement. This usually occurs when it is clear that the parents are not making progress in correcting the safety concerns which led to the out-of-home placement for the child or the parents decide to relinquish their parental rights or support another permanency option. As with all child welfare interventions achieving permanency is guided by the laws, mandates and legal process.

Refer the participants to **Overhead #1 (Permanency Options)** and discuss the options for how children can achieve permanency. Note that the options are in order of preference.

- ✓ Return to Parents
- ✓ Adoption (with relative)
- ✓ Adoption (non-relative)
- ✓ Permanent Legal Custody: a judicially created relationship between child and caretaker which is intended to be permanent and self-sustaining as evidenced by the transfer to the caretaker of the following parental rights with respect to the child: protection, education, care and control of the person, custody of the person, and decision making. The term 'legal guardian' means the caretaker in such a relationship.
- ✓ Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative: this option allows the child to remain in the custody of his/her parent or legal custodian while living with a relative.

- ✓ Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement: The APPLA (Another planned permanent living arrangement) option requires a “compelling reason,” because APPLAs do not provide the same legal permanency for children as adoption or permanent legal custody does. So, if CYs recommends a APPLA, the reason must be provided and must be compelling. Compelling reasons might include:
 - Child is a teen and does not want to be adopted.
 - Child has a strong bond to parent and parent is working hard to achieve reunification but not quite ready to have child returned at 15 months.
 - Child had serious emotional or behavioral problems, which require the child to reside out of the biological parents’ home to receive treatment.
 - When the child stabilizes, the home of the parents will be safe for the child.

Explain that there are three factors influencing the order of preference:

1. Family connection;
2. Strength of the legal relationship between the caregiver and the child;
and
3. The Juvenile Act.

If the county Children and Youth Services (CYS) agency determines that the child’s safety and well-being will be jeopardized by remaining in the family home, the agency obtains protective custody of the child, and as a temporary measure, places the child in a foster home setting. The purpose of the temporary custody is to remove the child from the unsafe home environment and to provide services to the family so that the child can return to a safe home. If during the 12-month permanency hearing, the court determines that the agency made reasonable efforts to reunify the family, the permanency goal may be changed to adoption or another permanent living arrangement. If the child is still in care by the 15th month, the agency must, except in certain circumstances outline below, file a petition to terminate parental rights.

In Pennsylvania, two courts may be involved:

1. Juvenile Court decides the permanency goal (e.g., adoption.) A permanency hearing must be held no later than 6 months after foster care entry. At this hearing, the court will make a finding about whether CYs has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan.
2. Orphan’s Court decides whether parental rights should be terminated and if adoption should be finalized.

In some counties, the practice is to combine the termination of parental rights and goal change hearings into one hearing.

If a child is in out-of-home care for 15 out of the last 22 months, CYs must file a petition with the court to terminate parental rights no later than the end of the 15th month. There are only three exceptions to this requirement.

1. The child is living with a relative and the court has decided that this is the child's permanent goal and TPR is not necessary (permanent placement with a fit and willing relative.)
2. The services outlined in the permanency plan were not provided to the family.
3. The county agency must document compelling reasons, which explain that it would not be in the best interest of the child to file the petition to terminate parental rights at the 15-month deadline. This recommendation to the court is based on the caseworker's assessment of the child and the possibility of the availability of other permanency options, explored during the concurrent planning process. If the court agrees with the caseworker's recommendation to pursue a permanency option other than adoption, the agency does not file the petition for TPR. If however, the agency is unsuccessful in finalizing the planned permanent living arrangement for the child, the agency must file for TPR.

Step 2 (10 minutes):

Lecture

Refer participants to **Handout #3 (Schedule of Juvenile Court Hearings)** and explain that they are now at the stage in which they have determined the permanency plan for a child and they are going to use the Court process to legally establish child permanency.

Tell participants to look at their handout and locate the File TPR petition line. On the top section it is located at the 15 month mark. On the bottom section it is ASAP. Again, the top represents when the agency has made reasonable efforts to reunite the family and the bottom represents the existence of aggravated circumstances. Note, even when an agency is making reasonable efforts you do not need to wait the entire 15 months to file a TPR petition if the court has not ordered that efforts be made to reunify. The case situation will dictate when you file a TPR petition. Explain if the goal is adoption the following additional processes must be followed:

- Report on intent to adopt
- Pre-Placement Report
- Intermediary Report
- Custodial Agency Consent to Adopt
- Petition for Adoption
- Adoption Finalization Hearing

Note the legal procedures vary from county to county. This list provides a general minimum outline.

Explain that unless you are an adoption worker you do not need to know every step in the adoption process but it is important to have a general overview of the process.

Step 3 (15 minutes):
Lecture

Distribute and refer participants to **Handout #4 (Legal Steps in the Adoption Process)** and provide an overview of the adoption process using the following information:

Legal Steps in the Adoption Process:

I. Goal Change Hearing:

- a. The worker must develop the case throughout the goal change process so that the goal change supports the child's best interest.
- b. If appropriate, documentation is presented to the court as the basis for a goal change to adoption.
- c. If the goal is changed to adoption, birth parents retain the right to visit their children unless those rights have been suspended by the court.
- d. Goal change hearing affords agencies the right and obligation to file the Petition to Terminate Parental Rights (if the goal is changed to adoption).

Relinquishment and Termination of Parental Rights:

Children may be freed for adoption by the court. When a parent relinquishes rights voluntarily, it is called relinquishment of parental rights. When the court steps in and frees the child without parental consent, it is called termination of parental rights.

II. Relinquishment and Termination of Parental Rights

A. Relinquishment of Parental Rights

1. Voluntary Relinquishment Petition

- a. Parents sign petition freely and of their own will.
- b. Hearing is scheduled.
- c. Notice must be sent to the birth parents, including both the presumptive and legal fathers. (Unknown does not mean unasked.)
- d. In order for petition to be acted upon, the relinquishing birth parents must appear at the hearing (unless they have done a Petition to Confirm Consent).
- e. The court has the option of asking the parents if they have received counseling from a qualified agency or individual. If not, court may refer before deciding on the outcome of the petition.
- f. Parents may revoke interest in voluntary relinquishment by not appearing at the hearing or by putting the revocation in writing to the custodial agency. Recent legislation instituted a 30 day time limit for birth parents to revoke consent. This is very important if one parent wants to do a voluntary and the other is contesting.
- g. Agency joins in parents' petition and agrees to assume custody until the adoption is finalized.

III. Relinquishment and Termination of Parental Rights

a. Relinquishment of Parental Rights

i. Petition to Confirm Consent

1. Notice must be sent to the birth parents, including both the presumptive and legal fathers (Unknown does not mean unasked).
2. An alternative procedure to voluntary relinquishment.
3. It is used if the parents are unwilling or unable to appear at the relinquishment hearing.
4. Parents must first sign consent. The consent is irrevocable 30 days after it is signed.
5. Agency files the petition with the signed parental consent.
6. Hearing is then held on the petition. If court is satisfied with the testimony given, relinquishment will be granted.
7. Parents need not appear at this hearing

The rights of each parent must be terminated, and each procedure must be viewed separately, but could proceed simultaneously.

IV. Relinquishment and Termination of Parental Rights

A. Termination of Parental Rights:

1. Petition for Involuntary Termination

- a. There is only one way to terminate parental rights—through this petition.
- b. Notice must be sent to the birth parents, including both the presumptive and legal fathers (Unknown does not mean unasked).
- c. The court takes the request to terminate parental rights very seriously.
- d. As said before, CYS must make reasonable efforts to reunify the family, and agency service plans must clearly reflect the reunification plan (unless aggravated circumstances have been petitioned to the court, and the court finds that no reasonable efforts to reunify will be made.)
- e. The worker must document these reunification efforts in the record from the point of the initial contact with family (e.g., that a diligent search has been made to find absent parents.) This documentation could become the legal basis for a court action as a petition to terminate parental rights.
- f. The petition must clearly state the grounds that support the decision to terminate parental rights.
- g. Testimony must reflect the reunification services that the worker offered to the family, and the extent to which the family used these services.
- h. The legal resources of the agency should be utilized in preparation for this hearing.

V. Pre-Placement Report

- A. Based upon the family profile.
- B. Filed with the Intent to Adopt.

VI. Intent to Adopt

- A. Notifies the court that the family intends to adopt a particular child or children.
- B. Intent should be filed within 30 days after child is placed for adoption.

VII. Report of the Intermediary

- A. Intermediary is the person or agency responsible for arranging the placement of the child with the adoptive family.
- B. The agency worker prepares the Report of the Intermediary to inform the court of:
 - 1. The identity of the intermediary.
 - 2. The intermediary's role in the placement.
 - 3. The facts about the child.
 - 4. The facts about the child's birth family and adoptive family.

VIII. Custodial Agency Consent

- A. Custodial agency has to consent to the adoption.
- B. If the agency agrees to the adoption, the consent is signed by the custodial agency representative and filed with the court.

IX. Adoption Petition

- A. The document that is filed by the adopting parents.
- B. Requests that the adoption be approved by the court.

X. Adoption Finalization Hearing

- A. After the petition is filed, a hearing is scheduled for the court to review the petition and approve or disapprove the petitioner's request to adopt.
- B. The child must be present at the hearing.

Conclude this section by stating that it is of utmost importance that all child welfare workers know the legal steps of the adoption process, so that the required activities in the adoption of children are clear.

The worker does not have to be an expert in the legalities of permanency planning (lawyer's role) however, the worker does need to be familiar with:

- The role of the court
- The legal steps
- The means of freeing children
- The grounds for termination
- What constitutes good, thorough documentation, and
- The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, implemented in Pennsylvania by amendments to the Juvenile Act.

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Section III: Making Permanency Planning Decisions

Estimated Length of Time:

1 hour 30 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Recognize the value of making permanency decisions based on case assessments and the best interest of the child

Methods of Presentation:

Lecture, Individual Activity, Small Group Activity, Large Group Discussion

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Flip chart stand
- ✓ Blank flip chart pad
- ✓ Colored markers
- ✓ **Handout #5 (Katie Parker: Update)**
- ✓ **Handout #6 (Factors to Review When Considering Changing the Goal to Adoption)**
- ✓ **Handout #7 (Katie Parker: 11 Month Update)**
- ✓ **Handout #8 (Independent Living Services)**
- ✓ **Overhead #2 (ICWA)**
- ✓ **Overhead #3 (MEPA-IEP Guidelines)**

Outline of Presentation:

- Review goal change options for Katie Parker
- Review ICWA, MEPA/IEP, Independent Living Services,

Section III: Making Permanency Planning Decisions

Step 1: (5 minutes)

Lecture

Trainer Note: The participant's transfer of learning activity for Module 14 was to discuss with their supervisor and/or the placement/adoption supervisor what are their agency's policies, procedures, and general philosophy pertaining to termination of parental rights, both voluntary and involuntary. Discuss the transfer of learning assignment with the participants.

Explain to the participants that in the next skills activity they will learn about permanency planning and making permanency decisions. They will use the case of Katie Parker to identify the decision points for determining permanency goals and explore the emotional ramifications of permanency planning for the parent, the child, and the caseworker.

Katie Parker has been in placement for 8 months. She currently resides with the Fitzgerald family.

Explain to participants that they will discuss what they would do as the caseworker, and what leads them to make these decisions, and then find out what Vernon, the caseworker, decides and why.

Step 2: (10 Minutes)

Individual Activity

Refer participants to **Handout #5 (Katie Parker: Update)**. Give them 5 minutes to orient themselves to the case.

Trainer Note:

If participants recently attended Module 13, they are familiar with the case and can begin reviewing the handout at - Outcome of First Review Hearing (page 2) section. If they have not recently attended Module 13 they will need to review the entire handout.

Ask participants to work individually and decide if they are going to move Katie. Tell them to use a piece of scratch paper and make two columns labeled "Reasons to Move Katie" and "Reasons Not to Move Katie" and list reasons for each decision.

After all participants have decided their answers (5 to 10 minutes), stop the process and move on to the next step of the activity.

Step 3: (10 Minutes)

Large Group Discussion

Begin the discussion by acknowledging that these decisions are difficult to make and there is not always an absolute right and wrong answer. It is important for the worker to

review all the case information and hold a supervisory consult prior to making any decisions.

Ask participants to stand up. Have those participants who would make the decision to move Katie stand to one side of the room. Those who would make the decision for Katie to stay with the Fitzgerald's should stand on the opposite side. Ask participants to briefly state the reasons for their decision.

Trainer Note:

If the room is not big enough for participants to move around, just ask for a show of hands—physically standing on one side forces participants to make a firmer commitment to their decision choice.

The discussion must include the key factors in the decision- making process:

- Reasons to Move Katie
 - So she can reside with kin
 - Because she already has a strong bond with her grandmother
 - Because Jennifer has recommended that Katie live with her grandmother
- Reasons Not to Move Katie
 - Katie is responding well to the Fitzgerald's and moving might result in more trauma for her.
 - Jennifer is doing OK, and if she continues, then Katie can return home and will only have had one placement.
 - Moving Katie to her grandmothers is not a realistic permanent plan since it depends on Mr. Smith always being involved with the family. Remember Mr. Smith just moved into Mrs. Parker's house 2 months ago.

Tell participants that after some serious consideration and consultation, Vernon has decided to keep Katie with the Fitzgerald's. Have participants return to their seats to find out what happens next.

Step 4: (10 Minutes)

Lecture

Oftentimes before the Court makes a decision to change the goal from return home to another permanency goal, the Court will order that a bonding assessment be completed. Bonding assessments are used to determine whether to return a child to a parent from whom s/he was removed when opposing psychological, social or legal professionals disagree on which potential caretaker can best meet the child's needs. The bonding interview is the primary tool in the assessment and consists of a semi structured observational session in which evaluators provide materials and give the adult-child dyad a series of tasks to complete in order to evaluate the interaction between the child and his/her parents. The whole purpose of the bonding assessment is to see if there is a true attachment between the child(ren) and the adult/s being assessed. Ask participants if they have ever attended a bonding assessment session or read a bonding assessment report. If so, as the participant to share their experience

with the group. If no one in the group has had any experience with a bonding assessment, encourage the group to check with their about the possibility of either viewing a bonding assessment or reading a bonding assessment report.

Explain that it is difficult to make a goal-change decision and there are many variables used in consideration of goal change to adoption.

Ask for a volunteer to write the group responses on a flip chart page and then ask the group the following question: "What factors or variables could be used in considering a goal change to adoption?"

After the group has brainstormed and their responses have been recorded, pass out **Handout #6 (Factors to Review When Considering Changing the Goal to Adoption)** to each participant. Instruct participants that they will use these variables in deciding the goal for Katie Parker.

Step 5: (20 minutes)
Small Group Activity, Large Group Discussion

Refer participants to **Handout #7 (Katie Parker: 11 month Update)**. Instruct them to review the update and in their small groups answer the questions that follow the case update.

A Permanency Hearing is scheduled for 1 month from now; do you recommend Katie's goal be changed? If so, what goal are you recommending? Give the groups 10 to 15 minutes to prepare their answers.

Instruct group 1 that they will need to present the answer to:

- ✓ On what factors are you basing your recommendation?

Instruct group 2 that they will need to present the answer to:

- ✓ Based on your recommendations:
 - How might this make mom feel? (Tune in to Others)

Instruct group 3 that they will need to present the answer to:

- ✓ Based on your recommendations:
 - How might this make grandmom feel? (Tune in to Others)

Instruct group 4 that they will need to present the answer to:

- ✓ Based on your recommendations:
 - How might this make Katie feel? (Tune in to Others, Child Developmental needs)

Facilitate a large group discussion for the answer to:

- ✓ Should Katie be allowed to visit her mother in prison? Why or Why not?
- ✓ What casework task do you need to attend to?
- ✓ Discuss planning with Jennifer, Katie, Grand mom and the Fitzgerald's.
- ✓ Try to locate Katie's father.

Step 6: (5 minutes)

Large Group Discussion

Ask participants to consider another scenario. Katie is 16 and ½ years old and she wants to continue to live with the Fitzgerald's' but does not want to be adopted. Would you change Katie's permanency goal? If you would change the goal, what goal change would you recommend and why?

1. Adoption (with relative)
2. Adoption (with non-relative)
3. Permanent Legal Custodianship/guardianship
4. Permanent placement in a home with relatives, or with other persons whom the child has an existing relationship (Kinship care)
5. Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Discuss why Permanent Legal Custodianship/guardianship or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement might be in Katie's best interest.

Permanent Legal Custodianship/guardianship – Adoption is not appropriate for a late teen child who does not want to be adopted, and Permanent Legal Custodianship/guardianship can still provides Katie with a permanent plan.

Step 7: (10 minutes)

Lecture

Explain to participants that since Katie is over 16 and is out-of-home, it is legally mandated that she be offered Independent Living Services.

Explain that in 1999, a Federal Law, John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (PL 106-169), mandated that children age 16 up to 21 be offered supportive services to prepare for their independence.

Ask if any participants work with children receiving Independent Living services. Ask if there is anything they want to add about their Independent Living program.

Remind participants that there is an Independent living section on the Child Permanency Plan that must be completed for all youth who are 16 and older and in out-of-home care. **Handout #8 (Independent Living Services)** is available as a resource.

Tell participants that their TOL assignment for completion of this module is to learn about the Independent Living services that are offered in their counties.

Step 8: (10 minutes)

Large Group Discussion

Ask participants to now consider a different case scenario.

What if at the 12 month permanency hearing, maternal grandmother, Mrs. Parker, expressed an interest to care for Katie. At the Review Hearing, she demonstrated that she is healthy and has a safe living environment for Katie. The Judge/Master ordered increased visitation and for Mrs. Parker to be added as a permanency option for Katie - Note, Mr. Smith is not part of this scenario- since the Review Hearing visitation between Katie and grandmom has increased and Katie has had several positive overnight visits.

Ask the group, based on this scenario, what is their permanency recommendation for Katie?

Ask participants what permanency options they would choose, and why they selected the option. It is likely that participants will choose one of the following options:

- Adoption (with relative)
- Permanent Legal Custodianship/guardianship
- Permanent placement in a home with relatives, or with other persons whom the child has an existing relationship (Kinship care)
- Planned Permanency Placement/Arrangement

Explain why one option would be selected over another option.

- Adoption (with relative): This is the most permanent option.
- Permanent Legal Custodianship/guardianship: This option does not provide Katie with the legal rights as a child of Mrs. Parker. Allows guardianship to be transferred without terminating the parent's legal rights. Permanent placement in a home with relatives, or with other persons whom the child has an existing relationship (Kinship care)
- Planned Permanency Placement/Arrangement: Again, these last two options are only to be selected if, for some reason, Katie would not want to be adopted, or Mrs. Parker did not want to adopt Katie. This can occur in Kinship arrangements as the mother does not want to upset her daughter

To conclude, emphasize:

- Making decisions to assure permanency for children in placement in the child welfare system is difficult.
- The decisions need to be expeditious so that the length of time a child is in "temporary" care is reduced, and the resultant trauma of loss is minimized. Remind participants that the intent of ASFA is to re-emphasize the priorities for children in the child welfare system based on safety, permanency, and well-being for all children. Within that intent, caseworkers must always assess the safety conditions of the proposed permanent living arrangement. Caseworkers must evaluate whether the child will be safe in the relative or non-relative's home before he/she is permanently placed with the family. There is also a renewed focus upon the need for timeliness by child welfare agencies in achieving permanency for all children. Timeliness must be considered from the child's perspective.
- Agency decisions are only recommendations to the court. It is a Judge who makes the final permanency decision.

Step 9: (10 minutes)
Large Group Discussion

Trainer Note: the participants have been introduced to ICWA, MEPA/IEP in prior modules. This section should be a brief review.

A major consideration when making permanency decisions is what the law says about where and with whom a child can be placed. Remind the participants of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA), which they have reviewed in several prior modules of Charting the Course. Facilitate a large group discussion by asking the participants to answer the question "If Katie Parker were of Native American descent, what does ICWA have to do with making a permanency decisions for her?" If the following points are not covered, review them with the group. During the discussion, display **Overhead #2: (ICWA)**.

Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-608) (ICWA) was enacted in 1978 in response to concerns about the large number of Native American children who were being removed from their families and their tribes and the failure of states to recognize the tribal relations of Indian people and the cultural and social standards of Indian communities.

ICWA establishes standards and procedures for certain "custody proceedings" that affect Indian children, including voluntary and involuntary terminations of parental rights and foster care, pre-adoptive, and adoptive placements.

United States Code Title 25 Chapter 21 § 1902. Congressional declaration of policy: The Congress hereby declares that it is the policy of this Nation to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and the placement of such children in foster or adoptive homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture, and by providing for assistance to Indian tribes in the operation of child and family service programs.

To be covered under the provisions of ICWA, an Indian child must be:

1. an unmarried person under 18 years of age
2. a member of an Indian tribe or
3. eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and
4. the biological child of a member of an Indian tribe

If the child is not residing on a reservation, any foster placement or termination of parental rights proceeding, upon petition of the parent, Indian custodian or tribe, shall transfer the case to the tribal court except:

- ✓ cases of good cause
- ✓ where either parent object to the transfer or

- ✓ the tribal court declines jurisdiction by the tribal court

Tell participants the importance of early and comprehensive assessments of a child's history, heritage, and needs upon entering out-of-home care.

- If a Child Welfare Professional has reason to know that a child may have some Indian heritage, it is essential to determine whether the child is a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe, or may be eligible for membership by virtue of being the biological child of a member.
- Delays in determining a child's status as an "Indian child" can have the unfortunate consequence, years later, of disrupting stable placements with non-Indian foster or adoptive parents to rectify an earlier failure to abide by ICWA.
- If it turns out that a child is of mixed ancestry, including some Indian heritage, but is not an "Indian child" under ICWA, then the child's placement is not subject to ICWA and the child is entitled to the MEPA-IEPA protections against discriminatory placement decisions.

Ask the group "If Katie Parker were of African American descent and the Fitzgerald's were Caucasian, what does the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and the Interethnic Placement Act (IEP) have to do with making a permanency decisions for her?" These laws have been reviewed in prior modules of Charting the Course. During the discussion, display **Overhead #3 (MEPA-IEP Guidelines)**

If not covered during the discussion, provide the following information:

- Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) is one of several federal initiatives and laws aimed at removing the barriers to permanency for the hundreds of thousands of children who are in the child protective system. Its goal is to insure child permanency while making every attempt to preserve a child's ethnic/cultural heritage. It requires that agencies receiving federal funding will:
 - conduct diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.
 - develop large and diverse pools of potential foster and adoptive families which will allow children the opportunity to be quickly placed with families capable of meeting their needs.

Discuss the following: to achieve the outlined goals, MEPA-IEP has three basic mandates:

- It prohibits states and other entities that are involved in foster care or adoption placements, and that receive federal financial assistance under title IV-E, title IV-B, or any other federal program, from delaying or denying a child's foster care or adoptive placement on the basis of the child's or the prospective parent's race, color, or national origin;

- It prohibits these states and entities from denying to any individual the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent on the basis of the prospective parent's or the child's race, color, or national origin; and
- It requires that, to remain eligible for federal assistance for their child welfare programs, states must diligently recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in the state who need foster and adoptive homes.

Trainer Note: MEPA-IEP does not alter ICWA's recognition of tribal rights, nor does it affect ICWA's preferences for placing Indian children with members of their extended families or other tribal members.

Inform participants that the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act - Interethnic Placement (IEP) is available in the resource books on their tables and the CD's that they were given at Module 1.

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Section IV: Permanency and Termination of Parental Rights Hearings

Estimated Length of Time:

60 Minutes

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Recognize the purpose of a permanency hearing and termination hearings
- ✓ Recognize the definition of aggravated circumstances
- ✓ Recognize the necessity of a Child Welfare Professional preparing properly for a permanency hearing and termination hearing

Methods of Presentation:

Lecture, Large Group Discussion, Individual Activity

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Flip chart stand
- ✓ Blank flip chart pad
- ✓ Colored markers
- ✓ Overhead Projector and Screen
- ✓ **Handout # 9 (Process for Locating Absent Parents)**
- ✓ **Handout #10 (Grounds for Termination of Parental Rights)**
- ✓ **Handout #11 (Locating a Missing Parent)**
- ✓ **Overhead #4 (Permanency Hearing)**
- ✓ **Overhead #5 (Termination Hearing)**
- ✓ **Appendix #1 (Script #1)**

Outline of Presentation:

- Review steps to prepare for a permanency hearing
- Review grounds and procedures for voluntary and involuntary termination of parental rights
- Review diligent search procedures to locate an absent parent

Section IV: Permanency and Termination of Parental Rights Hearings

Step 1: (10 Minutes)

Lecture

Trainer shows **Overhead #4 (Permanency Hearing)** and explains the purpose of the Permanency Hearing.

Ask participants if they recall the definition of aggravated circumstances from Module 12: The Court Process. Briefly review the definition.

According to section 6302 of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Act, aggravated circumstances may exist when any of the following apply:

- (1) The child is in the custody of a county agency and either
 - (i) The identity or whereabouts of the parents is unknown and cannot be ascertained and the parent does not claim the child within three months of the date the child was taken into custody; or
 - (ii) The identity or whereabouts of the parents is known and the parents have failed to maintain substantial and continuing contact with the child for a period of six months.
- (2) The child or another child of the parent has been the victim of physical abuse resulting in serious bodily injury, sexual violence or aggravated physical neglect by the parent.
- (3) The parent of the child has been convicted of any of the following offenses where the victim was a child:
 - (i) Criminal homicide under 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 25 (relating to criminal homicide);
 - (ii) A felony under 18 Pa C.S. § 2702 (relating to aggravated assault), 3121 (relating to rape), 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault), 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse), 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault) or 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).
 - (iii) A misdemeanor under 18 Pa C.S. § 3126 (relating to indecent assault).
 - (iv) An equivalent crime in another jurisdiction.
- (4) The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses set forth in paragraph (3).
- (5) The parental rights of the parent have been involuntarily terminated with respect to a child of the parent.

Trainer reviews the steps of preparing for a Permanency Hearing

The worker must develop the case throughout the goal change process so that the goal change supports the child's best interest.

Casework Tasks:

- Constantly assess the case at both formal and informal points to assess whether the goal is appropriate for the child

- Communicate with parents, caregivers, and the child (if appropriate) about goal changes
- Collaborate with the family and prepare a revised Child Permanency Plan
- Contact service providers to review case planning, i.e., Drug and Alcohol counselors, Mental Health counselors, parenting class teachers, etc.

Documentation must be presented to the court to schedule the Permanency Hearing
Casework Tasks:

- Contact service providers to obtain formal progress reports
- Document progress and goal changes that were discussed with families.
- According to county policies and procedures, prepare documentation detailing case activities and progress, or lack thereof, to submit to the court.
- Be prepared: the parent's and child's attorney will challenge you

Explain that good, thorough documentation is essential to expeditiously move an adoption case to finalization. Does the information available indicate that the family will provide a safe home for the child? If not, what other permanency plan will be in the child's best interest? In reviewing progress in relation to the final permanent plan, the focus is always progress on the service plan. Are goals being achieved and are objectives being met? What is the evidence of this? Are tasks being completed and what is the evidence? This documentation needs to begin at the time of placement and permeate all casework with the family as they move through the process covering the placement, as well as the permanency plan for the child.

If the plan is to change the goal to adoption, birth parents retain the right to visit their children, unless those rights have been suspended by the court.

Casework Implications:

- Develop an appropriate visitation plan
- Communicate with birth parents about the goal change and their feelings around maintaining relationships with their children
- Plan with birth parents about what to say to their children
- Prepare a Life Book for the child or refer to SWAN for child preparation
- Place child on adoption registry if child does not have an identified adoptive family
- Prepare child for adoption and adoption process

Permanency Hearings afford agencies the right and obligation to file the Petition to Terminate Parental Rights (if it is necessary.)

Casework Implications:

- Communicate with parents and children about TPR
- Request a Termination Hearing
- Complete necessary paperwork

Step 2: (15 Minutes)
Lecture, Large Group Activity

Overhead #5 (Termination Hearing) is available to explain the purpose of a termination hearing.

Explain to participants that it is critical that every effort is made to locate both parents so that they can be informed of the hearing that will be held to terminate their rights. In fact, it is crucial that the search for an absent parent begin as soon as a child put in an out of home placement. Before reviewing **Handout #9 (Process for Locating Absent Parents)**, ask participants where a Child Welfare Professionals should begin the search for an absent parent. Record their answers on a flip chart. After the participant's list is complete, review **Handout #9 (Process for Locating Absent Parents)** to complete the list. Conclude the activity by mentioning that SWAN (State Wide Adoption Network) Legal Services Initiative has put together a "Due Diligent Search" Packet available to caseworkers via the SWAN website.

Trainer Note: when considering termination of parental rights, it may be necessary to locate and interview more than one father. Some categories of fathers are:

1. birth father: proven to be the father by blood tests
2. putative father: acknowledges self to be the father
3. presumptive father: married to the child's mother at least one year before the birth of the child

Refer participants to **Handout #10 (Grounds for Termination of Parental Rights)** and explain that "Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights" is governed by The Pennsylvania Adoption Act, Title 23, Pa. C.S., Chapters 21-29. Specifically § 2511 (relating to Grounds for Involuntary Termination) enumerated the nine grounds for termination. Under this statute, there are nine grounds for termination. Refer to this handout during the discussion, and highlight some of the grounds more commonly used by Children and Youth cases (#1, #2, #5, and #8 and 9. These five grounds have been extracted from the handout):

(1) The parent has evidenced a settled purpose of relinquishing parental claim to the child, or has refused or failed to perform parental duties for a period of six months immediately preceding the filing of the petition.

(2) The repeated and continued incapacity, abuse, neglect, or refusal of the parent has caused the child to be without essential parental care, control, or subsistence necessary for the child's physical or mental well-being. The conditions or causes of the incapacity, abuse, neglect, or refusal cannot or will not be remedied by the parent.

(5) The child has been removed from the care of its parents by the court or under a voluntary agreement with an agency for a period of at least six months. The conditions which led to the removal or placement of the child continue, and the parents cannot, or will not remedy those conditions within a reasonable period of time, and termination would best serve the needs and welfare of the child.

(8) The child has been removed from the care of the parent by the court or under a voluntary agreement with an agency, twelve months or more have elapsed from the date of the removal or placement, the conditions which led to the removal or placement of the child continue to exist, and termination of parental rights would best serve the needs and welfare of the child.

In order to comply with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), a ninth ground for termination of parental rights was added to Pennsylvania Adoption Act in 2007 to allow for:

(9) Involuntary termination of parental rights when the parent has been convicted of one of the following and the victim was a child of the parent:

- an offense under 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 25 (relating to criminal homicide);
- a felony under 18 Pa.C.S. § 2702 (relating to aggravated assault);
- an offense in another jurisdiction equivalent to criminal homicide or aggravated assault; or
- an attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit an offense of criminal homicide, aggravated assault or the equivalent in another jurisdiction .

Per the Pennsylvania Adoption Act, Section 2511 (b): The court in terminating the rights of a parent shall give primary consideration to the developmental, physical and emotional needs and welfare of the child. The rights of a parent shall not be terminated solely on the basis of environmental factors such inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care found to be beyond the control of the parent. With respect to any petition filed pursuant to subsection (a) (1), (6) or (8), the court shall not consider any efforts by the parent to remedy the conditions described therein which are first initiated subsequent to the giving notice of the filing of the petition.

After reviewing the handout lead a discussion, using the content below, on a comparison of Relinquishment vs. TPR. On a flip chart, write “Comparison of Relinquishment vs. TPR: pluses (+) and minuses (-) and solicit responses.

Pluses:

Parent(s) can feel that they gave up rights as an act of love, giving the child an opportunity to have a better life than the parent can provide.

Parent(s) may be able to give permission to the child to attach to another family and thus create fewer traumas for the child.

There is a greater likelihood of an “open adoption.”

The process can happen more quickly.
The process can be less contentious.

Minuses:

Occasionally, a child will wonder why the parent(s) didn't fight to keep parental rights.
Some children feel that the parent(s) showed love by fighting to retain rights.
Relinquishment finalization is preceded by a waiting period of 10 days.

Step 3: (20 Minutes)

Lecture, Script, Individual Activity

Inform participants that during this next activity they are going to observe the interactional skill – questioning. Note the clear specific closed ended questions that are asked.

Explain that documentation of diligent searches should include attempts to contact the parent at any last known locations.

Even though the script represents a brief encounter, the importance of a detailed account of the visit in the record must be respected by the worker. The quality of the documentation is critical to the decision-making process. A description of this very encounter may be the piece of information the court needs to make the decision to terminate the parent's rights.

Trainer Note: Use **Appendix #1 (Script #1)** in Appendix section so that the volunteer participant will have a copy to read.

Ask for a volunteer to read the following script with the trainer:

Worker: Hello, I'm Mr./Mrs. Worker from ABC County. I noticed that there is no address on this door. Is this 1234 Main Street?

Person: Yes.

Worker: I am here to see Mr. Smith. Is he in?

Person: No!

Worker: Could you tell me where he is or what time I can reach him?

Person: No, I haven't seen him lately.

Worker: Could you tell me if he lives here?

Person: Yes he does, but we haven't seen him for about a week.

Worker: Does he receive his mail here?

Person: Yes.

Worker: For the last week, I have been trying to reach Mr. Smith by phone here, but no one has answered. Is the number here 222-2222?

Person: Yes, it is.

Worker: Would you mind telling me who you are?

Person: Yes, I am his friend, (give name).

Worker: Do you live here?

Person: Yes, I do.

Worker: My name is Mr./Mrs. Worker from ABC County. If you see Mr. Smith, would you ask him to contact me at this number as soon as possible? (hand person a piece of paper with your name and phone number).

Person: Yes, I will.

Worker: Thank you for your help.

After you finish reading the script, tell participants to write documentation for the interaction they just observed.

Step 4: (15 minutes)

Lecture

When they have completed their notes distribute and review **Handout #11 (Locating a Missing Parent)** and briefly go over the content.

As you cover the content ask participants to check their documentation and mark if they included all of the information.

Conclude the activity by stating that:

- Even though the script represents a brief encounter, the importance of a detailed account of the visit in the record must be respected by the worker.
- The quality of the documentation is critical to the decision-making process.
- A description of this very encounter may be the piece of information the court needs to make the decision to terminate the parent's rights.

- Good, thorough documentation is essential to expeditiously move an adoption case to finalization. This documentation needs to begin at the time of placement and permeate all casework with the family as they move through the process covering the placement, as well as the permanency plan for the child.

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Section V: Preparing the Child and Family for Permanency

Estimated Length of Time:

1 hour 30 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Recognize the timelines that guide permanency-planning decisions.
- ✓ Recognize the value of preparing the child and family for permanency

Methods of Presentation:

Lecture, Script, Large Group Discussion

Materials Needed:

- ✓ **Appendix #2 (Script #2)**

Outline of Presentation:

- Review positive adoption language
- Practice talking to a principal crucial parties about adoption

Section V: Preparing the Child and Family for Permanency

Step 1: (20 minutes)

Large Group Activity, Lecture

Explain to the participants that it is important to use positive language when talking about adoption. As a large group, ask participants to generate a positive adoption term for each of the negative adoption term that will be read by the trainer. The list is as follows:

Negative Term

1. Natural/real parents
2. Foreign child
3. Unwanted child
4. Handicapped child
5. Mixed race child
6. Adopted child
7. Adoptive family

Positive Term

- biological or birth parent
- child from abroad
- child placed for adoption
- child with special needs
- interracial child
- my child
- forever family

One of the important tasks of finalizing the permanency plan is for the worker to prepare all the parties for permanency.

Explain that they are now going to have an opportunity to practice talking about the final permanency plan. Remind participants of their work with the Parker/Johnson family. First, the trainers will demonstrate an interview with Katie about her final permanency goal, followed by large group discussion. Then the participants will practice and demonstrate their own skills in the role-play interviews with Ms. Parker, Mrs. Parker, Mr. Johnson, the Fitzgerald's, and Katie at age 8, 12, and 16. The skill demonstration will focus on Katie's final permanency plan- whether she should be adopted or permanently live with the Fitzgerald's.

As you watch this demonstration, think about what the worker is trying to accomplish and how he is doing it. As you watch the dialog, note the interactional skills that the worker is using to engage Katie. Check to see if the worker is using developmentally appropriate language with Katie. Be prepared to present motivational and constructive feedback

Step 2: (10 minutes)

Script, Large Group Discussion

Trainer Note: Use **Appendix #2 (Script #2)** so that the volunteer participant will have a copy of the script to read.

With a volunteer participant, present the following interview:

Worker: Katie, we've talked about how mom and dad Fitzgerald are going to be the people you live with forever.

Katie: Uh huh.

Worker: When that happens, you are only going to see your mom once in a while

Katie: I won't have visits all the time anymore?

Worker: You'll have a couple more visits in the next few weeks and then only have visits around your birthday and stuff.

Katie: Oh. (Sighs)

Worker: You feel a little sad?

Katie: (Shrugs)

Worker: It is ok to feel sad.

Katie: Is my mom ok that I am not going to live with her ever again?

Worker: Well, that is why we are going to have a few more visits so your mom can talk to you about living with the mom and dad Fitzgerald. So she can let you know it is OK to live with them.

Katie: Is she going to go away like my dad after that?

Worker: Well, we hope not. She says that she wants to still visit you sometimes and mom and dad Fitzgerald say they think it is good that you still see your mom.

Katie: What about my grandmom, I really like going to her house?

Worker: You will still get to go visit grandmom. Mom Fitzgerald says she likes going over to grandma's with you.

After finishing the mock interview, ask the group to provide motivational and constructive feedback.

Step 3: (60 minutes)
Small Group Activity, Large Group Discussion

Trainer Note: This activity may be simplified by putting each of the roles, Ms. Parker (mom), Mrs. Parker (grandmother), Mr. Johnson (father), Mrs. Fitzgerald (adoptive mother), and Katie at ages 8, 12, and 16, on a 3x5 card and passing the cards out, one to each dyad. If more dyads are needed, assign one of the roles to two different dyads.

Arrange the members of the group into dyads (pairs) and assign one member to be one of the following: Ms. Parker (mom), Mrs. Parker (grandmother), Mr. Johnson (father), Mrs. Fitzgerald (adoptive mother), and Katie at ages 8, 12, and 16 (for a total of 7 dyads). The second person in the dyad will act as the child welfare professional.

Tell participants who are in the role of the child welfare professional that they are going to interview their family member about how that person might be feeling and impacted as a result of Katie being adopted by the Fitzgerald's.

Prior to beginning the interview instruct the Child Welfare Professional to tune in to self and to share with their partner how their feelings could impact the interview and what they are going to do to maintain objectivity.

In their roles, ask the Child Welfare Professionals to interview the partner for about 5 minutes. Instruct the Child Welfare Professionals to be aware of the various Interactional Skills they are using (tuning in to self, tuning in to others, clarifying purpose, questioning, reaching for feedback, dealing with issues of authority, reaching inside silences, communicating information). During their practice sessions they are to maintain an awareness of their performance. After they complete the interview they must ask for feedback from their partners. Based on the feedback, they may need to revise their interviews and practice their presentations one more time.

Instruct participants when to start and stop the interview and when to start and stop the feedback process.

Have participants switch roles and repeat the activity of tuning in to self then completing the interview and feedback processes.

Conclude this activity by asking participants how it felt to be in the:

1. Child Welfare Professional role
2. Role of significant other; i.e., mother, grandmother, Katie at different ages, etc.
3. Were they comfortable in the role of Child Welfare Professional?
4. What would have made them more comfortable discussing this sensitive topic?

Conclude the training by reviewing that:

- A forever family is permanent.
- Children need to have a family they can view as their family when they are adults as well as when they are children.
- Permanency provides stability for children rather than remaining in limbo in the foster care system.
- It is "ok" to have strong feelings about the issues involved, but be aware of our own values, biases, and attitudes in the decision-making process.

Module 14: When Reunification is not in the Best Interest of the Child

Section VI: Self-Assessment and Transfer of Learning

Estimated Length of Time:

30 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Complete a plan for the successful transfer of their learning to the workplace.

Methods of Presentation:

Individual Activity, Large Group Discussion

Materials Needed:

- ✓ **Handout #12 (Self Assessment for Module 14)**
- ✓ **Handout #13 (Transfer of Learning for Module 14)**

Outline of Presentation:

- Presenter facilitates trainer self-assessments and transfer of learning plans
- Presenter review the WIFM poster and answers unanswered questions

Section VI: Self-Assessment and Transfer of Learning

Trainer Note: This is a critical section and will need the entire 25 minutes assigned.

Trainer Note: Review the WIIFM poster and be sure that all of the questions and concerns have been addressed.

Step 1: (10 minutes)

Lecture

The trainer advises the group that they have reached the stage of the training that requires a transfer of learning plan to implement upon return to their agencies. The plan is their key to transferring what they learned to their work behavior.

Using **Handout #12: Self- Assessment for Module 14** the trainer reviews the objectives of the training day. Note these are the same as the self- assessment knowledge and skill categories.

Step 2: (10 minutes)

Individual Activity

The trainer refers participants again to **Handout #12 (Self-Assessment for Module 14)** instructing participant to complete the Self-Assessment. Inform the participants that it is important that they accurately assess their ability. It is not expected at this stage of training to have mastered all the areas of training. It is through their recognition of a need to continue to grow that they take the steps necessary to do so.

The trainer then asks participants to individually complete their plans.

After they complete their forms, ask each participant to share one piece of knowledge/skill he/she wants to improve and the action he/she thinks will help improve the identified knowledge/skill. Go around the room until everyone has participated.

Ask participants if they have shared their Self-Assessments with their supervisors. Some may say yes, some may say no. For those who say no, ask them what barriers they have faced regarding discussing their Self- Assessments with their supervisors. Acknowledge that the barriers are real and will continue to exist.

Ask participants who said they have shared their Self-Assessments how/when they have managed to do so. Ask them what they gain from these discussions. Hopefully, the other participants will share some techniques that others can use. Also, other participants will see the benefits from the information that their counterparts are sharing.

Step 3: (10 minutes)
Lecture

Trainer Note: The transfer of learning assignments in preparation for Module 15 are extremely important. Please go through them thoroughly and strongly encourage participants to complete the assigned tasks and bring the required materials to Module 15.

Using **Handout #13 (Transfer of Learning for Module 14)**, remind participants of their next day of training and their required post and pre-training responsibilities. Inform participants that during the final module of this curriculum, they will participate in a critical thinking exercise, which will involve an analysis of their most challenging case. **Handout #13 (Transfer of Learning for Module 14)**, is meant to guide them in this effort. Specifically, pages 2-5 should assist them in analyzing the situation. Before reviewing the questions, participants should take a few minutes to reflect on the one family that has posed the greatest challenge to them. Encourage participants to look over the questions on pages 2-5 of the Handout. They should not try to answer them now – simply read them for understanding. It is important that they first identify the most challenging family in their caseload and then respond to these questions with the particular family in mind. They will need to complete this task prior to module 15. Encourage participants to discuss the questions with their supervisors.

Remind participants that they are to bring all previous self-assessments from Charting the Course and a completed **Handout #13 (Transfer of Learning for Module 14)** to the last session. They will need this information in order to prepare a post-training professional development plan.

Have participants complete program evaluations and inform them their training day is completed but their learning process continues.

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