



# LET'S CONNECT WORKSHOP

By: Kirsten Meneses, MSW Intern

## Foster Care Students Needs Assessment Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you cope in foster care? Please circle the response or responses. Then write in other responses in the box.

Exercise	Listen to music	Watch television	Play video games	Go shopping	Singing
Reading	Journaling	Talk with others	Play sports	Art	Dancing

2. What major concerns do you have in foster care? Please write in your responses.

3. What would you like to see change while in foster care? Please write in your response.

Yes	No
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4. Have you been abused while in foster care?

Yes	No
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5. Are you in contact with biological parents while in foster care?

Yes	No
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6. Would you like to return to parents and or family members after foster care?

# Needs Assessment Survey

## Policy for Let's Connect Workshop

The Bloomfield Middle school social worker intern will lead a Let's Connect workshop on building communication for foster care families. The objective of the workshop is to gather foster care families from the school and encourage and build connectivity with the foster care students and their foster care guardians/parents.

### Procedure:

Prior to the workshop, throughout the week of April 20-24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the school social work intern and with the collaboration of teachers will administer a needs assessment survey at the beginning or ending of a period to 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade foster care students in their classes.

The foster care guardians/parents will be notified of the survey and workshop through email by the school social work intern of the workshop and followed by a phone call the next day. Foster care guardians/parents must confirm attendance for the workshop by June 3, 2020. To confirm attendance, the consent form must be signed and returned to the school social work intern. Foster care guardians/parents will have three options to provide the consent form. (See consent section below).

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 6:00pm-8:00pm, the school social worker, Kirsten Meneses MSW intern will lead the workshop through group discussions and activities.

### Eligibility for Let's Connect Workshop:

- Foster care student attending Bloomfield Middle School
- At least one foster care parent must be present per family

### Consent:

The school social worker must be compliant with HIPAA regulations. Therefore, prior to attending the workshop, a foster care parent must sign the consent form. The consent form may be received through the following methods:

1. Review and sign the consent form, scan and then email it to the school social worker, Kirsten Meneses MSW intern at [menesesk@bloomfield.edu](mailto:menesesk@bloomfield.edu)
2. Review and sign the consent form and have the student bring the hard copy to the office of the school social worker at room 107.
3. Review and sign the consent form and fax it at (973) 680-8720.

# Let's Connect Workshop Policy

## **Rules, Guidelines, and Regulations:**

### **Confidentiality:**

The Let's Connect Workshop is meant to provide a safe place to engage, learn, share thoughts, concerns, and experiences. The social worker is ethically and legally obligated to uphold the confidentiality of each participant. Participants are also to adhere to keeping information within the workshop meeting and not be disclosed outside.

### **Exceptions to Confidentiality:**

- If a participant expresses intent to harm themselves physically, by law the social worker must take appropriate action of reporting to other professionals, police, and or a family member.
- If a participant expresses intent to harm another individual, by law the social worker must also contact that individual to warn them of possible danger.
- If there is suspicion of a child, elderly, or disabled person being abused in any manner, the social worker by law must make a report to the appropriate authority.

**Respect** for other participants, materials, time, and property. No discrimination; no teasing, name calling will be tolerated.

**Engagement** in group discussions and activities during the workshop as a form of participation is highly recommended. The workshop activities include the following: art crafts, lectures, discussions and videos.

**Privacy** must be kept throughout the workshop of others' information and responses. Recording or pictures of any kind is not permitted during the Let's Connect Workshop.

**Phone use** will not be allowed during the workshop or inside the library. If a participant needs to use the phone, they may leave the library for usage.

**Alcohol, drug substances and weapons** will not be allowed or permitted into the workshop.

**Food** will not be allowed into the workshop. The workshop will provide light refreshments.

**Responsibility.** It is the school social work intern's responsibility to enforce these procedures and guidelines.

**Other members.** This is a closed group. Therefore, if other family members will like to participate in the workshop or be the representative of a foster care guardian, the member must review, sign the consent form and notify the school social work intern.

**Clients rights:** In case of an emergency, participants have the right to withdraw from the workshop at any time without any consequences. Participants have the right to be treated with respect. Participants are provided with a safe environment in the workshop.

# Let's Connect Workshop Policy

## Let's Connect Workshop Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ and my foster child/(ren) \_\_\_\_\_, hereby consent to participate in the Let's Connect Workshop on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 6:00pm-8:00pm at Bloomfield Middle School library. I understand that this workshop is an opportunity to nurture the foster care family relationship by building communication skills.

I understand the following in regards to Let's Connect Workshop:

1. I understand that as a participant, I will show respect for other participants, materials, time, and property.
2. I understand that I will remain present and engage in group discussions and activities during the workshop as a form of participation. Unless, in case of an emergency I have the right to withdraw from the workshop at any time without any consequences.
3. I understand that the workshop activities will include the following: art crafts, lectures, discussions and videos.
4. I have read and understand the laws that protect confidentiality as provided in the policy form.
5. Recording or pictures of any kind is not permitted during the Let's Connect Workshop.
6. I understand the workshop will provide light refreshments but not include food. I will not bring outside food.

I have read and understand the information provided above and reviewed it with the school social worker.

Signature of parent/legal guardian:

Date:

# Let's Connect Workshop Consent Form

# Let's Connect Objectives

Identify the importance of building communication skills



Define each communication skill terms



Recognize personal barriers to effective listening



Apply the communication skills



To generate open, honest, and frank dialogue through sharing information and active participation

# Ice Breaker:

Share name and based on the 3 colors you are wearing, answer the questions from the boxes with a person you do not know.

When was a time when you gave a surprise to someone?	What kind of food could you eat everyday?
What is the most painful experience you had?	Where is a place you would love to travel to?
If you had unlimited amount of money, what would you do with it?	What superpower do you wish to have?
When was a time you felt very afraid?	What is a goal right now that you are working on?

# Importance of Building Communication Skills

- ▶ “It is important to analyze adolescents’ views of their relationship with their parents and the effects that different levels of communication have on their school success and propensity for delinquency” (Davalos, 2005).
- ▶ “Findings suggest that delinquency is related to perceived lack of communication in families. Data suggest that the greater the endorsement of family communication, the less likely the individual is to engage in all types of delinquent behavior. This positive effect may be a result of adolescents feeling that they have someone who is concerned about their lives, problems, and their futures” (Davalos, 2005).
- ▶ Increases trust
- ▶ Helps in problem-solving
- ▶ Encourages to express needs and wants

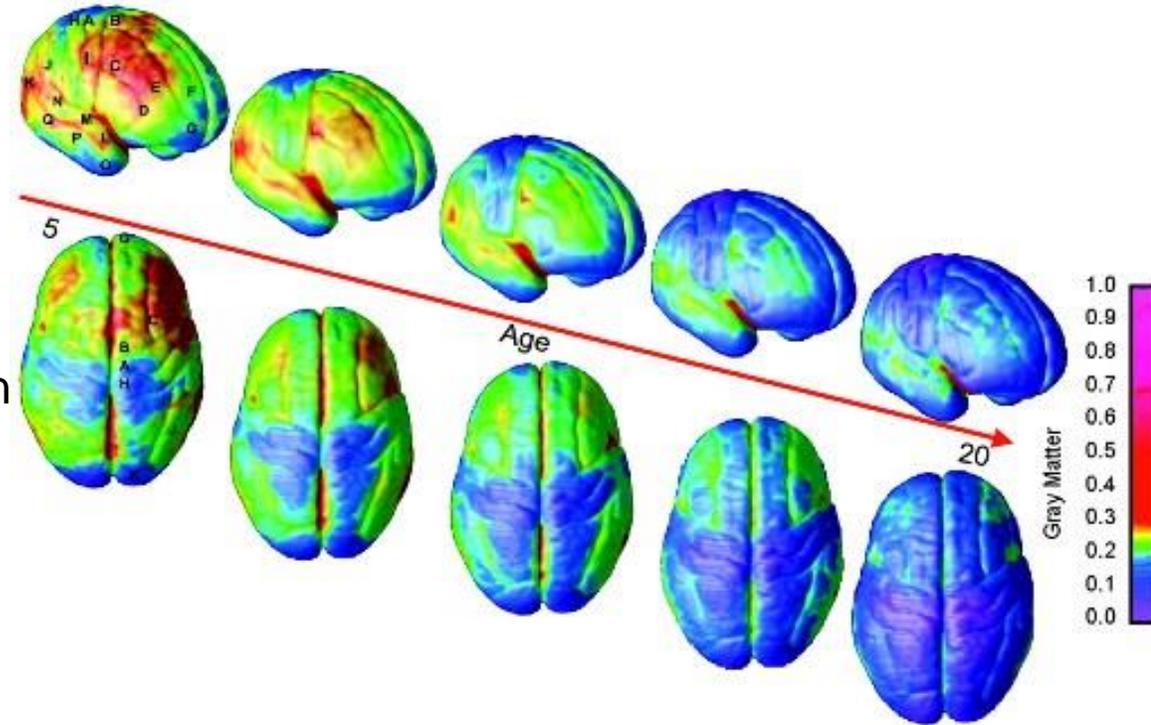


# The Adolescent Brain

- According to Lissienko (2015) it stated, teenagers use the amygdala rather than their prefrontal cortex.
- The last part of the brain to develop is the prefrontal lobe.
- Having healthy conversations nurtures the development of the teenage brain.
- MRI reveals the brain goes on changing for a long time. Even after puberty has finished, and may not be complete until nearly 30 years of age.

## Tip:

- *“Adults must check their own emotion when speaking with a teenager. First acknowledge their emotion and then assist in articulating their feeling”.*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Are You Listening?



Each of the social skills below are helpful toward solving conflict.

For each skill, rate yourself:

**S** for **strength**, **O** for **OK** or **N** for **I need to work on it**.

\_\_\_\_\_ When I am being talked to, I make eye contact

\_\_\_\_\_ I watch the speaker's facial expressions and try to understand them fully.

\_\_\_\_\_ I listen with the goal of fully understanding the speaker's point of view.

\_\_\_\_\_ I refrain from interrupting.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wait for a pause before I ask for clarification.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am not distracted by anything, the speaker has my full attention.

\_\_\_\_\_ I try to listen intently to remember the speaker's important points.

\_\_\_\_\_ I remain neutral and open minded while listening to the speaker.

How could you improve your listening skills to equip yourself to resolve conflicts? \_\_\_\_\_

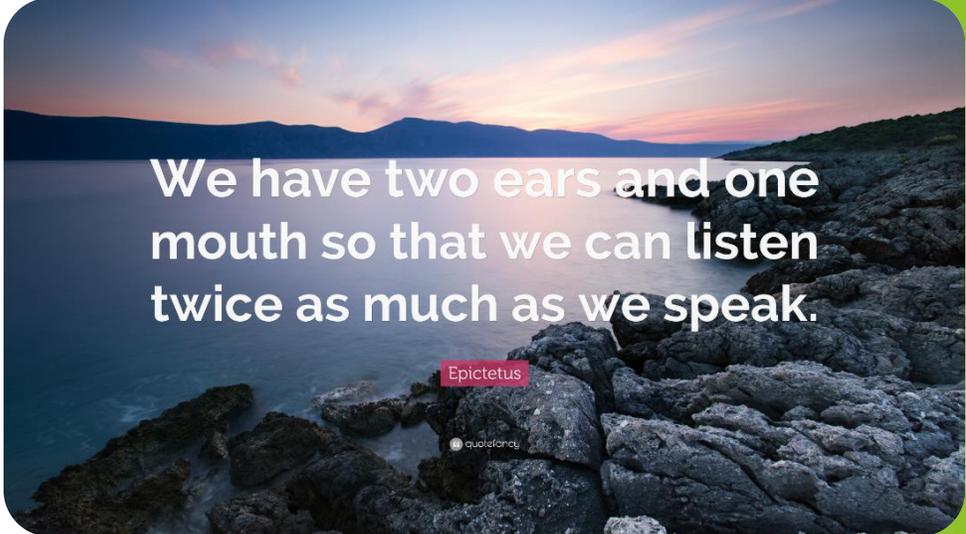
# Active Listening and Responding

Definition of *active listening*: “empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard” (Kawamichi et., 2015)

Research reported that 70-80% of our waking hours is in communication. About 9% percent writing, 16% reading, 30% speaking, and 45% listening (Barnard, 2017). In addition, we remember less than 50% of what we hear in a conversation” (Barnard, 2017).

Responding and not reacting- According to Jeppsen and Vandersloot (2013) it stated, “Saying to someone, “I understand,” is typically not helpful and tends to minimize their feelings”.

- ▶ Open-Ended Questions
- ▶ Paraphrasing
- ▶ Clarifying
- ▶ Reflecting
- ▶ Non-verbal: smiling, eye contact, posture, distractions.



We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.

Epicurus

quotation

# Active Listening and Responding

What It's Called	How To Do It	Why Do It	Examples of Active Listening Responses
Paraphrasing	Restate the same information, using different words to more concisely reflect what the speaker said.	<p>Tests your understanding of what is heard by communicating your understanding of what the speaker said.</p> <p>Allows the speaker to 'hear' and focus on his or her own thoughts.</p> <p>Allows the speaker to see that you are trying to understand his/her message and perceptions. Encourages the speaker to continue speaking.</p>	<p>What I'm hearing is..."</p> <p>"Sounds like you are saying..."</p> <p>"I'm not sure I'm with you but... If I'm hearing you correctly....</p> <p>So, as you see it...</p> <p>It sounds like what's most important to you is . . .</p>
Clarifying	Invite the speaker to explain some aspect of what she or he said.	<p>Gives the speaker the opportunity to elaborate and clarify what was said.</p> <p>Gives you the opportunity to identify anything that is unclear and to check the accuracy of your understanding</p>	<p>I am not sure I quite understand; or do you mean that...?</p> <p>Can you say more about . . . ?</p> <p>You have given me a lot of information, let me see if I've got it all..."</p>
Reflecting	Relaying what was said back to the speaker to show that you understand how eh/she feels about something.	<p>Deepens understanding of feelings and content.</p> <p>Allows the speaker to see that you are trying to understand his/her message and perceptions.</p>	<p>"I get the sense that you might be feeling afraid about what might happen if . . . "</p> <p>To me, it sounds like you are frustrated about what was said, but I am wondering if you are also feeling a little hurt by it."</p> <p>It seems like you felt confused and worried when that happened."</p> <p>"So, you're saying that you were feeling more frightened than angry."</p>

# Empathy and Judgement

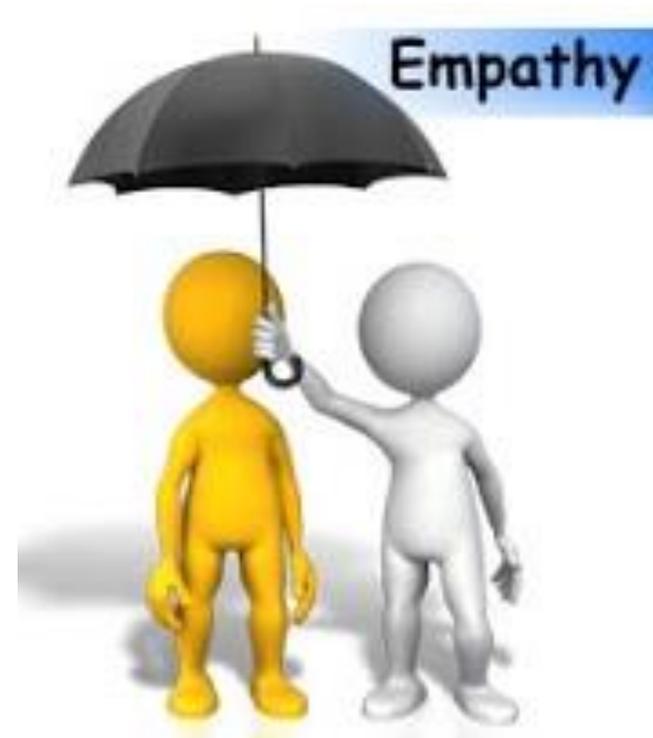
Definition of *empathy*: the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner (Merriam-Webster)

Definition of *judgement*: the process of forming an opinion or evaluation by discerning and comparing

According to Korem (2019) “Adolescents are especially occupied with others’ thoughts and how they are perceived by the surroundings; therefore, adolescents are especially vulnerable to increase of worries in the social realm”.

Video Clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>



# Non-Judgement "I" Statement

I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
(sad, scared, angry, happy, weird...)

When \_\_\_\_\_  
(tell when you feel this way)

Because \_\_\_\_\_  
(tell why you feel this way)

What I Really Need is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(tell the person what would make things better for you)

# Comprehension

- ▶ Definition of *comprehension*: the act or action of grasping with the intellect: understanding, knowledge gained (Merriam-Webster).
- ▶ Epstein et al. (1993) have identified the following four styles of communication.

Clear and Direct Communication: most healthy form of communication and occurs when the message is *stated plainly* and *directly* to the appropriate family member.

Clear and Indirect Communication: the message is clear, but it is not directed to the person for whom it is intended.

Masked and Direct Communication: content of the message is unclear, but directed to the appropriate family member.

Masked and Indirect Communication: both the message and intended recipient are unclear.

# Comprehension

- ▶ Example 1: “Son, people just don't work as hard as they used to”.
- ▶ A) Clear and Direct Communication
- ▶ B) Clear and Indirect Communication
- ▶ C) Masked and Direct Communication
- ▶ D) Masked and Indirect Communication

*Answer: Masked and Direct communication*

# Comprehension

- ▶ Example 2: "It's disappointing when people forget to complete their chores".
- ▶ A) Clear and Direct Communication
- ▶ B) Clear and Indirect Communication
- ▶ C) Masked and Direct Communication
- ▶ D) Masked and Indirect Communication

*Answer: Clear and Indirect Communication*

# Comprehension

- ▶ Example 3: "Son, I'm disappointed that you forgot to take out the trash today without me having to remind you".
- ▶ A) Clear and Direct Communication
- ▶ B) Clear and Indirect Communication
- ▶ C) Masked and Direct Communication
- ▶ D) Masked and Indirect Communication

*Answer: Clear and Direct Communication*

# Comprehension

- ▶ Example 4: "The youth of today are very lazy".
- ▶ A) Clear and Direct Communication
- ▶ B) Clear and Indirect Communication
- ▶ C) Masked and Direct Communication
- ▶ D) Masked and Indirect Communication

*Answer: Masked and Indirect Communication*

# Validating Thoughts and Feelings

- ▶ Definition of *validation*: “we confirm, mostly through words, that other people can have their own emotional experiences. It is not agreeing with their emotional experience, it is reassuring them that it is okay for them to feel the way they do (Jeppsen & Vandersloot, 2013).
- ▶ Disclosure of distressing experiences frequently involves the expression of negative affect, parental emotional distress to adolescent negative affect may be a particularly important indicator that adolescents use when considering how their parents might respond to their disclosures (Martin, 2018)
- ▶ Video Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t685WM5R6aM>

**ACCEPTING A  
CHILD'S FEELINGS  
AND VALIDATING  
THEM CAN GO A  
LONG WAY.**



Questions or  
Comments?

# References

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## Let's Connect Workshop Evaluation Form

Please circle your response to the following items using the scale provided.

1. Attending the Let's Connect Workshop has helped me better understand the importance of knowing and applying communication skills to nurture family relationships.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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2. I will implement the interventions and strategies from the workshop to better communicate with others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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3. I would recommend Let's Connect Workshop with others.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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4. The information, examples, and activities were concise, clearly explained and understood.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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5. The overall content from the workshop was well organized.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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6. In the box provided, write how can this workshop be improved?

7. Any other comments or feedback?

# Evaluation Form