

HANDOUTS FOR MODULE 1:

TRUST, POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES, AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

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MODULES OF ADAPT (ADOPTION-SPECIFIC THERAPY)

Module 1. Trust, positive coping strategies, and behavior management

Purpose – Parents: To form a supportive relationship and working alliance; to discuss basic beliefs about adoption; to focus on children's strengths and encourage positive family interactions; to assist parents in developing behavior management plans that take children's trauma history into account.

Child: To form a supportive relationship and working alliance; to help the child identify feelings; to guide the child in developing new adaptive coping strategies such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, a calming image, and problem-solving skills.

- 4 individual parent and child sessions, 1 joint session

Module 2. Developmental understanding of adoption experience

Purpose – Parents: To find out about parents' understanding of the adoption experience for them and their child; to help parents tell the child's adoption story and share it with the child; to increase parents' comfort with and skill in talking with their children about difficult information in their past at the child's developmental level.

Child: To find out children's understanding, comfort and awareness of why they are (or are being) adopted, and to clarify information in their adoption story; to help children tell their story through words and pictures and share with their parents; and to confirm adoption as a valued type of family.

- 3 parent and child sessions, 1 joint session

Module 3. Loss and grief issues in adoption

Purpose – Parents: To help parents understand their child's losses, and learn to assist children

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in their grieving process; to assist parents in dealing with their own adoption-related losses; and to help parents cope with possible feelings of rejection from the child.

Child: To help children identify, talk about, and understand the circumstances of their previous losses; and to support their feelings in the grieving process.

- 2 parent and child sessions, 1 joint session

Module 4. Attachment and joining with the adoptive family

Purpose – Parents: To help parents learn about the attachment process; to talk about ways to strengthen family attachment; to help parents “claim” the child as part of their family; and to encourage positive family interactions and rituals.

Child: To help children talk about their feelings about safety, trust and security (or lack thereof) in their adoptive family; to increase their sense of belonging in their adoptive family.

- 2 parent and child sessions, 1 joint session

Module 5. Search for identity and transracial adoption.

Purpose – Parents: To help parents understand how complicated identity development can be for adopted children as they try to develop their own sense of self that includes birth family, foster or orphanage family, adoptive family and the child’s own uniqueness, especially as they become teens; to explore special issues of identity for children adopted transracially; to help transracial and same-sex families develop strategies to deal with discrimination and microaggressions.

Child: To help children develop an integrated identity that includes birth family, adopted family, and children’s own uniqueness; to help children adopted transracially or in same-sex families develop strategies to deal with discrimination and microaggressions.

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- 2 parent and child sessions; for transracial adoptions, 2 parent, 2 child and 1 joint session are added; for LGBT and other non-traditional families, 1 parent, 1 child and 1 joint session are added

Module 6. Adoption and the outside world

Purpose – Parents: To help parents and children deal with questions about the child's background and adoption that come from other children, other parents and strangers; to help parents decide who they tell (e.g., extended family members, pediatricians, teachers) about difficult past history of the child.

Child: To empower children to handle the intrusive and sometimes upsetting questions others ask about adoption, using the *Wise UP! Powerbook*.

- 2 parent and child sessions, 1 joint session

Module 7. Trauma Treatment (May be inserted as needed any time after Module 1)

Purpose – Parents: To help parents understand that children being adopted past infancy are likely to have experienced traumatic events that will take time, love and probably therapy to heal; to assist parents in coping with and accepting children's disclosures of trauma, providing a safe and trusting environment for them to talk about (or draw or play out for younger children) what happened to them.

Child: To help children who have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, deprivation, domestic violence and other violent events process and cope with the trauma. If a child is experiencing posttraumatic stress symptoms that are upsetting and interfering in any way, to help the child engage in the trauma narrative process with the therapist in combination with other coping and adoption-specific skills from previous modules.

- 3 child and parent sessions, 1 joint session

BASIC BELIEFS OF ADOPTION-SPECIFIC THERAPY

1. Adoptive families face unique challenges inherent in adoption and different from those in birth families.
2. Adoption and reactions to it are not pathological.
3. Loss is unique and pervasive in all adoption adjustment.
4. Children must grieve their losses in order to form healthy new attachments.
5. Adoptive parents need to respect and honor the child's previous attachments; children should not be asked to forget.
6. Parents need to understand their child and the child's behavior in light of their previous history, including increased needs for stability, predictability, consistency and security.
7. Adoption is processed within a developmental framework.
8. Adopted children need to feel accepted for who they are, with help in finding their own unique strengths.
9. Talking about adoption is positive and creates a healthy adjustment.
10. Adoptive families need all available information on the child.
11. Children have the right to all information about themselves and their past, including difficult information, as is developmentally appropriate.

From *Beneath the Mask: Understanding Adopted Teens* (pp. 35–36), by D. Riley with J. Meeks, 2005, Silver Spring, MD: C.A.S.E. Publications. Copyright 2005 by Debbie Riley and John Meeks. Adapted with permission.

WHAT PARENTS CAN EXPECT DURING THE TRANSITION

YOUR CHILD

- may be on best behavior during the first few weeks, the “honeymoon” period.
- may start misbehaving and testing limits as he/she starts to feel your commitment.
- may have grief and loss reactions expressed in various ways, such as
 - wanting to go back to previous caregiver, especially at times when disciplined;
 - feeling angry at you because you are not the previous caregiver to whom there is an attachment;
 - resisting getting closer to you due to feeling that loving you is disloyal to previous caregiver;
 - loving and missing caregivers, even if mistreated by them; and
 - reexperiencing loss and abandonment with other loss experiences (losing pet or toy, friend moving away) or changes in daily life and routine (moves, vacations.
- may appear to make the transition very easily if child has had many placements,
 - but it may take child a long time to really get close.

YOU AS ADOPTIVE PARENT

- feel happy and scared to be expanding your family.
- hope your love and care will prevent or solve child’s problems.
- may experience the child’s testing of limits and misbehavior as evidence of not being a good enough parent.
- may see the child’s grief over loss of previous caregiver as a rejection of yourself.
- may feel very hurt that your love and reaching out is not being returned.
- may question your own ability to continue to be a parent to your challenging child.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE TRANSITION

- Expect a bumpy ride. Keep providing structure and consistent limits.
- Accept that the child may be grieving—it shows that your child can make deep attachments.
 - Remember how long it took you to recover from a major loss.
- Help child with grief by
 - accepting and validating their feelings about previous caregivers and/or other important people (e.g., “I know how much it hurts and how much you miss your birth mom [or your foster mom, or the orphanage staff, or your foster sister, or friends in the orphanage, or the teacher]”). In international adoption, children have also lost their country, familiar sights, sounds, tastes and smells, language, culture, racial heritage, etc.
 - looking at pictures of the previous family, caregivers and friends, and talking about happy times.
 - if the previous caregiver is supportive of the adoption and available, consider visitation.
 - being patient with the child’s grief and standing by your child during this period. Do not push the child to move on and stop grieving prematurely.
 - encouraging helpful expressions of grief and anger (talking or crying about it) and setting limits on nonhelpful expressions (physical aggression, destruction of property).
 - remembering that by working through hard times together, you will become closer.
- Expect longer and stronger grief, loss and anger if the transition from the previous caregiver was sudden and if the child was poorly prepared for the placement.
- Get support for yourself as you deal with doubts and emotional turmoil. Talk to a friend, partner, clergyman, and/or therapist about what you are feeling.

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PARENT PROGRESS REPORT (PPR)

Child's Name _____ Module # _____ Session # _____ Date _____

Problems		
Here are the top three problems you mentioned in our first meeting. For each, please rate how much of a problem it still is, from <u>0</u> " <i>not at all a problem</i> " to <u>10</u> " <i>a huge problem</i> ." If these problems have resolved, please add and rate new problems. Feel free to add notes.		
Problem	Rating	Notes
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

For the following questions, please circle the answer that best describes how many DAYS in the last week YOU AS A PARENT engaged in each activity.

- Spent one-on-one time with the child leading play:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
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- Praised and encouraged child's positive efforts and behavior:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------

- Became calmer and quieter as child's negative behavior intensified:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
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- Discussed expectations and consequences before beginning activities:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------

- Enjoyed time with child:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
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- Parenting was stressful:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
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- Felt positively toward child:

Seldom/Never (0 days)	A few days (1–2 days)	About half of the week (3–4 days)	Most of the week (5–6 days)	Daily (7 days)
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------

MY CHILD'S POSITIVES

My Child's Positive Personal Characteristics

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What My Child Does Very Well

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Activities My Child Likes

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

MY CHILD'S STRENGTHS/CONCERNING BEHAVIORS

MY CHILD'S STRENGTHS

Child's area of strength:

What I did this week to support it:

How child reacted:

How I felt about it:

MY CHILD'S CONCERNING BEHAVIORS

Child's concerning behavior:

Possible relation of behavior to child's previous history:

CHILD-LED PLAY SKILLS

Helpful Reminders:

1. Child, not parent, decides what they will play for 10–15 minutes
 - a. Activities might include drawing pictures together, building something with LEGOs, playing catch or kicking around a soccer ball, cooking together something of the child's choice, doing imaginative play of any kind, etc.
 - b. Activities for older children and young teens may be harder to find but need to stem from the child's desires and interests. Possibilities might be flying a kite, planting vegetables or flowers, taking a walk around the block, working on a craft project together.
2. Activities should be interactive and easily structured as child-led. Try to avoid activities such as reading, watching TV, or playing video games during this time, as these activities do not lend themselves to child-led play. At least at first, try to avoid competitive games.
3. If possible, keep it the same time of day so the child feels they can count on the special time.
4. Label the time to differentiate it from the rest of the day, e.g., it's Daddy/Meghan time; let's do our Special time; time to go into our fantasyland.

DO's and DON'T's of Child-Led Play

<u>DO</u>	<u>DON'T</u>
<u>Allow child to direct the play.</u> Child decides who does what and when	<u>Control the play,</u> e.g., Let's have the children make a picnic lunch; why don't you draw a barn over there and I'll draw a horse?
<u>Use descriptive commenting,</u> simply saying what is happening, e.g., the boy is going over to put the baby in the crib; you're using the red LEGOs to build the car; now you're fixing lunch for me and the bears.	<u>Ask questions,</u> e.g., Why do you want the girl to cut her hair? What color is that? Shall we draw an airplane? Did you know that there are four kinds of bluebirds? <u>EXCEPTION:</u> Asking clarification questions is different and can be helpful, e.g., What would you like my guy to do? Where does this go?
<u>Reflect feelings,</u> e.g., you're so happy that that you could fit them all in; the baby looks sad that the mom wouldn't take her out of the crib; that bear seems so mad that his brother took away the fish he was going to eat.	<u>Try to teach anything, unless requested by the child,</u> e.g., If you put this color over here, you'd make a rainbow; kick it with the side of your foot; this one is orange and this one is green.
<u>Use praise and encouragement,</u> e.g., Great catch!; you're working so hard on drawing the girl's hair; look at how yummy the frosting looks; that's beautiful!	<u>Criticize even slightly,</u> e.g., It would look better if you put it over here; That isn't right at all; Haven't you ever made one before?; Let's get this over with.

ADOPTION-SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR RECORD

Concerning behavior of child _____

Adoption-specific strategy _____

Date & Time	Situation	How strategy used	Outcome	Satisfied? Y or N

CHILD-LED PLAY RECORD SHEETS

Date	Play Activity	Who Involved?	Child-led? How?	How long?	Success rating: (0 = horrible; 10 = wonderful)

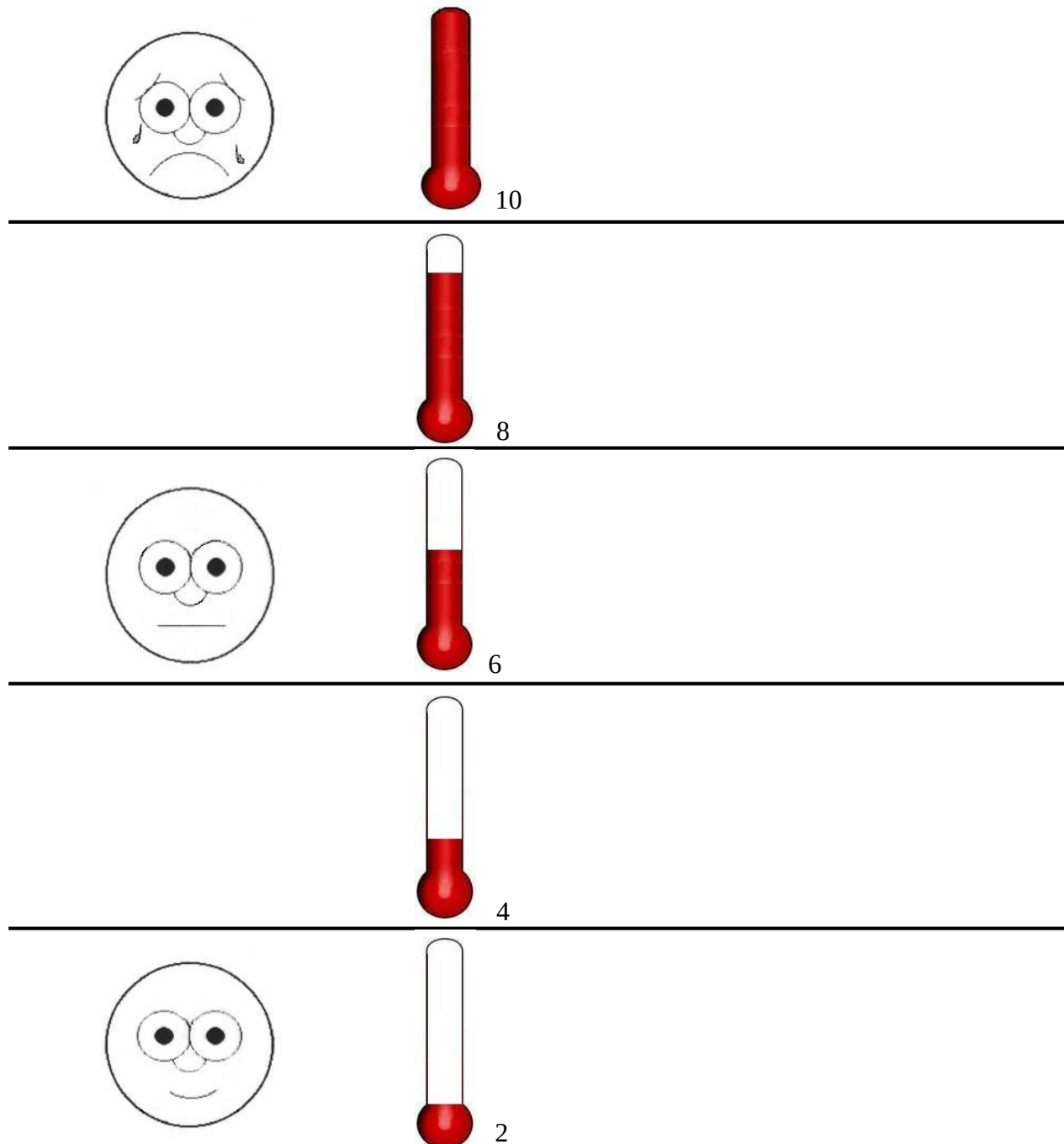
FEELINGS FOR FEELINGS GRAB BAG

(For younger children use left column only)

SAD	PROUD
HAPPY	DISAPPOINTED
MAD	CONFUSED
SCARED	ASHAMED
SHY	EMBARRASSED
BRAVE	EXCITED
CALM	STRESSED
SURPRISED	CONFIDENT

From *Putting Children First: Proven Parenting Strategies for Helping Children Thrive Through Divorce* (pp. 216–218), by J. Pedro-Carroll, 2010, New York, NY: Penguin/Avery. Copyright 2010 by Joanne Pedro-Carroll. Adapted with permission.

FEELINGS THERMOMETER



ADOPTION FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

A _____

D _____

O _____

P _____

T _____

I _____

O _____

N _____

POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES

(use when you want to increase a behavior)

- 1. PRETEACHING**
 - a. Anticipate an issue, and give acceptable choices
 - b. Use “If...then” or “when...then” statements
- 2. PRAISE**
 - a. Catch child being good
 - b. Praise immediately following desired behavior
 - c. Be enthusiastic
 - d. Label praised behavior—“Great job cleaning up your toys!” rather than “Great job!”
 - e. Give at least eight praise/encouragements for each criticism given
- 3. ENCOURAGEMENT**
 - a. Praise effort or process rather than outcome, e.g., “You’re working so hard on your spelling words,” or “I love how you try out so many different ways to make that spaceship.”
 - b. Nonverbal praise and encouragement—High-fives, hugs, smiles and laughs, clapping
- 4. PHYSICAL AFFECTION**
- 5. TANGIBLE REINFORCERS**
 - a. Things—stickers, small toys, dessert, etc.
 - b. Privileges—more computer time, sleepovers, etc.
 - c. Special time—with parent, friend, etc.
 - d. Points—can be earned and used for the above
 - e. Use reward chart for tracking if appropriate
 - f. Deliver reinforcers immediately and consistently
 - g. Accompany with verbal and nonverbal praise and encouragement

101 Ways to Praise a Child

WOW • WAY TO GO • SUPER • YOU'RE SPECIAL •
OUTSTANDING • EXCELLENT • GREAT • GOOD • NEAT •
WELLDONE • REMARKABLE • I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT •
I'M PROUD OF YOU • FANTASTIC • SUPERSTAR • NICE
WORK • LOOKING GOOD • YOU'RE ON TOP OF IT •
BEAUTIFUL • NOW YOU'RE FLYING • YOU'RE CATCHING
ON • NOW YOU'VE GOT IT • YOU'RE INCREDIBLE • BRAVO
• YOU'RE FANTASTIC • HORRAY FOR YOU • YOU'RE ON
TARGET • YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY • HOW NICE • HOW
SMART • GOOD JOB • THAT'S INCREDIBLE • HOT DOG •
DYNAMIC • YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL • YOU'RE UNIQUE •
NOTHING CAN STOP YOU NOW • GOOD FOR YOU • I LIKE
YOU • YOU'RE A WINNER • REMARKABLE JOB • BEAUTIFUL
WORK • SPECTACULAR • YOU'RE SPECTACULAR • YOU'RE
A DARLING • YOU'RE PRECIOUS • GREAT DISCOVERY •
YOU'VE DISCOVERED THE SECRET • YOU FIGURED IT
OUT • FANTASTIC JOB • HIP, HIP, HORRAY • BINGO •
MAGNIFICENT • MARVELOUS • TERRIFIC • YOU'RE
IMPORTANT • PHENOMENAL • YOU'RE SENSATIONAL •
SUPER WORK • CREATIVE JOB • SUPER JOB • FANTASTIC
JOB • EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE • YOU'RE A REAL
TROOPER • YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE • YOU ARE EXCITING •
YOU LEARNED IT RIGHT • WHAT AN IMAGINATION •
WHAT A GOOD LISTENER • YOU ARE FUN • YOU'RE GROW-
ING UP • YOU TRIED HARD • YOU CARE • BEAUTIFUL
SHARING • OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE • YOU'RE A
GOOD FRIEND • I TRUST YOU • YOU'RE IMPORTANT • YOU
MEAN A LOT TO ME • YOU MAKE ME HAPPY • YOU
BELONG • YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND • YOU MAKE ME LAUGH
• YOU BRIGHTEN MY DAY • I RESPECT YOU • YOU MEAN
THE WORLD TO ME • THAT'S CORRECT • YOU'RE A JOY •
YOU'RE A TREASURE • YOU'RE WONDERFUL • YOU'RE
PERFECT • AWESOME • A PLUS JOB • YOU'RE THE BEST •
A BIG HUG • A BIG KISS • I LOVE YOU!

—Author unknown

MODEL REWARD CHART

I AM WORKING ON...	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

MY REWARD WILL BE _____

PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT RECORDS

Date & Time	Situation	What Praise or Encouragement Given	Child's Reaction	Satisfied? Y or N

REINFORCERS FOR MY CHILD

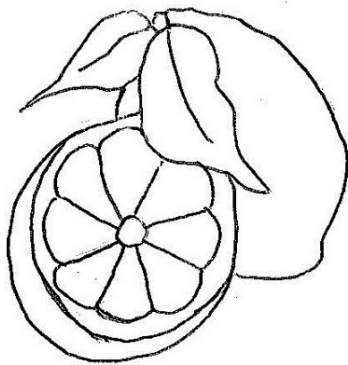
THINGS (e.g., stickers, small toys, dessert)

PRIVILEGES (e.g., sleepover with friend, extra computer time)

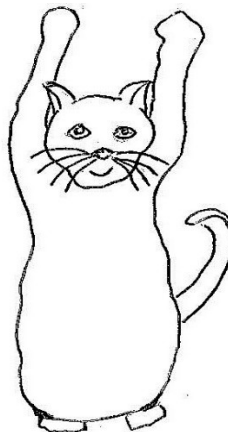
SPECIAL TIME OR ACTIVITY (e.g., ice cream with mom, go to movies with brother, hang out with favorite uncle)

MUSCLE RELAXATION PICTURES

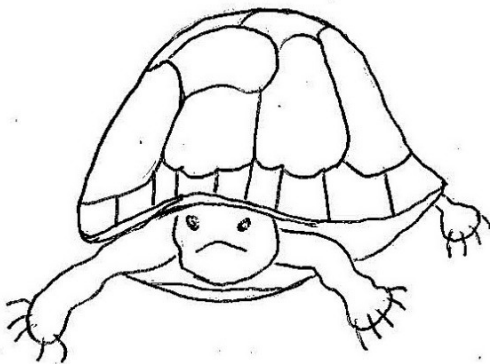
Color them in!



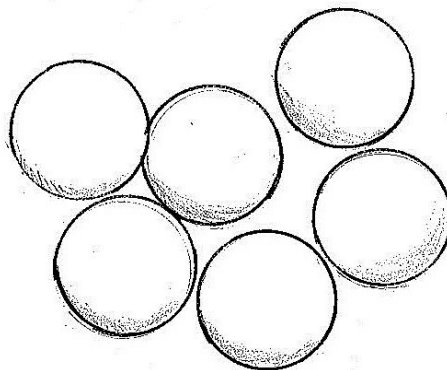
SQUEEZE THE LEMON



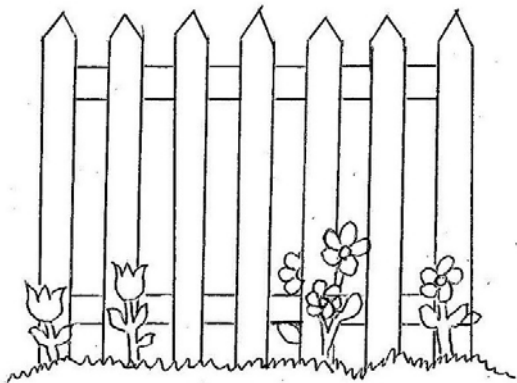
STRETCH LIKE A CAT



DANGER! HIDE IN YOUR SHELL



CHEW THE JAWBREAKER



SQUEEZE THROUGH FENCE



SQUISH IN MUD PUDDLE

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES
(use when you want to decrease a behavior)

1. **REDIRECTING**
 - a. Reengage child's interest to an acceptable task or object.
 - b. Use distraction to accomplish this with younger children.
2. **IGNORING**
 - a. Use for whining, complaining, talking back, arguing, attention-getting behaviors, etc.
 - b. For children in relatively new placements, reflect the child's feeling before ignoring, e.g., "I can see you are really upset right now," "You're sad that you can't have a popsicle."
 - c. Make only ONE statement to let child know what you will be doing, e.g., "There's no more discussion," or "We can talk about it when you stop whining and crying."
 - d. Ignoring means TOTALLY ignoring even if child escalates—no eye contact, no words, no physical interaction. Parent can leave situation if necessary.
3. **SETTING CLEAR AND CONSISTENT LIMITS**
 - a. Set up ahead of time when possible (preteaching), with choices and "If...then..." statements.
 - b. Whenever appropriate, use shared decision-making, involving the child in setting up the consequences and choices ahead of time.
 - c. When setting a limit or consequence, take a moment to reflect if it is something you are willing to enforce. IF a limit is set, you must follow through.
 - d. Use de-escalation to keep the situation calm and under control.
4. **USING TIME OUT** (if appropriate given child's history)
 - a. Use as a calming down period, not punishment (e.g., "It seems like you need a break to calm down—would you like to go to your room or the den to calm down?").
 - b. Must ignore child during time out and move on after.
 - c. Do not try to reason with child during time out or directly afterwards—wait until a later calm period if you want to discuss the incident.
 - d. Sometimes best for parents to take time out—go do something calming for the parent (read a book, listen to music, close door to own bedroom and lie down).
 - e. For children who have been neglected and/or left alone, either do not use time out or use only very carefully (e.g., have time-out chair where child can still see you).
5. **REMOVING A PRIVILEGE** (especially for older children)
 - a. Whenever possible, use preteaching so child knows what to expect about privilege removal.
6. **USING NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES**
 - a. Natural consequences: child goes to school in pajamas or dresses in car if not dressed when have to leave
 - b. Logical consequences: if homework not done, no time to go to park

BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES FOR COMMON DIFFICULT CHILD BEHAVIORS USING ADOPTION-SPECIFIC LENS

Some of the most common behavioral difficulties of children with traumatic and neglectful histories include lying, stealing, hoarding food, and running away. Standard strategies for these problems are often ineffective in children with difficult histories. In most cases, the behavior was adaptive in a previous situation. Below, we outline some adoption-specific strategies for these behaviors that take into account the child's past traumatic history.

STRATEGIES FOR STEALING

Stealing in children with difficult histories usually relates to early deprivation. The child may have had to steal to survive, or to have something to trade with others to get their needs met. Stealing also helps a child who has not had their needs met by caregivers feel self-reliant. Therefore, it was probably adaptive in a former context.

1. Acknowledge stealing behavior in the context of the child's life story, e.g., "I know that you had to steal things when you lived on the street or in the orphanage so you could eat, and you knew you could depend on yourself. So it's totally understandable that you would feel you need to steal things. But now we can talk about what you need and we can find a way for you to get it without having to take it."
2. Provide an outlet for the need to steal that is acceptable to you. For example, put a basket of things this particular child tends to steal (e.g., soaps or lotions, little toys) in a closet, and let the child know if they feel like stealing something, they can take something from the basket.
3. If the child steals from others outside of home, note that you understand why they would feel the need to steal, given this was how they got their needs met earlier. Have the child return the stolen item(s) to the other person or to the store and apologize to the relevant people, either verbally or in writing. Be calm and matter-of-fact and do not shame the child.
4. Eventually as the child feels more secure in the home and develops a solid history of their needs being consistently met, the stealing behaviors will decrease.

STRATEGIES FOR HOARDING (FOOD OR OTHER THINGS)

Hoarding in children with difficult histories also often reflects deprivation and unpredictability. For a child in a neglectful environment, it would be adaptive to hoard things and especially food to make sure you had some at times when none was provided. For some children who have not had emotional nurturance, food may have served as way of soothing themselves.

1. Acknowledge hoarding behavior in the context of the child's life story, e.g., "When you didn't have enough to eat, it helped to hold onto any food you could find since there wasn't enough to go around. Now we have plenty of food, and you can always get some, so there's no need to keep candy and fruit and string cheese under your bed."
2. Keep some food the child likes or tends to hoard available and accessible at all times. Leave a bowl of fruit on the kitchen table, or have a special snack drawer with items the child likes such as peanut butter crackers, chips, fruit roll-ups, boxed juice, etc., that they

Handout 20

can access freely when they feel the need to have food or keep it in their room or backpack as long as they are sealed and won't attract ants. For recent placements, allow the types of snacks the child is used to as well as potentially healthier alternatives at first.

3. Do not lock up food or restrict hours for eating. If children feel the need to hoard food and are denied access, it will increase their sense of deprivation early in the placement. They almost certainly will eat normally over time as they realize they are now in a safe, secure and plentiful environment.
4. Make gradual changes to the child's diet over a period of time in a way that does not lead to a sense of restriction. Slowly add more of what you would like the child to eat and then decrease the frequency of unhealthy foods they may love. Reflect on what the psychological meaning of familiar foods may be and acknowledge this to the child.
5. Include the child in snack and meal planning, shopping, and preparation. If the child is part of choosing what is available to eat and helping to cook it, it increases their sense of control and investment in the meals and also helps them feel effective and good about themselves.

STRATEGIES FOR LYING

Lying among children with difficult histories generally relates to protection and survival in a previous dangerous and unpredictable situation. These children may not trust in the parent's unconditional love or feel safe enough that they won't be rejected at a deep emotional level if they tell the truth. For children who were verbally and physically abused, lying may have helped them avoid punishment or trauma. If children have been moved or lost caregivers unpredictably, children may feel that lying will prevent these caregivers from rejecting them, causing further loss. In all the scenarios described above, lying could be seen as an adaptive response to a scary and unpredictable situation. Lying is a very difficult behavior to change, and it is important to recognize that it may take considerable time as well as effort in building trust to resolve.

1. Acknowledge the lying behavior in the context of the child's life history, e.g., "I know when you lived with Momma and Harvey, you needed to lie to avoid getting beaten by Harvey, so it makes sense that you would lie now when you are worried you will get in trouble. But I will not ever beat or hit you, no matter what you have done. And don't worry about us sending you away—we are your forever family and whatever you do, we will want you and keep you in our family."
2. Avoid labeling behaviors as lying when it serves another purpose. If the child says they'll do their homework or take out the trash, and when you check, they have not done it, this is not lying. Use the label "lying" only for deliberate misleading and use the label very sparingly.
3. Do not corner child in a lie or try to catch them in a lie. For example, if you saw the child take a sibling's possession, do not ask, "Did you take Jake's LEGOs?" Children with difficult histories may have had to lie for protection, and when emotionally aroused, will lie. Ask the child to give the LEGOs back to Jake, and if necessary, institute a contingency if the child does not comply. Trying to catch the child lying makes it adversarial and is not helpful.
4. Do not ask children why they lied. Especially for traumatized children, lying can be an almost automatic impulsive response and children most often do not know why they lied. If cornered about why they lied, their anxiety will be raised, and they may confabulate a

response under pressure—a further lie. Even when faced with direct evidence, children with these difficult histories often are unable to back down from the lie. Acknowledge that the child lied but do not try to force the child to admit it.

5. Give lots of praise and encouragement when children are honest and forthcoming. Especially when acknowledging something they were not supposed to do, be effusive in praise, and say something like, “High five! I’m so glad you told me the truth when you could have lied. I hope you will learn that it is safe to be honest with me.”
6. Reflect confabulation as a wish and do not label it a lie. For example, if the child says their birth mom took them to Disneyland for their birthday last year and you know their mom was in jail at that time, say something like, “You wish your mom had taken you Disneyland. That would have been a very special day.”
7. Eventually as the attachment becomes secure and the child feels safe and comfortable in a home they perceive as permanent, children will feel more comfortable telling the truth.

STRATEGIES FOR RUNNING AWAY

Running away among children with difficult histories usually relates to a survival or exit strategy that was adaptive in the past. For some, it may have been necessary to avoid abuse. For those with multiple placements, it may feel safer to be the one who leaves rather than risk being rejected and forced to leave again. It also may be a coping strategy to take off and avoid a situation when feeling overwhelmed or emotionally dysregulated. And sometimes the child may run away to test whether the parent cares enough and they are worthwhile enough for the parents to try to find them and bring them back.

1. Acknowledge the running away behavior in the context of the child’s life story, e.g., “I know when you have big feelings, you feel like you need to run away to get some space. And if you run away from us, you’re leaving us before we can leave you like your birth family or those other families did. But we love you and want you to always be part of our family, so we won’t just let you go. We want you with us and we are not going to leave you.”
2. Help the child develop and use other ways of dealing with strong feelings. Examples are labelling feelings and using words to communicate need; having a time out word/space to go to calm down; relaxation techniques, i.e., deep breathing, muscle relaxation, calming image; cognitive coping; problem solving.
3. Recognize triggers for running away and help the child recognize them. Predict that the child might want to run away in certain situations, and make plans in advance with the child to utilize coping strategies or distraction, etc. For example, “Last time you weren’t allowed to sleep over at your birth brother’s house, you ran away. I’m concerned that the situation now is kind of like that, and you may feel the need to run away. Let’s figure out what we can do to help you feel safe enough to stay.”
4. Remind the child of their worth, of how special they are to you and how sad you would be if they were not with you.

KIDS' COPING SOLUTIONS

1. Relaxing yourself

- Relax your muscles
- Breathe deeply and slowly
- Use calming image

2. Taking a time out

- Walk away
- Ignore a person who is bothering you

3. Problem-solving

- Talk it out
- Look at all options and consequences of each option

4. Seeking out help

- Talk to a friend
- Ask a trusted teacher or parent to get involved

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COPING WITH MY PROBLEM

My problem is: _____

My feelings about the problem are:

The solution that will help me with this problem is:

1. _____

How helpful was that strategy? (circle one below)

Very helpful A little helpful Not at all helpful

2. _____

How helpful was that strategy? (circle one below)

Very helpful A little helpful Not at all helpful

3. _____

How helpful was that strategy? (circle one below)

Very helpful A little helpful Not at all helpful

4. _____

How helpful was that strategy? (circle one below)

Very helpful A little helpful Not at all helpful

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU

Name: _____

Family Member

What I Like About You Is...

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COPING STRATEGIES LOG

Use this log to note when you practice the ways we learned to help when you notice your emotional temperature rising. Try to use deep breathing, muscle relaxation, and your calming image each at least once or twice this week. Write down at least one time you used each. Use more sheets if you want to tell about other times you used these strategies.

1. WHEN I USED DEEP BREATHING:

The situation that upset me:	
Where I felt it in my body:	

Deep breathing helped (circle one) a lot some not at all

2. WHEN I USED MUSCLE RELAXATION:

The situation that upset me:	
Where I felt it in my body:	

Muscle relaxation helped (circle one) a lot some not at all

3. WHEN I USED MY CALMING IMAGE:

The situation that upset me:	
Where I felt it in my body:	

My calming image helped (circle one) a lot some not at all

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