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Building Strong Families Together!

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Chauncey Strong uses his professional experience of 25 years working with children and families and personal experience in the child welfare system to bring a unique perspective when training child welfare professionals, foster and adoptive parents, and youth in foster care. Through his trainings and motivational speaking, he hopes to inspire, motivate and challenge his audience to decisive action to improve the outcomes of children and families involved in the child welfare system. Below is a brief description of his trainings and keynote speeches.

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

I. STAFF AND FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING

- 1) **NEW: Youth Welfare Approach: Practical Ways to Engage Youth in Foster Care**
Child welfare has historically focused on providing services to children. While many of its principles may also apply to working with youth/teens in foster care, given the different developmental needs and the number of youth in care, a more customized approach is needed to respond to youth's developmental, social, and practical needs. This interactive workshop will highlight practical ways to apply the Youth Welfare Approach in service provision that effectively engages youth to be more actively involved in their case planning. Key concepts will include Shifting Our Lens from Child Welfare to Youth Welfare and utilizing a Good-Better-Best continuum to provide services to youth.
- 2) **NEW: Being a Permanency-Driven Organization:** Becoming a permanency-driven organization involves establishing a culture and philosophy of permanency as everyone's responsibility, not just the caseworker. It requires a sustained sense of urgency that begins the moment a child comes to the agency's attention with a call to the hotline. This workshop will highlight the phases of being a permanency-driven organization to include effective Permanency-Driven Supervision. Key concepts include Permanency-Driven Supervision (Virtual Supervision, Support, Coaching, and Accountability)
- 3) **NEW: Helping Caregivers Effectively Address Trauma:** Research informs us that most youth in the child welfare system have experienced some traumatic experiences. We also know that long after they are over, traumatic experiences continue to prioritize youth's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and, if left unmanaged, can have many negative consequences. Foster and adoptive parents, and kinship caregivers, are in a

critical and unique position to help youth deal effectively with trauma and even help them heal, but we know this can be challenging. Based on several well-researched curriculums, this training will help teach caregivers and workers practical skills to parent youth who have experienced complex trauma effectively. Specifically, the training will address the impact of trauma on youth in foster care and help caregivers better understand trauma and how it impacts behaviors. In addition, the training will assist caregivers in helping youth through trauma triggers and supporting foster and adoptive parents to take better care of themselves to prevent burnout. This training is ideal for foster and adoptive parents and the workers that support them.

- 4) **Unpacking the "NO" of Permanency for Older Adolescents: Exploring Permanency for Youth in Foster Care.** Family and life-long connections are crucial in achieving successful outcomes for youth in foster care. Unpacking the "NO" of Permanency for Older Adolescents Training addresses the importance of permanency using an adapted training developed by the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections. This training will provide an overview of national and state data on older youth in foster care and major policy changes. The training will also explore the definition of permanency, the concept of permanency for youth, and strategies for changing an initial "no" to permanency to "yes." At the end of the training, the participant will understand what permanency and permanent connections are and why they are significant, understand how adolescent development relates to permanency, know how to talk to youth about permanency, and understand the importance of having youth involvement in permanency planning *Permanency Video:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLrMqUVZZgG5A5OF-IL2IFYJ3-eYoZZUw&v=j5qalXldRV8>. *Permanency*

Webinar: <http://www.nccwe.org/BPR/webinars/may/part-2.htm>

- 5) **Bridging The Gap: Birth and Foster Families Working Together-** This interactive workshop will explore practical child welfare strategies that improve family engagement, well-being and impacts permanency for children/youth in foster care. The session will highlight the work related to building and maintaining relationships and communication between birth parents and foster/adoptive parents. The workshop will help workers better understand the value of families working together, examines the benefits and challenges of these working relationships, and explore strategies to ensure these working relationships are successful. Key areas include Comfort Calls, Icebreakers, and a Continuum of Contact. *Featured in Icebreaker DVD* www.aecf.org/icebreakers.
- 6) **Effective Family Engagement:** Family engagement is a family-centered and strengths-based approach to making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system. Engaging families promote children and youth's safety, permanency, and well-being and is central to successful practice. Effective family engagement occurs when workers actively collaborate and partner with the whole family network (maternal and paternal) throughout their

involvement with the child welfare system. It recognizes the family as the experts on their respective situations and empowers them in the process. This workshop will help define effective family engagement, explore the benefits and challenges of family engagement, and provide strategies for effective family engagement.

- 7) **Adoption Search and Reunion: Why We Search: An Adoptee's Journey or Adoption Search: A Personal Journey** It's a basic human right to know where you come from and your family story. Knowing your family story helps you form your identity; adoptees should know their adoption story, even if it's painful. In addition, many adoptees want to find and, if possible, to have a relationship with their birth families. Adoptive parents have a significant role in being proactive in helping adoptees navigate these relationships. This workshop will address the value and importance of developing and maintaining connections with birth families through a personal journey. The workshop will also discuss the ambivalence, challenges, and successes when adoptees search for birth family and its impact on the adoptive family.
- 8) **Effective Father Engagement:** Research has shown a direct link between positive father involvement and a child's well-being. The involvement of a father is critical to a child's growth and development but historically, child welfare agencies have not been the most effective in involving fathers in family work. It is becoming more widely accepted that effective father engagement is an essential component to successful child welfare practice. Increasingly, agencies are focusing on ways to engage and involve fathers and paternal family members to help achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children involved in the child welfare system. This training will focus on the values and benefits of father and paternal relative's engagement, strategies on effectively engaging fathers, and what makes a successful and sustainable father engagement program.
- 9) **My Brother's Keeper: The importance of sibling connections-** Sibling connections are among the most significant and longest-lasting relationships we will have in life. Yet, many times siblings come into care and are separated and placed in different homes. This workshop is designed to highlight the value of sibling connections and suggest strategies to address sibling issues successfully.
- 10) **Family Finding: Search and Engagement** -Family engagement is important from the moment a family comes to the attention of the child welfare system. The experiences of youth who have been in foster care far too long leads us to search and engage families earlier and more intensely. The goal of this training is to introduce participants to Family Search and Engagement and understand concepts: children and youth's need for family, connection to birth family and communities of origin; gaining the knowledge to conduct various types of search for family; and the initial skills to engage children, youth, and adults in exploring permanency and connectedness.

- 11) Recruiting and Retaining Resources Families:** Resource families (Foster and adoptive parents) are our greatest assets in helping youth in foster care find a permanent family. Unfortunately, the pool of available foster families has been in steady decline across the country in recent years. The resources families who are approved statistics show that 60 percent of them quit in the first 12 months. This training provides strategies and best practices in effectively recruiting and retaining permanency resources for youth in foster care.
- 12) Effective Teaming: Social Workers and Resource Parents Working Together** The relationship between the social worker and resource parent can directly impact the stability and permanency of children in foster care. In some cases, these relationships can be conflicting, strained, and end abruptly. This workshop focuses on the importance of maintaining a healthy relationship between the social worker and resource parent. Emphasis is placed on partnering, communication, and developing clear roles and responsibilities to help stabilize relationships within the professional team to best benefit youth in foster.
- 13) Understanding the Culture of Foster Care and Family Privilege:** Alumni of foster care have expertise about the system that can only be gained by having lived through the experience. Bringing expertise as alumni and child welfare professionals, this interactive workshop focuses on understanding the culture of foster care and ensuring that all young people have access to 'family privileges.' By understanding these concepts, we can help teens with the emotional transition from foster care to adulthood. This workshop includes content from Foster Care Alumni of America's book FLUX: Life after Foster Care and a presentation from our national community art project.

II. Consulting

- **Currently- National Quality Improvement Center for Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency (QIC-EY)- Curriculum Development**
 - Filming video on engaging youth in finding permanency. **Curriculum Development** Working on a team for the QIC-EY, to outline and construct developed for the child welfare workforce training to create a detailed outline on the assigned topics, Art of Engagement and the Benefit of Engagement.
- **Currently-Consultant Richmond City DSS**
 - Coaching-Family Engagement: Effectively implement the Virginia Department of Social Services Practice Profiles through coaching and supervision for all programs. The goal is to assist with an organizational culture change regarding improving family engagement using the Virginia Practice Profiles. **Key Elements:** Review and evaluation of the work with the Reunification and Permanency Program, including an action plan for an ongoing focus on supervisor development. Guidance of the initial work with

the CPS and In-Home Prevention Services Programs. Delivery of supporting training interventions to include Family Search and Engagement, Icebreaker and Permanency Trainings

- **Currently- Trainer/Consultant Plummer Youth Promise**
 - The Unique Dynamics of Kinship Care and Permanency-CT
 - Achieving Permanence Through Reunification-CT
 - Expedited Permanency Meetings-SC

- **Currently- Consultant Georgia Division of Family & Children Services**
 - **Youth Advisory Board Development-GPAC** Provide Technical Assistants to develop and implement the Georgia Youth Advisory Board (YAB). **Key Elements:** Plan and facilitate initial and ongoing Focus Groups; Review and create documents needed for the YAB; Assist youth with developing Leadership Skills; Facilitate training for youth and workers; Engage community partners as appropriate; Assist with other youth events as needed.

- **Currently- Consultant/Liaison Virginia Department of Social Services**
 - Youth Advisory Board-SPEAKOUT
 - Implementation of Youth Welfare Approach
 - Planning Team for Foster, Adoption and Reunification Month
 - Normalcy Training
 - Youth Exit Survey

- **2020-2022 Consultant Information Gateway**
 - **Incorporating Lived Experience:** Provide a full assessment and develop a plan to integrate alumni voices (those with lived child welfare experience) into Information Gateway's work and products. **Key Work Elements:** Understand Information Gateway's overall business processes; Interviews and planning sessions with identified leadership, staff, and stakeholders (as appropriate) to identify common goals and intended outcomes; Evaluate and develop a plan to integrate the alumni voice for product development.

- **2017-2021- Capacity Building Center for States -**
 - MD-Resource Parent Recruitment and Retention
 - MD-Strengthening the Youth Advisory Board
 - NM Improving Sibling Connections and Engaging Relatives
 - Racial Equity Workgroup
 - MO- Developing a Parent Advisory Board- 2019

- **2017-2020- AdoptUSKids**
 - Child Specific Recruitment

- **2017-2019 The Annie E. Casey Foundation**
 - 2018 Extended services for older youth in foster care

- 2018 Teen Connect Training
- 2017 Kentucky Kinship Care Practices
- **2018-2019 Wake County Human Services- Wake County, NC**
 - Foster Parents Peer to Peer Support Groups

III. Youth Training and Motivational Speaking

- 1) **FLUX: The Emotional Transition from Foster Care** - This interactive workshop helps youth explore the emotional transition from foster care. Using a national curriculum developed from Foster Care Alumni of America's book FLUX: Life after Foster Care it addresses issues of change and transition, labeling, sense of belonging, and biological family.
- 2) **My Life My Connections:** This interactive workshop is designed to help teens in foster care explore the importance of connection as they leave the foster care systems. Topics cover connection through adoption, birth, family, and community.
- 3) **Strategic Sharing: Talking about your foster care experience** - Ideally, sharing your personal experiences with the foster care system can educate, influence, inspire others. But if not well-prepared sharing your story can feel manipulative or exploitative and lead to negative outcomes. This workshop explores making good choices on sharing your story so that the message is effective, and your well-being is protected and helps youth in foster care, and alumni of care share their story in a meaningful and safe way.
- 4) **Motivational speaker to youth groups:** Sharing personal and professional experiences in the child welfare system to encourage youth in foster care to be successful. Themes include succeeding in and after foster care, making positive choices and family and life-long connections.
- 5) **Keynote Speaker:** Keynote address for child welfare conferences. Varies topics to include, permanency, trauma, supporting foster and adoptive parents, social worker, and staff appreciations.
- 6) **Foster and adoption parent appreciation lunches/dinners (Foster/Adoptive Parents)** Foster/Adoptive Parent Appreciation lunches or dinners themes include; sharing my personal story, the importance of making a commitment to youth in foster care, the importance of family connections, and an appreciation to foster and adoptive parents for their work.
- 7) **Child Welfare Panels (Moderator and Panelist):** Moderator and served on numerous child welfare panels. Topic include; healthy life long connections, life after foster care, teens in foster care, effective permanency planning, moderator, and panelist for numerous foster care and adoption panels.

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II. Curriculum Development

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- Achieving Permanence Through Reunification-CT
- The Unique Dynamics of Kinship Care and Permanency-CT
- Implementation of the Youth Welfare Approach- Virginia
- Bridging The Gap: Families Working Together
- Sibling and Relative Connections, NM
- Normalcy for Youth in Foster Care, VA
- Placement Stability for Youth in Foster Care, Center for States
- Unpacking the No of Older Youth Permanency

III. National Projects

- Reunification Month Planning Committee
- Foster Care Month Planning Committee