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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 type of traumatic experience. We also know that long after they are over, traumatic experiences continue to take priority in the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of youth and if left unmanaged can have many negative consequences. Foster and adoptive parents, (and other 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. This training, based on several well-researched curriculums, will help teach caregivers and workers practical skills to effectively parent youth who have experienced complex trauma. Specifically, the training will address the impact of trauma for youth in foster care; help caregivers better understand trauma and how it impacts behaviors; how to help youth through trauma triggers; and help foster and adoptive parents 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, major policy changes in foster care, the definition of permanency, the concept of permanency for youth, and strategies on how to change 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 will include, Comfort Calls, Icebreakers, and A Continuum of Contact. **Featured in Icebreaker DVD** www.aecf.org/icebreakers.
- 6) **Effective Family Engagement:** Family engagement is essential 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 lead 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.

- 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. 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. In recent year the pool of available foster families has been in steady decline across the

country and 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 practice 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 have a direct impact on 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. Emphasizes 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. Featured in I am Here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7-uhMgETYU> Foster Walk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swywpCU5-QE>

II. 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.

III. Consulting

- Currently- **Richmond City Department of Social Services- *Family Engagement***
- Currently- **Virginia Department of Social Services-*Youth Advisory Board***
- Currently- **Georgia Division of Family & Children Services *Youth Advisory Board***
- Currently- **Plummer Youth Promise- *Reunification and Supervision***
- Currently- **Capacity Building Center for Courts- *Measures of Performance***
- Currently- **Capacity Building Center for States- *Kinship Care and Sibling***
- 2021-2021- **Information Gateway- *Engaging Those with Lived experience***
- 2017-2020 **Consultant, AdoptUSKids**
- 2017-2019- **Consultant, The Annie E. Casey Foundation**
- 2018-2019 **Consultant, Wake County, NC Human Services**
- 2012-2014 **Consultant, National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections**

IV. Curriculum Development

- **Implementation of the Youth Welfare Approach**
- **Bridging The Gap: Families Working Together**
- **Unpacking the No of Older Youth Permanency**
- **Sibling and Relative Connections**
- **Normalcy for Youth in Foster Care**
- **Placement Stability for Youth in Foster Care**

V. National Projects

- **Reunification Month Planning Committee**
- **Foster Care Month Planning Committee**