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Building Strong Families Together!

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Chauncey Strong uses his professional experience of 30 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 training and motivational speaking, he hopes to inspire, motivate, and challenge his audience to take decisive action to improve the outcomes of children and families involved in the child welfare system. Below is a brief description of his training and keynote speeches.

TRAINING AND CONSULTING

I. STAFF AND FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING

- 1) **NEW: A 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: 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 who support them.

- 3) **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, including effective Permanency-Driven Supervision. Key concepts include Permanency-Driven Supervision (Virtual Supervision, Support, Coaching, and Accountability)

- 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. The training will 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, and well-being, and impact 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, examine 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: (Also see Father Engagement Consulting below)**
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 their 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. A father's involvement 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 essential 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 for 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, siblings often come into foster care and are separated. It's not just the physical separation but also the lack of communication necessary to maintain their relationship. This workshop highlights the value of sibling connections and discusses strategies to address keeping connected successfully. [The Importance of Sibling Adoption](#)
- 10) Family 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 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.

- 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 on a 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- The National Quality Improvement Center on Family-Centered Reunification (QIC-R) [Meet the Team – QIC Family Reunification](#)**
 - Provide technical assistance on father engagement. This includes supporting and coaching father engagement staff.
 - Provide technical assistance and best practices on reunification and family and youth engagement
 - Provide feedback to sites to enhance their chosen interventions and attend site visits with the QIC-R team and the Quality Learning Collaborative when applicable.
- **Currently-Consultant/Trainer- Richmond City DSS [Social Services Children Families and Adults / Richmond \(rva.gov\)](#)**
 - Supporting Kin-First Now work
 - Family Engagement: Help develop a Family Search and Engagement Unit to include supporting father engagement work

- Support Development of REC-Richmond Emergency Case Staffing
- Coaching on Family Engagement
- Training - Family Search and Engagement, Icebreaker and Permanency
- ***Currently- Youth Development Specialist- Virginia Department of Social Services [Foster My Future \(virginia.gov\)](http://virginia.gov)***
 - Youth Advisory Board-SPEAKOUT
 - Parent Advisory Board
 - Implementation of Youth Welfare Approach
 - Planning Team for Foster, Adoption and Reunification Month
 - Normalcy Training
 - Youth Exit Survey
- ***Currently- Subject Matter Experts- National Child Traumatic Stress Network [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network / \(nctsn.org\)](http://nctsn.org)***
 - Prepare and share suggestions for content and activities that meet the learning objectives of Resource Parent Curriculum (RPC 2.0)
 - Attend Planning, RPC Collab, and kick-off calls
 - Notice and share how the process is working
- ***Currently- Oklahoma Successful Adulthood Program-Oklahoma DHS [The Oklahoma Successful Adulthood Program](http://oklahoma.gov)***
 - Provide consulting and training services to the Oklahoma Successful Adulthood Program to assist with youth engagement and assess the Oklahoma Foster Youth Advocates (OKFYA) structure.
 - Clear expectations of youth engagement from state leadership and adult supporters.
 - Clear expectations of OKFYA from state leadership.
 - A written plan with recommendations to OKFYA and the state team for continued growth and sustainability.
 - Increased knowledge, skills, and practices in youth and young adult engagement.
- ***Currently- Consultant-American Bar Association -Center on Children and the Law [National Reunification Month \(americanbar.org\)](http://americanbar.org)***
 - Support Reunification Month to include
 - Organizing reunification month events and follow-up
 - Assist with launching Reunification Month webinars
 - Lead outreach to help court and agency partners follow through on commitments
 - Recruit national organization partners to help launch a reunification month and follow up on commitments
 - Promote Reunification Heroes
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- **Currently- North American Council on Adoptable Children - [Home - The North American Council on Adoptable Children \(nacac.org\)](http://nacac.org)**
 - Prepare and deliver training on coaching to meet the needs of the QIC-EY project. (Coaching supervisors and managers on engaging youth in finding permanency)
 - Assist with curriculum revision

- **Currently- Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency (QIC-EY)- [Home - OIC-EY](#)**
 - Trainer Curriculum Writer
 - 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.
 - Filming video on engaging youth in finding permanency

- **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- 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

- **2020-2023 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.

- **2021-2022- 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.

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

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.

IV. Curriculum Development

- National Quality Improvement Center for Engaging Youth in Finding

- Permanency (QIC-EY)- The Art of Engagement and the Benefit of Engagement
- The Unique Dynamics of Kinship Care and Permanency-CT
 - Achieving Permanence Through Reunification-CT
 - Sibling and Relative Connections, NM
 - Bridging the Gap: Families Working Together
 - Icebreaker Meetings: A Tool for Building Relationships Between Birth Families and Foster Families, VA
 - Normalcy for Youth in Foster Care, VA
 - Placement Stability for Youth in Foster Care, Center For States
 - Unpacking the No of Older Youth Permanency

V. National Projects

- National Reunification Month Planning Committee
- National Foster Care Month Planning Committee