

## Handout 3: Reframing Common Terms<sup>4</sup>

### Overview

*Reframing means "building new windows" around families through an emphasis on family strengths; this means using language that reinforces family strengths, teaching families how to use their strengths, and encouraging success in families through a focus on what they can do.*

### Instructions

*Look over the two columns below. In the left column are terms often used to describe families/family members; these terms devalue family strengths and reinforce a deficit-oriented view of the family. In the right column are examples of ways the same terms can be reframed as strengths. Try to come up with some other reframed examples, as you go through the list; add one or two terms you use often and reframe them.*

#### Common Terms

1. Family resists assistance
2. Family is dysfunctional
3. Family is isolated
4. Parents are too demanding
5. Parents dote on their child
6. Parents are unmotivated
7. Parents are uncooperative
8. Parents are over-protective
9. Parents are angry
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

#### Reframed as Strengths

1. Family can address its own needs
2. Family is dealing with many issues
3. Family is very private
4. Parents are good advocates, they know how to make things happen
5. Parents love their child
6. Parents are happy with their lives
7. Parents take pride in being independent
8. Parents care a lot about their child
9. Parents can express their feelings
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

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<sup>4</sup>Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).