

# Lobby Ice Breaker

Think about a time when you successfully navigated through a challenging conversation. Share some strategies that helped support you along the way.





NATIONAL CENTER ON

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

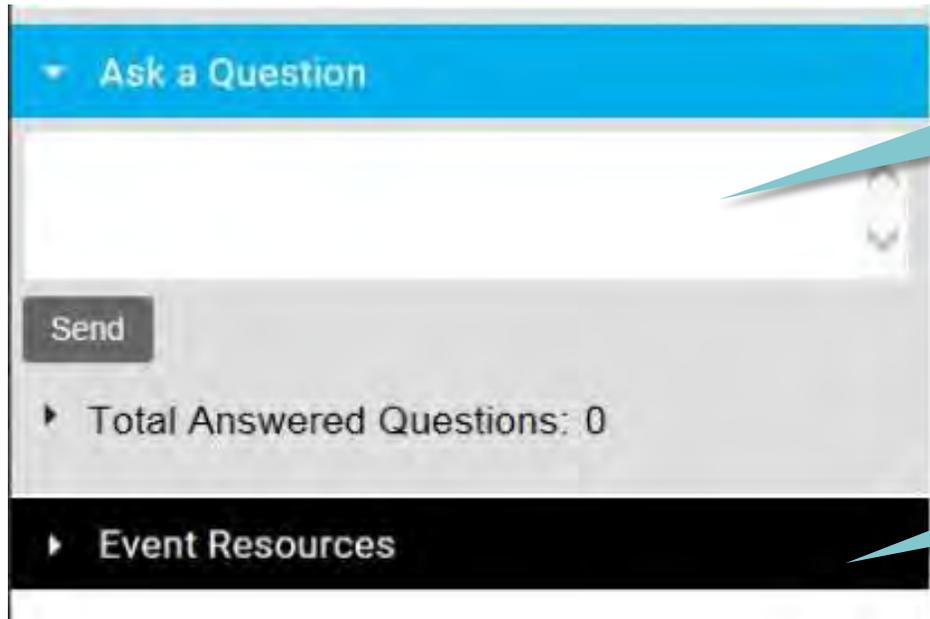
# Head Start Heals

## Preparing for Challenging Conversations with Families

June 11, 2020



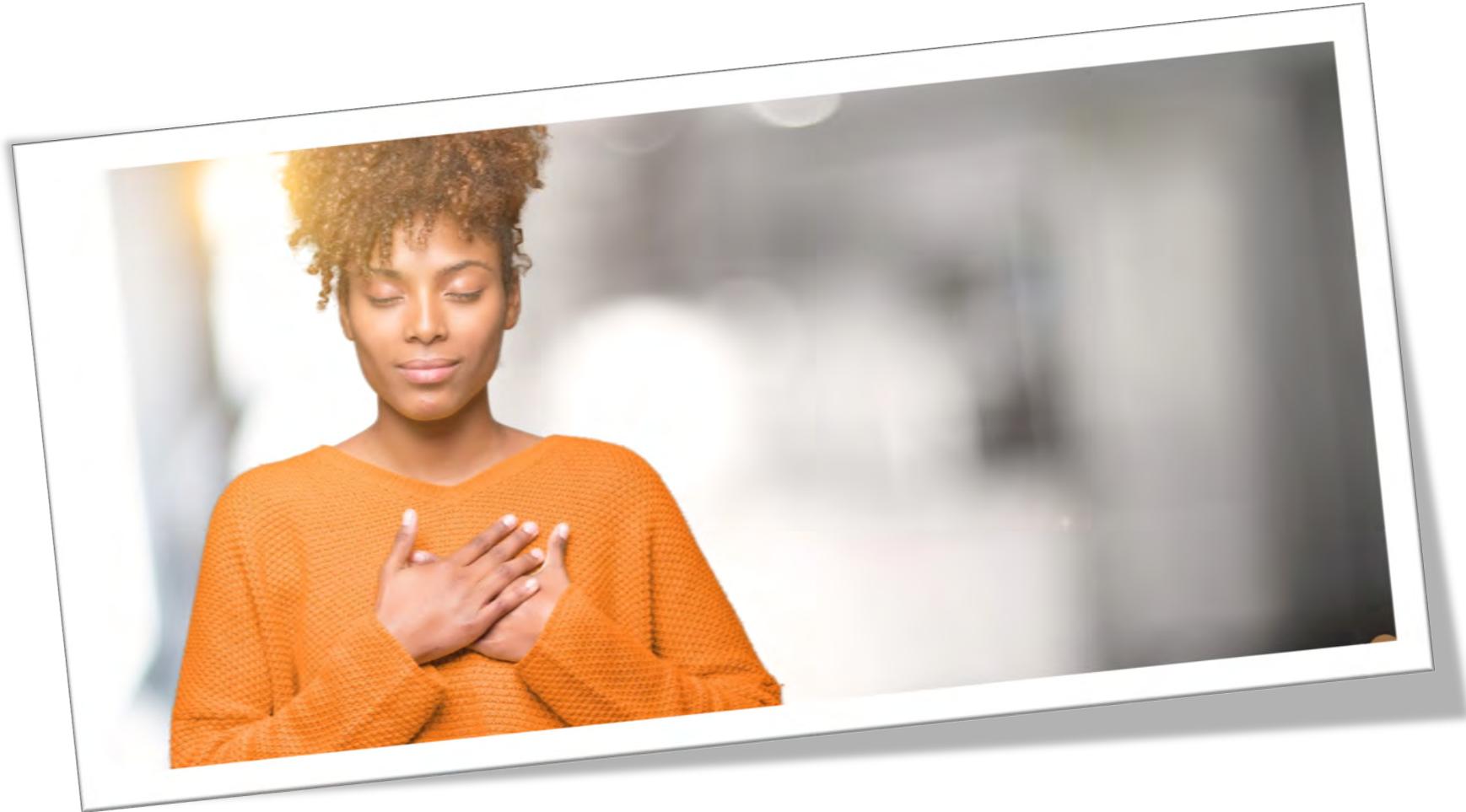
# Please Use the Left Side Bar to Ask Questions, Submit Comments, Or Download Handouts



Ask your questions and submit your comments here

Download handouts from Event Resources

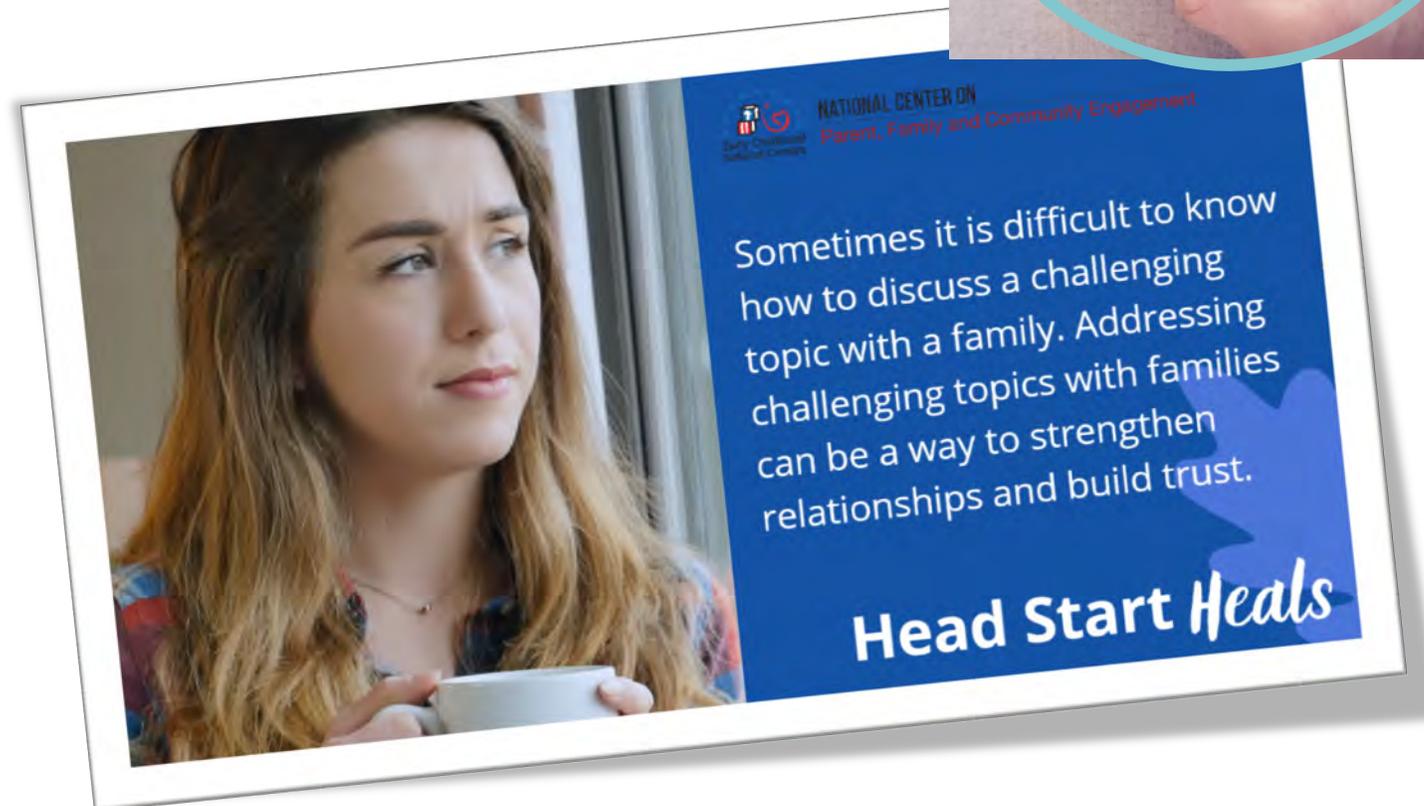
# Self-Compassion Break



# OHS: Head Start Heals



**Kiersten Beigel,**  
Comprehensive Services &  
TTA Division,  
Office of Head Start



# Welcome and Introductions



# NCPFCE Facilitators



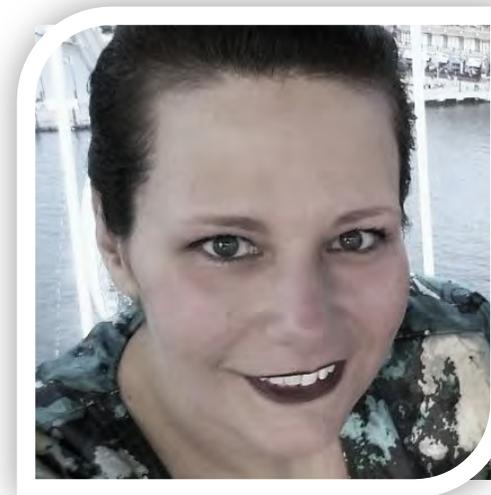
**Dr. Joshua  
Sparrow**

Co-Principal  
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Singer**

Director of Developmental  
and Relational Health,  
Brazelton Touchpoints Center



**Brandi Black  
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Director of TTA and  
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# Learning Objectives

- Explore what makes a conversation challenging
- Examine the six steps to prepare for conversations with families about challenging topics
- Learn strategies to use during discussions with families

# Key Messages

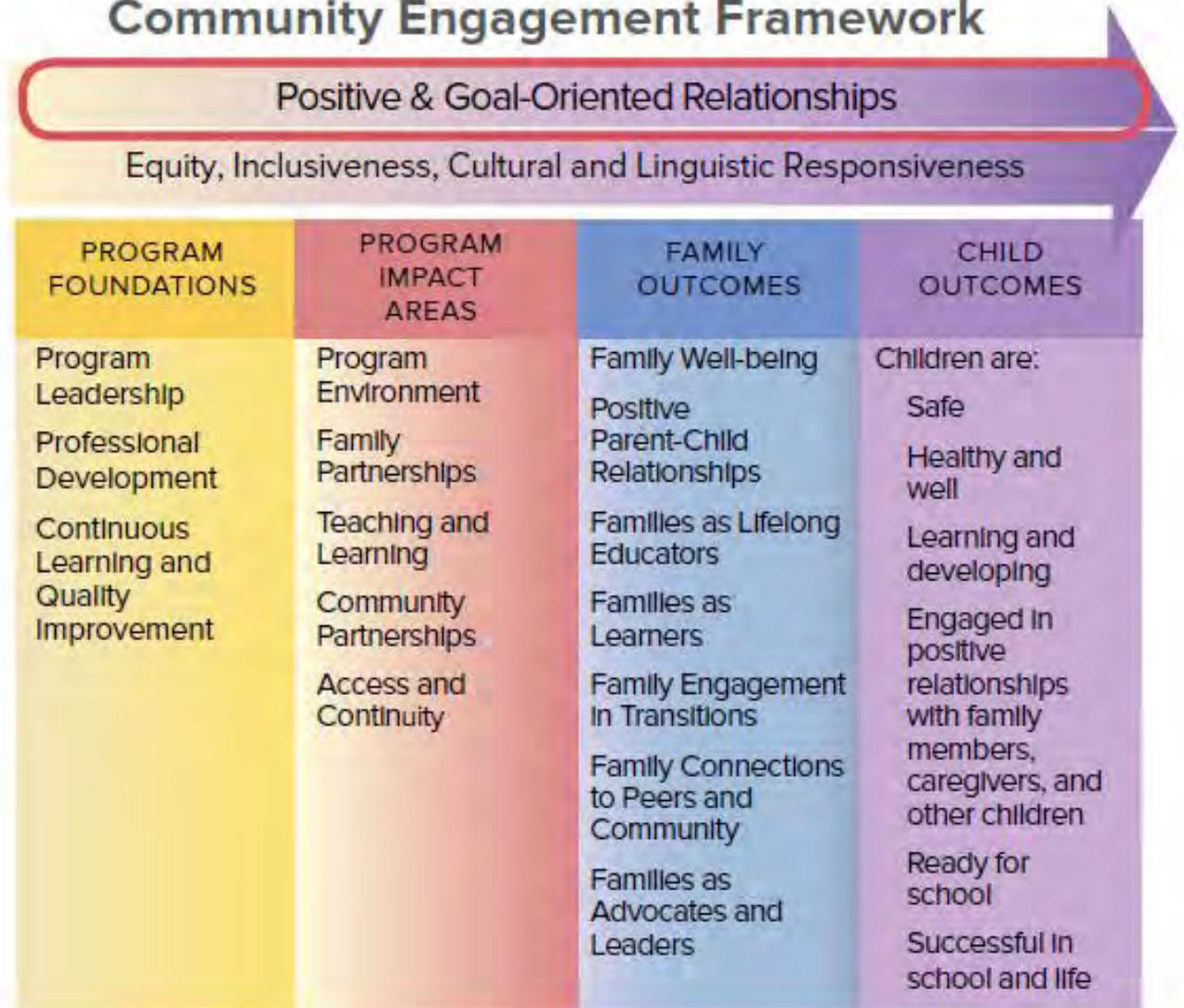


- Addressing challenging topics with families can be a way to strengthen relationships and build trust.
- You can prepare for challenging conversations.
- These preparations are critical in supporting family well-being.

# Why Prepare?

Positive, goal-oriented relationships are mutually respectful partnerships with families focused on families' goals. These relationships promote parent-child relationships and family well-being.

## Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework



# What Makes a Conversation Challenging?

- Topics may relate to concerns about family or child safety
- Topics may be considered stigmatizing or too personal
- Topics may bring up difficult memories for staff

# How Do We Engage with Families?

## Strengths-Based Attitudes

- All families have strengths.
- Families are the first and most important teachers of their children.
- Families are our partners with a critical role in their child's development.
- Families have expertise about their child and their family.
- Families contributions are important and valuable.

## Relationship-Based Practices

- Focus on the family-child relationship.
- Observe and describe the child's behavior to open communication with the family.
- Reflect on the family's individual and cultural perspectives.
- Reflect on your personal and cultural perspectives.
- Support parental competence.
- Value a family's passion.

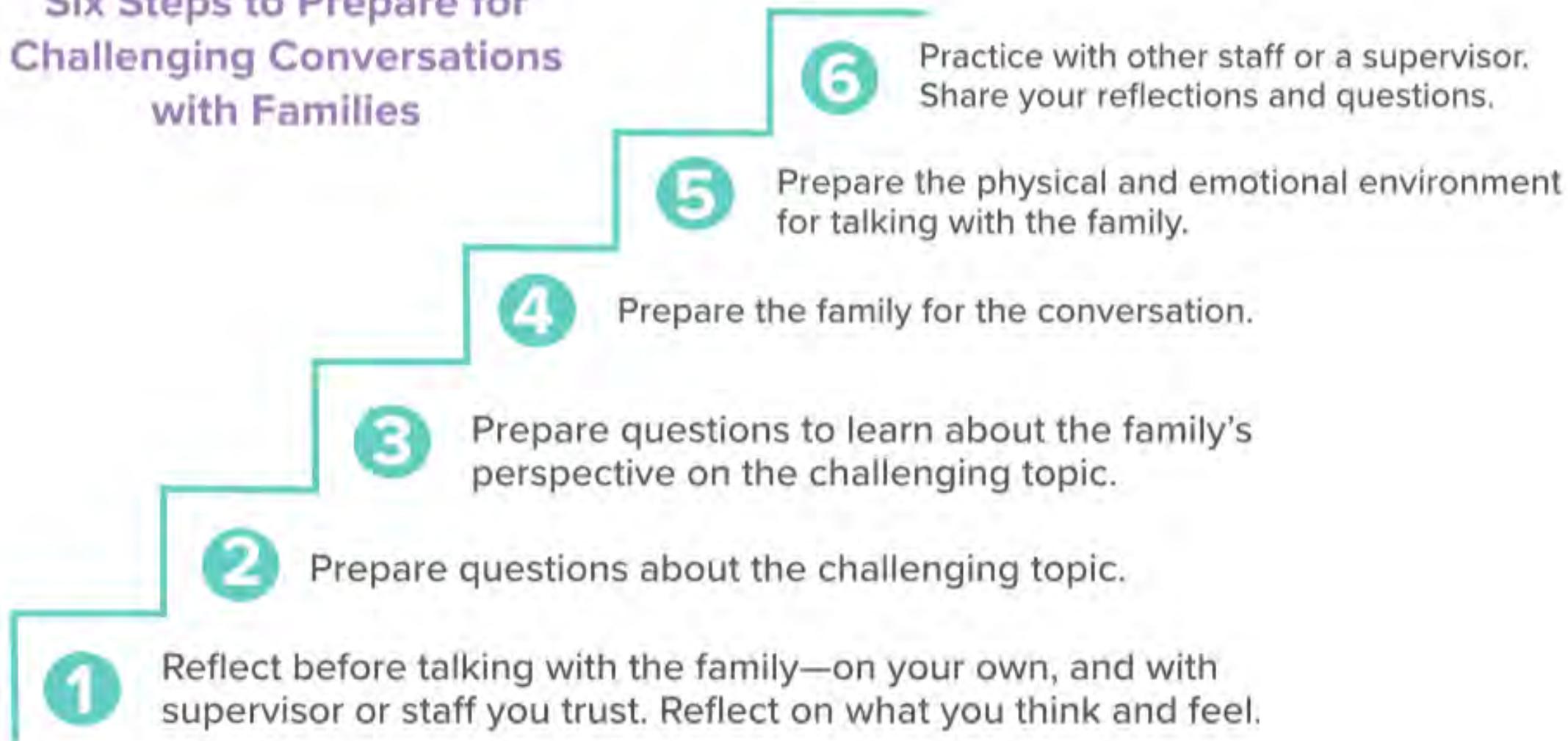
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/strategies-family-engagement-attitudes-practices>

# 6

## Steps to Prepare for Challenging Conversations with Families



## Six Steps to Prepare for Challenging Conversations with Families



Step  
**1**

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**



# Areas for Reflection



**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**

Your thoughts and feelings about the challenging topic

Your current relationship with a family or parent

Your knowledge about the family or parent

Your feelings about the family or parent

Your ideas about working toward an understanding with the family

Your ideas for managing your time and following up

Step  
1

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**



**Reflection. How are you feeling about this topic? About having this conversation?**

- What are your thoughts about having this conversation? What are your feelings?
- What are you hoping will happen? What would be the best outcome? What are you afraid of or most worried about? What is the worst thing that could happen?
- Who could help you prepare for the conversation?

Step  
1

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**

Your  
current  
relationship  
with a  
family or  
parent

**Reflection. What is the current status of your relationship with the family or parent?**

- How do you feel about your relationship with this family? Have you built a positive, goal-oriented relationship? If so, what are the strengths in your relationship?
- Have there been past challenges you have faced with this family and feelings that you and the family have not repaired or resolved?
- Does the relationship feel strong enough to have a productive conversation? What will you do if the family does not want to meet again?

Step  
**1**

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**



**Reflection. What do you know about this family or parent?**

- What do you know about this family's cultures and home languages? What communication strategies might be most respectful?
- Does this family trust staff and leaders at your program? How might this conversation change that?
- Have you had challenging conversations with this family before?

Step  
**1**

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**



**Reflection. How do you feel about this family?**

- How do you feel about this family? Do you like, respect, and trust this family?
- What assumptions have you made about this family? Do you have any judgments or biases you need to recognize and set aside? Are you ready to discover that some of your assumptions may be wrong?
- How do you think the family feels about you, other staff, and the program? Do they like, respect, or trust you, other staff, and the program?

Step  
1

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**

Your ideas about working toward an understanding with the family

**Reflection. How can you work toward a shared understanding with the family?**

- How will you begin the conversation to try and create shared meaning? Will you describe behaviors you have noticed? Will you share your opinion? Will you ask if the parent is open to hearing your opinion? What questions will you ask the family and when?
- How will you know that the family has understood what you intended to say? Will you ask the family to repeat what they have heard?
- How will you know that you have accurately understood what the family has said? Will you restate it for them to check your understanding?

Step  
1

**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**

Your ideas  
for managing  
your time and  
following up

**Reflection. How will you manage your time and plan for follow-up?**

- How much time will you have for the conversation? What will you do if you or the family need more time?
- What is your follow-up plan so you can reconnect and check in again? Planning for another meeting can allow you and the family an opportunity to check on misunderstandings or hard feelings. Together you may be able to make repairs or resolve issues.

In extreme circumstances, such as when there are safety concerns, you may need to decide that you should not have another conversation. Talk with your manager or supervisor if this is the case. Be sure to discuss whether a different staff person should try to have a follow-up conversation with the family.

# In Summary

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**Reflect before talking with the family—on your own and with a supervisor or staff you trust. Reflect on what you think and feel.**

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Your thoughts and feelings about the challenging topic

Your current relationship with a family or parent

Your knowledge about the family or parent

Your feelings about the family or parent

Your ideas about working toward an understanding with the family

Your ideas for managing your time and following up

# Survey

Which of these areas of reflection do you find to be most useful in preparing yourself for challenging conversations?

Click all that apply

- Your thoughts and feelings about the challenging topic
- Your current relationship with a family or parent
- Your knowledge about the family or parent
- Your feelings about the family or parent
- Your ideas about working toward an understanding with the family
- Your ideas for managing your time and follow-up

Step  
**2**

## Prepare your questions about the challenging topic.

Think specifically about what you are prepared to ask and why. What do you need to know before you start the conversation?



Step  
**3**

## Prepare questions to learn about the family's perspective on the challenging topic.

Preparing to understand the family's perspective will be important for your relationship with the family.



Step  
4

## Prepare the family for the conversation.

Take the time to prepare families for the conversation. Consider their possible perspectives about the topic and the conversation



Step  
5

Prepare the physical and emotional environment for talking with the family.

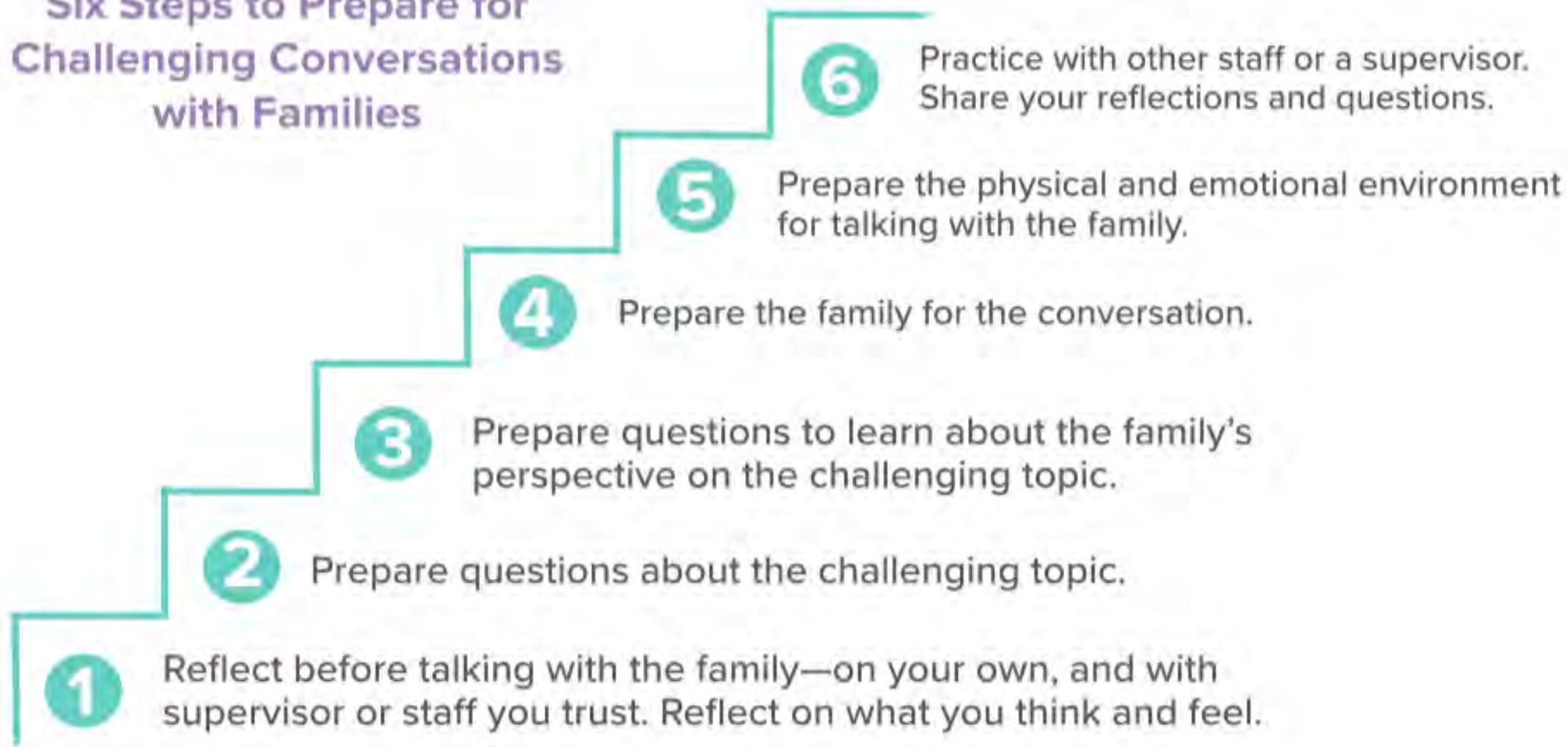


Step  
6

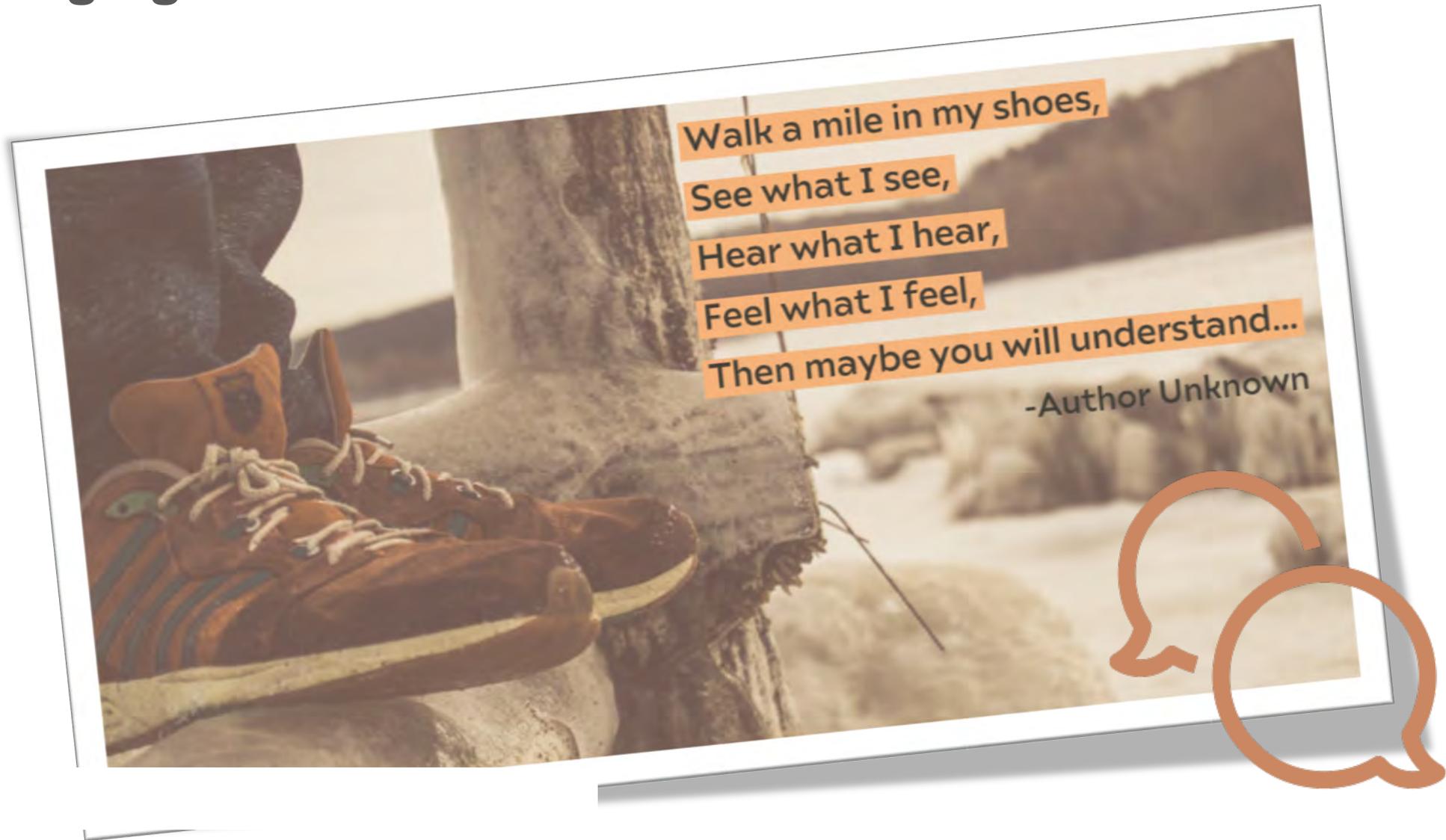
**Practice with other staff or a supervisor. Share your reflections and questions.**



## Six Steps to Prepare for Challenging Conversations with Families



# What strategies do you use to manage moments that feel challenging DURING a conversation?



# Strategies to Use During Conversations with Families

- Focus on self-regulation
- Focus on the family
- Work through your own feelings
- Take time for yourself
- Seek support



# Key Takeaways



- As you practice the steps and strategies, your confidence will grow and these conversations will become easier.
- Find your own voice and the words that feel right for you.
- Working through these difficult conversations together with families will make your relationships stronger and more rewarding.

The logo for MyPeers Communities features a blue square with a white 'my' and a white 'P' on a dark blue background. To the right, the text 'MyPeers' is in orange and blue, and 'Communities' is in dark grey.

# myP MyPeers Communities

- Open communities including: **Mental Health, Opioid Misuse and Substance Use Disorders; Staff Wellness; PFCE Deepening Practice**
- Knowledge base - Q&A, Forums, Polling, File sharing, Calendars, Events, Tasks, Wikis
- Communication tools – Group Chat, Instant Message, and internal email
- Robust search engine
- Social Network style feeds

# Want to Take Your Family Engagement Practice to the Next Level?

## Sign Up for Text4FamilyServices Today!

- This FREE text messaging service was designed for family services providers.
- It is also available in Spanish (español).

Just text **“PFCE”** to **22660** to sign up!



# Office of Head Start #HeadStartHeals Campaign



## Upcoming Webinars

Understanding Meaning in Behaviors That Challenge Us

Tuesday, June 30, 2020, 3–4 p.m. ET

If you are interested, you can go to the ECLKC upcoming events page to register.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/upcoming-events>

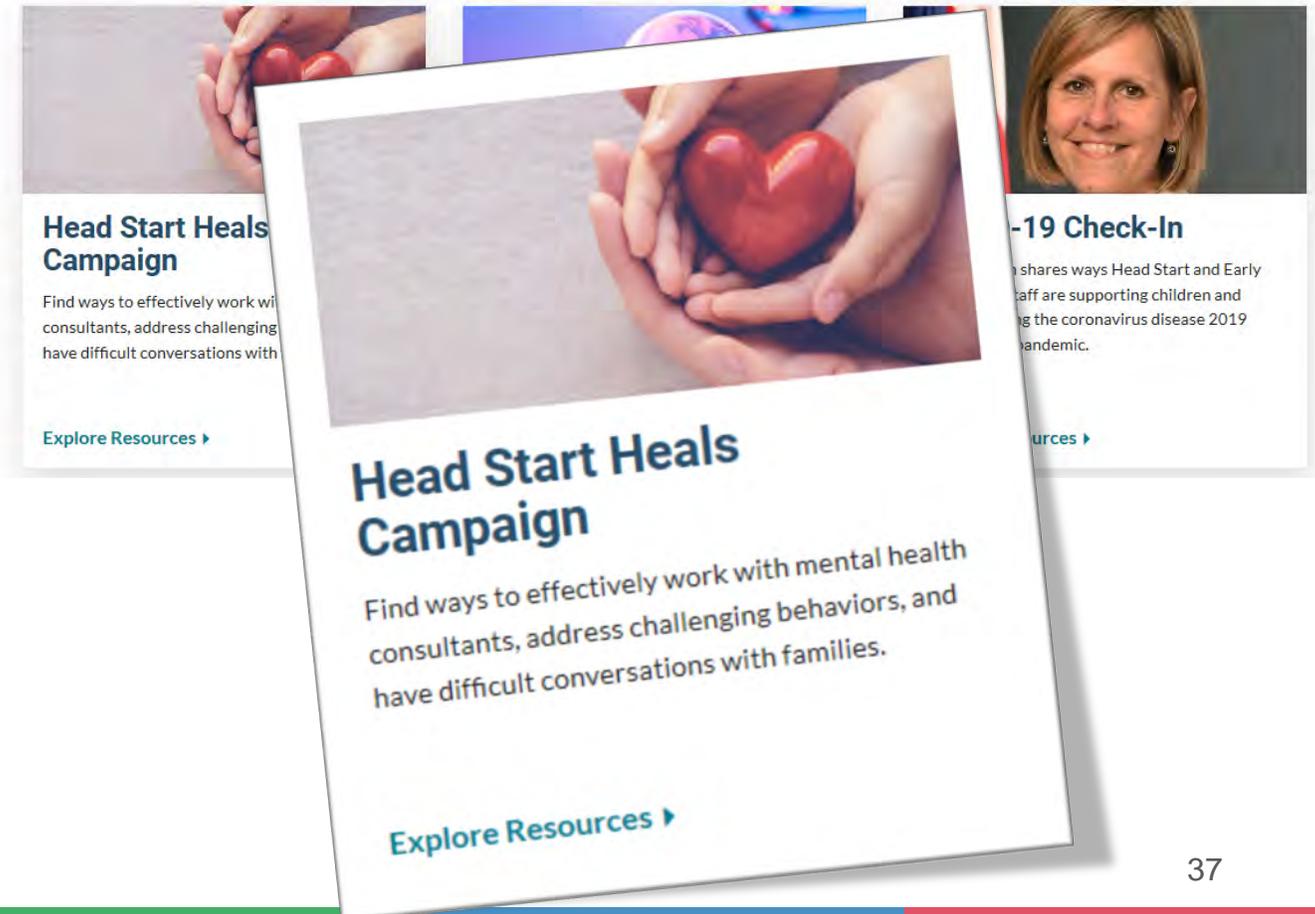
# Office of Head Start #HeadStartHeals Campaign

## Explore What's New

Email: [trauma@eclkc.info](mailto:trauma@eclkc.info)

Website:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>



**Head Start Heals Campaign**  
Find ways to effectively work with mental health consultants, address challenging behaviors, and have difficult conversations with families.

[Explore Resources ▶](#)

**-19 Check-In**  
Shares ways Head Start and Early Childhood Education staff are supporting children and families during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

[Resources ▶](#)

# National Hotlines

If you or someone you know is experiencing negative mental health effects and need more immediate assistance, please reach out to either

- **SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline** (1-800-985-5990) or
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (1-800-273-TALK). Both are available 24/7, 365 days a year.

# National Hotlines

- **24 Hour Parent Support**

National Parent Helpline for Parent Support any time 1-855- 4A PARENT • 1-855-427-2736

- **Domestic Violence**

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or thehotline.org.

- **StrongHearts**

Native Helpline at 1-844-7NATIVE (762- 8483) or strongheartshelpline.org.

- **Child Abuse and Neglect**

The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-4A-CHILD (422-4453) or [childhelp.org/childhelp-hotline](http://childhelp.org/childhelp-hotline).

- **Substance Use**

- Alcoholics Anonymous Number – [1-212-870-3400](tel:1-212-870-3400)
- National Association for Children of Alcoholics – [1-888-554-COAS \(2627\)](tel:1-888-554-COAS-2627)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) – [1-301-443-1124](tel:1-301-443-1124)

# Evaluation Link, Wrap-Up, and Certificate



# Have More Questions?

Stay and chat with us!

The speakers will stay on the line an additional 15 minutes to continue the dialogue.





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For more information, please contact us:  
[PCFEwebinars@ecetta.info](mailto:PCFEwebinars@ecetta.info) | 1-866-763-6481