



Together Facing the Challenge

sites.duke.edu/tftc

Winter Newsletter, 2021

Moving from face-to-face to online training

Adapting our model to meet the challenges faced by our agency partners during the pandemic

We place a high value on conducting training face-to-face. In-person training helps build relationships and strengthens connections between participants. Opportunities to fully engage and learn from one another is enhanced by face-to-face training. It is so valued by us that we initially believed our TFTC 3-day train-the-trainer model could not be effectively implemented online. Although we will always be a proponent of in-person training when safe to do so, adapting our TFTC training curriculum to new technology was both challenging and exciting.

By developing the technical knowledge and expertise needed to transition to an online platform, we were able to continue both to support our existing agency partners as well as to bring new agencies on board. We developed distance learning TFTC materials by making some adaptations to the activities originally designed to take place in person. We also focused on making online training user friendly and interactive. We look forward to the day we can again offer in-person training, but until then we will continue to “Zoom” along.

We continue to offer what previously was referred to as “regionally based training”. Our ability to do these online means that we are no longer bound by geography. We can accommodate folks from across both North Carolina and South Carolina. These trainings have been very well attended and there appears to be a need to continue offering them in the future. We have asked our agency partners to assist us in these trainings by having various folks conduct some portions of the training with a TFTC trainer. We want to give a big shout out to Jessica Riedel of Alpha Management Community Services, Inc. and Danielle Sample-Raggins of Children’s Home Society for doing an awesome job helping us lead our most recent “regional training” event held in January 2021!



Lastly, we want to give you a quick update on our Closing the Circle initiative. We were just underway when the pandemic hit, and had to stop meeting for safety reasons. We are finally moving forward once again! We will be conducting training on *Closing the Circle* with the clinicians from our first pilot group, Easterseals UCP, this March. We are thrilled to resume this work to better support youth and families in the transition from foster care to their permanent home.

Maureen Murray
Program Director



**Congratulations
to these agencies on
their achievements since
Spring 2020**

Certification Status

CTSHHealth

Epworth Children’s Home

StepStone
Family & Youth Services

Recertification Status

Alpha Management
Community Services, Inc.

Bair Foundation -NC

Easterseals UCP

KidsPeace, NC

Precious Haven, Inc

Stan B Treatment
Services Inc.

South Carolina Youth
Advocacy Program

Unity Home Care


THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

Self-Care Corner

The pandemic has made us all aware of the importance of consistent self-care. Let's avoid comparing self-care routines. We are all trying our best. We shouldn't feel bad if self-care is eating Oreos while watching our favorite Netflix series of the week, just because society has told us that there are healthier ways. Opportunities for self-care look different for everyone, so let's embrace that.

For those who are working from home while trying to ensure that their children are tuned into virtual learning, self-care may be enjoying a cup of coffee in peace before the kids are awake. For those working in the field, self-care may be jamming out in your car between home visits. We should not feel bad because we don't get to work out on our Pelotons every morning even though those commercials look so inviting.

Be patient with yourselves! Find the things that make you happy and continue to do them. We are responsible for each other, so let's learn from and care for one another as we find better ways to live and work together. In the words of Arthur Ashe, "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."



"ALMOST EVERYTHING WILL WORK AGAIN IF YOU unplug IT FOR A FEW MINUTES, INCLUDING YOU."

— ANNE LAPOTT

TFTC and Welcoming Diversity

Last summer, amidst significant social unrest in our country, Access Family Services held a virtual Town Hall Forum via Zoom to help foster parents engage with youth about racial injustice. Over 80 foster parents were able to attend! Resources were shared, including "How to talk about current events with youth," and "How do I talk to young children about racial injustice", which are referenced below.

<https://massaimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/how-do-i-talk-to-young-children-about-racial-injustice.pdf>

Content emphasis of the Town Hall included:

- Applying active listening skills to help youth feel heard,
- Using appreciative inquiry strategies when interacting with youth,
- Encouraging foster parents to be themselves, and reminding them that is okay to not have all the answers,
- Offering to find other trusted adults to talk to if the youth wants to (therapist, custodian, etc.),
- Practicing an ongoing posture of cultural humility.

We hope you will find these resources helpful!

ACCESS FAMILY SERVICES, INC. How to talk about current events with youth...

- Above all else, reassure the child that the adults in their life are doing their best to take care of them
- Keep concepts simple
- Be honest about your own confusion, fear & worries
- Listen without judgment or giving advice
- Ask open ended questions to seek better understanding
- Be comfortable with saying, "I don't know"
- End the conversation with reassurance and redirection

Ref: Talking to young children about racial injustice doc.

In late fall of last year all sites were mailed the "all-inclusive TFTC flash drive" which included the virtual PowerPoint presentations. Please share the contents of the flash drive with each of your sites. If you have not received a flash drive, please let your lead consultant know.



TFTC—Recertification

Together Facing the Challenge recently reached out to our agency partners who have achieved TFTC recertification. Assembled below are themes they shared with us that would likely be helpful to agency partners that have not yet been recertified.



What went well? What were some of your agency's **strengths**?

- The process was understandable and achievable - the TFTC consultants were available to “coach us to success.”
- The process promotes ongoing fidelity to the TFTC model.
- A strength is our consistency in building relationships based on a trauma-informed approach.
- The tremendous amount of experience within the company in working with children and adolescents with mental health needs, and being able to communicate the tools, strategies, and concepts taught in TFTC in a smooth and coherent manner to our foster parents, helped us achieve our goals.
- We ensured that TFTC was a standing agenda item for our management meetings so that we could continue to plan and problem-solve regarding implementation.
- We had systems in place to ensure that the fidelity forms were being completed on a regular basis and being reviewed through internal audits for feedback/improvement.
- The process did not feel punitive at all, and everything that needed improvement was followed with tools and guidance in order to meet fidelity requirements.

What were some of your agency's **challenges**?

- It was time-consuming to collect and coordinate all sustainability evidence (fidelity forms, focus groups, training videos, recertification application), particularly for larger agencies.
- Having to do TFTC training online so that our submitted videos met fidelity requirements.
- Assuring the Parent Coaching Forms and Staff Coaching Forms met fidelity requirements .
- Training new staff due to staff changes/turnover.
- Fear of the unknown – wondering if everything was good enough, and if not, what the consequences might be for our program.

As a function of the recertification process, what did you **learn**?

- We learned about areas for improvement on the Parent Coaching Form.
- We learned the importance of embedding the TFTC model into our day-to-day practice. It has become “what we do.”
- Fidelity to implementation benchmarks ensures success in achieving recertification.
- Effective communication among staff and parents is critical in sustaining the TFTC model.
- Staying organized, following the recommendations of the TFTC staff, and staying on a schedule of trainings and supervision helped with the recertification process.
- We learned the importance of encouraging the shared language aspect of TFTC implementation. The positive outcome for our agency has been increased opportunities for agency staff to recognize skills the parents demonstrate.

TFTC Foster Parent Training – Booster Sessions

Once parents and agency staff have been fully trained in Together Facing the Challenge, the primary means of reinforcing the TFTC concepts is through consistent coaching. We believe learning happens organically through coaching, and that mastery happens through practice, repetition, and supportive feedback.

We recognize there will be times when agencies identify “areas needing improvement” among staff and foster parents alike, so there is value in targeted TFTC “booster” training. Our agency partners have been quite innovative in developing effective plans for delivering this to their foster parents.



Frontline Treatment Provider Scale. (Appendix C) This is not a required fidelity form, but many partners have utilized this tool to identify strengths and possible deficits in skill implementation across both parents and staff. One agency does this form quarterly, and then identifies targeted training based on the lowest “scoring” of the 17 core elements.

Info-To-Go Sheets. (Appendix E) One agency uses these as the foundation for booster training. They provide a condensed, skill-specific in-service curriculum for those foster parents who have already been trained in TFTC.

“Tools to Go” Manual. One innovative agency partner took the info-to-go sheets a step further, developing a manual for staff to use as an ongoing in-the-field training resource for foster parents. It was designed to give everyone resources to review/retrain any parts of the model.

Standardized Annual TFTC Training. Some agencies devote seven consecutive months each year to ongoing TFTC in-service training (e.g., January to July). New foster parents are expected to attend to get fully trained, and some agencies also “mandate” attendance at particular sessions for parents who struggle in that respective area, or who may need additional annual training hours.

Supplemental Materials. Other agencies conduct ongoing TFTC training as part of monthly provider meetings or parent support groups. They utilize the TFTC PowerPoint as their foundation, and often add additional resources to provide a fresh take for those parents who have already gone through TFTC training. Examples for supplemental materials agencies suggested are:

Invisible Suitcase – TIPS-MAPP Imaginary Journey or TIPS-MAPP Identity activity.

Tracking Behavior – Pressley Ridge behavior tracking

Welcoming Diversity (session 5) – TIPS-MAPP Triangle Family Activity

Self-Care / Family Fun – building resiliency through Connections Matter NC & ACEs

Parents as Trainers. Using skilled and already trained foster parents to co-lead training leverages the power of peer-to-peer support.

Posttests. An agency has developed posttests that require a certain “passing score.” Based on the results of the posttests, the agency focuses training efforts on areas that appear most in need.