Creating Lasting Change

How to Make Wraparound Powerful for Youth and Families Involved in the Foster Care System

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Learning Objectives

- Discuss the common challenges children and families face when they are involved in the foster care system.
- Understand the recent data and trends for youth and families involved in foster care.
- Identify the value of engaging the biological family to create a sense of belonging and lasting change for those in foster care.

Challenges of partnering with children & families in Wraparound who are involved in the foster care system?

Foster Care Population

The number of children in foster care has increased in recent years, climbing to 443,000 in 2017 from a recent historic low of 397,000 in 2012.

Type of Placement

- In 2017, nearly 1/2 of all foster children lived in non-relative foster homes.
- Nearly 1/3rd lived in homes with relatives—known as "kinship care."
- 13 percent of children in foster care lived in group homes or institutions,
- 4 percent in pre-adoptive families

Time Spent in Foster Care

- 30 percent spent one to two years in care,
- 24 percent spent two to four years in care, and
- 4 percent spent more than five years in care

Placement Changes:

- Move a minimum of 4-6 times while in foster care*

Who do we engage?

Fostering a Sense of Belonging

Consider this …

Of the 3,463 transition age youth

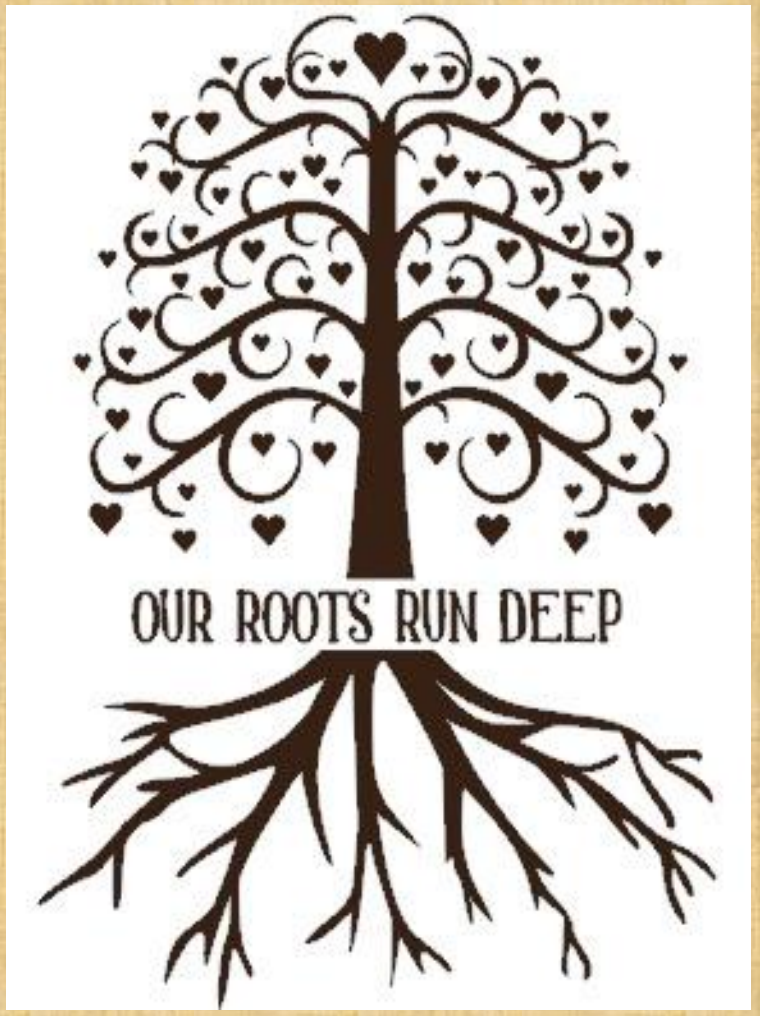
- 2,978 (86%) of youth had data for both their permanency plan as well as the reason for exit.
- 1,262 (42.4%) of youth had successfully achieved their identified permanency plan goal (i.e. independent living, etc.)
- 1,716 (57.6%) of youth had exit reasons that were different from their permanency goal and ended up reunifying with their families.

And this…

- In another study, nearly half (45%) of youth exiting foster care returned to their biological family regardless of their transition/permanency plan

- Research indicates that youth aging out of care have a desire to maintain contact and a relationship with their biological family.

- Hence, it is important that we prioritize family connections for all children and youth in care, no matter what their placement setting or permanency goal.



Engaging biological family

What information do we need to understand?

- Hopes and dreams for their family
- History of tough times
- How they got through the tough times
- Safety concerns that led us here
- Other family members in their life

Core beliefs inherent in this approach are:

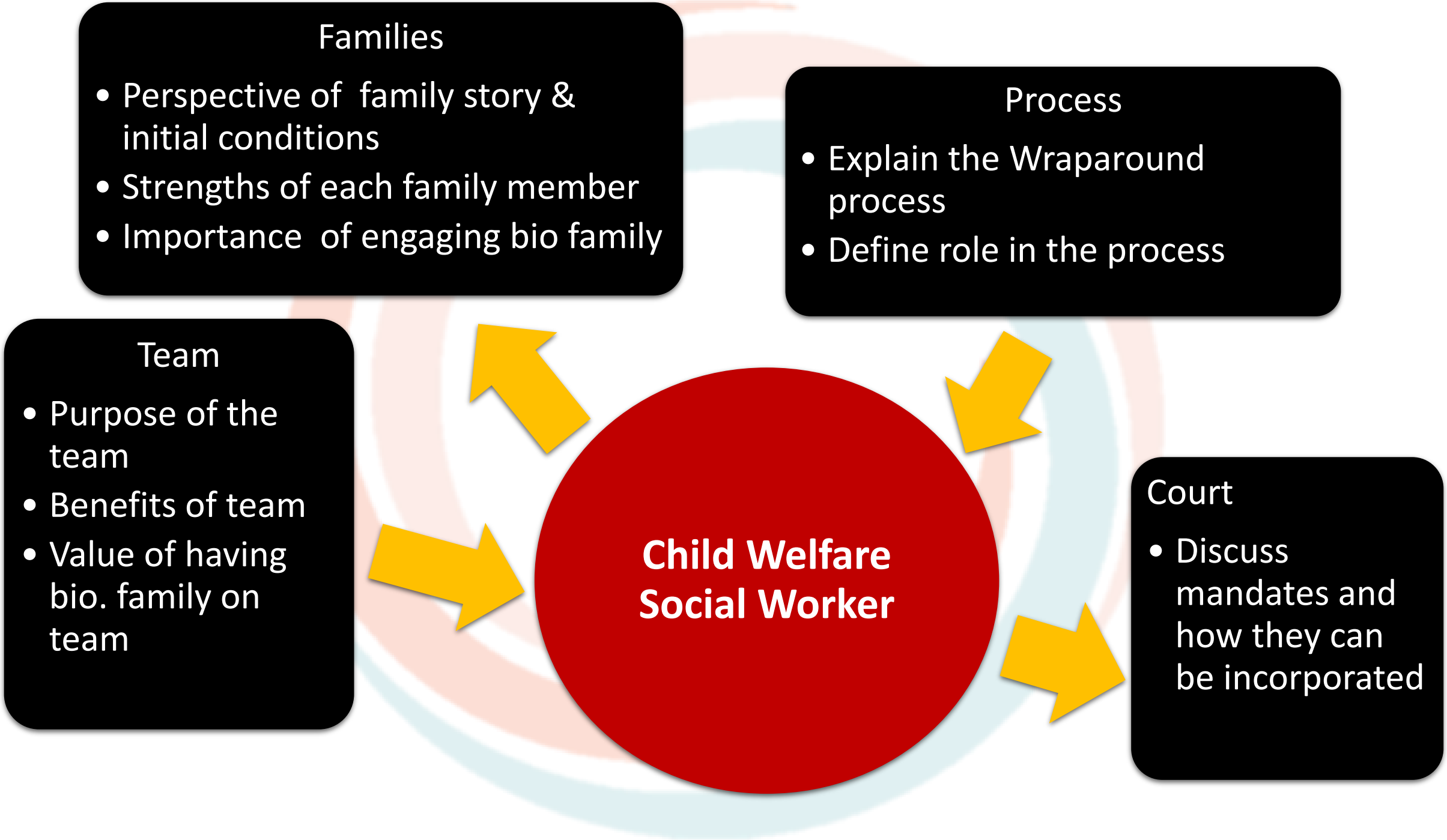
1) Every child has a family, and they can be found if we try.
2) Loneliness can be devastating, even dangerous, and is experienced by most children in out of home care.
3) A meaningful connection to family helps a child develop a sense of belonging, and
4) The single factor most closely associated with positive outcomes for children is meaningful, lifelong connections to family.

The Family Finding Model

What about the child welfare worker?

_____

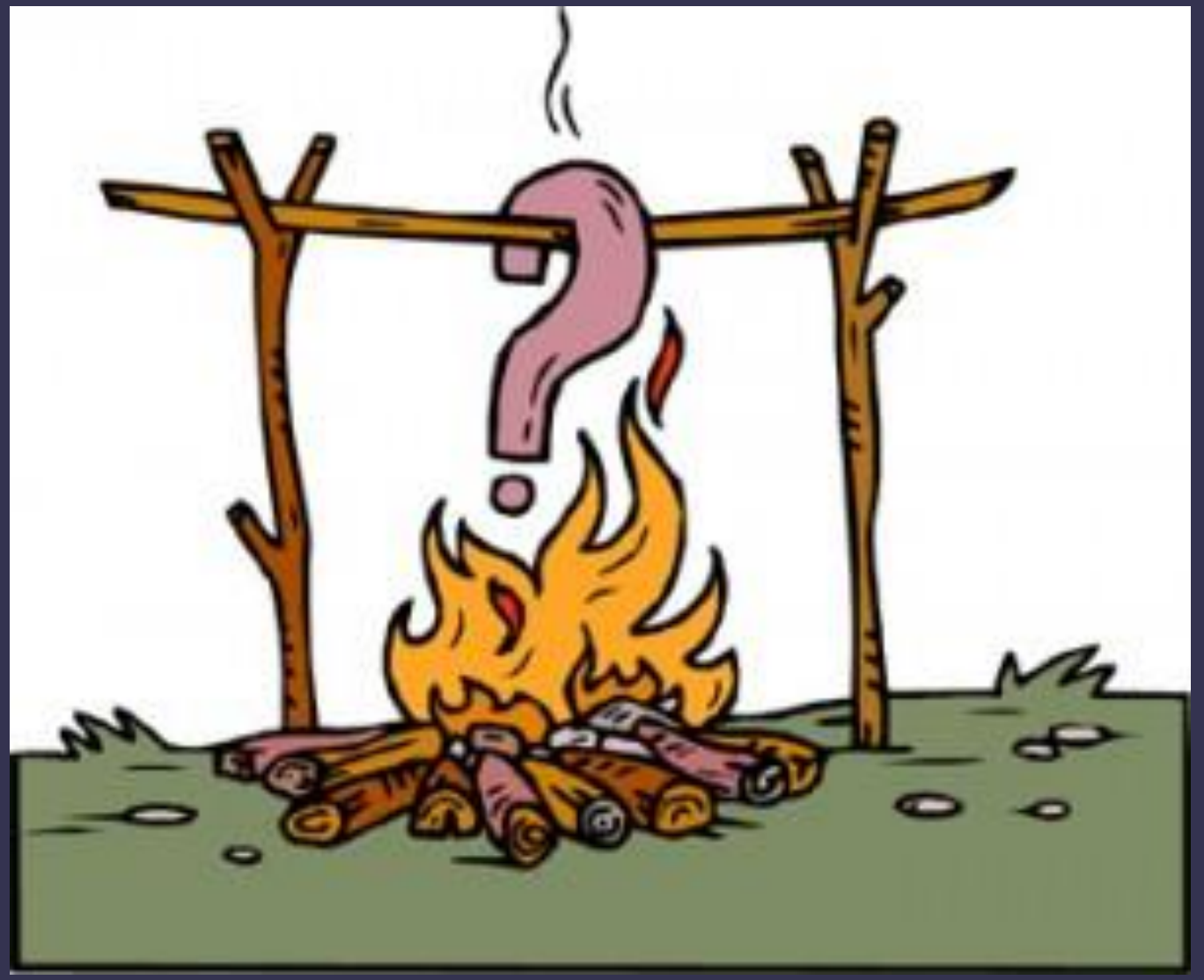
What information do you think would be important to share and gather from a child welfare worker?


Families
• Perspective of family story & initial conditions
• Strengths of each family member
• Importance of engaging bio family
Process
• Explain the Wraparound process
• Define role in the process
Team
• Purpose of the team
• Benefits of team
• Value of having bio. family on team
Child Welfare Social Worker
Court
• Discuss mandates and how they can be incorporated

What are you going to take with you from today?

- **What are your top 2 biggest takeaways from this session???**
- **How will you apply those when you return to the office?**
- **How will doing those things help to create lasting change for children and families involved in foster care?**

Questions



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