

# **NRCFCPP Concurrent Planning Curriculum**

## **Module 4: *Full Disclosure***



### **Full Disclosure Communication About Concurrent Planning: Using Full Disclosure to Help Parents Want to Change**

#### **Session at a Glance (1.5 hrs)**

Review/Preview - Definitions 10 minutes  
Respect, Genuineness, Empathy 15 minutes  
Up, Down, Up, Video 10 minutes  
Practice Exercise 45 minutes  
Professional Helping Relationship 10 minutes  
Problem-Solving Framework

#### **Session Objectives:**

- To define mutual respect, empathy, genuineness, and full disclosure
- To practice and convey respect, empathy and genuineness and full disclosure when working with families to achieve safety, permanency and well-being for children
- To review, discuss and build consensus about the values that enhance respectful, open and inclusive work with families and children
- To discuss concerns about using full disclosure
- To practice using full disclosure and the problem-solving process when communicating the need for concurrent planning with parents, family members, foster parents, attorneys, judges and children.

#### **Time 90 Minutes**

#### **Overhead, handouts and other material**

#### **Session Materials:**

Easel, Flip Chart, Markers, Tape, Overhead Projector, Screen – if possible  
Up, Down, Up Video Tape, TV/VCR

#### **Handouts and Overheads**

- Handout 4.1** Full Disclosure Defined & Values of Full Disclosure  
**Handout 4.2** Definitions of Respect, Genuineness, Empathy  
**Handout 4.3** Full Disclosure Issues  
**Handout 4.4** Full Disclosure Checklist  
**Handout 4.5** Teresa's Case Example  
**Handout 4.6** Full Disclosure Process  
**Handout 4.7** Full Disclosure Observers Guide  
**Handout 4.8** The Problem-Solving Process/Rules for Problem-Solving

*Notes*

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### **Review/Preview**

Welcome participants back from their break and comment that we are now going to work on the hard part of Concurrent Planning – Full Disclosure and the Problem-Solving Process. Explain that Full Disclosure is a process of talking with families about their rights, responsibilities, options and the importance of their staying involved with their children. It involves talking about the obstacles to the work, barriers to achieving early permanency. In effect, talking about the “elephant” in the room.

Full Disclosure is not easy, and it will require our best people skills – It also brings conflict and anger and fear and shame; and also, opportunities for creative problem solving. Requires us to use conflict management and resolution skills, while being respectful, honest, supportive, genuine and empathic.

Review the definitions of Full Disclosure. Comment as well, that full disclosure is guided by a set of values that emphasize parents’ rights to know and be involved in the decisions that impact their lives and where their children will grow up. In fact – they are the experts on their lives and have a right to know the truth!

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Review **Handout 4.1**

### **FULL DISCLOSURE**

*(Adapted from discussions with Jeanette Matsumoto and Lee Dean - Hawaii Department of Human Services - Child Welfare Services Branch; NRCFCPP training materials, 2001)*

#### **Full Disclosure**

- Is an essential component of ethical social work practice
- Is a process that facilitates open and honest communication between the social worker, biological parents, extended family members, foster parents, attorneys, the court, and service providers
- Is a skill and a process of sharing information, establishing expectations, clarifying roles, and addressing obstacles to the work with families
- Helps everyone understand what is happening and why – and in what timeframes
- Informs families of the agency’s concurrent activities intended to prevent extended stays in foster care
- Addresses detrimental effects of out-of-home care, separations, loss and unresolved grief
- Discusses the urgency of reunification and the significance of visiting the child
- Ask parents: Whom would you want to care for your child if you could not do it?

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### FULL DISCLOSURE VALUES

(Adapted from Kriya Associates - St Christopher Ottilie, Families Together Project)

- Parents ultimately decide the outcome of the case
- Parents have a right to know the permanency timeline
- Parents can handle the truth
- Parents need to give and receive data in order to make informed choices
- Parents are our peers

Remind participants that this is the hardest piece of Concurrent Planning – talking honestly with parents, in particular, about the obstacles to safety as well as permanency and developmental well being. But that full disclosure is also about being honest with families about the things that are going well – and can be some of the most rewarding times you will have with families!

Comment that full disclosure depends upon the basic engagement skills of mutual respect, genuineness and empathy.

Ask the participants to consider the definition of each technique and put descriptors on flip chart

- How is mutual respect defined?
- How is genuineness defined?
- What is empathy ... vs. sympathy?

### ***Mutual Respect***

*means valuing another person because he/she is a human being.  
Respect implies that being a human being has value in itself*

### ***Genuineness***

*“Webster:” sincerely and honestly felt or experienced-free from  
hypocrisy or pretense*

### ***Empathy***

*Is a two-stage process whereby one person attempts to  
experience (step into) another person’s world and then  
communicate understanding of and compassion for the other’s  
experience.*

*(Definitions of respect, empathy, and genuineness from New York State Office of  
Children and Family Services Supervisory CORE Curriculum developed by SUNY  
Research Foundation/CDHS)*

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State that two important aspects of respect are one's attitudes and one's ability to communicate respect in observable ways. In order to communicate attitudes and values, we must treat all people with respect because all human beings are worthy of respect, each person is unique, people have the right to make their own choices, and people can change with the right education and support.

To communicate respect in observable ways, we must show a commitment to understand, convey warmth, suspend critical judgment, and use good manners, politeness, and professionalism.

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### **Up, Down, UP**

Show the Up, Down, Up Tape. Reinforce the strategy of sharing positives, then the negative/concerns, leaving the client with positives again.

Explain that this is an 8-minute video developed in the State of Connecticut by a worker and supervisor who use this technique to address difficult issues with families.

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Explain that Full Disclosure is a process that:

### **FULL DISCLOSURE PROCESS**

*Adapted from the Connecticut Department of Children and Families Training Materials, 2001*

- Provides positive information (+ or “UP”)
- Addresses the difficult information (- or “DOWN”)
- Summarizes with positive information (+ and “UP” again)

### **FULL DISCLOSURE PROCESS**

- Builds the family member “UP” – verbally acknowledging his/her achievements and struggles in child rearing
- Brings the family member “DOWN” – defining the current problems, issues and the impact on the children and their parenting abilities
- Builds the family member “UP” again – supporting self-efficacy and self-confidence to make the right choices for the best interests of the children – safety, permanency and well-being

After the video, ask what Concerns participants may have about using full disclosure. List them on a flip chart – but try not to engage them in conversation about them – after they have practiced full disclosure, return to their concerns and ask if these concerns are still as serious.

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#### **Exercise: Full Disclosure – Teresa**

Let's practice using full disclosure with Teresa's case. Ask participants to break into groups of three.

Ask one person to agree to play the role for Teresa; one person to play the role of the worker; and one person to serve as the observer.

The worker's task is to talk to Teresa about the supervisor's concerns that "...Teresa is a relapse waiting to happen...."

- How will they tune into Teresa's situation – her present, her past, and the potential for her future?
- How will they tune into the foster mother's situation – her ability to care for Tanya, support and mentor Teresa, her interest in adoption if Teresa relapses and doesn't rebound?

Suggest that participants review the Full Disclosure Interviewing Role Play Form that can help the Observers provide feedback about the role-play between Teresa and the caseworker.

After the groups have interacted for 15 minutes, ask the interviews to stop and ask the observers to share feedback.

*Then ask the groups the following questions:*

- How did those who played Teresa feel during the interview?
- How did those who played the caseworker feel during the interview?
- How did the observers feel during the interview? How did the observers feel providing feedback to their colleagues?

Then ask the small groups to reconvene and shift roles – and practice the interview with Teresa once more. This time – let's imagine that Teresa has had the relapse.

**Tuning In:** Ask them to consider before hand what the situation is and what would the conversation include? What each person in role might be feeling going into this meeting.

Allow the groups 5 minutes to plan and then ask that they begin the interview. Allow 15 minutes for the role-play and then ask the observer to provide feedback.

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*Then ask again:*

- How did those who played Teresa feel during the interview?
- How did those who played the caseworker feel during the interview?
- How did the observers feel during the interview? How did the observers feel providing feedback to their colleagues?

Ask for general comments about the process of full disclosure and comment that even providing full disclosure in the form of feedback to our colleagues is hard – providing both positive and constructive feedback is difficult.

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### **Full Disclosure: Issues to address with parents and identified caregivers**

*Adapted from “Determining Adult Relatives as Preferred Caretakers in Permanency Planning: A Competency-Based Curriculum”. National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning/Hunter College School of Social Work. 2001.*

- The need for child welfare intervention (threats and risks to the child’s safety that may exist, and how they can be addressed)
- The process that can be expected for the assessment and planning for where the child will be placed - expectations that parents and family members can have of the agency
- Expectations the agency will have for the parents’ and family members’ involvement
- Identification and discussion of family strengths, opportunities and resources that may exist
- Potential options (with or without court intervention) to resolve problems that brought the family to the attention of the child welfare agency
- Children’s developmental need for safety, connections to family, continuity of care, connection to family and culture
- The obligation to give first consideration to potential adult relative care providers and assess their capacity to serve as placement and possible permanency resources
- Placement options for relative care providers: informal placement, legal guardianship (with or without subsidy, TANF funding), formal foster care, adoption (with or without subsidy)
- Parents’ rights and responsibilities in continuing to plan for their children even if placed with a relative care provider
- Children’s urgent need for parents and family members to be involved in planning, visiting and decision-making about what will happen to the children.

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### **FULL DISCLOSURE CHECKLIST**

*(Adapted from Kriya Associates - St Christopher Otilie, Families Together Project, NRCFCPP)*

**Open, honest, ethical and respectful discussions with birth family of rights, responsibilities, timeframes, permanency options, consequences, expectations of the agency; gentle confrontation about obstacles to the work and/or ambivalence to plan or be involved in planning.**

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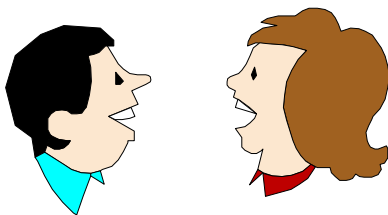
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### HAVE YOU...

	Talked with the birth parents/family about their rights?
	Talked with the birth parents/family about your role as a representative of the agency?
	Talked with the birth parents/family about the role of the foster parents?
	Verbally advised birth parents/family of their rights?
	Asked the birth parents/family about their understanding of the circumstances that caused placement?
	Shared with the birth parents/family - respectfully, but directly - the official reasons for placement?
	Explained permanency planning timeframes to the parents/family?
	Discussed the range of permanency planning options with the parents/family?
	Discussed concerns about past involvement or present barriers to permanency planning with family?
	Discussed and agreed to a mutually satisfactory visitation plan?
	Discussed purpose, types and behavioral expectations of visitation?
	Discussed service plan and assessment process with parents/family?
	Discussed consequences of following through/not following through with the plan?
	Identified additional planning resources, i.e. relatives, friends, service supports?
	Asked the foster family about their willingness to adopt, if birth family is unable to plan?
	Provided feedback to parents/family about progress being made/not made?
	Gently confronted parents/family about planning ambivalence?

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### Full Disclosure Interviewing Role Play

Please help your colleagues improve their practice skills through practice and feedback.

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Use the guide below to. When giving your feedback, please:

- Be concrete—identify specific strong and weak points
- Be constructive—suggest what the interviewer could have done differently

Please provide feedback on the interviewer’s ability to:

- **Communicate with genuineness and empathy**  
*Paying attention to body language and using reflective listening*
- **Help parent focus on the best interests of the child**  
*Including the need for safety, permanency and well-being*
- **Be honest and straight forward**  
*No hidden agendas; use of neutral, non-judgmental language; focus on behavior, underlying needs – not promises to change*
- **Use Up Down Up Techniques**  
*Share positives, the serious negatives, and share positives again*

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- **Give feedback and clarify consequences**  
*Assessment and progress toward case plan objectives. Explain consequences of not reunifying and discuss the remaining reunification time*
- **Summarize the discussion**  
*Including double reflections, reinforce self-motivational statements*
- **Keep it simple**  
*Including clear, neutral language, limit number of issues to discuss*
- **Affirm the family member**  
*Mention twice as many strengths as weaknesses; support the family member's self-efficacy and self-esteem*

*(Adapted from Materials Developed by Laura Williams, California Department of Social Services, 2001)*

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Ask if there are any questions about Full Disclosure – or comments.

Comment that we will have time at a later point in the training to apply full disclosure again – with foster families and others – attorneys, judges, community providers.

### **Full Disclosure within the Professional Helping Relationship**

*(Weave this section into the discussion as time allows)*

Explain that through full disclosure, if we have remained respectful, genuine and empathic, we will be likely to at some point engage the family member in acknowledging the concerns, and preparing them for the problem solving and case planning process. Quickly review with the group the steps or rules for problem-solving. Connect this basic framework for solving life’s problems with the structure that is needed when children’s safety, permanency and developmental well-being is compromised or at risk.

Explain that the professional helping relationship is rooted in the problem-solving framework. As social workers, we are charged with helping people solve their problems in living. Comment that helping family members connect to the severity of these problems and want to change is the essential role of the caseworker and supervisor. Changing is the role of the parent!

### **Problem-Solving Framework**

- Define the problem
- Gather and assess the facts – Describe and explore, observe and question
- Brainstorm all the possible solutions – Contingency plans
- Anticipate results
- Pick a solution and try it out – anticipate obstacles, contingency planning
- Learn from mistakes
- Try again
- Celebrate success!

Ask participants to think about the professional helping relationship...ask them what comes to mind when they think of what it means to be a PROFESSIONAL HELPER?

*Elicit the following ideas and list on the flip chart:*

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A professional is:

- knowledgeable
- skilled (application of knowledge)
  - guided by values and principles
  - dedicated to being helpful
  - honest/direct about consequences of problems
  - experienced
  - respectful
  - thoughtful
  - empathic and compassionate

Using the **Handouts 4.9 and 4.10**, discuss the importance of maintaining a professional role at all times, with a commitment to working collaboratively with families, children, agency colleagues and other agency staff; and with an ability to feel empathy (an understanding of), not sympathy (sorry for) people and their problems.

Discuss the focus of the social work profession - to help people solve their problems in living - their personal, interpersonal and environmental problems in living.

### **SOCIAL WORKER ROLE**

#### **Case Planner**

- Assess the family and the family environment
- Assess the potential resources available
- Develop preferred permanency goal and alternative goal
- Negotiate service agreement with parents
- Establish well-defined timeframes
- Develop goal-oriented treatment plans
- Maintain careful case records

#### **Case Manager**

- Evaluate goal attainment
- Negotiate respective roles with service providers and community resources
- Make referrals
- Plan and manage parent-child visitation
- Help families develop social networks, resources
- Promote collaboration among service providers

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### **Counselor/Teacher**

- Help families to cope with personal, interpersonal and environmental problems
- Help families develop productive and positive child rearing environments, and improve family functioning
- Help empower parents with information, knowledge, skills needed to care for children, manage a household and cope with environmental stresses
- Help families make shifts in their family dynamics and behaviors that negatively impact on children
- Help children overcome developmental delays or adjustment reactions to separation and loss
- Provide support and encouragement

### **Client Advocate**

- Find or create community family support resources
- Press agency and legal system to provide mandated services and supports
- Teach family members self-advocacy and assertiveness skills

### **Court Witness**

- Document all important events
- Work with legal system collaboratively
- Prepare clear and meaningful court reports (*verbal and written*)

Quickly review with the participants the stages in the helping process and comment that we sometimes have to go back to the engagement process when we seem stuck, or when cases are not progressing.

### **STAGES IN THE HELPING PROCESS**

#### ***The Pre-Engagement Phase***

- Determining purpose/goals for interview
- Tuning in on prejudices
- Anticipating empathy
- Anticipating obstacles

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### ***The Engagement/Assessment Phase***

- Outreach and establishing rapport
- Exploring client problems, strengths, needs
- Getting invited in/getting invited back

### ***The Contract Phase***

- Goal setting
- Identifying available resources
- Formulating service agreements and action plans
- Generating alternative plans

### ***The Action Phase***

- Tracking goal attainment
- Periodic review and evaluation: re-engagement, reassessment, re-contracting
- Motivating family members
- Timely decision-making for permanence

### ***The Ending Phase***

- Continued evaluation and reassessment
- Finding resources for the future
- Plans for moving on

Explain that while this was a brief review of the helping relationship – it serves as just that – a review so that we can see that Concurrent Planning is indeed an enhancement of good social work practice with vulnerable families. Thank participants for their hard work, give them a break, and let them know we will focus on meeting with families to achieve safety, permanency, and developmental well-being when we return.

*Notes*