



# Discussion Guide



## Learning Circle:

**Involve a diverse array of stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive continuum of services and supports for youth transitioning out of the foster care system.**



# Preparation for Adulthood: Supervising for Success

## Discussion Guide

**Learning Circle:** Involve a diverse array of stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive continuum of services and supports for youth transitioning out of the foster care system.

### Activity One: Focus Questions

**Objectives:** To facilitate a discussion of strengths-based practice and preparation work among members of the learning circle community.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart paper  
Markers  
Talking Balls/Sticks  
Focus Questions

### Facilitator Notes:

**Note to Facilitator:** The last learning circle is a half day of training. Discussion of these focus questions should last about sixty minutes and prompt supervisors to dialogue about resources and share issues specific to the types of collaborations that are currently working and barriers to creating the types of services needed for young people to prepare for adulthood.

Welcome the participants back to the learning circle and provide an overview of the day's topic. State that today is our final learning circle focusing on collaboration in the development of a comprehensive continuum of services and supports for youth transitioning out of the foster care system.

Ask group members to report back on activities or materials that they've used since the last learning circle. The facilitator can ask for volunteers or can just go around the circle to give all participants the opportunity to share.

Divide participants into smaller talking circles and give each group their own talking ball/stick. Inform the group that when a participant is in possession of this



object, the focus is on him/her and what he/she is saying. All others should listen deeply to what this person has to say. The goal of the discussion in the small groups is to ensure that participants really spend time talking in depth about the identified focus questions.

**Note to Facilitator:** The following strategies can also be used to facilitate the focus questions -The World Café and Technologies of Participation.

Facilitator introduces the focus questions identified below:

Present the first focus question for the learning circle and write it out on the flip chart. Inform participants that the second focus question will be addressed after lunch.

- What kinds of collaborations are you/your unit/your department involved with to support young people as they prepare for adulthood? What is your role? How do these collaborations function? How are young people involved in these collaborations? If they function effectively, please talk about the components of an effective collaboration. If collaborations are struggling, what are the barriers you have encountered?
- In your supervision, how do you help develop collaboration skills with your staff?

During the discussion, facilitator should circulate throughout the room to ensure that groups are focused on the task and using the talking balls/sticks appropriately. Once groups have discussed the focus questions, facilitator debriefs the small group conversations with the following probing questions:

- In response to the first question, what were some of the collaborations discussed?
- What are some of the issues that surfaced in your discussion specific to collaborations necessary for the transition from foster care?

Facilitator reconvenes the large group and asks group members to share the highlights from their conversations around each of the focus questions. Facilitator records responses on the flip chart.

Now, we are going to look at a series of digital stories representing the views of supervisors, workers and young people.



## **Activity Two: Voices from the Field**

**Objectives:** To appreciate the multiple perspectives in preparing youth for adulthood.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Digital Stories (choose stories that reflect the collaboration discussions)

### **Facilitator Notes:**

Introduce the concept of digital media stories and talk with group about the purpose of the stories, how they're made and where they can obtain a free copy of the DVD's (<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass>).

After viewing the stories, ask group members to discuss what they've seen in the context of their earlier conversations around collaboration and preparation for adulthood. Use the following questions to facilitate discussion:

- What are some of your reactions to the stories?
- What are some of the struggles discussed by the storytellers?
- What do you see as possible solutions to those struggles?

Facilitator transitions into a discussion of the various tools and techniques available to supervisors and workers.



## Activity Three: Tools and Techniques – Collaboration

**Objectives:** Explain the elements of collaboration.  
Appreciate different perspectives when engaging in collaborations.  
Describe the process of change.  
Explain how different communication and temperament styles can influence collaborations.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:** Building Dynamic Groups: A Collaboration Checklist, Developed by Ohio State University Extension, 2000.  
[http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~bdg/pdf\\_docs/b/B02.pdf](http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~bdg/pdf_docs/b/B02.pdf)  
National Network for Collaboration:  
<http://crs.uvm.edu/ncco/cd/unit2a.htm>  
Participant Resource Packet  
True Colors materials available by contacting Joan Morse at 212-452-7480 or through certification through True Colors®  
<http://www.truecolors.org/>

**Activity Source:** National Network for Collaboration: Building Organizational Collaborations by Lynne Borden, Ph.D., The Ohio State University, Daniel Perkins, Ph.D., University of Florida, and produced by Bruce E. Haas, Ph.D. <http://crs.uvm.edu/ncco/>

**Facilitator Notes:**

### **Lecture: Collaboration**

Ask the group: When you hear the word *collaboration*, what comes to mind?  
Record responses on the flip chart. Use the following definition which is adapted from The Collaboration Framework, *Addressing Community Capacity from the National Network for Collaboration*:

*Collaboration is a process of participation through which people, groups, and organizations work together to achieve desired results. Collaborations accomplish shared vision, achieve positive outcomes for the audiences they serve, and build an interdependent system to address issues and opportunities. Collaborations also involve the sharing of resources and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals. Members of the collaboration must be willing to share vision, mission, power, resources and goals.*



Review the characteristics of collaborations based on the above definition from the Handout: Building Dynamic Groups developed by Ohio State University Extension, 2000:

- Goals
- Communication
- Sustainability
- Research and Evaluation
- Political Climate
- Resources
- Catalysts
- Policies/Laws/Regulations
- History
- Connectedness
- Leadership
- Community Development
- Understanding Community

Point out to participants that there is a collaboration checklist included in the handout which can be used with the staff in discussing the elements of collaboration.

State that an effective collaborator needs to be able to shift his/her thinking in the following ways:

- from being driven by problem towards working towards vision and solutions;
- from muddled roles to defined relationships; and
- from being activity driven to focusing on outcomes.

State that when moving into a collaborative venture, it requires us to be creative and generate new ways to accomplish our objectives. When we do this, our own belief system may stop us, and that's another reason why we may not think differently. Most of us have certain attitudes that keep us thinking in certain ways and continuing to do the same thing. By opening up to a creative and new outlook, you can allow for new possibilities and be more open to change.

Let's do an activity that will give us a chance to think differently. Refer participants to their resource packet, *Think Differently*. Allow participants to work in pairs. Give them three minutes to complete the exercises. Review the following exercises with the group stating that there are no "right answers."



*An eccentric old king wants to give his throne to one of his two sons. He decides that a horse race will be run and the son who owns the slower horse will become king. The sons, each fearing the other will cheat by having his horse run less fast than it is capable, ask the court fool for his advice. With only two words the fool tells them how to make sure that the race will be fair. What are the two words?*

Answer: Switch Horses

*Think of a way you can put a sheet of newspaper on the floor so that when two people stand face to face on it, they won't be able to touch one another. Cutting or tearing the paper is not allowed, and neither is tying up the people or preventing them from moving.*

Answer: Trying putting the newspaper in a doorway – door closed – with the two people standing on each side.

*This has two parts – by adding only a single line, turn the Roman numeral seven into an eight: VII. Want something more challenging? Shown here is Roman numeral nine: IX. By adding a single line, turn it into a six.*

Answer: VII = VIII, Here are three different answers to turn IX into 6: put a line through the middle of the Roman number IX, turn it upside down and cover the bottom half, SIX, IX6 or 1 times 6 = 6.

State that our ability to be effective collaborators is also influenced by our personal temperaments.

### **Presentation of Tools and Techniques:**

State that we are now going to examine our personal temperaments through a system called True Colors®.

Use the following information from the True Colors website (<http://www.truecolors.org/>):

*True Colors® is a simple model of personality identification for people of all ages that improves communication through recognition of a person's true character. Utilizing the colors of orange, green, blue and gold to differentiate four basic personality types, True Colors becomes an uncomplicated language for every individual to convey complex ideas very simply.*



*True Colors' lively and interactive programs have become the easiest and most convenient way of discovering one's strengths, and understanding human behavior.*

*Since 1978, when Don Lowry founded True Colors, its mission has been to enhance the way we live, work, communicate and interact with those around us at work and in our personal lives.*

*Over the last 28 years, hundreds of thousands of individuals have experienced the True Colors process, which is widely used in the United States, Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom and parts of Asia, and is available in multiple languages.*

*A distinguishing quality of the True Colors programs is the artful blending of education and entertainment into programs that combine audience interaction with insightful materials that inform and delight participants because they are easy to understand, to apply on a daily basis and to retain over a lifetime.*

*True Colors is used in schools, businesses, corporations, government and nonprofit organizations, and in people's personal, family and social interactions.*

### ***The Genesis of True Colors***

*In 1978 founder Don Lowry became interested in the work of clinical psychologist David Keirsey. Keirsey, author of the best-selling self-help book "Please Understand Me," studied the work of psychologists Carl Jung, Katherine Briggs and Isabel Myers who theorized that all people fit into one of four broad categories of personality.*

*The concepts instantly rang true with Lowry, who quickly recognized their potential to improve people's lives, careers and relationships. So he set about developing a fundamental and universal way to package the information into practical guidelines that could be understood and easily applied by both children and adults alike.*

*The result is True Colors, which expands upon Keirsey's four temperament types, and translates complicated personality and learning theory into "one of the easiest, most convenient ways of understanding and appreciating human behavior."*

*The True Colors program asks participants to identify their "color spectrum" using four cards that represent key personality types: Blue, Gold, Green or Orange. Each color has particular strengths and each analyzes, conceptualizes, understands, interacts and learns differently. But these differences, if not*



*acknowledged and understood, can become barriers to interpersonal communication, making understanding between people of different types difficult.*

*Lowry believed that entertainment offers the most broadly appealing and universal context for communicating messages; so he specifically designed the program to be as entertaining and fun as possible. When people are entertained and relaxed, Lowry realized, their resistance to new ideas diminishes, allowing them to fully experience and become aware of their own True Colors, and those of the people around them.*

Distribute the True Colors® packet to participants and guide them through the directions. Once each participant has identified their True Colors® divide them into groups by their brightest color. State that they are going to educate each other about their colors. Post the following on the flip chart:

- What are the strengths, joys, values and needs of your color?
- What are the stressors and frustrations of your color?
- What is one thing that is misunderstood about your style?

Give the groups ten minutes to answer the questions and tell them that they are going to present their colors to the group using their creative talents. State that all members of the group must participate in the activity.

After the presentation, use the following questions to deepen the True Colors® discussion:

- How does knowing about the different temperaments aid in developing collaborations?
- How does knowing your color(s) impact your ability to supervise staff?
- What types of things would you do to increase your less dominant colors?
- How could you use True Colors® in your supervision?

State that effective collaborations can result in changes to the child welfare system. Refer participants to their resource packet *The Change Process* and review the five basic premises of managing complex change.



## **Activity: Integration Activity – Broken Squares**

**Objectives:** To illustrate the challenges in preparing youth for adulthood.  
To highlight the importance of collaboration, teamwork and an array of services needed to prepare youth for adulthood.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Building Dynamic Groups: Broken Squares developed by Ohio State University Extension, 2000.  
Flip chart  
Markers

### **Facilitator Notes:**

**Note to Facilitator:** Prior to the activity, follow the directions from *Building Dynamic Groups: Broken Squares* developed by Ohio State University Extension, 2000 available at the Preparation for Adulthood: Supervising for Success website under Learning Circle Five Session Materials <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass/>.

Advise the group that we are going engage in an activity that allows us to examine the importance of interpersonal skills. Follow the directions in the article and use the following questions to debrief the activity:

- What was the experience like for you? Describe it for the group.
- What kinds of things could other members in your group have done differently to make the experience more satisfying and successful?
- How did knowing about the group members' True Colors® impact the activity?
- What kinds of things could you have done personally to make the experience more satisfying and successful?
- What did you learn from this experience that could be helpful in your supervisory position?



**Activity: Action Planning**

**Objectives:** To create individual action plans to promote transfer of learning.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Action Planning Forms  
Post Test

**Facilitator Notes:**

Distribute Action Planning Forms and ask participants to develop action plans based on today's session. Give participants ten minutes to complete their plans. Encourage them to be as specific as possible when developing their action plans. Have each participant share his/her action plan with the group.

**Note to Facilitator:** If possible, collect action plans and make copies of them as a way of tracking participant progress.

Wrap up the day by summarizing the material covered during the learning circles. Provide information about resources posted on the website and the corresponding *On the Job* (OJT) activity.

Since this is the last learning circle, distribute the Post Test and collect.



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