

A reminder about groups

- Confidentiality:** what is shared in this room stays in this room
This is intended to be a safe space
- Courtesy:** silence your phone
If you need to take a call, please exit the room
- Be respectful**
Avoid interrupting others when they're speaking
- Arrive on time**
We will begin group promptly at 6:00 pm
- Remain in the building** if your child is in children's group
We cannot provide childcare-- Children younger than 4 will need to be left at home

1

DO I HAVE RIGHTS? THE NEED FOR PERMANENCY

GRANDFAMILIES • WEEK 3




2

Week 2 review

Kinship Dynamics review:

- Were there any dynamics that you were more aware of this week?
- Did you practice a locus of control?
- Were there any long-term dynamics you thought about?

3

Objectives

- Understand the importance of permanency for the emotional and physical well-being of the children in your care.
- Understand the types and considerations of permanency
- Consider your family's needs regarding future planning and visitation

4



What is permanency?

Permanency "means having positive, healthy, nurturing relationships with adults who provide emotional, financial, moral, educational, and other kinds of support as youth mature into adults."

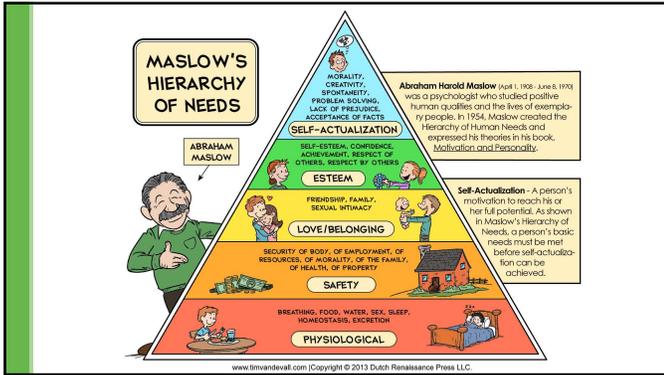
5

Emotional need for permanency

Everyone has a basic need for permanency

- The emotional security and stability that permanency creates, helps identity formation take place, allowing you and the child to form a new family bond/system
- Permanency allows a child to feel safe and regulated, knowing an adult has assumed responsibility for them
- The child becomes physically and emotionally able to attach to the caregiver
- Caregiver can plan for the future of the child

6



7

Positive outcomes for achieving permanency

Youth who experience minimized placement changes are more likely to experience:

- Fewer school changes
- Less trauma and distress
- Less mental health problems
- Less behavioral problems
- Increased probabilities for academic achievement
- A lasting positive relationship with an adult

8

Outcomes when permanency is not achieved

- Potential separation from parents/siblings/other close relationships
- Increased distress, sense of loss, and feeling of not belonging
- Placements in multiple homes increase the probable need for mental health services
- Higher risk of educational delay and lowered school performance due to increased levels of stress, anxiety and personal hardship

9

Permanency from a youth perspective - video

10

Types of permanency

PLEASE NOTE:

GRANDfamilies is NOT a legal service

- We cannot offer legal advice
- We cannot recommend any specific attorneys
- When in doubt, we will refer you to legal services

***Application assistance is not legal advice**

11

Types of permanency

INFORMAL AGREEMENT	GUARDIANSHIP/ CUSTODY	ADOPTION
This is not considered a form of permanency	This is a form of permanency	This is the ultimate form of permanency

12

Informal Agreement



What Informal Agreements look like:

- Child lives with caregiver **without** any written acknowledgement or consent
- Or, parent signs piece of paper granting caregiver permission to care for child (not court ordered)
- Parent may pick up child at any point against caregiver's will

13

Informal Agreement



How GRANDfamilies helps:

- Family team meetings to establish visitation agreements
- Assistance with DCFS reporting
- Resource navigation, including:
 - Power of attorney
 - School enrollment
 - Medical/financial application assistance

14

Guardianship/Custody

About Guardianship/Custody:

- Guardianship is the legal standing of an adult who is NOT a child's parent, but who has been appointed by the court to care for and make legal decision for the child
- Guardianship includes all different types of custody rights that a parent has (physical, legal, etc.)
- Parental rights of the parents are NOT terminated, but are suspended



15

Guardianship/Custody

How GRANDfamilies helps:

- Assistance with application for district court
- Family team meetings/mediation to help explain guardianship process
- Attendance at court hearings as a support
 - We do not speak in hearings unless subpoenaed to do so



16

Adoption



What Adoption looks like:

- Relative caregiver is now legally considered the parent, **permanently**
- Parental rights must be terminated by a prior court order (unlike guardianship, where parental rights are only suspended)

17

Adoption



How GRANDfamilies helps:

- GRANDfamilies has a kinship adoption specialist!
 - Can complete official home study
 - Adoption counseling
 - Adoption support groups

18

Permanency

Group Discussion

Where do you feel you're at now with permanency?

Where would you ultimately like to be with permanency?

What conversations have you had with the children regarding plans for permanency?

19

Annual reports/Hints for documentation

Annual reports

- Report due on anniversary of granted guardianship, per child
- COURTS MAY NOT SEND A REMINDER!!**
- Important to set personal reminders
- Documents accessible online at OCAP website
- GRANDfamilies Family Advocates are available for support
- Purpose is to update court on any major changes and the child's welfare

What to document

- Appointments with GRANDfamilies, DCFS, etc.
- Any medical appointments (medical, dental, therapy, etc.)
- Prescribed medications
- Teacher conferences
- Receipts
- Visits, texts, messages, emails and phone calls with the parents
- Special events such as birthdays and holidays

20

Handout

Recommendations for wellness checks, dental visits, and vaccinations

What to document

- Appointments with GRANDfamilies, DCFS, etc.
- Any medical appointments (medical, dental, therapy, etc.)
- Prescribed medications
- Teacher conferences
- Receipts
- Visits, texts, messages, emails and phone calls with the parents
- Special events such as birthdays and holidays

21

Document, Document, Document!

Tips on Documentation

- Do not delete texts, voicemails, emails, etc.
- Use a notebook rather than loose leaf paper
- Write the date of each entry
- Keep it factual-- avoid statements fueled by emotions
- Buy a safe to keep valuable items in:
 - Social security cards, birth certificates, medications, weapons, immunization records, etc.

What else to document

- Document your observations about the parent's mental health and sobriety
 - "Sally showed up high again and I told her she could not see the kids"
- "We attended the GRANDfamilies Friend2Friend event"
- "Sally sent me an angry text today that said..."

22

Planning for the future

- Express to your children your hopes for the future-- for yourself and them. Ask them how they view the future, what are their hopes and goals?
- Consider your short and long-term plans
 - How do you prepare for reunification?
 - How do you prepare for long-term kinship care?
 - How do you prepare your long-term finances?
 - How can you help your child envision, plan, and work towards their own future?
 - How can you instill them with hope for the future when reunification cannot/will not happen?



23

Planning for the future

If something unexpected were to happen, what arrangements are made for the care of the child(ren)?

- With guardianship, do you have rights to decide where the children go if something happens to you?
- What is the current permanency goal for each child?
- What are my options if the children cannot return to their parents?
- Under what circumstances can I receive a subsidy to help pay for the children's care?
- What happens when the children turn 18?
- How will GRANDfamilies continue to be involved with and help my family?



24



Considering Visitation?

- Purpose of visitation
 - Reduces trauma
- Potential for reunification
 - What is in the best interest of the child?

25

Tips on visitation

Consider a visitation agreement

- Many biological parents are concerned that if they consent to legal guardianship, that they will not see their kids again. You might be able to alleviate these concerns if you discuss a visitation agreement.
- An agreement is not legally binding, but lays out expectations for how the adults will behave towards each other regarding visits and communicating with the children.
- Visitation agreements demonstrate your openness and willingness to let the parents see their children, if it is safe and appropriate.
- Talk with your GRANDfamilies Family Advocate and discuss what this might look like for your situation.

26

Handout

Examples of expectations that could be listed on a Visitation Agreement



27

After the visit

Things you might observe after visitation:

It is not uncommon to see regressive or acting out behaviors in children, **even if the visit went well.**

The emotional/physical intensity of the visit can be a lot for the children and can manifest itself in a variety of ways



28

After the visit

Things you might observe after visitation:

It is not uncommon to see regressive or acting out behaviors in children, **even if the visit went well.**

The emotional/physical intensity of the visit can be a lot for the children and can manifest itself in a variety of ways

- Hyperactivity
- Bad dreams
- Overly emotional
- Toileting issues
- Being "naughty" or "nice" so they can go with parents
- Mimicking or emulating their parents
- Sullenness of withdrawal after visit

29

Take-away activity

Evaluate where your family is at with visitation and come prepared to discuss boundaries next week.

30

■ ■ Next week's topic:

**Healthy
Boundaries
with Your
Family**

