

## KINSHIP CARE: ADJUSTING TO CHANGES IN FAMILY DYNAMICS

By

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### ***Approaches Assisting Family Members in Adjusting***

1) Family Preservation and Protection:

- lost or drifting in the SYSTEM (large caseloads/ multiple placements)
- trauma from family and community separation
- loss of identity/feelings of abandonment/isolation
- labelling/ stigmatizing/mistreatment/discrimination

2) Empowerment

- uniqueness of family “no one else will care or protect the way family does”
- irreplaceable - “no one can replace us or prevent the loss our child will feel when separated from us”
- attachment- “he/she will not trust anyone quite the way or as quickly as he /she does with us”

3) Recognition and Engagement(Reward/Nurturance)

- acknowledgement of their sacrifice/role
- engagement in their loss/grief/embarrassment
- appreciation of their loyalty to family and YOU

4) Loyalty/Legacy

- “If not you, then who”
- “we’re all they have”
- “ family has been there for us”
- “this is who we are and this is what we do”

5) Self Preservation/Benefit

- “this could have been you”
- “this could be your children”
- “you could need family like this one day”

6) How Have Things Changed and What’s Still the Same

- rules
- chores
- shared entitlements/rights (protection/loyalty/privileges)
- responsibilities
- relationships (irreplaceable/unique relationships, experiences, bonds)
- routines

7) Resolving Conflict (Past/Current)

- acknowledge conflict/how you want things different)
- how you plan to be different (take the first step/earn trust)
- elicit family member’s goals (what differences they want)
- how they plan to be different (allow second chance)
- recognition/engagement of family members (importance /grief)
- benefits of resolving conflict( members ‘ less guarded, stability for for the child)

***Coping Strategies For Caregivers While Adjusting and Assisting Family Members***

1) Support Systems( Group/ Individuals/Therapy) in addressing:

- loss/grief
- isolation
- ventilating

- brainstorming
  - information/education (financial,health, legal)
  - mentoring/supporting others/advocacy
  - strength building/validation
- 2) Loyalty/Attachments/Legacy
- child in care
  - birth parents
  - family
- 3) Faith/Hope
- part of a larger/greater plan
  - purpose/role
  - reunification
  - better life for the child
  - returning to or continuing pre-kin lifestyle
- 4) Process For Self- Assessment
- strengths/Limits
  - tolerance
  - “Should I, Can I, Can I Continue Providing Kinship Care”
  - Optional, Alternative Roles and Transitional Plans
- 5) Self Care Plans and Activities
- health (mental and physical)
  - recreational/spiritual/physical
  - companionship/friends
  - respite