

Finding the words, Finding the ways...

Strategies and techniques...





A model for staff training and work with families



Relationship-Based Strategies

- How to Be...
- How to Understand...
- How to Influence...



How to Be....

- “How you are...is as important as what you do.”
- Respect that is demonstrated in courtesy, awareness of self, and acceptance of a wide array of differences in values and childrearing practices.



How to be...

- Parallel Process, the idea that relationships influence relationships
- Important to model in practice from administrators to staff and staff to families.
- Supports family relationships



How to Be...

- Self-awareness through reflective supervision and team support.



Reflective Supervision

- The process of examining with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with young children and their families.



How to Understand...

- Focus on the importance of observation.
- Need to understand the perceptions, needs, and behaviors
- Extending observations through discussion and inquiry linked with empathy, attention and curiosity.



How to Understand...

- Focus on understanding the internal experiences—supervisors with staff, parents with children
- Building understanding of own attitudes, feelings, and beliefs and how these effect others



How to Understand...

- Use of inquiry is fundamental to good infant family practice across disciplines
- Key is linking inquiry to empathy and careful attention to what is shared.



How to Understand...

- Avoid giving advice disguised as inquiry i.e. “don’t you think it would be a good idea if . . .?”
- Questions should be born of genuine curiosity, not just a polite introduction for the clinician to introduce her own agenda.



How to Influence...

- Initiating discussion of sensitive issues with families.
- Diplomatic direct ways of talking about hard to discuss issues.



Communication Model

- Staff are encouraged to form working alliances with the families they work with through being present to the family and working to understand the needs, perceptions and context of the child and family.
- Earning the right to be heard

Relationship- Based Techniques



From the work of Mary Claire Heffron and Lucia Milburn



How to Be . . .

- Be aware of your own feelings
- Be respectful and follow the family's lead
- Be empathic
- Be aware that there are multiple ways of seeing and experiencing reality
- Think about all family and household members



How to be . . .

- Normalize when appropriate
- Attribute positive meaning
- Resist the urge to jump in and do it for someone else
- Remember and use information from the past
- Think about reasons for resistance



How to Understand

- Listen Carefully and attend with your whole self
- Ask open ended questions
- Tease out concerns
- Be tentative when appropriate
- Seek to understand before trying to influence
- Voice something you have noticed



How to influence . . .

- Give specific feedback designed to shape behavior
- Be tentative when making observations or giving suggestions
- Encourage an experimental attitude
- Encourage a broader perspective



How to influence

- Encourage self reflection and observational skills
- Ask, don't tell
- Contain new information in a question when appropriate
- Voice anticipated concern and caring paired with a suggestion



How to influence

- Use direct communication or spotlighting to address areas of concern that have not been brought up by the parent (staff member)
- Use your own worries about the parent's (staff members) concerns as a prelude to your statement



- In training staff to do reflective, relationship based work our modeling of the process will powerfully influence their work with the families they serve.



Questions and Comments