

# STRENGTHENING FAMILY COPING RESOURCES

## Module One: Session One – *Telling Family Stories*

Date:

Facilitators present:

### 1. Family Meal: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitators encourage and model appropriate conversation, sharing, and supervision of children. Remember to be sensitive to and empowering of the parent(s).

- Welcome - Have parents introduce their families; Introduce staff. Brief group introduction: We will be spending 15 weeks together sharing about family traditions. We will be talking about the ways families spend time together; celebrate the good things that happen to them, and help each other get through the bad times. We will also talk about big family events, and things that happen every day. We will get to play games, make things, and share ideas about our families, ourselves, and the group as a whole. Review confidentiality and assure families that they will not be asked to talk about their trauma with the other families.
- Give thanks for those who helped prepare the food and get the room ready.

### 2. Opening Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

- Rules overview (Facilitator) Brainstorm additional rules for poster – it is suggested to complete this during meal.
- Check in with each family (Lead Facilitator) - This is another way we can make sure things go well. Every week we will check in and ask how your family is doing. Is there anything that would get in the way of your family's participation this evening?
- Review the schedule (Lead Facilitator) - Each week, you will find a schedule on the table with your family name. We will follow a schedule for each of our sessions. It will help keep you (and us!) on track. Tonight, we will...(read schedule aloud).

### 3. Small groups – What is a Family Tradition? (30 minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

- Often, we will spend some of our time together in smaller groups. Each facilitator will take a different group, one for the adults, one for the teenagers, one for the older children, one for the younger children, and one for the babies and toddlers. Depending on the size of the group more than one facilitator may join the smaller groups.
- Tonight, because it is our first group and we are still getting to know each other, we will split into just three groups. The parents will stay here with \_\_\_\_\_, the youth will go with \_\_\_\_\_, and our youngest members will go with \_\_\_\_\_.
- Adults (Lead Facilitator): Introduction to Family Traditions and Routines Handout; discuss traditions and routines from the adults' past; highlight the important characteristics of rituals and routines.
- All Youth: Talk about family traditions; ask youth to discuss how their family makes and celebrates bigger events, as well as day-to-day routines. Encourage kids to share at least

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one tradition/routine. Youth then select their favorite routine or tradition to draw or write about on a scrapbook page.

- Younger children and babies (Facilitators): Read *Feast for Ten* and make a pretend feast, also use *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes*.

#### 4. Telling Family Stories (35 minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

- Read *A Story, A Story* – books for each family, if possible
- Families tell their own stories (Facilitator)
  - I bet each family here has some good stories to tell. Think about a happy event your whole family experienced together. Once you have decided, discuss the event. Just pretend you were sitting around and someone brought it up.
  - Allow about 10 -15 minutes.
- Scrapbook page
  - We want you to be able to remember this group, but also to build family memories. Telling family stories is one way to do that, making a scrapbook is another way. The kids have already started working or finished their own page for a family scrapbook, but now we want you to work on a page as a family. Make a page together about your family story.
  - Allow about 15 minutes.
  - Provide supplies to complete at home, as needed.

#### 5. Establishing Group Rituals (30 minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

- Brainstorming session
  - Rituals and Routines are not just part of families; other groups share rituals and routines as a way of structuring time together. For example, when you come to group each week, we will have a schedule that is pretty much the same every week.
  - We can also share some traditions – like how we begin or end the group each week. Let's plan those now by brainstorming (Explain). Review brainstorming rules.
  - Write down ideas for about 8-10 minutes.
  - Record the final choices on the rituals poster.

#### 6. Closing Activities (10 minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

- Thank everyone for taking part in tonight's group.
- Check that everything was covered/summary of session.
- Share a good thing about each family.
- Introduce topic for next week - We will be talking about your family history and making a special kind of family tree.
- Review tasks/homework for the following week – Relative interview; choose one or a few people who can tell you about your family's history. Call or visit that person and find out what traditions have been important to your family over the years.
- Planning contacts for the week.
- Closing ritual.

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