

# Welcome

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# Effective Facilitation of Support Groups

Webinar | December 12, 2018

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# Housekeeping

- This interactive webinar will be 60 minutes long and will include time for questions via the online chat function.
- We will record this webinar. We will share the recording with you and post it on [adoptuskids.org/publications](https://adoptuskids.org/publications).
- Your line will be muted throughout the webinar.
- The webinar will include poll questions and opportunities for you to share information via the chat function, including if you are having technical difficulties.
- Please evaluate the session when you leave the webinar.

# About AdoptUSKids

## Our mission:

- Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system
- Assist states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop, and support foster and adoptive families

# Goals for this webinar

- Discuss what effective facilitation of groups looks like and why it's important
- Build group facilitation skills
- Explore strategies for facilitating difficult conversations in groups
- Explore strategies for managing challenging behaviors in groups

# Poll questions 1 and 2

# Defining facilitation

- Facilitation is the act of making something easier
- In parent group meetings, facilitation is the art of guiding the group's discussions and protecting the structure of the meetings to help the group be as effective, efficient, and productive as possible

# Effective facilitation matters

- Effective facilitation keeps groups focused on the task at hand
- Participants get the support they need because they are not distracted by the group's process challenges



# Keys to facilitation

- Understanding group process
- Structuring the meeting
- Guiding discussion



# Understanding group process

How groups make  
decisions

Group members'  
roles

Human dynamics



# Understanding group process

- Forming – coming together for mutual concerns
- Storming – frustration, venting issues, looking for validation
- Norming – essential for group health and longevity

# Understanding group process

## Unbalanced storming:

- One or more persons can't let go of an issue
- Frustration and resentment grows
- Participation drops
- Attendance drops
- Group fails

# Understanding group process

Proactive facilitators will:

- Seek solution-focused speakers, instruction, discussion
- Interrupt and redirect unrelenting storming
- Anticipate difficult behaviors
- Address issues head-on

# Poll question 3

# Structuring the meeting

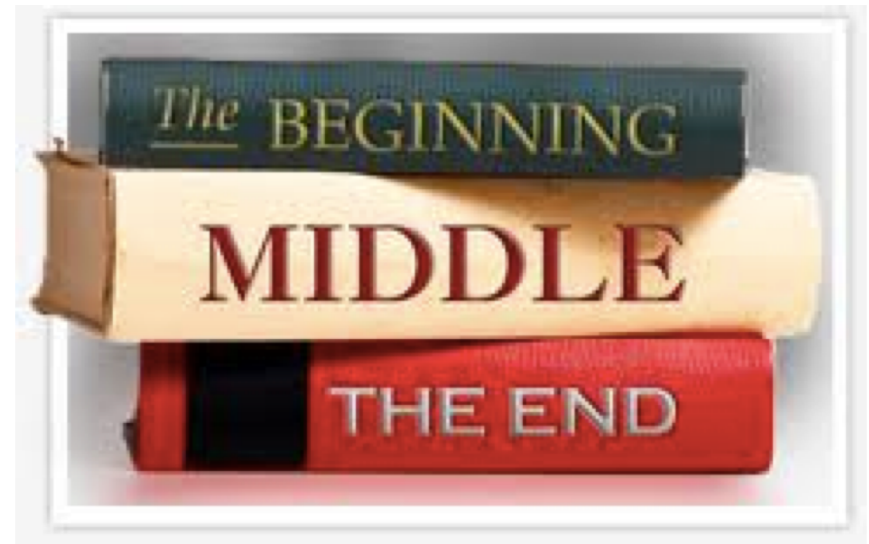
- Preparation is key
- Solicit volunteers to bring refreshments, act as time keepers
- Set up the room in a way that encourages interaction
- Have a clear agenda
- Include time for socializing

# Structuring the meeting

Beginning: Ground rules

Middle: Business

End: Closure





# Guiding discussion

- Survey group for shared interests and mutual concerns
- Focus conversation on moving from issues to strategies and solutions
- Seek everyone's voice—make room for quieter members

# Guiding discussion



- Monitoring who speaks
- Choosing topics
- Inviting guest speakers or doing presentations yourself

# Guiding discussion

- Be positive
- Set ground rules and stick to them
- Engage everyone in the first 5-10 minutes
- Be aware of yourself and others

# Guiding discussion

- Know that 10% of our communication is verbal and 90% is non-verbal
- Accept that conflict is normal; work through it
- Remain committed to the group process

# Guiding discussion

Land the plane

Make your point and wrap it up



Three, then me

Let three people speak before  
you speak again



One diva, one mic

No side talking



# Leaders are self-aware

- Find the balance between how much you share or don't share about things going on in your life
- It is important that the members know you are human, but you don't want to consume the meetings with your needs
- Remember, you may be facilitating the group, but it is not *yours*

# Facilitating difficult conversations

- Sensitive or emotional topics
- Controversial topics
- Crises

# Facilitating difficult conversations

- Make your group a no-judgment zone
- Ask: Do you want advice or just to be heard?
- Have tissues handy
- Avoid “one-upsmanship”
- Provide a time frame in advance



# Managing difficult behaviors

- Set the ground rules in advance and post/distribute them so they're easy to refer to
- A gentle hand on the shoulder if you are able
- Parking lot for a future discussion
- “Can we talk outside the group?”
- Remember—your role is to protect the group, even if it means losing a member

# A successful parent group facilitator...

- Upholds structure and order at meetings
- Honors the group process above their own personal needs or agenda
- Values the contributions of all members as equal participants
- Helps to identify key points of discussion as they emerge
- Helps the group work through conflict
- Is adaptable

# A successful parent group facilitator...

- Has a sense of humor
- Seeks balance in discussions
- Draws out quiet members and manages members who tend to dominate the discussion
- Redirects discussions that get off track
- Asks the group to reassess its goals when the group is not making progress toward its stated goals

# A successful parent group facilitator...

- Is self-aware and self-accepting
- Sees all interactions as relevant to the group process
- Maintains confidentiality
- Checks in with the group regularly
- Understands how to share without dominating group discussion

# Future directions

We will be offering more training for parent group leaders and managers of programs that include support groups.

Type in the chat your answer: What future training topics would help you further develop your support group?

# Questions?

# Parent group resources

- *Starting, Nurturing, and Maintaining Adoptive Parent Groups: A Guide for Leaders*  
<https://www.nacac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/starting.pdf>
- *Developing a Parent-to-Parent Support Network*  
<https://www.nacac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/parent-2-parent-network.pdf>
- *Taking a Break: Creating Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Respite Care in Your Community*  
[http://adoptuskids.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/taking-a-break-respite-guide.pdf](http://adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/taking-a-break-respite-guide.pdf)

# Kinship group resources

## Brookdale Foundation

- Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP)  
<http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/RAPP/rapp.html>
- Relatives as Parents Program guidebook  
[http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/RAPP/07-080\\_n4a\\_Brookdale\\_final.pdf](http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/RAPP/07-080_n4a_Brookdale_final.pdf)



# AdoptUSKids resources

AdoptUSKids “supporting families” web page  
<https://www.adoptuskids.org/for-professionals/publications/supporting-families>

- Publications
- Tip sheets
- Recorded webinars, including *Engaging Parents and Caregivers in Support Groups (October 2018)*

# Contact information

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# AdoptUSKids

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