

# Preparing and Supporting Parent Group Leaders

Using the AdoptUSKids Parent Group Leadership Curriculum

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October 27, 2021

**Kim Stevens**

AdoptUSKids Family Support Team

# Before we begin



This webinar will be recorded and shared with you.



Submit your questions via Q & A.



Please complete our survey! You will receive it via email after the webinar.

# Our mission



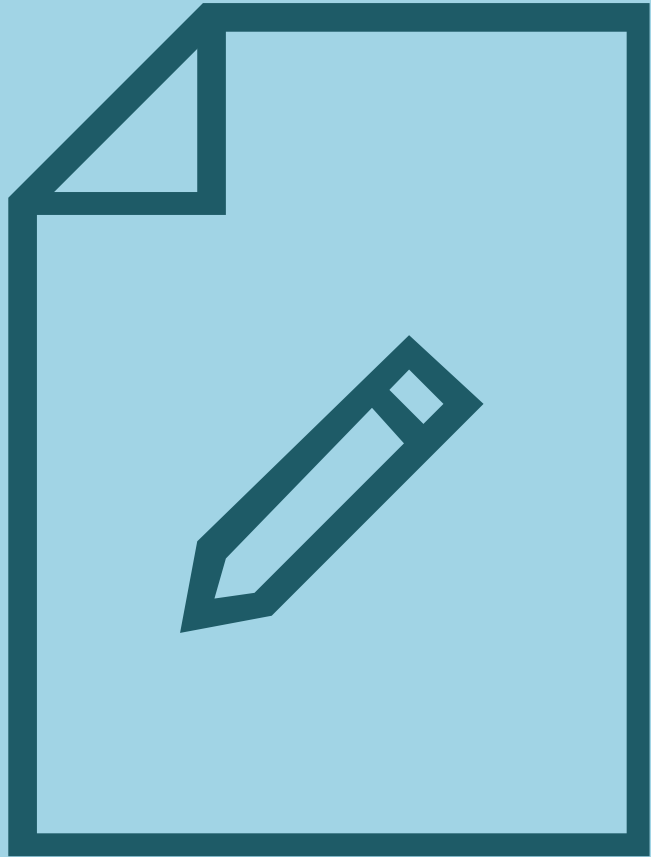
Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system



Assist US states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop and support foster and adoptive families

# Goals for this webinar

- ① Share the core components of the parent group leadership curriculum.
- ② Showcase sample activities from the curriculum.
- ③ Offer implementation suggestions and discuss how AdoptUSKids can support you.
- ④ Answer your questions about preparing and support parent group leaders.



**Poll: Who's in the room?**

# The value of peer-led support groups

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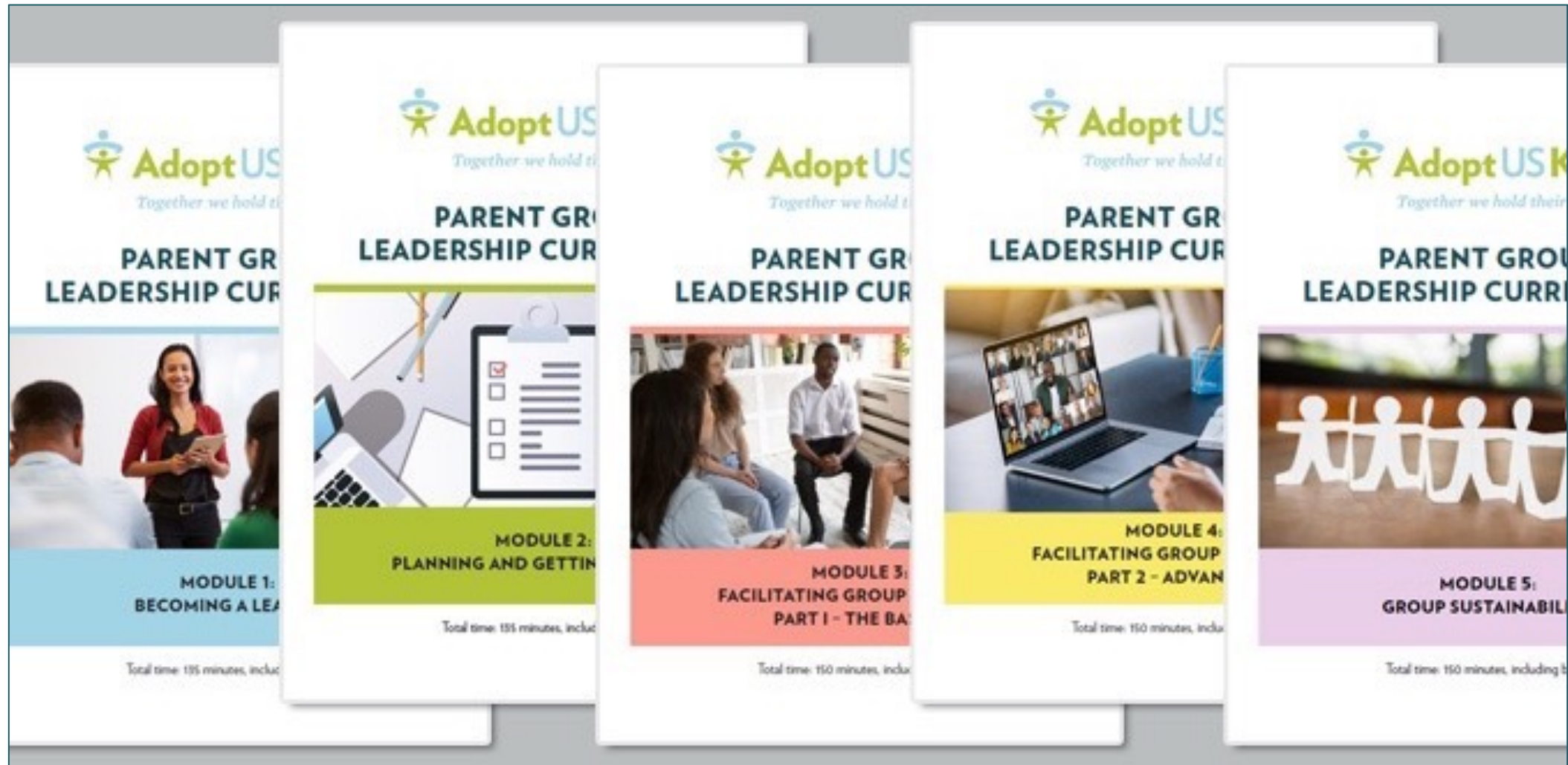


**Support groups are most effective when group facilitators are well-trained and supported by agency leaders.**

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# Curriculum overview





# Curriculum overview

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- Five modules
- 12 hours of training
- Scripted instruction
- Slide decks
- Handouts, activities, and tools
- Links to other helpful resources



# Module 1

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Becoming a leader

# Practicing an interactive exercise

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Leadership styles

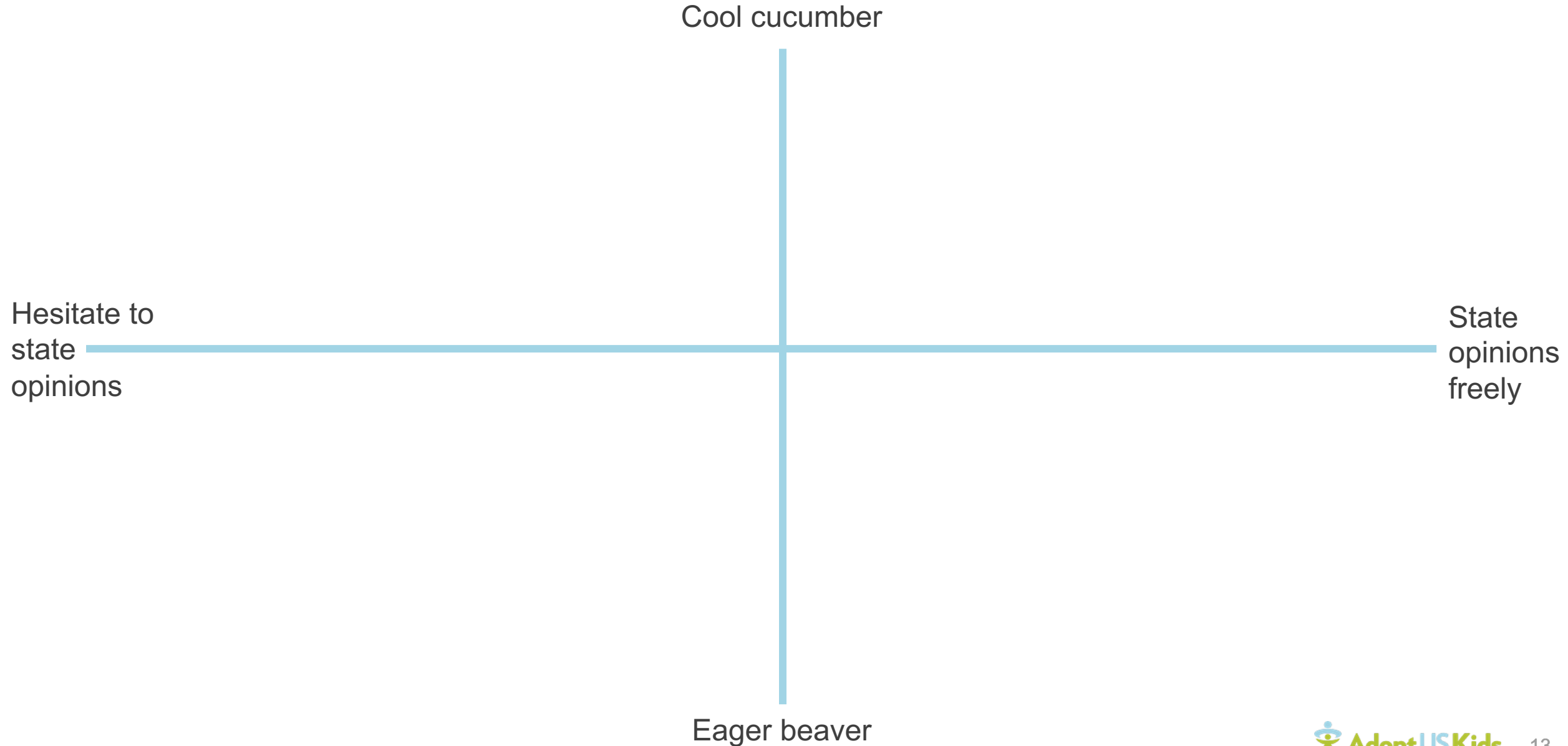


# Understanding your leadership style

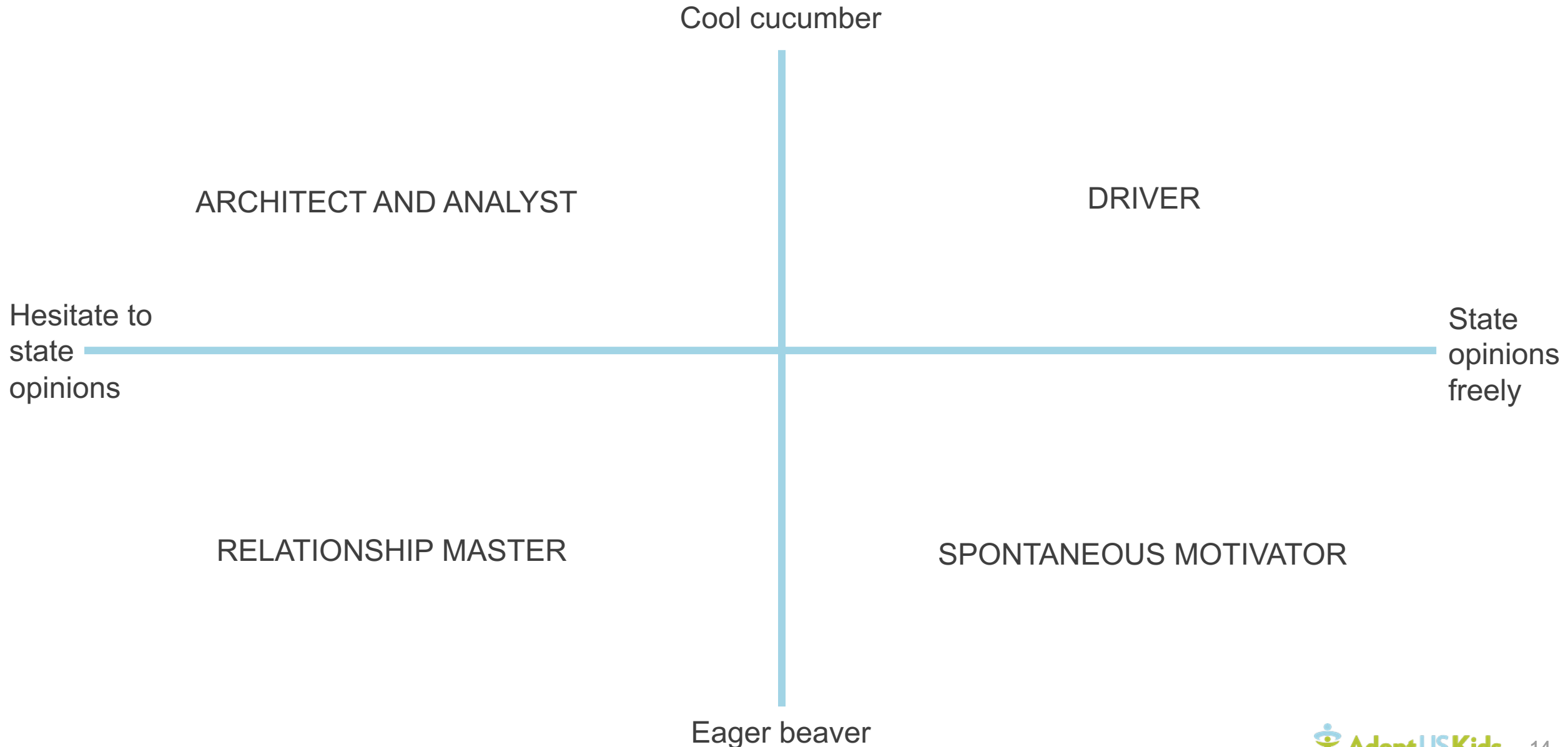
Hesitate to  
state  
opinions

State  
opinions  
freely

# Understanding your leadership style



# Understanding your leadership style





# Understanding the quadrants

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## Architects and Analysts

- Meaning and concepts
- Information and opinion seeker
- Deliberate, sometimes slow to decide



## Drivers

- Action and direction
- Information and opinion giver
- Watch for “over-leading”



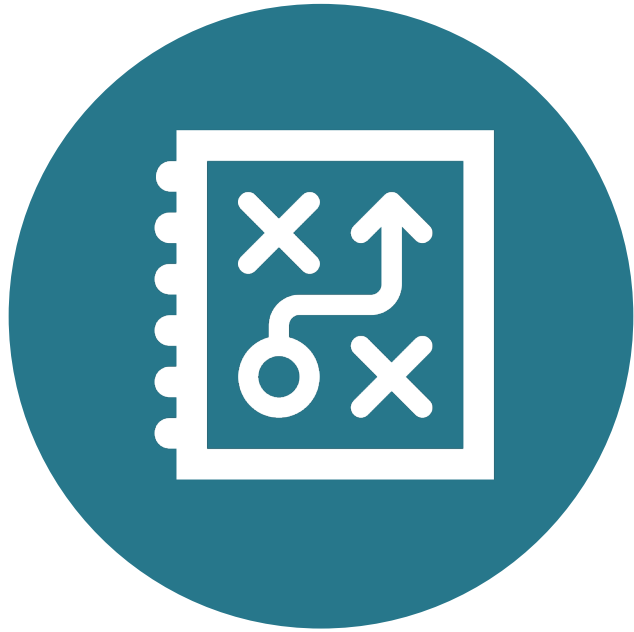
## Relationship Masters

- Caring
- Build and sustain community
- Relationships can trump movement



## Spontaneous Motivators

- Emotional stimulation
- Sense of mission, passion
- Objectivity can be impacted



## Module 2

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Planning and getting started

# Planning tools



## MODULE 2 – HANDOUT 2

### Parent Survey Sample

- Would you like to participate in an adoptive, foster, or kinship parent group?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Maybe. Please keep me informed of your group's activities.  
If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_
- If you would like to attend parent group meetings, but can't right now, please explain why. \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you a(n) (please mark all that apply):  
☐ Adoptive parent  
☐ Foster parent  
☐ Guardianship parent  
☐ Kinship caregiver  
☐ Prospective foster or adoptive parent  
Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- If applicable, how long have you been an adoptive, foster, guardianship, or kinship parent? \_\_\_\_\_
- Mark all that describe your family:  
☐ Single parent  
☐ Includes birth children as well as children through adoptive, foster care, kinship care  
☐ Multiracial/multicultural family  
☐ LGBTQ+ parent(s)  
☐ LGBTQ+ child(ren)
- How many children are you caring for who are:  
\_\_\_\_ Adopted  
\_\_\_\_ In foster care  
\_\_\_\_ In informal kinship placements or guardianships  
\_\_\_\_ Your or your partner's biological children

Module 2: Planning and Getting Started



## MODULE 2 – HANDOUT 3

### Action Planning

It is essential that new leaders have a SMART plan in order to successfully launch their group and start with an eye toward sustainability. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely.

As you break your goal down into objectives, aim to make each of them SMART. Then identify strategies that you think will help you achieve your objective. Here are some sample objectives and questions to help you choose successful strategies.

Tips for success:

- Don't take on too much at once. Focus on two or three objectives, and as you achieve them, move on to others.
- If over time you're not achieving an objective, rework it. Was it overly ambitious? Not specific enough? Are the strategies not a good fit for the objective? Do you need more partners before that objective can be achieved?

**Objective: Engage five new potential members by May 1.**

Strategy	Who is responsible	Due date	Resources required
Sample: Post about group formation and upcoming meeting in the Adoptive Families of the Triangle Facebook group.			

Module 2: Planning and Getting Started | 22



## Module 3

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Facilitating group meetings: Part 1  
The basics

## Parent Bingo

In this icebreaker activity, give parents and caregivers time to talk with each other. As participants learn more about others in the room, they write the names of the people who fit the descriptions in each box. After the activity, ask for volunteers to talk about what they learned about each other.

Adopted through foster care	Has an open adoption	Has a foster or guardianship parent	Has child or children of a different race than yourself	Has three or more children in their home right now
Is a single parent	Has a child with a developmental disability	Has successfully advocated for their child at an IEP or 504 meeting	Has had a child in out-of-home placement	Is able to find humor in even the most challenging times
Has lived experience as an adopted person or foster care alum	Practices yoga regularly	<b>FREE SPACE</b>	Adopted internationally	Has birth and adopted children
Knows what ACEs stands for	Has a child who is medically fragile	Is good at self-care	Has a child with a brain injury	Has a unique parenting strategy to share with everyone
Adopted a sibling group	Adopted an infant	Grew up with adopted, foster, or kinship siblings	Works in child welfare in some capacity (other than parent role)	Is caring for grandchildren or other relatives

# Facilitation tools

## Icebreakers such as Parent Bingo



## Module 4

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### Facilitating group meetings: Part 2 Advanced



# Navigating difficult personalities and situations

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# Support group demonstration

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## Type in chat:

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- What challenges did you notice?
- What facilitation skills did Mercedes use?
- What other approaches could she have taken?

# Support group demonstration

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- What challenges did you notice?
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## Module 5

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Group sustainability

# Self-Care Activities for Your Group

Everyone can benefit from incorporating more self-care strategies into your group meetings. Here are some activities to consider including in your group to promote self-care and prevent secondary traumatic harm.

## On-the-spot ideas

Activities that you can use on the spot if group members are experiencing symptoms of vicarious trauma:

- Breathing exercises, such as blowing bubbles
- Move—stand and stretch, take a quick walk around the room, practice a chair-yoga exercise
- Use humor to defuse—tell a joke or find something comical in the room
- Practice a quick mindfulness exercise, such as popping a chocolate or mint into your mouth and closing your eyes while you spend 30 seconds tuning out everything else
- Color, doodle, or draw
- Pause and play a short piece of calming music
- Do a three-minute writing exercise—invite everyone to stop talking and spend a few minutes writing about how they are feeling at the moment

Come up with your own quick fixes to use in times of stress:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Ongoing exercises

Activities that can be built into the group's regular schedule and structure:

- Gratitude moment—everyone names a few things they are thankful for today
- “I see you” moment—participants pair up and spend one minute sharing strengths, positive attributes, or other appreciations about one another
- “Gift exchange”—everyone names one gift, talent, or strength they bring to the group
- LOL moment—everyone goes around the room and shares the funniest thing they did, saw, or experienced this week or month
- Success stories—everyone shares one success they experienced in the past week or month
- Looking forward—everyone names one thing they are looking forward to between this meeting and the next

Come up with your own self-care routines to build into support group meetings:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Tools to improve sustainability

## Self-care activities

# Implementing this curriculum

AdoptUSKids can help you!

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- Use experienced trainers
- Prepare ahead of time
- Consider who your group leaders are
- Don't do more than two modules in one sitting
- Modify for virtual learning





## Type in “Questions”

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What questions do you have about using the curriculum?

What questions do you have about supporting parent group leaders generally?



# Contact information

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Britt Cloudsdale

AdoptUSKids Family Support Program Manager

(651) 644-3036, ext. 116

[brittcloudsdale@nacac.org](mailto:brittcloudsdale@nacac.org)



# Find the curriculum here!

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AdoptUSKids Parent Group Leadership Curriculum

<https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/curriculum-to-help-child-welfare-agencies-build-better-support-groups/>



# Sample resources for group leaders

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## Discussion guides

- [\*Understanding Childhood Grief and Loss\*](#)
- [\*Understanding Parental Grief and Loss\*](#)
- [\*Lying, Confabulation, and Distorted Thinking\*](#)

## Tip sheets and articles

- [\*Tending to Group Dynamics\*](#)
- [\*Three Approaches to Strategies Communication in Support Groups\*](#)



# Sample resources for group leaders

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## Recorded webinars

- [\*Facilitating Virtual Support Groups\*](#)
- [\*Helping Parents Embrace Trauma-Responsive Parenting Strategies\*](#)

Find all the AdoptUSKids resources for parent group leaders at <https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/category/support-families/parent-groups/>



# AdoptUSKids

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