

## Ep. 5 How to Ensure Long Term Success Frequently Asked Questions

**We work in a very remote area and don't have many social workers -- we don't have enough staff to visit the families regularly. What should we do?**

That is challenging, but unfortunately not that uncommon, especially in remote and rural areas. Learn from other organizations who have faced the same challenges, and look at the community you are serving with an innovative eye.

- Reach out to local government officials and ask for their thoughts or support
- Connect with NGOs working in the community to see if they have team members who can help.
- Tap into respected community members. Research has shown that trained paraprofessionals can serve a vital support role.
- Look to neighbors and extended family members who can check in with the family and provide updates

With some ingenuity and effective training, you will be on your way to building a social service workforce to successfully meet the needs of the community.

**What are some simple self-care techniques that I can teach the family?**

Keep in mind that self-care is a necessity for parents/caregivers, and they need to prioritize practicing self-care daily. Remind them that taking care of their spiritual, physical, psychological, and social needs will help them feel their best so they can be the best parent they can be.

Help the parent/caregiver identify what activities help them feel their best. Self-care is individual -- self-care for one person will mean something completely different for someone else. One person may need more alone time, for example, while another may nurture him/herself by spending more time with friends.

Offer the following tips:

- Every morning spend one minute in bed deciding what you are going to do for yourself that day. Start small – promise yourself just a few minutes a day. You'll soon see the rewards (for yourself, and your family).
- Sneak in self-care where you can. If you don't have huge chunks of time, you can still fit in little moments of relaxation. Even if you take just five minutes to close your eyes and take deep breaths, it can help your stress level. Focusing on your breath forces your mind and body to let go of the pressure you are feeling.
- Meditation has a great impact on stress, and even a quick, 5 minute one will help you feel rejuvenated.
- Spend time in nature - research has shown that it has a very calming effect
- Listen to soothing music. You don't necessarily need to set aside a special time to listen - turn it on while doing your chores or other activities.
- Remember that self care includes good nutrition, exercise, and healthy sleep habits.

## Sometimes family situations are very complex -- how do I prioritize and locate the multiple support services needed by the family?

Circumstances surrounding some families can be quite complex and can seem overwhelming at times. First, prioritize the family's needs based upon safety. The Home Thrive Scale™ will guide you to assess Red Flag items that need to be addressed immediately such as abuse, lack of access to education, and risk of child marriage.

Once safety has been assured, focus on gaps that have the greatest impact on the family. Build upon the family's strengths and resources to address these needs. For example, if the family has close ties to extended family, be sure to solicit their input and support. If family members have strong coping skills, help them to seek out ways to find resolution to their concerns. The family is often the best source of knowledge regarding what would be most helpful and how they could locate that support.

Be sure to look to the community for sources of support. Neighbors and community members, government agencies, and NGOs are excellent resources, and often they can direct you to appropriate resources if they cannot provide the service themselves.

## What should we do if the child returns back to the CCIs?

Understanding the reasons for the family breakdown is critical. Gather input from the child, family members, and others connected to the family including extended family, neighbors, community leaders just as you did during initial assessment of the child and family. You are seeking understanding, not finger pointing or judgement.

Recognize that the child and family members had hopes for a positive outcome, and are likely experiencing a mixed bag of emotions. Give them time and space to express their feelings and offer their point of view.

Reflect on the entire case management process from assessment to transition to identify gaps that may have led to the separation, determine if reintegration is still possible, and look for ways to address needs at this time. It may be helpful to seek guidance from the district authorities as well, and legally you will need to inform the CWC if a child returns to the CCI.

While the end goal is transitioning the child from institutional care to family, reintegration should not be forced before the child and family are ready.