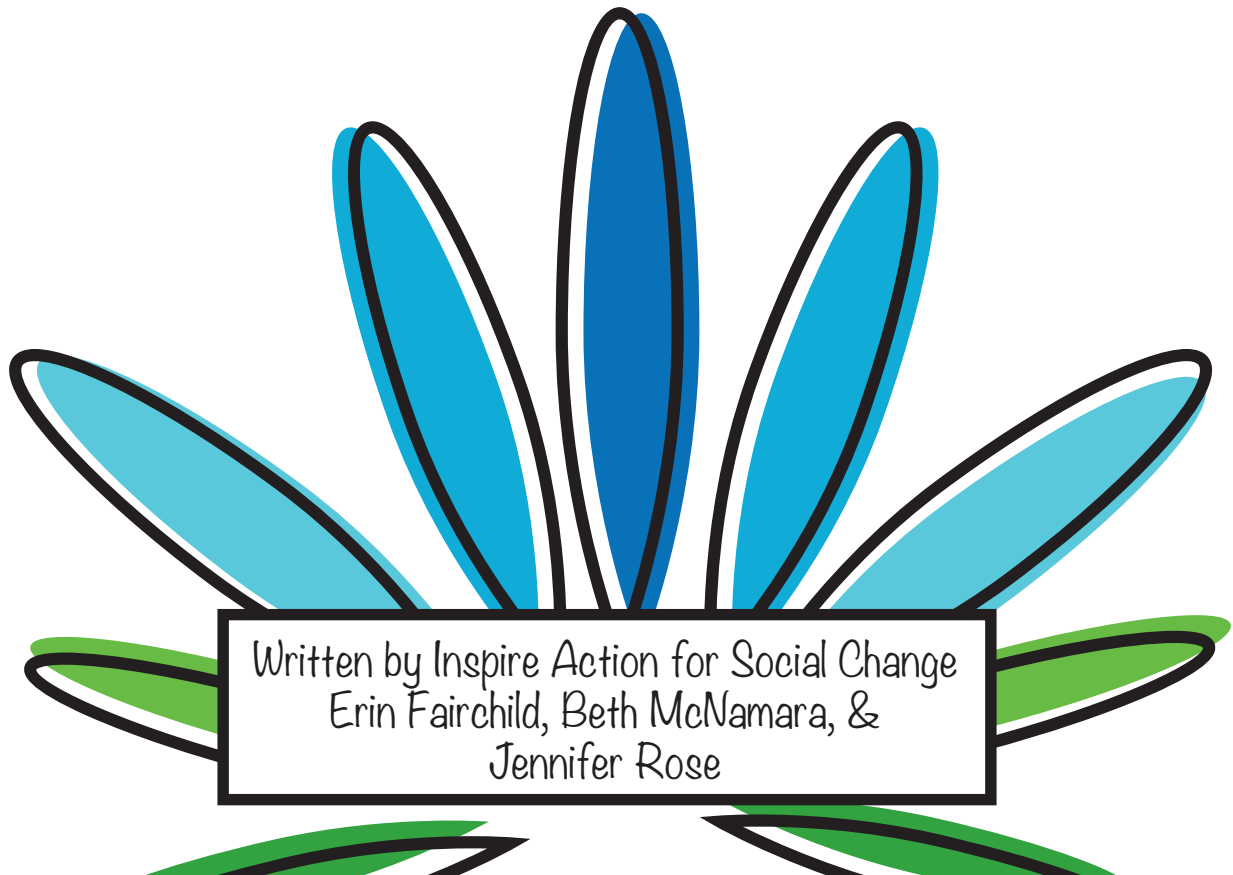




**BUILDING AN ENHANCED MODEL OF  
SUPERVISED VISITATION:**

**IMMERSION EXTENSION TRAINING PACKAGE**

# Facilitator Guide



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## **Dear Director, Supervisor, or Staff Meeting Facilitator:**

Welcome to your Building an Enhanced Model of Supervised Visitation: Immersion Extension Training Package!

These materials were designed to foster ongoing learning, self-reflection, and growth for programs that have already completed the two in-person supervised visitation immersion training events - Supervised Visitation Immersion Training and Working with Infants, Children, and Youth in Supervised Visitation Immersion Training - conducted by Inspire Action for Social Change in partnership with the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. We have created a full training packet of everything you need to lead your colleagues in discussions and learning exercises to supplement and enhance learning from each Immersion training and beyond.

At Inspire Action for Social Change, we are committed to lifelong learning, particularly when it comes to supporting families impacted by trauma and abuse. The field of violence prevention and intervention is ever-evolving and requires practitioners to stay educated and well-informed. We know that learning and improving practice is not limited to single events and training, but it is the most dynamic and effective when it is continuous and occurs in relationships with our peers. The contents of this Extension Package are designed for this type of ongoing, multifaceted learning. As your knowledge grows, we want to make sure your practice, policies, and procedures can adapt and blossom as well.

It is without question that the work of providing supervised visitation services is hard, requires a steady head and heart, and has the ability to create meaningful and lasting change for individuals and families.

Inspire Action for Social Change's ["Change is Possible: An Enhanced Model of Supervised Visitation for Families Impacted by Domestic Violence"](#) was created to offer a roadmap for visitation providers working with families who have experienced domestic violence. The aim of the

enhanced model is to foster a sense of safety, honesty, trust, and well-being by creating an environment that increases the adult victim and child's sense of safety and allows for reparative experiences and opportunities in a warm, caring, and humanistic environment. We encourage you to download this publication from our website <http://www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org/resources> if you want to explore this model in more depth.

### **Instructions for Use:**

We have designed this Immersion Extension Package so that it can be used as staff enrichment training during your existing staff meetings, individually with staff members during one-on-one supervision meetings, or for longer staff training or retreat functions. The Extension Package includes training modules with separate segments within each module. The modules are designed to build from each other; however, to address the unique or immediate needs of your team each module and each segment within each module can be completed as stand-alone training or out of order as you see fit. We have made a note when a segment may require you to reference a previous module.

### **For Use in Staff Meetings:**

You will see that each segment offers a facilitator guide with discussion points, small and large group activities, guided individual self-reflection work, materials needed for each segment, supporting resources, supporting videos and supplemental worksheets for each participant. You can use the training segments exactly as they are presented. We also encourage you to be creative and use them in a manner that suits your team best. We have provided you with the approximate time to complete each segment to support your planning and time management during the training, but please feel free to decide how much time to devote to discussions and learning activities based on your team's individual needs and interests. We envision centers integrating activities from the Immersion Extension Package into staff meetings, for about 30-60 minutes regularly or setting aside multiple longer training sessions. This practice fosters a culture of ongoing learning with a commitment to change and adaptation. It

also provides some breathing room from what can often feel like crisis-driven daily operations, which is common for agencies that serve people impacted by trauma. By committing to set aside time for group learning and self-reflection, you are investing in the growth and sustainability of your center and your team.

Depending on how much time you devote to Immersion Extension Package discussions in each staff meeting, there is enough content to spread out over a long period of time. Do not feel pressured to rush the materials; rather, focus on quality learning and relationship building - we encourage you to go slow and allow for a process of growth and team building.

Some of the training segments include training video links, in addition to using the links as they appear in this guide you can access all training videos using the “Info @InspireAction” YouTube channel with this link: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). Once you click on this link please select “PLAYLIST” from the menu bar and then click on “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. You can then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose the video you need for the corresponding segment.

### **For Use in Individual Supervision:**

Another way to use the Extension Package is as a guide for individual supervision content. Many of the activities involve paired or small group discussions. If you would like to use any of those prompts or activities in individual supervision sessions, we recommend you engage in the content with staff and ask them to think about required components as “homework” in between supervision sessions.

You can lead these discussions with individual staff and can choose segments based on the needs and learning goals of each person on your team. The self-reflection prompts can also be assigned for individual reflection, and we encourage you to create a workplace culture where the staff has time for self-reflection. Self-reflection work should be an ongoing practice and will enhance service provision, productivity, and reduce the

impact of vicarious trauma. We would encourage you to also utilize the [“Self-Reflection Journal for Supervised Visitation Staff”](#) to further support staff in a dedicated practice on ongoing exploration and growth. More information about the Journal can be found on our website <http://www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org/> if you want more details about this publication. When you hire new staff, you can also get them started with Immersion Extension Package activities, discussion, and self-reflection activities - but keep in mind the content works best as a supplement to the in-person Immersion training events - so new staff may find completing some of the training modules difficult.

We hope the Immersion Extension Package is a useful tool for your center, leading to growth, connectedness and enhanced practice. Thank you for doing the work you do for children and families!

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## **Introduction**

### **Enhancing Supervised Visitation Through On-going Learning from the Field, Systems Change, and Practice Change**

As promising practices, new research findings, and dispatches from the field develop, we want to support supervised visitation centers to develop alongside these advances. This Immersion Extension Training Package to support building an enhanced model of supervised visitation offers many ways to plan reflection and learning time into your existing staff convenings. Inspire Action is committed to helping you to adapt as the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention expands to become more effective and inclusive of the diverse experiences of adult and child survivors.

Recent research supported by Blue Shield of California Foundation<sup>1</sup> indicates that there is a need to re-evaluate the “punitive paradigm” that has largely been implemented in most dominant culture, system-based responses to domestic violence. The study indicates that it is vitally important to hold people who use violence accountable, but focusing primarily on punitive approaches may actually do more harm than good for some victims. For women of color, in particular, this research demonstrates that criminal justice responses to domestic violence had a negative impact on survivors over time. This highlights that what may work for one community may not work for another. Additional findings from this study indicate that there are several key promising approaches to creating change and advancing methods for ending domestic violence: 1) focus on “two-generation” interventions that serve both the parents and the children; 2) re-evaluate punitive approaches and systems as a response to domestic violence and 3) view prevention through an equity lens. Supervised visitation programs can intentionally align with each of these promising practices, and the Enhanced Model can support your efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Blue Shield of California Foundation, “Breaking the Cycle: A life Course Framework for Preventing Domestic Violence” (2019).

## **“Two-generation” interventions that serve both the parents and the children**

Supervised visitation centers are in a unique position compared to many others working in the field of domestic violence. Where many programs work either with the survivor parent OR the parent who used violence or the children, supervised visitation works with everyone in the family.

Supervised visitation providers have the ability to connect with the parent who uses violence about their hopes around their parenting, the relationship they want with their children, and the person they want their child to become as an adult. These are all crucial connection points for creating compassionate accountability for people who use violence while creating tangible pathways for healing and change. The fact that supervised visitation providers also work with the children and survivor parents means that you can integrate real-time considerations for safety and empowerment. Batterer’s Intervention programs, for example, may not have this continuous thread to weave in to supportive and survivor-centered accountability.

## **Re-evaluate punitive methods**

By moving from seeing supervised visitation as an "agent of social control to an agent of social healing," your center can hold space for transformative healing and change. You will see that the Enhanced Model supports your center to be transparent about why the center exists, the role of the center, and why participant guidelines support healing directly. Punitive measures are to be avoided, and individualized approaches should be put in place to be directly connected to each person’s unique needs, thereby supporting safety and creating the possibility for change and healing.

## **View prevention through an equity lens**

Oppression and marginalization can impact people deeply; our approaches must allow people to show up with their full humanity - we must make every effort to reduce oppression and marginalization within our services.

Successful interventions for heterosexual people often vary significantly from LGBTQ people; likewise, approaches that work for white families may

not work for families of color, etc. The Enhanced Model emphasizes the importance of self-reflection particularly related to privilege and oppression for both individuals and organizations. This can prevent us from developing practices and policies rooted only in dominant culture world views, and instead encourages us to develop practices and policies that are responsive to the lived experiences of the extremely diverse families supported by supervised visitation.

Other crucial elements of Inspire Action's Enhanced Model are connection, cohesion, and community among staff working in supervised visitation centers. By building trust and sharing in advanced learning, teams will be more equipped to challenge the narrow cultural norms that often permeate social services and our values related to domestic violence perpetration and victimization - to see each person as a complex human being, deserving of relevant interventions. The Enhanced Model will support your team in building a stronger foundation from which to do this complex work.

An enhanced supervised visitation model is a strengths-based, optimistic approach centered on the belief that change and healing are possible, and people can bring about the change they wish to see. The starting point of such change are the strengths, resilience, and capacities of the person seeking change.

The aim of an enhanced model of supervised visitation fosters a sense of safety, honesty, trust, and well-being by creating an environment that increases the adult victim and children's sense of safety, and allows for reparative experiences and opportunities in a warm, caring, and humanistic environment. An enhanced supervised visitation model provides an opportunity for people who use violence to cause no further harm to their partner and children, create a healthy, safe and caring relationship with their children, and potentially change their behavior. A key component to the implementation of an enhanced model of supervised visitation is centering each survivor's self-determination and safety. While it is understood that each parent and child will have unique needs, ensuring

that no further harm comes to adult and child victims has to be paramount to any enhanced practice.<sup>2</sup>

Strategies that support an enhanced model of supervised visitation and can reduce further harm to adult and child survivors are as follows:

- ❖ Prioritize building trust with survivors. Adults and children need to know they can talk to providers about ongoing risk and harm that may be occurring.
- ❖ Create regular and ongoing opportunities for checking-in and building relationships with survivors.
- ❖ Ensure every aspect of the supervised visitation program is grounded in equity and racial justice.
- ❖ Create policies and practices that are grounded in a deep and complex understanding of domestic violence and battering.
- ❖ Hold regular staff meetings and supervision sessions with all staff.
- ❖ Facilitate and provide the time and resources necessary for staff to engage in self-reflection work to support the well-being and care of staff.

The Guiding Principles for Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women<sup>3</sup> were developed as a guidepost for the development and administration of supervised visitation programs that provide services to adult victims of domestic violence and their children. The Guiding Principles are as follows:

- Equal regard for the safety of children and adult victims
- Valuing multiculturalism and diversity
- Incorporating an understanding of domestic violence

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<sup>2</sup> McNamara, B. and Rose, J. (2017). *Change is Possible: An Enhanced Model of Supervised Visitation for Families Impacted by Domestic Violence*. Inspire Action for Social Change.

<sup>3</sup> The Guiding Principles were developed by a national steering committee for the Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, 2007.

- Respectful and fair interaction
- Community collaboration
- Advocacy for children and adult victims

Building an Enhanced Model of Supervised Visitation: Immersion Extension Training Package incorporates and fully supports the Guiding Principles for Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (Guiding Principles). Each module was developed to enhance our shared understanding of the Guiding Principles in action, as outlined below.

**Module 1: “Self-Reflection of Identity and Bias,”** provides you and your staff multiple opportunities to unpack how our identities, and where we experience both privilege and oppression, can shape how we work with families, as well as how we structure our policies and practices. The overarching goal of this module is to create a practice for deepening self-analysis, as well as organizational analysis, around creating environments that are welcoming, inclusive, and equitable. This module directly supports the Guiding Principles. Specifically, the principles of: “Valuing Multiculturalism and Diversity” and “Respectful and Fair Interaction.” To be respectful and fair in our interactions with diverse, multicultural families, our services and organizational cultures must commit to continuous learning and evaluation with equity and inclusion at the center.

**Module 2: “Healing Centered Engagement in Supervised Visitation Services”** focuses on creating trauma-informed environments that allow space for every person in a family to heal and recover. Healing centered environments support the Guiding Principles of “Incorporating an Understanding of Domestic Violence” into center services. Building our capacity to understand, support, and hold the needs of survivors at the forefront of our work requires our organizations first to build resilience and support the well-being of the staff. The well-being of the families we serve directly links to the well-being of our organizations and the staff.

**Module 3: “Enhancing Staff Teams”** works to support the development of

strong and diverse staff teams that build an organization's capacity to be informed and responsive to the individuals and the community it serves. This module works to support each of the Guiding Principles as foundational groundwork for visitation programs providing services to adult victims of domestic violence and their children. The stronger our teams are, the stronger our service provision is.

**Module 4: “The Practice of Meaningful Engagement: Checking-in & Connecting with Families in Supervised Visitation Programs”** is an essential practice for visitation programs. The practice of checking in with every person in a family works to: establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue; learn about changing conditions and circumstances; facilitate an understanding of ongoing and changing safety needs for survivors and their children; build meaningful relationships with parents and children; increase our understanding of the unique needs of families; support our ability to conduct meaningful visitation safety planning and account for ever-changing risk; allow us to learn about other needed services and offer meaningful referrals; and support our ability to connect to strong advocacy support. Conducting check-ins in supervised visitation is a foundational practice that works to support each of the Guiding Principles, and serves to establish a promising practice in the provision of safe visitation and exchange services and in the overall community response to children and adult victims of domestic violence.

To learn more about the standards of practice established by Guiding Principles for Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange use this link: <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ovw/legacy/2008/08/06/guiding-principles032608.pdf>

# Module 1: Self-Reflection of Identity & Bias

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*A note about this module: Because talking about identity, bias, privilege, oppression, and power can be challenging for people (for many reasons), we have structured the segments in module 1 to rely heavily on self-reflection writing exercises. Staff who experience or have experienced oppression may not feel safe or comfortable having these conversations as a group. You can make these segments more interactive for the whole group if you are comfortable facilitating and if staff are ready, by adding small or large group discussions after the self-reflection writing, but you don't have to. These segments are also shorter, as they can be taxing for some people. Emphasizing self-care and wellness can help staff think about their needs. The check-in and check-out questions are meant to offer some lightness and connection.*

*Additional Resources for this module (there are many - this is only a sampling):*

["So You Want to Talk About Race" book by Ijeoma Oluo](#)

["Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person" article by Gina Crosley-Corcoran](#)

["White Fragility" book by Robin Diangelo](#)

[Take the Implicit Bias Assessment from Harvard](#)  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

*\*If all staff have access to a computer, you can encourage them to take this test during your time together\**

## Module 1, Segment 1: Introduction to Identity & Bias



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*As the staff engages with the workbook content in this module, conversations may come up. We recommend being prepared for facilitating these discussions, which are often not easy but can lead to true growth.*

*Prepare this video: **Power, Privilege, and Oppression***

***Racial Microaggressions video**\* (6 minutes, 35 seconds).*

*\*Creative Commons Attribution license (reuse allowed).*

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From the “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.

*Tips for facilitating discussion around biases, identity, power, privilege, and oppression:*

***Impact matters more than intent.** Often people suggest a ground rule for these conversations that we “assume good intent” of each other. This is an understandable outcome to hope for, but it does not leave much space for the person who may be hurt or offended by our words, and they may not feel allowed to express how it impacts them. When that happens, the person who said the unintentionally hurtful comment does not get to learn about their bias, and the person who was harmed stays silent about the harm, which can be very stressful over time. We can also damage the quality of our relationships. One way of looking at it is: if I accidentally hit your car with mine, causing damage, the impact is undeniable. I did not intend to damage your car, but I did, and the impact is real. In this case, I can apologize and let you know it was an accident. But I also must take responsibility for what I did (even though I didn’t mean to), and provide you my contact and insurance information. If your car is not drivable, I*



could also help make sure you get where you need to go. Simply saying “that’s not what I meant” is not enough in any situation where we have caused harm. We must behave in a way that remediates the harm.

**People who hold privilege often don’t know what they don’t know.**

Dictionary.com defines privilege as: “the principle or condition of enjoying special rights or immunities.” Privilege is unearned and usually granted to groups of people based on identities. White privilege, for example, includes both obvious and less obvious advantages that white people may not recognize they have. For example, white people are less likely to get stopped by the police and less likely to be followed while shopping. White people are more likely to see their experiences reflected in all forms of media. For example, when white people buy “flesh colored band-aids,” they can expect that band-aid will resemble their skin tone (from <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf> ). It’s common for people who hold privilege not to know they hold privilege, and to therefore not recognize the flip side of the coin - systematic discrimination. For example, Black and Latinx people often describe being stopped by the police for merely being in neighborhoods where they aren’t “expected.” They may be pulled over, or neighborhood residents suspiciously ask them questions such as “Where are you going?” or “Do you live here?” or “Who are you here to see,” as if they don’t have the right to be in any neighborhood they please. If you have white privilege, you are much less likely to have this type of experience and may be unaware that it happens. If you are never questioned whether or not you “belong” in certain neighborhoods, and if you aren’t friends with people who have been, it’s easy to just not know that this is happening for groups of people around you.

**Most of us experience both privilege and oppression in different areas of our lives.** Someone can have white privilege and at the same time experience oppression based on their socioeconomic status, their gender, their ability, their sexual orientation, etc. So, white people may experience hardship, but it’s not because of skin color. The hardship is

*real, and at the same time, it's not the result of systemic racism. Additionally, a person of color can have privileges in several areas of their life, and will still experience racism. Some people experience oppression across multiple identities they hold, and some people are privileged in most aspects of their lives. Where we hold privilege, we may also have blindspots - e.g., we don't know what we don't know. To be effective and trusted in our roles at the center, we want to learn about what we don't know.*

***If you don't experience a type of marginalization that someone else does, a good place to start is listening.*** *Because the privileges we hold may make it challenging to see experiences of oppression and marginalization, a critical aspect of learning is listening to understand rather than listening to defend. Many people feel defensive when their areas of privilege are pointed out. That defensiveness can get in the way of truly hearing and understanding the oppression and harm that others are experiencing. It's important to note when we feel defensive; we should give ourselves enough grace to sit with that discomfort (without acting from it) so that we can hear the other person's experience. To be of service to the families we work with, it's critical that we don't feel entitled to debate someone about their humanity or their lived experience.*



### **Supporting Materials**

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Equipment to view and listen to the online video link



## Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Below is the type of introduction you can provide for this segment. It's important to normalize for the staff that the uncomfortable feeling associated with unpacking our biases and learning about privilege is okay and to be expected. Of course, you can use your own words and supplement with additional information. "Everyone holds bias and judgment, even if we don't want to. We can all do the uncomfortable work of challenging ourselves to get underneath our biases so that we can have open and authentic interactions with people who are different from us. Otherwise, we run the risk of causing harm to those we may have biases and misconceptions about, even if this wasn't our intention. And when it comes to working with families at our center, whether we intend to or not, our biases and assumptions about people can lead us to unproductive and even harmful interactions. Making room for these conversations can feel uncomfortable, AND the most crucial learning usually happens when we are uncomfortable. Sitting with the discomfort, rather than acting from it, is a key to challenging our biases. The questions in the workbook were designed to help us work through our assumptions and worldviews, to help us understand our own identities as we try to understand others."
2. (10 minutes) Check-in: Share an identity of yours that you think people notice or know about you first (examples: skin color, gender expression, ability, sexual orientation, religion, etc.).
3. (7 minutes) Watch the video, Power, Privilege, and Oppression.
4. (10 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook page 5 to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise.
5. (10 minutes) Check-out: Share a talent or skill you have that people may not know.

## Module 1, Segment 2: Microaggressions



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*You may want to look back at the preparation notes from the previous segment (Module 1, Segment 1) if you would like more information about facilitating the conversations that may arise out of this segment.*

*Prepare this video: **Racial Microaggressions: Comments That Sting** published by *The New York Times*\**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From this “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.

*\*According to the New York Times linking guidelines and further clarification received from Alexander Smith Manager, Business Development, New York Times Licensing, formal permission is not required as long as the citing source does not download nor store the video.*

**Additional resource: The Urgency of Intersectionality**

*TedWomen2016\* by Kimberly Crenshaw:*

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From this “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.

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### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Equipment to view and listen to the online video link



### **Facilitator Guide & Talking Points**

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Share one family, religious, or cultural tradition that is important to you.
2. (4 minutes) Watch the New York Times video, *Racial Microaggressions: Comments That Sting*
3. (15 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook page 6-7 to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise.
4. (10 minutes) Check-out: What was your first concert?

## Module 1, Segment 3: My Identities



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*You may want to look back at the preparation notes from the previous segment (Module 1, Segment 1) if you would like more information about facilitating the conversations that may arise out of this segment.*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Share something good that happened last week.
2. (15 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook page 8-9 to complete the Identities Exercise.
3. (5 minutes) Check-out: What is a show, series, or movie you are currently enjoying/binging?

## Module 1, Segment 4: Privilege and Oppression in My Life



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*You may want to look back at the preparation notes from the previous segment (Module 1, Segment 1) if you would like more information about facilitating the conversations that may arise out of this segment.*



### Supporting Materials

→ Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: What is your favorite outdoor activity, and why?
2. (20 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook pages 10-11 to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise
3. (10 minutes) Check-out: Share one thing you are looking forward to this week.

## Module 1, Segment 5: Unpacking Bias



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*You may want to look back at the preparation notes from the previous segment (Module 1, Segment 1) if you would like more information about facilitating the conversations that may arise out of this segment.*



### Supporting Materials

→ Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: Share one thing that people might be surprised to know about you.
2. (20 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook pages 12-14 to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise
3. (5 minutes) Check-out: What is your favorite snack?



## Module 1, Segment 6: Bias & Other People's Parenting



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*You may want to look back at the preparation notes from the previous segment (Module 1, Segment 1) if you would like more information about facilitating the conversations that may arise out of this segment.*



### Supporting Materials

→ Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: When did you last cry over something happy?
2. (20 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook pages 15-16 to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise.
3. (10 minutes) Check-out: Why do you think it's important for us to think about the values and beliefs we hold about parenting.

## Module 1, Segment 7: Bias & Flipping Your Lid



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*You may want to look back at the preparation notes from the previous segment (Module 1, Segment 1) if you would like more information about facilitating the conversations that may arise out of this segment.*

*Note to facilitator: Hopefully, most of the staff will have been through the Inspire Action for Social Change, “Working with Infants, Children, and Youth in Supervised Visitation Immersion Training”. In this training they would have learned about the concept of “lid flipping,” which is a shorthand way of describing what happens in our brains when we have a significant stress response and our thinking brain goes offline, or “flips,” and we go into flight, fight, freeze response. Additionally, here are two resources that can support a deeper understanding of this concept: Dr. Daniel Siegel presenting the “Hand Model of the Brain” 2.5-minute video that explains the concept of lid flipping. In this video, Dr. Daniel Siegel is talking to parents, but the applications are relevant for the staff to review: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From this “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.*

*Another supporting resource is “The Whole-Brain Child Workbook Practical Exercises, Worksheets and Activities To Nurture Developing Minds” [http://www.portlandpediatric.com/console/page-images/files/building-resilience/Late%20Adolescence/Whole%20Brain%20Child%20Workbook\\_PUB083550.pdf](http://www.portlandpediatric.com/console/page-images/files/building-resilience/Late%20Adolescence/Whole%20Brain%20Child%20Workbook_PUB083550.pdf)*



### **Supporting Materials**

→ Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### **Facilitator Guide & Talking Points**

4. (5 minutes) Check-in: What is your favorite book? If you don't have a favorite book, what is your favorite newspaper, magazine, podcast, blog, etc.?
5. (10 minutes) Refer the staff to workbook page 17 to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise.
6. (10 minutes) Check-out: Share an appreciation you have for an infant, child, or youth that you worked with this week.

# Module 2: Healing Centered Engagement in Supervised Visitation Services

## Module 2, Segment 1: Supporting Ourselves to Be Resilient in the Work



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

Prepare to play this 20-minute video: **Beyond the Cliff\*** - a talk given at TEDxWashington by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From this “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.

\*TED Talks are licensed for distribution under a Creative Commons license, Attribution–Noncommercial–No Derivatives (or the CC BY – NC – ND 4.0 International) and can be shared under these conditions.

*Additional resources: Trauma Stewardship (book) and The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul (book) by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky.*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Video and audio equipment to view and listen to the online video



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: Share one example of resilience that inspires you (share this simple definition of resilience if needed: having the ability to bounce back or strive for healing after experiencing setbacks).
2. (3 minutes) Read this expanded definition of resilience from Dr. Michael Unger to the staff (it is also in their workbooks on page 19 if they would like to follow along). “In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to *navigate* their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to *negotiate* for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.”
3. (5 minutes) Ask the staff to break into pairs and discuss their reactions to this definition of resilience. Is there anything new or surprising about this definition?
4. (5 minutes) Ask the staff to complete the Self-Reflection Writing Exercise on workbook pages 19-20. (1) What does vicarious trauma, sometimes called secondary trauma, mean to you? (2) Why do we need to be proactive about paying attention to it?
5. (5 minutes) Bring the staff back together for a group discussion about their writing exercise. Talking points to supplement the discussion if needed:
  - a. Being impacted by the stress and trauma of the people who use our services can be difficult, and sometimes feel like directly experiencing trauma ourselves.
  - b. We can experience traumatic reminders or triggers while working with survivors of trauma.
  - c. People who are drawn to helping professions tend to have higher rates of childhood trauma than in other professions, so working with people experiencing trauma similar to what we experienced can be overwhelming and stressful.
  - d. We can experience vicarious trauma in our bodies, similarly to how we directly experience a traumatic event.

- e. When we are impacted by vicarious trauma, our lids can flip more quickly and easily, because we are on edge more often.
  - f. Vicarious trauma often creates feelings of physical and emotional fatigue - which is often defined as “burnout.”
  - g. We need to pay attention to it for our well-being, and also because of the quality of our work with families is enhanced when we can be professionally resilient.
6. (20 minutes) Watch the video, “Beyond the Cliff.”
  7. (10 minutes) Lead the staff in a large group discussion about their responses to the video and how it relates to their work at the center.
  8. (5 minutes) Check-out: Share two-three words that sum up how you feel about building your resilience related to this work.

## Module 2, Segment 2: Building Organizational Resilience



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*In this segment, staff will be brainstorming practices that can help build the resilience of your organization. We have provided some ideas to supplement the discussions, but encourage you to draw out the wisdom and expertise of the staff here - which will help them feel a sense of ownership and community. You will also want to be transparent about what ends up being possible and not possible. There is more guidance on this embedded in each step, but we recommend you read through all of the steps in advance of starting this segment to prepare.*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Warm-up: Ask staff to turn to page 21 of their workbooks and complete the “Self-Reflection Writing Exercise” responding to the question: Thinking back to our last session, what would being resilient, at work, look like for you?
2. (5 minutes) Ask for a volunteer to share reflections from their writing.
3. (15 minutes) Have staff break into groups of 2-3 and discuss the questions in the workbook on pages 21-23, entitled “Group Discussion Questions”. Each group should assign a notetaker and a reporter.
4. (15 minutes) Bring the group back and share with them: This is a time to brainstorm and learn from each other about how we can build resilience as an organization. All of your ideas are welcome,

though, in full transparency, we may not be able to implement all of them. Later we will talk about a process for moving viable ideas forward. Ask each group reporter to share response highlights from their discussion. Below are the questions as well as talking points if the staff need additional suggestions, but we encourage you to draw out the knowledge and ideas directly from the staff. If you decide to share some of these suggestions, you should first think about which are possible in your center.

**Question 1:** Do we need to change any policies or elements of our workplace culture to support staff well-being and increase resiliency? What ideas do you have? Here are some ideas to supplement your discussion if needed, though we recommend you try to draw out the staff ideas first:

- Being able to use sick time as mental health days.
- Breaks built into workdays?
- Celebrate birthdays or any other holidays that are important to the staff (remembering that diversity and culture are important in considering what you celebrate as a staff).
- Setting up a quiet, calm place where the staff can take breaks when needed?

**Question 2:** How does access to your cultural traditions and your community help build resiliency? What are some ways that this is currently supported in our organization? What are some additional ways we could support cultural traditions and community in our work? Here are some ideas to supplement your discussion if needed, though we recommend you try to draw out the staff's ideas first:

- Being connected to culture and community can help us feel in touch with something larger.
- People from many cultures have survived hardship, and developed a myriad of ways to thrive - being connected to that cultural resilience can help both personally and professionally.



- The staff should feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work, including aspects of culture and community.

**Question 3:** What are some ways that culture is currently supported in our organization?

**Question 4:** What are some additional ways we could support cultural traditions and community in our work?

**Question 5:** How do we celebrate success as staff? What are some ways we could strengthen this practice? When working with stressed families, it can be quite easy for trauma to be in the driver's seat. Celebrating success can shift the focus away from trauma. Here are some ideas to supplement your discussion if needed, though we recommend you try to draw out the staff ideas first:

- Every staff meeting can start with celebrating a success, for example: something that went well in a visit, milestones, accomplishments of both staff and clients, children and youth laughing and playing, etc.
- Your center can make a visual celebration board.
- The staff can engage in appreciation for each other in a variety of ways.

5. (10 minutes) Large group discussion. Share with the staff: Building our resilience as an organization is a work in progress. There are some things we can start right away, and others that will take time and planning. This work will be on-going. Some organizations have workplace wellness committees, and that could be a good fit for us (one idea). For now, we could gather in a smaller group to think through how to build a plan and next steps for promoting resilience in the culture of our organization. The smaller group would share the plan they develop with the larger group for feedback. *Ask the staff what they think of this idea of meeting in a smaller group to sketch out a plan.*

6. (3 minutes) If the staff are open to the idea of establishing a smaller group to work on next steps for building organizational resilience, ask for 3-5 volunteers, and schedule a time to meet.
7. (5 minutes) Check-out: What was your favorite subject in junior high or middle school?

## Module 2, Segment 3: Supporting Infants, Children, and Youth in their Healing Process



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*If this segment is too long, feel free to break it up over multiple meetings as needed.*

*Prepare video (5 minutes, 30 seconds): **Changing Minds: "Chad"** developed by Futures Without Violence. \**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From this “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Video and audio equipment to view and listen to the online video



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in reflection: Share one word you associate with “healing.”
2. (5 minutes) Ask for volunteers to read each point out loud from the list “Ways Infants, Children, and Youth Heal” on workbook page 24. Ask the staff to think about these points as they watch the video coming up next.
3. (6 minutes) Introduce the “Chad” video from Futures Without Violence. Let the staff know that there are parts of this video that may evoke emotion, which means that self-care is crucial. Remind them that kids like “Chad” heal and do quite well because of

supportive adults in their lives, just like them. Though no one from a supervised visitation center is identified as an adult that helped Chad, staff should think about how the video applies to their role as a visitation provider.

4. (5 minutes) After the video, allow a few minutes of quiet processing time. Once everyone has had a chance to collect their thoughts, ask the staff to break into pairs, and discuss their reactions.
5. (15 minutes) Ask the staff to individually complete the writing exercise on pages 24-27 of the workbook.
6. (10 minutes) After the writing exercise, ask the staff to come back together for a large group discussion, sharing any highlights from their writing reflection. The questions with talking points to supplement the discussion if needed are below (not every point needs to be covered; these are offered as an aid to the discussion if needed):

**Question 1:** *What can we do as a center to support infants, children, and youth in healing? What is within our scope of control, and what is not?*

- We can't control what happens at home.
- We can't control what either parent says or does, though we can clearly state our expectations and guidelines for their time in the center.
- We can't control what children say or do.
- We can do our very best to support safety for the survivor parent and the children, though we can't control it.
- We can create a center environment that is developmentally appropriate and welcoming to children and youth of all ages.
- We can model respect and care in our interactions with each other and the families who use our services.
- We can build as much routine and predictability into our processes with families as possible.

- We can use feeling word vocabulary as much as possible, which has been shown to support healing and resilience.
- We can make sure our lids are down before we help children and young people who may have their lids flipped.
- We can demonstrate unconditional positive regard for infants, children, and youth in our centers, and express an interest in their interests.
- We can offer child orientations that build trust and establish rapport.

**Question 2:** *What policies or elements of our workplace culture to support child and youth well-being, resiliency, and healing could be changed?*

- Can we include diverse messages of hope and healing in our environment via posters, books, toys, and media?
- We can recognize that our well-being makes it easier to promote the well-being of infants, children, and youth - they are connected.
- We can review our practices to make sure they are developmentally friendly and support building trust.
- We can review our child orientation practices to ensure they are child and youth-friendly.

**Question 3:** All cultures have positive traditions. These traditions can be grounding, affirming, and healing. Cultures that are not rooted in the white American experience can feel pressure to assimilate or ignore cultural traditions and environments that positively affirm their cultural identities. Supporting the positive cultural traditions of those who use our center services can be healing. It's important to note that sometimes power and control or other behaviors that cause harm can be framed by people who use violence, and even community members, as "culture." This can happen in white families, too, as white families also have cultural norms. For this reason, it's critical to remember that each family is

unique, and the survivor parent and children should be consulted about engaging in cultural practices. Some survivors experience power and control through cultural norms, so assessing what feels safe to survivors is critical. No cultural practice should cause harm.

*Q: How does access to cultural traditions and community help build resilience for children and families we serve? Q: How do we currently support this practice? Q: What are some additional ways we can incorporate this into our practice?*

- Humans are not designed to heal in isolation, which is why the community aspect of cultural traditions can be crucial in healing and recovering from trauma.
- Being in community shows children that they are not alone and that they are part of something larger - all core components of healing from trauma. Our center can be part of their community that helps children and youth feel connected.
- If children only have access to some parts of their culture in the context of a supervised visit, it becomes even more important that the family feel comfortable and welcome to engage in those practices, as long as they are safe to the survivor parent and children.

**Question 4:** *How can we support the celebrations, successes, and milestones for families? And part 2 of this question: How can we do this while also working with the survivor parent and children to make sure that what is celebrated and honored during their time at the center feels safe to them and is not an aspect of power and control?*

- Before steps are taken to celebrate a milestone or event, we can check in with the survivor parent and children about their related wishes and feelings.
- We can be aware of milestones, birthdays, and holidays that are important to the families we serve and offer words of support and affirmation.
- When a child excels at a task or activity, even if the accomplishment is persistence or attention, we can give

a clear compliment at the end of the visit, “Jayden you really focused on that puzzle with your dad!”

- In our staff family consultations, we can be sure to ask questions that encourage recognizing the positive.

**Question 5:** *Can we build more routine and ritual into the visitation processes? Why is this important? What can we do at the center to support more routine and ritual?*

- Trauma can lead to feelings of unpredictability, chaos, a loss of self-efficacy, or the ability to control one’s environment. Building routines and rituals into even the most mundane processes can build predictability and a sense of control and mastery for infants, children, and youth who may not experience routines and rituals that often.
- You can make anything into a routine or ritual:
  1. The way you greet each child arriving at your center.
  2. When and where children say good-bye to their custodial parent.
  3. The check-in process that you establish before and after each visit.
  4. How children enter the visitation room.
  5. When and where they pick out a snack or activity to take into the visitation space.
  6. How they greet their parent.
  7. How they say goodbye to their parent and how they leave the visit space.
  8. How you say goodbye at the end of each check-in (e.g., giving a high five).

7. (5 minutes) Check-out: Share one thing you can do tonight to honor yourself and your important role in this work.

# Module 3: Enhancing Staff Teams

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## Module 3, Segment 1: Strategies for Supervised Visitation Leadership to Build & Maintain Cohesive Staff Teams

### FOR LEADERSHIP STAFF



#### Grounding Information for Leadership Staff

For every private and public social service program, building and maintaining a cohesive staff team takes time, intentionality, and support. Whether you're building a visitation program from the ground up and working to develop your staff team or taking a moment to reflect on your existing program and current staff team this supplemental guide is intended to provide you with some tips on how to build, maintain, and enhance your staff team.

What we have learned over the years is that when a program actively works to create a cohesive staff team programming is strengthened, and the outcome is a program that is informed and responsive to the individuals and communities being served.

The following are some strategic steps any supervised visitation program can take to support your process of building, maintaining, or enhancing your staff team.

#### 1. **Ensure you have a diverse team.**

Programs must be intentional about hiring a diverse staff that represents the communities you serve. Diversity is an asset to all workplaces, especially within social service organizations. People from a variety of



backgrounds and identities often work together to create more innovative policies and practices that will benefit your organization, your community, and the families you serve. You ideally want your team to have a variety of lived experiences related to gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic background, age, etc. Having a diverse team, across multiple aspects of identity and community, can also help prevent tokenism and marginalization within the workplace, which can improve recruitment and retention. It's important to note that hiring a diverse staff is the first step to creating an environment that is equitable and inclusive. Diverse staff members must also experience a sense of belonging, while their expertise is honored. You will also want to look critically at who has access to leadership and management positions within your organization, ensuring that there is equal access to upward mobility. Building a diverse team grounded in equity and inclusion is significant and important work for any organization, and tangible resources should be dedicated to it whenever possible. Remember that a diverse team where everyone is valued and welcomed will ultimately contribute to all the families you work with feeling valued and welcomed, which in the end can contribute to healing, safety, and well-being.

Programs should work to hire staff members who are well suited for the work of supervised visitation services. The nuts and bolts of visitation work can be taught; however, particular beliefs and attitudes that are imperative to this work are more difficult to teach. Not everyone is a good fit for this work. The ability to hold compassion and empathy for everyone, while working to ensure no further harm comes to adult and child victims requires great skill and self-awareness. Please refer to the supplemental guide "Considerations: Visitation Center Staff Qualifications" found at the end of this segment for further support on selecting staff that would fit well in this line of work.

For many programs, staff turnover tends to be very high. Staff turnover has a tremendous negative impact on an organization and its ability to take on the added complexity of working with families who have

experienced violence, trauma, and change. What we have learned from organizations that retain diverse teams is that work/life balance is critical and must be nurtured. Finding the balance between staff autonomy and staff oversight is critical to growing teams where everyone who feel trusted, respected, and confident that they have the tools, support, and respect they need to be successful.

It is also imperative that organizations/programs provide the staff with regular team meetings, individual supervision and support, and consultation with community partners (e.g., batterer's intervention programs, domestic violence advocates, children's advocates, and family law attorneys) on a regular basis. Program staff should be provided with the best available training, information, support, and resources to be successful in their positions. A staff team that feels well equipped and supported is much more likely to do well and remain with an organization/program.

## **2. Create a strong organizational infrastructure.**

It is essential that as organizations, you are transparent about why and how you do the work. Organizations should actively examine and make clear the beliefs you hold, the approaches used, and the role of your center. It is vital to undergo a process of collective assessment and continual, iterative improvement to best serve the families utilizing supervised visitation services. Ongoing assessment and subsequent improvement efforts should apply to your policies and practices for both clients and employees. Through consistently engaging in evaluation and reflection, your organization can demonstrate how not only center participants but staff can grow, thrive, and push learning edges as much as possible. The first step in this exploration is to determine each other's definitions and beliefs about domestic violence, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, dating violence, and stalking.

Here are some questions to help you explore the beliefs that are held by your program staff and collaborative partners:

- Q- What beliefs do you have about domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and child sexual abuse that inform and guide your work?
- Q- What unifying/common beliefs do you possess as an OVW grant community?
- Q- How should these beliefs guide and inform the development and operation of your supervised visitation program?

**Your beliefs should then guide the development of a unifying vision, mission, and philosophy for your grantee community.** If you have already developed a vision, mission, and philosophy you may need to work backward and conduct a cross-check – you can then ask (1) What beliefs do our vision, mission, and philosophy reflect? (2) How does the vision, mission, and philosophy account for our beliefs? and (3) Is this reflection on target with how we want our program to operate?

**Determine or clarify the role** of your supervised visitation program. Engaging in an exploration of such questions as (1) What is the center’s responsibility toward the survivor parent? (2) What responsibility does the center have to make the violence visible? and (3) What is the primary reason the center exists? (e.g., is the center there for the courts, attorneys, the men, women, and children who will use center services)?

**Conduct an assessment** to determine how well your program provides support for staff to be successful in their positions. Explore the following questions:

- How are you organized to support staff working with people who use violence?
- How are you organized to support staff working adult survivors of violence?
- How are you organized to support staff working with children and youth who have experienced violence?

- How does your organization support and ensure that its staff represents the diversity within your community?
- How are supervision and support set up for staff?

### **3. Practice teamwork.**

Team-building is imperative to the success of the staff team and their ability to work together and look to each other for support and connection. Module 3, Segment 1: Building Team Cohesion provides support to begin building your staff team.

### **4. Establish trust.**

Different teams will have varying degrees of trust. Even within a team, different people may feel more trust than others. Programs must take time to build and enhance trust among diverse team members. Module 3, Segment 2: Establishing Trust provides a guide to explore and build trust among your staff team.

### **5. Give & get feedback.**

Giving and receiving feedback is a great way to grow, learn, and build the capacity to become stronger in your role. This should be a combination of individual feedback and team feedback. Module 3, Segment 3: Peer-to-Peer Support & Giving Feedback provides support to establish this practice in your program.

### **6. Celebrate success.**

When your team celebrates together, they tend to become a stronger team. Be intentional about celebrating the big and small things that happen within your staff team - both at work and outside of work. It is also important to make sure the staff team knows you appreciate their work; thank them often.

## **Supplemental Guide for Module 3: Segment 1: Strategies for Supervised Visitation Leadership Staff to Build & Maintain Cohesive Staff Teams**

### **Considerations: Desired Qualities of Visitation Center Staff**

- Self-awareness and the ability to set aside personal bias and beliefs.
- Willingness to address power differentials and privilege and the impact that has on building relationships and trust.
- Ability to set strong boundaries around personal well-being.
- Able to work in the complexities of people's lives. Willingness to be in the grey of people's experiences.
- Ability to hold compassion and understanding for survivors, children, and people who use violence.
- Comfortable working with people who use violence.
- Ability to learn and grow without feeling defensive. Capable of receiving feedback and being willing to change.
- Able and willing to ask for help and support.
- Clear philosophical understanding of domestic violence.
- An understanding of cultural humility and the ability to be responsive to diverse and unique needs.
- Non-judgmental and awareness of personal judgments with the ability to self-monitor and set them aside.
- Compassion and the ability to show respect to every person who uses center services.
- The ability to manage multiple needs, expectations and safety issues simultaneously.
- The ability to make clear decisions and remain calm in chaotic circumstances while being pressured or confronted by others.
- The ability to make decisions and defer decision-making to other staff when necessary.
- The ability to manage conflict effectively and model healthy communication styles.

- Can continue to work effectively while strong emotions are being expressed.
- Sense of humor.
- Holds respect and empathy for self and others.
- Ability to solve complex problems, respond quickly in a crisis, and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where there may not be directives nor a lot of clarity.
- Acts professionally and ethically at all times and maintains positive, cooperative, and productive working relationships with colleagues and collaborative partners.
- Ability to maintain a non-judgmental attitude when working with others whose values and beliefs may be in contrast with their own values and beliefs.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Ability to function under stressful conditions; able to work independently as well as part of a team; consistently demonstrate effective listening skills and common sense.
- The ability to tolerate frequent interruptions.
- Demonstrates a courteous, caring, and understanding attitude towards program participants, co-workers, and community partners.

## Module 3, Segment 2: Building Team Cohesion



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*Just like the families using your center should ideally feel a sense of trust, belonging, and connection, so should the staff at your center. It's quite common for work teams NOT to feel a sense of cohesion, shared purpose, nor a feeling that everyone's expertise is respected and utilized. Often the pressure of the work and definitions of "productivity" that challenge trust and relationships get in the way. This segment is meant to build team cohesion and relationships. Having a strong staff team who feels connected to one another comes from being intentional about building staff cohesion. To build staff cohesion, it is important to nurture the ability for the staff to get to know each other, hold personal connections with each other, talk regularly about things that matter to them, and talk about difficult or sensitive issues. While it is important to have fun together, building staff cohesion also requires time for staff to get to know one another in a deeply meaningful way. Providing an atmosphere where the staff is supported and allowed to make mistakes and express oneself freely also improves team cohesion. We have provided a few ideas that balance having fun with supporting a deeper connection among the staff. We encourage you to supplement these activities with any others that suit your team. In this segment, you will be asking staff to generate ideas to enhance their team cohesion, so be prepared to hear from them and think about how you can implement their ideas in the future. The following are a few ideas in case you need to supplement what your staff share:*

- *Create intentional time to meaningfully engage in a thought-provoking question (work or non-work related).*
- *Go for a hike or a walk together*
- *Play a game before or after a staff meeting*
- *Have meetings outside of the workspace*
- *Organize an event together*
- *Volunteer at another organization as a team*

- *Hold a staff variety show*
- *Create a staff message board to encourage sharing things such as: what do you like to do in your free time, what you are currently reading or wanting to read, what you are currently watching (TV show/ movie), your pets with a picture, favorite food, favorite restaurant, a picture of your family, a picture of your silliest selfie...*



### **Supporting Materials**

→ Post-it notes (enough to give several sheets to each person)



### **Facilitator Guide & Talking Points**

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Share a hidden talent that you possess that your co-workers may not know about you.
2. (2 minutes) Share with staff: We will do our best work as a supervised visitation center when we are connected as a team, where everyone can be their authentic self and contribute to the culture of our organization. Each of you is a critical part of this team, and we hope you feel like it. Sometimes when our work is stressful and overwhelming, we can lose sight of that. Also, just sharing in camaraderie and fun is a big part of team building. Today's meeting is all about helping us feel connected. It's a work in progress!
3. (10 minutes) Ask staff to break into pairs, and discuss: "What brings you to this work of helping keep kids safe, and how does this motivation add to what you offer as a staff person?" Let the staff know that they will be sharing back to the large group on behalf of each other. Staff should only share what makes them feel comfortable.
4. (15 minutes) Large group share-out. Ask everyone to share what they learned about their partner.
5. (5 minutes) Team building brainstorm: Pass out post-it notes to everyone. Ask them to write ideas they have for free and easy



activities, games, or exercises for fun and team building, one idea per post-it.

6. (5 minutes) Ask everyone to add their post-it notes to the wall, and share their ideas as they post them. You will be saving these ideas to consider for implementation. You can also revisit these ideas in future staff meetings if you need more time.
7. (10 minutes) Check-out: ask everyone to share one thing they appreciate about the center or a fellow staff member.

## Module 3, Segment 3: Establishing Trust



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*Different teams will have varying degrees of trust in a staff meeting and a family consultation process, especially if it involves a focus on how they have worked with families. Even within a team, different people may feel more trust than others during a staff meeting and consultation process. This first activity is meant to help you explore with your team what staff needs to have trust in conducting consultations and in establishing some agreed-upon basic expectations.*



### Supporting Materials

→ Note-taking Supplies



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Ask everyone to share one thing they love about working with children and families at your center. Celebrate the good stuff.
2. (5 minutes) Share with staff that today you will explore how your team can engage with each other in a way that is honest, helpful, and grounded in trust. A key to staff and organizational wellness is being intentional about allowing time to cultivate relationships, create room for open and honest dialogue among the staff, engage in self-reflection, and support ongoing growth and change. Mention that people may have different feelings about giving and receiving feedback. All of those feelings are valid and can help us build a process that ideally works for everyone and leads to enhanced work with families. It is normal to feel a little anxious about receiving feedback, and we want to make sure we build a process that is supportive and helpful. It's also important to remember that some of

our most profound learning happens when we are out of our comfort zones.

3. (10 minutes) Break the staff into pairs and have each pair discuss: When you think about **giving** feedback to your colleagues during the family consultation process, what thoughts and feelings first come to mind? Try not to censor your thoughts.
4. (10 minutes) In the same pair groups, now ask them to discuss: When you think about **receiving** feedback from your colleagues during family consultations, what thoughts and feelings first come to mind? Try not to censor your thoughts.
5. (15 minutes) Bring everyone back into the large group and facilitate a discussion about giving and receiving feedback. You will want to take notes or ask for a volunteer notetaker, as points from this discussion will aid in Segment 2. Below are talking points to supplement or support you in facilitating this discussion:
  - a. What came up for people that you are willing to share?
  - b. Do any common themes emerge around giving and receiving feedback?
  - c. Can any of the concerns be resolved through shared agreements and guidelines? Information you obtain here will help with Segment 2, which will more formally establish how a peer-to-peer support model for giving and receiving feedback will be implemented.
  - d. Why is it important for us to be able to give and receive feedback as we consult about our work with families? Ask if the group can come to a consensus about why it's essential.
  - e. Why is it important for a sense of trust to be established among the team, including with leadership, for family consultation processes?
  - f. Let people know that the next step in the next meeting will be to establish the peer-to-peer support model and have a chance to practice. Everything the team discussed today will help inform how you implement your staff meeting and family consultation model.

6. (5 minutes) Closing: Ask everyone to share one time they learned something new from participating in family consultation (formal or informal). Or, ask them to share one thing they are looking forward to related to improving staff meetings and the family consultation process.

## Module 3, Segment 4: Peer-to-Peer Support & Giving Feedback



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*This section, in particular, draws from content covered in the training “Working with Infants, Children, and Youth in Supervised Visitation” presented by Inspire Action for Social Change in partnership with the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, so this may be review for some of your staff. But these concepts tend to become more effective with practice!*

*Additional resource:* An article written by Brooke Anderson on Medium.com called “10 Tips on Receiving Critical Feedback: A Guide for Activists”. <https://medium.com/@brookeanderson/10-tips-on-receiving-critical-feedback-a-guide-for-activists-e51689c59d81>



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Review from your last meeting the reasons staff shared for why it’s important to be able to give and receive feedback in this work. Ask people to share if they have any new reflections.
2. (5 minutes) Share with the staff: Peer-to-peer-support is an important element to creating an environment that fosters mutual respect, support, and growth. We know that providing and receiving feedback requires trust as well as a specific set of skills. To offer a peer-to-peer connection, we have to be in a mindful and open place. It's important to remember that to provide thoughtful feedback; each person needs to be able to be present and

authentic. Remind staff that we are all human and may not always be in a good space to give or receive feedback, it's OK. If you are ever not feeling up to it, your peer-to-peer session should be rescheduled. The process of peer connection should be a give-and-take process that is organized to support and nurture you and your peers, not create shame or create a sense of failure.

3. (5 minutes) Ask staff to turn to pages 29-30 of their workbook, and ask them to take turns reading each point out loud from the “Tenets to Peer-to-Peer Connection and Feedback Reminders” and “Providing Peer-to-Peer Support” worksheets. When providing peer-to-peer connection and support, keep these key tenets in mind both when you are giving feedback and receiving feedback.
5. (5 minutes) Large group discussion: Are there any points here that stick out to you? Why?
6. (5 minutes) Share with the staff: In our next meeting, we will decide how we will be structuring our staff meetings and family consultation formats using peer-to-peer support, based on these principles. Ask if they have any questions.
7. (10 minutes) Check-out: Ask everyone to share one thing they will do today to honor a success or positive aspect of their work at your center. For example: “When I hear a child laughing, I will take a breath and hear the joy,” etc.

## Module 3, Segment 5: How to Structure Family Consultation Peer-to-Peer Feedback



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*It's up to you and your team how specifically you would like to structure peer-to-peer family consultations, and your team practice can change and evolve. Here we offer some options to consider as a team, but encourage creativity in developing an approach that works for you. The most important thing is to make sure that the structure you use is rooted in the content in the workbook, "Tenets to Peer-to-Peer Connection and Feedback Reminders" and "Providing Peer-to-Peer Support" (workbook pages 29-30). We encourage a model where the staff person receiving feedback gets to choose if they would like the consultation to occur in smaller peer-to-peer groups or with the whole staff. Both offer unique benefits.*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Ask the staff to break into pairs and share one positive result from our last meeting. Bring the group back and facilitate a large group process by asking if there is anything they would like to share from their discussion with their partner.
2. (5 minutes) Ask the group to break into small groups (groups of three typically work best), and discuss the following question: As we set up our peer-to-peer feedback family consultation structure, one option to consider is whether you would like to consult in small groups, or as a whole staff. Please talk together for five minutes

about your preferences as the person **receiving** feedback.

3. (10 minutes) Bring staff back together for a larger discussion. Ask if anyone wants to share highlights from their discussion about small group peer-to-peer feedback consultation vs. whole team feedback. Remind staff about your discussions and commitments from Segment 1 of this module when you discussed establishing trust.
4. (5 minutes) Refer staff to workbook page 31, and ask them to read the steps to “How to Structure Peer-to-Peer Family Consultation Feedback”.
5. (10 minutes) Facilitate a group discussion to allow the staff to:
  - a. Ask questions.
  - b. Share reflections or bring up concerns about these steps.
  - c. Share if they have any suggested changes.
6. (10 minutes) Check out: Share one thing about learning from your peers that you think can help you in your work.



## Module 3, Segment 6: Practical Application Feedback Session



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*In this segment, staff will be trying out family consultation peer-to-peer feedback which we prepared for in the previous segment. We recommend that before this session takes place, you identify a staff person willing to be the person receiving feedback, from the staff team. (Logistically for this segment, it will work best if the entire staff team participates in this first practice session together before breaking off into small groups). If the person who volunteered to receive feedback feels comfortable, it would be helpful if they identify an actual family they are working with now or in the past. If you are unable to identify a volunteer for this segment, we encourage you to consider being the person receiving feedback to model how it can look. You can speak about a real family you worked or work with, or write a fictional scenario with background information about the family. If you do have a brave staff volunteer, share with them the steps for this meeting in advance, so they know what to expect. Additionally, make sure you have thought in advance about how you could incorporate peer-to-peer feedback. For example, if you already know based on logistics and other constraints when and how often family consultation peer-to-peer feedback sessions can plausibly take place, you might opt to share your determination with staff during that section of this segment, and ask for their thoughts. However, if possible, we encourage empowering the staff to be part of that decision-making process. No matter what, transparency and clear communication are key. You also want to ensure that the feedback sessions can happen regularly as scheduled, and aren't put off consistently - which is why being realistic is crucial.*



## Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



## Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: Share one word that describes how you feel at this moment when you think about receiving family consultation peer-to-peer feedback.
2. (10 minutes) Ask staff to break into groups of three and briefly describe a moment in the past few weeks when they felt like a consultation with peers could be helpful. They don't need to present background or detailed information about this situation, just a very brief description of a situation that gave them pause. This meant to be a warm-up activity before diving into a real peer-to-peer feedback session.
3. (5 minutes) Ask staff to turn back to the workbook page 31 from your last meeting, Module 3, Segment 5: "How to Structure Peer-to-Peer Family Consultation Feedback". Ask them to quickly reread these steps as a review.
4. (20-30 minutes) If you DO have a staff volunteer, share with staff that this person will be receiving peer-to-peer feedback from the staff team, following the format in the above workbook pages. Remind everyone that going forward, we will decide if they want the entire staff team or small group feedback sessions, but for the purposes of group learning, this staff person has graciously volunteered.

If you DON'T have a staff volunteer, let the staff know that for this exercise, you will be the person receiving feedback.

Follow the steps as outlined in the workbook "Peer-to-Peer Family Consultation Feedback." \*Please note for steps 3 & 4 you may not

have time for every single staff person to contribute, and not everyone may have feedback or questions. Encourage people to engage in steps 3 and 4 as needed.

5. (2 minutes) Thank your staff volunteer for engaging in this process, and for being brave enough to try it with the staff team. Remind staff that we can all learn during this process, even during someone else's feedback session.
6. (5 minutes) Ask the staff to break back into the same small groups, and discuss how often they would like to have peer-to-peer feedback sessions. Let them know they will report back to the large group. They don't all have to agree, though it's helpful if each group reaches consensus.
7. (5 minutes) Bring the staff team back together and ask for a report out. Keep a tally of the results, and hopefully, a few options will emerge. If all of the options are feasible, ask for a vote. If you believe that more leadership and administrative level consideration will need to be part of determining when and how often peer-to-peer feedback will occur, let the staff know. Also, let them know when you will get back to them with a decision.
8. (5 minutes) Check-out: Share one thing you will do this week to recognize the positive work happening at your center. It can be something to focus on, compliments to give each other, observations to make, a joy to cultivate, etc.

## Module 3, Segment 7: Integrating “Lid Flipping” into Family Consultations



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*Note to facilitator: Hopefully, most of the staff will have been through the Inspire Action for Social Change, “Working with Infants, Children, and Youth in Supervised Visitation Immersion Training”. In this training they would have learned about the concept of “lid flipping,” which is a shorthand way of describing what happens in our brains when we have a significant stress response and our thinking brain goes offline, or “flips,” and we go into flight, fight, freeze response. Additionally, here are two resources that can support a deeper understanding of this concept:*

Dr. Daniel Siegel presenting the “Hand Model of the Brain” in this 2.5-minute video that explains the concept of lid flipping. In this video, Dr. Daniel Segel is talking to parents, but the applications are relevant:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTWBXmBPmADBOJah1tI0IFA/playlists?view_as=subscriber). From this “Info @InspireAction” YouTube Channel you can then select “Playlist” on the menu bar and then open the “Enhanced Model of SV Immersion Extension Package” playlist. Then select “VIEW FULL PLAYLIST” and choose this video.

*Another supporting resource: “The Whole-Brain Child Workbook Practical Exercises, Worksheets, and Activities To Nurture Developing Minds”*  
[http://www.portlandpediatric.com/console/page-images/files/building-resilience/Late%20Adolescence/Whole%20Brain%20Child%20Workbook\\_PUB083550.pdf](http://www.portlandpediatric.com/console/page-images/files/building-resilience/Late%20Adolescence/Whole%20Brain%20Child%20Workbook_PUB083550.pdf)



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook



## Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Ask everyone to share one indication in their body when they know they have a stress response, and their lid is about to flip. It is okay if some people are not able to identify or feel uncomfortable sharing any indicators. A benefit of this check-in is to allow people time and space to think, and as a result, they may be able to start to notice this for themselves in the future. If time allows, ask everyone to share one non-verbal thing they do to put their lid down and turn their brain back on when they notice these indicators. A few common indicators to supplement your discussion if needed:
  - a. Heart racing
  - b. Fast & shallow breathing
  - c. Sweaty palms
  - d. A sudden hot sensation
  - e. Feeling dazed or hazy
  - f. Shaking
  - g. Clenched jaw
2. (5 minutes) Ask for a volunteer to explain the concept of lid flipping to the group. Remind the group that everyone flips their lid - it's a normal response to certain types of stress. What's important is that we learn how to best put our lids back down before we try to solve complicated problems with ourselves and others.
3. (10 minutes) HOT SPOTS ACTIVITY:
  - a. Share with staff: Everyone has “hot spots” otherwise known as interactions, situations, communications, and triggers that can set off a stress response, causing us to flip our lids. We can have these experiences at work, at home, or in our communities. Once we know what our “hot spots” are, we can think in advance about how to prevent them, manage or navigate them when they do happen. Once we are aware of our “hot spots”, we can be better prepared to put our lids

down!

- b. Ask the staff to complete the “Hot Spots Activity” found on pages 32-33 of the workbook. “Hot Spots” can be anything from a simple act to a complex response, and they aren’t the same for everyone. Some examples of “Hot Spots” to supplement your discussion:
  - i. Getting interrupted
  - ii. People talking too close to you
  - iii. The layout of a room not making sense to you
  - iv. A process that feels unnecessarily complicated
  - v. Someone raising their voice
  - vi. Someone not listening
  - vii. Microaggressions
4. (5 minutes) Ask staff to break into pairs and discuss any reflections or points from the “Hot Spot” activity.
5. (5 minutes) Bring the group back to have a large group discussion and ask:

How do you think identifying your “hot spots” in advance can help you keep your lid down?
6. (5 minutes) Check out: Ask everyone to say one word indicating how they feel now that they have identified hot spots at work.

# Module 4: The Practice of Meaningful Engagement: Checking-in & Connecting with Families in Supervised Visitation Programs

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## Module 4, Segment 1: Purpose of a Meaningful Check-in



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*This segment is meant to help you and your staff explore the practice of conducting regular and ongoing check-ins with every person using center services. **This segment is intended to support programs which currently do NOT engage in a formalized practice of checking-in with every person using their center services.** If your center currently engages in a formal check-in process with EVERY person using center services, please skip to Module 1, Segment 7: Enhancing the Practice of Meaningful Check-ins.*

*Please note: Inspire Action for Social Change has created another training package specific to working with infants, children, and youth in supervised visitation, in this training package you will find a training segment, “Meaningfully Engaging with Children and Youth at Our Center” (Module 1, segment 6) which contains the information provided in this module as it relates to checking in with children, but also contains a process for integrating feedback and lessons learned from young people into your programming model. Please contact Inspire Action for Social Change if you are interested in further information on creating a process for integrating feedback into your programming model.*

*[www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org](http://www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org)*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Note-taking materials



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: Self-reflection writing. In your workbook on page 35 respond to the following question: “Think of a time you went to a program or a function. Share two ways you felt welcomed and two specific ways you felt uncomfortable or not welcomed.”
2. (5 minutes) Bring the staff back into the large group and ask if anyone would like to share highlights from their writing reflection. After this initial share back, ask the staff how they could incorporate this reflection into your center practice.
3. (15 minutes) Large group discussion. Share with the staff that while conducting orientations is our first opportunity to lay the groundwork for building trust and establishing a relationship with every person using our center services, it is important to incorporate other intentional and ongoing opportunities to stay connected to every person using center services. One of the promising practices in the field of supervised visitation work is establishing the practice of check-ins, which is an **intentional** time to talk (check-in) with **EVERY** person who uses center services. Check-ins provide a space for every person using center services to engage with staff and have intentional time with staff that isn’t rushed or would require extra steps to set-up or be requested.

Ask staff to brainstorm possible outcomes of conducting a check-in practice. Be sure to take notes during this discussion so you can refer back to this discussion in future training segments. To



supplement your discussion if needed: Check-ins allow programs to:

- a. Establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue, learn about changing conditions and circumstances, and address ongoing and often changing safety needs.
  - b. Build meaningful relationships with parents and children.
  - c. Increase an understanding of the unique and changing needs of families.
  - d. Have the ability to conduct meaningful visitation safety planning and account for ever-changing risk.
  - e. Have an opportunity to plant seeds of change and interrupt current and future violence.
  - f. Support a healing centered engagement model in a supervised visitation program.
  - g. Build trust with every member of every family using center services.
  - h. Establish an intentional time to learn about changing risks, changing needs, and any changing safety concerns.
  - i. Work with people who use violence to create meaningful, compassionate accountability to prevent future violence.
  - j. The ability to make adaptations in individual visitation plans and service delivery, if needed.
  - k. Support staff coming together to recognize and assess programmatic gaps, needs, enhancements, or changes that need to be addressed.
4. (15 minutes) Important: Ensure that you take notes of this discussion, you will want to revisit the ideas the staff discussed when you move to Segment 6: How to Operationalize & Implement the Practice of Check-ins with Each Center Participant. Engage the staff in a discussion using the following questions:
- a. Is there a reason why we have not engaged in the practice of check-ins?
  - b. Are there barriers for our center conducting check-ins with every person using center services?

- c. How could we establish a check-in process that is in line with the purpose of conducting check-in that we just explored?
5. (10 minutes) Next steps: Establish a staff agreement about your commitment to establish a formalized check-in process, review what your team established as the purpose of a formalized check-in process, and discuss the barriers you identified.
  6. (5 minutes) Check-out: Ask each person to share, “What is one thing you hope to learn how to do (personally or professionally)?”

## **Module 4, Segment 2: The Practice of Check-ins: Creating an ongoing practice of connecting with and supporting families**



### **Facilitator Preparation & Notes**

This segment is meant to build staff and organizational interest and commitment around the practice of check-ins with adults, youth, and children utilizing your services. Because supervised visitation centers are generally quite busy and staff may feel they already have plenty to do, this segment helps them explore the benefits of check-ins and the value of an authentic connection between staff and center participants. Asking them to think about where, when, and how they feel the most connected to others sets a framework to think about building trust and rapport with families. This segment also includes quotes from participants from OVW funded supervised visitation centers to help set the stage for developing a regular check-in practice.



### **Supporting Materials**

- Supplemental Workbook
- Pens, crayons, or colored pencils



### **Facilitator Guide & Talking Points**

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: Self-reflection writing. In your workbook on page 36 respond to the following question: “What makes you feel most connected to others?”
2. (5 minutes) Ask for volunteers to share some points from the writing exercise.
3. (5 minutes) Ask the staff to break into pairs and discuss: Why is it important to build strong, connected relationships with each child and each parent who utilizes your center?
4. (5 minutes) Ask staff to turn to page 37 of their workbooks, and color in the following quote from Brene Brown at Courageworks,

*“Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment.”* Ask them to consider the quote as they color or doodle on this workbook page.

5. (5 minutes) Ask staff: how does this quote apply to the work you do here at our center?

6. (5 minutes) Ask staff to turn to page 38 of the workbook and read two quotes from survivors from the *OVW Supervised Visitation Grant Program National Evaluation and complete the workbook prompts*. Offer the option that they can write about how they would like to nurture this type of connection on their workbook page.

*“I love the staff! They are so caring. They can just look at me and tell if I had a bad day - they take that extra 30 seconds to ask how are you doing, how do you feel, how did this visit go? They definitely make me feel comfortable!”* -Quote from a survivor using a supervised visitation program.

*“Something I like is that [center staff] take my daughter to the visits, and they talk to me a little and ask me what’s going good, and what’s going bad and they give me resources; they help me or they tell me you can go here, you can do this.”* -Quote from a survivor using a supervised visitation program.

7. (5 minutes) Ask for a few volunteers to share thoughts from their writing exercise. Close the discussion by letting staff know that in future meetings, you will be discussing how you can integrate check-ins with everyone who uses services at the center.

8. (3 minutes) Homework assignment: Before the next training, ask each person to read and reflect on workbook page 39, which provides some key strategies a visitation center should consider when working with a parent who needs protection.

9. (5 minutes) Check-out: For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

## Module 4, Segment 3: Checking-in and Connecting with Survivors of Domestic Violence



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*In the previous segment, each staff member was asked to complete a homework assignment. Remind the staff to make sure they have completed that assignment in advance of conducting this training segment. In this segment, the staff will be asked to generate ideas on post-it notes for two different concepts, “considerations for the parent needing protection when they are the custodial parent” and “considerations for the parent needing protection when they are the visiting parent.” You will want to save these notes, so in advance, you should designate and label an area on the wall or use flipchart paper to collect them.*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook (with completed homework assignments)
- Post-it notes
- Flipchart paper or a spot on the wall to collect all the post-it notes



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: Share any thoughts or observations you relate to the practice of regular check-ins with all family members since our last meeting.
2. (3 minutes) Share with everyone: Today, we are talking about connecting with the parent needing protection, remembering that they could be the visiting parent or the custodial parent. Creating regular and ongoing opportunities to connect with parents needing protection has been established as a key strategy in the field of

supervised visitation to support safety. Learning from adult survivors of violence and building a trusting relationship needs to be an ongoing process. While orientations are our first opportunity to lay the groundwork for building trust, it is important to incorporate intentional and ongoing opportunities to stay connected. Check-ins would allow us to establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue with survivors, learn about any changing conditions or circumstances, and address ongoing and often changing safety needs. We also want to ensure we are checking our assumptions and remember that the person needing protection can be either the custodial or noncustodial parent and be of any gender and sexual orientation, and their ex-partner can be any gender and sexual orientation.

3. (5 minutes) Large group discussion: When you think about checking-in with the adult survivor of violence / parent needing protection, what first comes to mind? Let them know they don't need to censor their thoughts and feelings.
4. (10 minutes) Ask the staff to take out their homework assignment from workbook page 39 and share their reflections and thoughts about the key strategies for supporting safety for adult survivors using a supervised visitation program. The key strategies introduced in the homework assignment for supporting safety for adult survivors using a supervised visitation program are as follows:
  - Create an environment that interrupts and intervenes in power and control and abuse tactics, minimizes risk, and works to reduce opportunities for ongoing violence, which includes ensuring we aren't inadvertently colluding with abusive behaviors.
  - Be flexible and open to safety strategies that will change over time.
  - Be informed and knowledgeable about the dynamics of domestic violence so you can identify red flags and risk.
  - Allow space for the complex feelings that adult survivors may have about the other parent.
  - Let each survivor's experience of domestic violence inform

your tailored response and their safety/visitation plan; as they are the experts in their own lives.

5. (10 minutes) Share with the staff that we want to build on these key strategies and now generate considerations for checking-in with adult survivors. Let the staff know that their ideas will be saved to potentially shape the development of your center's check-in practice. Hand out a stack of post-it notes to each person. Ask them to think about what needs to be considered to conduct a regular check-in with the parent needing protection **when they are the residential parent**. They will write each consideration on one post-it note, which will be shared with the whole group. Below are possible themes they can explore, and ask them to get as specific as possible with considerations under these themes - you may find it helpful to print these themes and hang them up in the room as you facilitate your discussion:
  - a. Safety
  - b. Confidentiality
  - c. Anxiety, fear, hesitation of the parent needing protection
  - d. The parent-child relationship
  - e. The parenting style of the person needing protection
  - f. Routines, rituals, and values important to the family
  - g. Building trust with center staff
  - h. Their feelings and thoughts around their children in this experience
  - i. The parenting style of the parent who used violence
  - j. Culture, traditions, and community
6. (10 minutes) Ask everyone to read their considerations aloud as they add them to the correct place on the wall or poster.
7. (10 minutes) Hand out another stack of post-it notes to each person. Ask them now to think about what needs to be considered to conduct a regular check-in with the parent needing protection **when they are the visiting parent**. They will write each consideration on one post-it note, which will be shared with the whole group. Below are possible themes they can explore, and ask

them to get as specific as possible with considerations under these themes - you may find it helpful to print these themes and hang them up in the room as you facilitate your discussion:

- a. Safety
  - b. Confidentiality
  - c. Anxiety, fear, or hesitation of the parent needing protection
  - d. The parent-child relationship
  - e. The parenting style of the person needing protection
  - f. Routines, rituals, and values important to the family
  - g. Building trust with center staff
  - h. Their feelings and thoughts around their children during this time in their lives
  - i. The parenting style of the parent who used violence
  - j. Loss and overwhelming feelings related to not having custody of their children
  - k. Culture, traditions, and community
8. (10 minutes) Ask everyone to read their considerations aloud as they add their post-it notes to the correct place on the wall or poster.
  9. (5 minutes) Thank everyone for their participation, and let them know that in your next meeting, you will be exploring considerations for check-ins with the parent who uses violence. Ask if they have any questions.
  10. (3 minutes) Homework assignment: Before the next training ask each person to read and reflect on workbook pages 40-41 which provides some key strategies a visitation center should consider when working with a parent who has caused harm - which is the topic of the next training segment.
  11. (10 minutes) Share a hope you have for adult survivors of violence that might result from conducting regular check-ins at our center.



## Module 4, Segment 4: Checking-in and Connecting with the Person Who has Caused Harm



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*In the previous segment, each staff member was asked to complete a homework assignment. Remind the staff to make sure they have completed that assignment in advance of conducting this training segment. For this segment, the staff will be asked to generate ideas on post-it notes for two different concepts. You will want to save these post-it notes, so in advance, you should designate and label an area on the wall, or have flipchart paper to collect them.*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook (with completed homework assignment)
- Post-it notes
- Open wall space or flipchart paper and spot to collect the post-it notes



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: Ask everyone to share their response to the following question: If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
2. (5 minutes) Large group discussion: When you think about checking in with the parent who uses violence, what first comes to mind? Let staff know they should try not to censor their thoughts and feelings.
3. (3 minutes) Share with staff: In our last meeting, we explored considerations related to regular check-ins with adult survivors of domestic violence. Today we are exploring considerations for regular check-ins with the person who uses violence. This is equally

important and a critical way to promote safety and well-being for everyone in the family. Checking-in with the person who uses violence may feel different or more difficult to some of us than checking-in with the adult survivor. Those feelings are okay; what's important is that everyone feels comfortable building trust with people who use violence who access our services. Change and healing happen in the context of trusted relationships. To develop compassionate accountability with people who use violence, some level of trust must be established. Check-ins are a step on that path. It's also important to remember that the person who uses violence can have the status of custodial or non-custodial parent and be any gender, and their ex-partner can be any gender. There are specific considerations for fatherhood, masculinity, and men who use violence in relationships. There are also specific considerations for LGBTQIA people who use violence in relationships, and we may need additional training on this issue. We have supplemental materials specifically for engaging in check-ins with fathers who use violence but want to note that others struggle with violence in relationships as well.

4. (10 minutes) Ask the staff to take out their homework assignment on pages 40-41 of their workbook and share their reflections and thoughts about the key strategies when working with a parent who has caused harm at a visitation center.

The key strategies from the workbook are:

**Humanity as a leading approach.**

Treating all people who use violence with respect, dignity, and fairness will help to reduce their anxiety and potentially minimize their hostility toward their partner. While it is important to never lose sight of the harm caused by people who use violence, seeing them as a whole person can help us build respectful, non-colluding relationships. Moving away from labeling people by their behavior (abuser) or their custodial status (visiting parent) makes it easier to engage the whole person. When staff genuinely care about the person who has caused harm, the person feels respected and are

more willing to engage with the staff and more likely to make changes to their behavior.

**Allow for imperfection.**

There are often many unrealistic expectations for people who use violence in supervised visitation programs. If they have not completely changed or are not holding themselves fully accountable for the harm they have caused, program staff often dismiss incremental change. There is great value in honoring and acknowledging when something good happens. When you support and encourage strengths, you will be more effective in addressing issues or problems. Acknowledging even the slightest change can be a motivator for further and ongoing changes.

**Build strong non-colluding relationships.**

Building relationships with people who use violence is the foundation of this work. If supervised visitation center staff do not build authentic, respectful, non-colluding relationships, the rest of our efforts will fail. It is important to show up with a genuine curiosity and allow people who use violence the space to share their story. Listening without judgment can be transformative for everyone. This does not mean being permissive of abusive behavior. We are suggesting that to create opportunities for change and hold people responsible for their abusive actions, it is also important to build a genuine connection.

**Be transparent.**

Transparency is critical to our work, and a cornerstone of trauma-informed care. Taking the mystery out of supervised visitation services while being clear, direct, and open can help minimize some of the anxiety and frustration, parents may feel when using center services. We are not suggesting that transparency will eliminate all the challenges you face as visitation providers; however, it will help reduce some of the issues that typically arise. Transparency is also

foundational to eliminating punitive approaches. Punitive policies and practices are those that are arbitrary and usually grounded in subjective values. They often punish for the sake of punishing, without supporting the person even to recognize the potential for healing and growth. When organizations are transparent about why and how each policy exists, both with themselves and the families they serve, punitive policies are more likely to be avoided. A move towards transparency will support you to identify policies and practices that should be amended or eliminated.

**Use fatherhood ideals and values.**

When the person who caused harm is also the father, leading with nurturing, warm, and responsible values around fatherhood is an important strategy for engaging with men. This approach can invite a father to shift his focus to the well-being of his children which can ultimately increase safety for everyone in the family. Leading with positive fatherhood principles, and learning about his values as a dad, can help you better understand how he sees himself as a parent. By focusing on the type of father he wants to be to his children, you are demonstrating that you see his potential as a positive force in the lives of his children. Men who use violence may not have had positive, nurturing experiences with their fathers, and may need support to see themselves differently. Additionally, a growing body of evidence shows that a “two-generation”<sup>4</sup> approach to healing and recovery can prevent future violence while improving resiliency for both the father and his children. When fathers who have caused harm and their children can heal and grow in safe, connected contact with each other (like in supervised visitation), significant change can happen.

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<sup>4</sup> Blue Shield of California Foundation, “Breaking the Cycle: A life Course Framework for Preventing Domestic Violence” (2019).

5. (10 minutes) Share with the staff that you will be asking them to generate considerations for checking-in with parents who use violence, and that their ideas will be saved to potentially shape the development of your center's check-in practice. Hand out a stack of post-it notes to each person. Ask them to think about what needs to be considered when conducting a check-in with the parent who uses violence **when they are the custodial parent**. They will write each consideration on one post-it note, which will be shared with the whole group. Below are possible themes they can explore, and ask them to get as specific as possible with considerations under these themes:
  - a. Safety of the adult and child survivor
  - b. Confidentiality
  - c. Anxiety, fear, or hesitation that the parent who uses violence may be feeling
  - d. The parent-child relationship
  - e. The parenting style of the person who uses violence
  - f. Routines, rituals, and values important to the family
  - g. Building trust with center staff
  - h. Their feelings and thoughts around their children during this time in their lives
  - i. The parenting style of the other parent
  - j. Culture, traditions, and community
  - k. How their ideas about gender shape their way of being in intimate relationships
6. (10 minutes) Ask everyone to read their considerations aloud as they add them to the correct place on the wall or flipchart.
7. (10 minutes) Hand out another stack of post-it notes to each person. Ask them to now think about what needs to be considered **when** conducting regular check-ins **with the parent who uses violence when they are the visiting parent**. They will write each individual consideration on one post-it note, which will be shared with the whole group. Below are possible themes they can explore,

and ask them to get as specific as possible with considerations under these themes:

- a. Safety of the adult and child survivor
  - b. Confidentiality
  - c. Anxiety, fear, hesitation that the parent who uses violence may be feeling
  - d. The parent-child relationship
  - e. The parenting style of the person who uses violence
  - f. Routines, rituals, and values important to the family
  - g. Building trust with center staff
  - h. Their feelings and thoughts around their children during this time in their lives
  - i. The parenting style of the other parent
  - j. Culture, traditions, and community
  - k. How their ideas about gender shape their way of being in intimate relationships
8. (10 minutes) Ask everyone to read their considerations aloud as they add them to the correct place on the wall or flipchart paper.
  9. (5 minutes) Thank everyone for their participation, and let them know that in your next meeting, you will be exploring considerations for check-ins with infants, children, and youth. Ask if they have any questions.
  10. (5 minutes) Check-out: Share one hope you have for parents who use violence that might result from conducting regular check-ins at our center.

## Module 4, Segment 5: Checking-in and Connecting with Infants, Children, and Youth



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*Supporting children and youth using your visitation programs is another important part of supporting the needs and safety of each member of the family. It can be easy for young people to get lost in the shuffle of their parents' needs, issues, and concerns. It is important for visitation programs to dedicate time to getting to know the young people coming to their centers, to carve out time for regular and ongoing check-ins as well as incorporating their unique needs, experiences, and wishes into your overall work with each family. Talking with and connecting with young people requires time and attention to do it with intention and care. We have provided an additional supplemental guide: "Considerations to Guide Check-ins with Children and Youth" which is found at the end of this module. This supplemental guide is provided to support your team to build a more complex understanding of working with children as it relates to the practice of checking-in. Inspire Action for Social Change also provides a specialized in-depth training dedicated to working with infants, children, and youth in a supervised visitation center which goes beyond the practice of conducting check-ins with young people. If you are interested in this training, please contact Inspire Action for Social Change at [info@inspireactionforsocialchange.org](mailto:info@inspireactionforsocialchange.org).*



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Post-it notes
- Open wall space or flipchart paper to collect the post-it notes



## Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: What do you look forward to in your work with infants, children, and youth at our center?
2. (5 minutes) Share with staff: “Much like our work with parents, creating opportunities to help bring infants, children, and youth into our programs is essential. Children and youth benefit from having orientations and regular check-ins with staff. We must recognize that each child will have different needs based on age, development, comfort, and level of trauma. It is important to ensure that the opportunity for children to talk with staff at our center exists. Helping children and youth know what to expect can help reduce anxiety and stress they may be experiencing. An important component of engaging with children and youth is working with both of their parents to determine how best to support their children. Helping the parent who needs protection to prepare children for visits and support them after visits, and creating alternative opportunities to garner support and resources to take care of themselves, are all important components that visitation center staff can offer. Additionally, working with the parent who uses violence around the needs of their children can help make visits that, at the very least, cause no further harm and at best promote healing and change. It is important for us to remember that our role is not to make visits happen. Our role is to ensure that if visits happen, adult and child survivors feel physically and emotionally safe. This allows you to slow down, listen to children, and take their lead.”
3. (10 minutes) Large group discussion:
  - Has anyone ever conducted regular check-ins with young people at the center?
  - If so, what was the process like, how did it go?
  - What are the challenges with conducting a check-in with children coming to our center?
4. (15 minutes) Break staff into groups of three and provide each



group with post-it notes. Ask each group to have a small group discussion, generating ideas about check-ins with young people. There are four questions they should discuss on workbook pages 42-43. After each question, ask that their group collect their best ideas to bring forth to the large group discussion. They should write their ideas on the post-it note pages you have provided, one idea per post-it note. The questions are as follows:

### **Small-Group Discussion Questions**

1. What do young people need from a check-in process with center staff? What are your initial thoughts and ideas?
2. What should be the goals of conducting check-ins with young people at our center? What are your initial thoughts and ideas?
3. How can the confidentiality of young people be respected at our center? What are your initial thoughts and ideas?
4. Logistically, how can our center support a check-in process with every child using center services? Think about when, where, and how this practice can happen at our center. What are your initial thoughts and ideas?
5. (15 minutes) Bring staff back into the large group and ask them to share their ideas as they post them to the post-it collection area you established. You will want to save this important information when you move to the training Segment 6: How to Operationalize & Implement the Practice of Check-ins with Each Center Participant.
6. (5 minutes) Check-out: If you were given a crystal ball and could ask one question about your life, what would you want to know?

## **Supplemental Guide for Module 4, Segment 5: Checking-in and Connecting with Infants, Children, and Youth**

### **Considerations to Guide Check-in's with Children and Youth**

Here are some leading principles that can help you establish your practice of checking in with young people at your center.

#### ***Let children and youth lead.***

Centers should give children and youth some ability to guide their process. We often make assumptions about what children and youth need and want. We try to protect them from sensitive conversations; we strive to ensure that, on our watch, nothing bad happens.

Sometimes children want to ask their parent hard questions, tell them how they feel, express their emotions or confront them about the harm they have caused. Centers can support children and youth by fostering a space that allows those conversations to happen.

Understand that young people may test the waters at a visitation center to determine if the environment is truly safe and if they can trust staff and the abusive parent. Gaining their trust will take time. Following their lead, giving them the tools to ask for what they need and then following through on what you've discussed, will have a positive impact on the children and youth coming to your programs.

#### ***Give attention to transitions, routine, and predictability.***

Check-in with children and youth before and after their visits. This can also establish a predictable routine, which is healing and beneficial for trauma survivors.

Centers should be intentional about creating a safe space for children and youth to visit with their parent. Paying attention to transitions and maintaining a predictable routine is important. Staff can support children and youth through the many transitions that occur at centers. This requires carving out intentional time before and after visits for children to check-in with center staff and move at their own pace. Often children are moved quickly from one parent to the next, and

sometimes they need time to transition. When you have multiple children from one family, recognize that each child may have different needs.

Predictability is important – if something is going to change, do your best to inform children before it happens. For example, center staff can tell children “Next week your monitor is going to be on vacation. Would you like to meet the person who will be with you and your dad next week?”.

***Be a positive, loving adult in a child’s life.***

Never underestimate the power you have to support the children and youth coming to your program. We know that one of the key resiliency factors for young people is to be in the presence of positive, loving relationships. Visitation center staff members can be one of those individuals in a young person’s life. Take time to get to know the children and youth coming to your program. Validate their experience, let them know it’s not their fault and they are not alone. Let them know you care about them and will be there to listen, provide support, and keep them safe if that is what they need.

**Be intentional about how you talk to children and youth.**

Young people often have a difficult time responding to directed questions and feel uneasy about one-on-one conversations. We have found that using an activity to facilitate directed conversation is often an effective approach when working with children and youth. Here are a few examples of what you could do:

(1) Ask them to create a drawing that describes something in particular. For example: “Can you draw a picture of what you like about visiting your mom or your dad at the visitation center?” or “Can you draw a picture of what bugs you about coming to the visitation center to see your mom or your dad?” Or, you can ask something more open-ended like, “Can you draw a picture of how it feels to visit your mom/dad at the visitation center?”

(2) Ask them to finish a sentence verbally or in writing for you. For example: “When I have come to see my mom/dad at the visitation center I am....”, or “When I’m at the visitation center I wish I could....”, or “I think the visitation center should....”.Or, “I would like to come to the visitation center more if....” If you sense a young person needs a less involved conversation, you can ask: “What is one word you would use to describe visiting your mom/dad here at the center?”

(3) Ask them if they would be willing to give some advice to other people who work in visitation centers or give some advice to help other kids coming to see their one of their parents at a visitation center. For example: “What would you want other kids to know about coming to a visitation center?”, “What is the best thing about coming to the visitation center to see your mom/dad?” or “What is hard about coming to a visitation center?”

**Special Note:** It is important to be clear with both the kids and their parents about the check-in process. When and where check-in will take place, why you are asking the questions you are asking, what you will do with the information you gather, the extent and limitations of confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of talking with you. Ensure that every kid knows that they can stop talking to you at any time, and they don’t have to share anything they don’t wish to share or answer.

Only engage in these activities and questions with children and youth during times when they are emotionally regulated and relatively calm, and only once you have established some rapport and relationship with them. You should also be aware that privacy is important when you conduct your check-ins with children and youth. Be intentional about whether other staff or siblings would be invited to be a part of the check-in process. Additionally, make sure you have a plan to communicate to their caregiver if they display any distress or emotional dysregulation, so their caregiver is aware and prepared to support them.

## Module 4, Segment 6: How to Operationalize & Implement the Practice of Check-ins with Each Center Participant



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

Before this segment, you will want to make sure you have the notes that staff made in each of the previous segments (Segments 1-5). This allows you to draw on the expertise of staff while also demonstrating that their work in all of your staff meetings is building towards something larger. At the end of this segment, you will find a supplemental guide with sample check-in questions. You may discover in your exploration of the material in this segment that the staff team experiences a difficult time operationalizing what they would ask parents or how they would frame a check-in conversation. This supplemental guide is intended to support your staff exploration and help give specific ideas to staff.



### Supporting Materials

- Each staff person will need writing materials and their Supplemental Workbook
- Notes taken from your all of your previous group discussions held in Segments 1-5 (may be helpful to organize these or type up all the notes in one document)
- Note-taking materials



### Facilitator Guide & Talking Points

1. (5 minutes) Check-in: What do you love about your job, and what do you think you do well in your position?
2. (10 minutes) Bring out the notes from all of your previous discussions in Segments 1-5. Post all of the notes (or distribute a copy to each person if you typed all of the notes). Have each person review all of the notes to remind the team about their past

thinking related to conducting check-ins.

3. (5 minutes) Ask staff to break into pairs and discuss: Now that we have spent more time thinking about the practice of check-ins, how have your thoughts changed or evolved?
4. (5 minutes) Bring staff back for a large group discussion to share out from their pairs.
5. (5 minutes) Ask staff to brainstorm (make a list) of the barriers that they think could make a regular check-in practice with all members of each family challenging.
6. (10 minutes) Bring staff back for a larger group discussion to share from their lists. As you listen to the discussion, make a note of themes that emerge. You can supplement the conversation as needed with these barriers identified by other centers:
  - Scheduling practices: Often, staff feel constrained by tight schedules.
  - Space: Often the center design hasn't been organized to support a dedicated space for checking-in privately with each member of a family using center services.
  - The comfort of staff: Some of the staff may not feel equipped to handle difficult conversations that might arise during a check-in.
  - Policies and procedures: Often, there aren't formalized policies and procedures in place to support the practice.
  - Documentation: Many staff express worries related to the conundrum of what needs to be documented as a result of a check-in.
  - Difficult or challenging participants: Staff can feel hesitant to engage with center participants they feel are difficult to approach, those who often complain about the other parent, or aggressively protest the system or perceived injustices.
7. (10 minutes): Break staff into pairs and ask them to discuss how they feel about conducting regular check-ins now that they have shared the barriers.
8. (10 minutes) Bring the staff back for a large group discussion. While

they are talking, identify the themes you hear from their brainstorming. Present the top 1-3 barriers that emerged as a theme (choose based on the level of repetition and what you perceive to be significant barriers) and seek consensus. If there is no consensus, work with staff to identify their top 1-3 barriers. Then ask the staff what ideas they have to remove each of the identified barriers. This may be the beginning of a larger discussion and process, or you may be able to identify solutions immediately. If you believe more time and attention needs to be devoted to identifying solutions to these barriers, move to step 9. If you have identified immediate solutions to attempt to remove barriers, skip the next step.

9. (5 minutes) If more time is needed to problem solve through these barriers, ask for a small group of volunteers to meet to identify possible solutions. Ask them to identify a time to meet next, and let everyone know that once they have developed a set of draft solutions, they will be presented to the whole group for discussion and consensus. Make sure you track this and include time in a future staff meeting to hear back from the smaller workgroup.
10. (35 minutes) Practice session: Ask the staff to review the Supplemental Guide for this module “Sample Check-in Questions” and highlight two-three questions that they think they would like to practice using - encourage each person to choose at least one question that they would struggle to use during a check-in. Create teams of three people. In their teams, they will practice conducting a check-in. One person will start in the role as the staff person conducting a check-in, one person will act as the center participant, and the third person will observe. The team will rotate roles every 10 minutes, allowing the person who is conducting the check-in five minutes to practice and five minutes to receive feedback. Note to facilitator: Prior to the teams breaking into their practice sessions, remind the staff of the work you completed in Module 3, Segment 4: Peer-to-Peer Support & Giving Feedback and also ask each person to refer back to the workbook pages on “Tenets to Peer-to-Peer

Connection and Feedback Reminders” and “Providing Peer-to-Peer Support” found on pages 29-30 of their workbook.

11. (10 minutes) Return to the large group and discuss how each of the practice sessions went. Ask each team to report back any takeaways, observations, useful tips, and helpful feedback they would like to share with the full staff team. Encourage staff to continue to practice with one another outside of the staff meetings as much as possible.
12. (5 minutes) Check out: What do you value most in a friendship?



## Supplemental Guide for Module 4, Segment 6: How to Operationalize & Implement the Practice of Check-ins with Each Center Participant

### Sample Check-in Questions\*

\*Important note: A list of questions can create a temptation for many programs to create a form for staff to complete related to check-ins. We recommend that the check-in process NOT be guided by a form. This can make the process feel needlessly formal, institutional, distant, and inauthentic. Remember that check-ins should be relational and connective. If necessary, refer back to Segment 1: The Purpose of a Meaningful Check-in and reflect on the brainstorming staff discussion you held. These sample check-in questions are intended to demonstrate the myriad of ways you can begin your conversations with the adults who are using your center services.

- Is there anything we need to know since the last visit?
- Is there anything we need to know since we last connected?
- How do you feel the last visit went?
- What was one thing you thought was positive in the last visit?
- What was one thing that was tough or you have been considering?
- What is something you want to do differently the next time you are with your child?
- Is there anything I can do to support you in this process?
- What would you like to do at today's visit?
- What could we do to make the visit the best it can be?
- Do you have any questions?
- Have there been any events or concerns you would like us to know about that occurred before this visit? After the last visit? In between visits?
- How are things going for you?
- How are things going for you as a result of the visitation/exchange services?

- How do you think things are going for your children as a result of visits?
- What have we done that has been most helpful to you?
- What has caused concern for you?
- What else can we do to help you and your children?
- Have there been any events or concerns related to your safety that you would like us to know?
- In your opinion, how are things going for your children as a result of the visits?
- How is everything else going for you? Are there any challenges or issues you would like us to know about?

## Module 4, Segment 7: Enhancing the Practice of Meaningful Check-ins



### Facilitator Preparation & Notes

*This segment is meant to help you and your staff enhance your current practice of conducting regular and ongoing check-ins with every woman, man, and young person using your center services.*

*Please note: If your center does **NOT currently** engage in a formal check-in process with EVERY woman, man, and young person using center services please ensure that you have completed Module 4, Segments 1-6 prior to completing this segment. This segment can help deepen your approach and enhance your practice. We will explore how you are setting the stage for a check-in practice that reflects the values of your organization while centering the humanity of all the participants in your program. We recommend you read through each step and modify the process as needed according to your existing center practices.*

*In this segment, you will be establishing smaller workgroups to revisit or develop your practice related to check-ins. Workgroups can be a very effective way for staff to engage in the program development, advance new skills, or use and share the skills they already possess. Here are some tips on supporting the workgroup concept in your program:*

- 1) Support staff to schedule workgroup time as you would a visit or other work related to families.*
- 2) Think creatively as a team about how to make it work, see if staff have suggestions about what they feel they need to add this to their workload.*
- 3) Acknowledge that staff have different and unique gifts and some may not want to do program development work - acknowledge that this is okay.*
- 4) Be willing to take something off their plate or jump in to support their participation if needed.*

*You will also need to consider a few things before you establish the workgroup. These things are:*

- *How much time can the workgroup feasibly devote to the work?*
- *How will schedules be accommodated for this extra work?*
- *Are you able to offer any incentive to people who join the workgroup?*
- *How will you set up regular check-ins between the workgroup and the whole staff so that majority consensus can be reached?*

*Important note: It is tempting for many programs to create a form for staff to complete related to check-ins. This may come up as a solution from the staff workgroup or as your staff works to re-evaluate or develop policies. We recommend that the check-in process NOT be guided by a form. This can make the process feel needlessly formal, institutional, distant, and inauthentic. Remember that check-ins should be relational and connective. If necessary, refer back to Segment 1: The Purpose of a Meaningful Check-in and reflect on the brainstorming staff discussion you held.*



### **Supporting Materials**

- A copy of your current program belief statement, mission or purpose statement, a vision, and written values or philosophy statement
- Note-taking materials



### **Facilitator Guide & Talking Points**

1. (10 minutes) Check-in: If you could change one thing in the world today, what would it be?

**NOTE:** If your organization has a current program belief, mission or purpose statement, and a written vision, values, or philosophy statement then skip to Step 3, if your program does not have these items in place continue with Step 2.

2. (3 minutes) Share: Today we are exploring how we can work to enhance our practice of regular check-ins with every member of a family that uses our services. As a way to begin our exploration, it will be helpful to undergo a foundational exploration. Our first step is to explore our definitions and beliefs about domestic violence, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, dating violence, and stalking.

**Note:** Whether you have been working collaboratively for years or are just building your team, it's important not to make assumptions that everyone holds the same definitions, beliefs, and philosophies about this work.

As a large group process, pose the following questions to help you explore the beliefs that are held by your program staff:

Q- What beliefs do you have about domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and child sexual abuse that inform and guide your work?

Q- What unifying/common beliefs do you possess as an OVW grant community?

Q- How should these beliefs guide and inform the development and operation of your supervised visitation program?

Your beliefs should then guide the development of a unifying vision, mission, and philosophy. Developing these will take dedicated time and attention. At the conclusion of your discussion in this step ask for 2-4 volunteers to join a workgroup to continue the development of your program's unifying vision, mission, and philosophy. If you find that you need additional assistance, please contact Inspire Action for Social Change / [info@inspireactionforsocialchange.org](mailto:info@inspireactionforsocialchange.org) for specialized assistance.

3. (10 minutes) Share: "We will be conducting a review of our current mission, vision, and philosophy statements to ensure they are aligned with our practice of check-ins. We will be looking at where we are aligned and where we might be missing the mark." Provide each person with a copy of your current program mission, vision, and philosophy statements. Ask each staff member to review these

documents. Engage the staff in a discussion using the following questions:

- a. Does our practice of conducting check-ins reflect our current mission, vision, and philosophy statements?
- b. Is there anything we need to change to be in line with these concepts? If so, what?
- c. What is one thing we can start doing right away to make us more in line with our mission, vision, and philosophy statements?
- d. Does anything surprise you?

At the conclusion of your discussion summarize the team consensus and make a concrete plan on how you will address any needed items to ensure the practice of check-ins is supported by the foundational aspects of your programming.

4. (3 minutes) Share that the next step of our exploration will look at the types of policies & procedures we have (or need to) put in place that support our practice of regular check-ins with every member of a family that uses our services. Developing policies and procedures is considerable work that requires thoughtfulness, assessment, and our collective expertise. Today we will lay the foundation for a smaller workgroup to be able to continue to develop more completely. At the end of our time together, we will be asking for 2-4 volunteers to join the workgroup. There are supplemental tools and guidance available to help the workgroup examine and develop our check-in policies, and we will work together collectively with the workgroup as they are developed. We may also eventually amend and add to existing policies and procedures more comprehensively (not just focused on check-ins), and this process will ultimately help us develop stronger policy development practices.
5. (10 minutes) Large group discussion: “When you think about our current practice or of our center developing the practice of regular check-ins, where do you think we should focus our policy and procedure examination or development efforts? At this stage, we can start with just major themes where you think we need to focus.”

Take notes on the themes that staff bring up. If necessary, you can supplement the conversation by asking about these areas of focus, but let the staff generate ideas before you offer any of these:

- a. Scheduling service with enough time built in to support check-ins
  - b. Staff schedules
  - c. Space/where check-ins will happen
  - d. Incorporating discussion of check-ins in staff meetings and consultations
  - e. Documentation
6. (3 minutes) This next step will allow the staff to practice policy examination together, help establish some group cohesion, and develop a process that feels comfortable. Share: “As a way of developing our policy development skills, now we will hone in on confidentiality specifically as it relates to the practice of check-ins. There is a lot to consider related to check-ins and confidentiality. Check-ins will help you build a strong relationship with participants, and many will become comfortable sharing personal information with you. This brings up an important point: just because the information is shared with you doesn’t mean you are responsible for documenting or doing something with that information. We should all get clear about what and how we document the information we learn in check-ins. We also want you to feel comfortable with the whole process so you can engage authentically with our participants.”
7. (5 minutes) Break the staff into groups of 2-3, and ask them to discuss: What comes up when we talk about creating policy and procedure that balances the importance of survivor safety with confidentiality for both parents and all children and youth during check-ins? Let small groups know they will be reporting back to the larger group.
8. (10 minutes) Large group discussion and report out. You or someone should take notes of the discussion, as this information could be helpful to your future workgroup.

9. (5 minutes) Ask for volunteers for a “Developing or Enhancing Check-In Policies and Procedures Workgroup.” Ideally, it will be helpful to have a workgroup of at least 2-4 people (more is fine if there’s interest). Let people know that learning how to write good policy is an excellent career-boosting skill to develop. They will first be focused on developing policy and procedure specific to check-ins, but in the future, you may assemble another workgroup, including community partners, to assess and modify all current policy as needed. Let the staff know about how much time you anticipate this workgroup will spend, and how you will make accommodations to their schedules. You should also let everyone know that the workgroup will check back in with the whole staff team once they have draft policies related to check-ins, and you will all work together until majority approval is reached. Before you end the meeting, make sure that a first meeting for the workgroup is scheduled, and a general timeline is established for the workgroup to come back to the rest of the staff.
10. Check out: Have the staff team pair up and ask each person to share one specific thing they like or appreciate about their partner and why.



## Module 4, Segment 7: Enhancing the Practice of Meaningful Check-ins

### Supplemental Guide to the Practice of Checking-in: Policy & Procedure Development Considerations

Developing or modifying policies and procedures can feel like a daunting task whether you are building a visitation program from the ground up or taking a moment to reflect on your current programming. However, what we have learned over the years is that when a program develops and revises their policies and procedures in a manner that both accounts for and engages a wide variety of stakeholders in the development and ongoing review and assessment of your programming the outcome is a program that is informed and responsive to the individuals and communities being served. **Being informed by, learning from, and engaging with** participants, staff, and community partners in examining supervised visitation practices has multiple benefits in shaping and guiding a center's work. This approach helps us guide our decisions, develop our policies and procedures, evaluate services, and continually assess the effectiveness of current practices. The think piece on [Informing the Practice of Supervised Visitation](#)<sup>5</sup> can support your work. This resource reviews six approaches to learning about the quality and impact of supervised visitation practices from participants, staff, volunteers, and community partners. The methods include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, check-ins, case file reviews, and case consultations. As you embark on your check-in policy and procedure development or re-examination, here are a few additional steps to follow:

1. Consider **organizing each of your policies and procedures** with a statement of purpose, a clearly articulated policy, and precise procedures to support or carry out your policy.

**Purpose:** The purpose clearly and precisely outlines the reason the policy or section of policies exist. The purpose

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<sup>5</sup> Informing the Practice of Supervised Visitation written by M. Shepard, J. Sadusky, & B. McNamara can be found on the resource page of Inspire Action for Social Change's website. <http://www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org/resources>

statement should be linked to the mission of the organization, the intent and goals of the program, and be firmly grounded in the OVW Guiding Principles. Without providing a purpose statement for each section, the program can easily lose the intent and “why” you have put very specific policies and procedures in place.

**Policy:** A policy is a statement that is determined by an organization to be followed - the “what must be done.”

**Procedure:** A procedure is the instructions - the “how” to carry out a said policy.

It is important to **distinguish policies from procedures**. When developing a policy document, it is very easy to intertwine policies and procedures together. There should also be an intentional process an organization goes through when establishing or revising policies. Policies should not be changed arbitrarily – but as an organization, you can adapt procedures (that would still follow a policy) but be able to accommodate any unique circumstances that may arise.

2. **Ensure your internal staff policy and procedure document is not confused with your center participant guidelines or rules.** These are two separate and distinct documents that serve two separate and distinct purposes.
3. Internal policy and procedures that support the practice of participant check-ins must be linked and support your stated **purpose of check-ins** that you defined early on in your exploration. Refer back to your work in Module 4: Segment 1: Purpose of a Meaningful Check-in.
4. **Policy development considerations and examples\***  
**Consider: Who will conduct check-ins** with each member of the family? Some options to consider include:
  - a. Visitation monitor
  - b. Administrative staff
  - c. The person who has worked with the family the most

**Consider: What specifically will be done.** How will staff be guided and instructed to conduct check-in, what is the goal of this practice, and what purpose will check-in serve in your program.

**Consider: Where will check-ins be conducted?** Where will you instruct staff to carry out check-ins. Don't let the lack of a formalized space get in the way - a dedicated space can simply mean the hallway you use to walk children from one parent to the other or a corner of the waiting area. You want to ensure that it will be a space that you can control who comes and goes so that other center participants are not in the same space during another person's check-in process. A dedicated space shouldn't require a lot of logistics and movement of people or staff to carry out. Ideally, there would be a natural routine and flow to being able to conduct check-ins easily.

**Consider: When will check-ins occur?** What is the expectation you are setting for staff to follow and how will you account for unique needs and individual circumstances? What are your scheduling practices and how will they support the ability to conduct check-ins.

### **Examples of Policies Related to Check-ins to Aid in Your Development Process\***

*\*Note that these examples of policies and procedures collected from centers across the country. They are not intended as model policies but are provided as aids to your policy and procedure development process to support getting your conversations started. The examples provided are not meant for "cut and paste" use. Each center is unique in its challenges and opportunities, so universal policy sharing should be avoided. We recommend you do a deep dive around your center's specific policy needs as they relate to check-ins before adopting any part of these examples.*

## **Sample service delivery policies and procedures**

*The staff should be intentional about connecting with every person using the center's services. Check-in's support the ability of the staff to build relationships, ensure safety needs are being met, and understand each person's unique needs.*

*Center staff will make it a priority to check-in with each parent and child that is participating in services - these conversations may occur informally before and after visits, or by a telephone check-in between scheduled appointment. Parents will also be invited to contact the program staff to arrange for an additional face-to-face meeting if needed.*

*Waiting periods for center participants are an opportunity for the staff to offer time to connect with the staff, provide support, and identify additional needed community resources.*

*Center staff will escort each child from one parent to another. The staff will be intentional and check-in with each child and youth before and after each scheduled service.*

*Center staff will inform each parent of when they can depart from the facility to ensure the safety of the adult victim and children are accounted for, and the staff member has been able to check-in with each party or at a minimum has been able to make arrangements to check-in at a later time.*

*A check-in before and after each visit is an opportunity to provide suggestions and discuss strategies to help support the parent in building a positive relationship with their children. Issues involving interventions that took place may be addressed at the time of occurrence, but may also be discussed during the check-in time.*

### **Sample design of space policies and procedures**

*The visitation space includes a check-in room for each point of entry and is the first area accessed when moving from the waiting areas to the visitation spaces.*

### **Sample scheduling policies and procedures**

*To ensure the safety of each adult victim and child, center staff will determine the visitation plan of each scheduled appointment.*

*When establishing an individualized visitation plan for each parent, the schedule for supervised visits will support a staggered arrival and departure plan and account for the individual needs of each family. The center will follow the general guidelines of reserving two hours of staff time per family. Within those two hours the staff will build in intentional check-in time with each parent and child.*

### **Staff meetings and staff check-ins policies and procedures**

*Center staff will conduct a visit pre-briefing and an after-visit debriefing with the staff team.*

## **5. Final Check: Anticipate and avoid unintended negative consequences. When developing policies, ask the following questions of each policy:**

- How is the policy a reflection of your beliefs?
- How does the policy support your vision/mission/philosophy?
- Does this policy/procedure support the OVW Supervised Visitation Grant Program Guiding Principles?
- Who is the policy established for – who does the policy benefit?
- Why is the policy established? What is the intent of the policy?
- How does it account for the realities of all of the cultural identities of the possible participants?
- How will the policy be evaluated?
- Do the policy and the procedures account for the safety needs of survivors of domestic violence who are the visiting parent?

- Do the policy and procedures conform to any larger organizational rules, laws, or regulations?
- Do the policy and procedures anticipate how a person who uses violence might circumvent the intent of this policy or find ways to use this policy to cause further harm?
- Will you ever need to make exceptions to this policy?
- Do the policy and procedures reflect an understanding that there will be varying degrees of dangerousness and safety risks for each family?
- Is there clarity around why this policy has been established and who the policy benefits?
- Is there clarity around how this policy will be implemented?





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