
CONTENT MODULE: FAMILY, FRIENDS, RELATIONSHIPS

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT FOR BOTH A COACH AND A FAMILY?

Social capital, in the form of family, friends, and relationships, can be a strong source of support for a parent seeking to make changes. The influence of family and friends can have a strong impact on a parent's and family's actions and plans, both positively and negatively. Having a strong and reliable support system – whether to help with child care, lend a ride, or be a shoulder to lean on – is key to a parent's ability to make progress toward goals for family well-being. A cheering squad in their corner can help a parent remain focused even when obstacles arise, as they

naturally will. On the other hand, if a family member or friend casts doubt on a parent's ability or expresses disapproval of change, it can derail the parent's hard work. Sometimes, family members or others mean to be helpful, but dispense inaccurate information, leading a parent to make poor decisions for themselves.

Understanding who is within a parent's circle of support will help you better identify the influences at play in a parent's life and be better able to discuss the impact of those influences on a parent.

GENERAL TIPS AND ADVICE FOR COACHING ON THIS TOPIC:

- Two family-centered coaching tools that can be helpful in identifying and understanding a parent's social capital are Who Is in My Family? and The Wheel of Life. Discussing responses based on Who Is in My Family? not only provides a means to know the people closest to the parent, but also sheds insight on the influence each plays in the parent's life. When completing The Wheel of Life, a coach can explore why a parent rated domains differently and who from their family is impacted by the domain. This conversation allows the coach and the parent to better understand the complexity of relationships and influences.
- When talking with a parent, you may see or hear signs of an abusive relationship. If the parent identifies the need to leave an unhealthy relationship, you need to refer them to a source that can help them develop an exit plan. If you see signs of abuse but the parent does not, then you can share the signs of a healthy relationship and ask how that compares to what the parent identifies as healthy. (See Future without Violence under Resources below. It provides support to programs to talk with parents and has extensive free resources and an 800 number for help, support, and connections to local resources.) If the parent identifies qualities as not healthy, then you can ask scaling questions. If the scale is 1 to 10, ask "How can I support you to move from a 4 to a 5?" Only suggest moving one step at a time. Talk with the parent about what a move to 5 would look like or sound like.

For more information on how and when to make referrals for domestic abuse, see the guidance of the National Association of Social Workers noted in the Resources section below.

Remember, if no local resources are available, you can refer a parent to an advocate from the multi-lingual National Domestic Violence Hotline 24 hours a day by dialing 800-799-SAFE, TTY 800-787-3224.

- Many social services are constructed to serve mothers and children, but not fathers or other significant men in families' lives. If you are serving single mothers, some may not have a relationship with the father of their children but they may have a relationship with another man. Think about whether your questions and program materials create space for the mother to discuss these relationships, which are often a hidden, critical piece of the family puzzle. Also, if your agency doesn't serve men, be familiar with other groups in your community that might. Be an advocate for expanding your own program offerings to all family members.
- For many families, religion and spirituality are fundamental to who they are. Seek to understand the relationships that support this and how a parent draws on that support. Ask if a parent belongs to and/or is active in a faith community. How has the community provided support to the parent? This can be emotional support as well as practical support in the form of vacation camps and providing food or child care during crises. Do other members of the family participate in this community or another one?
- For men in re-entry from the criminal justice system, they may be returning to existing relationships where families have certain financial expectations based on past income he provided. Ask the parent, is the family prepared for this change and the reduced income? How can he adjust to coming home and not earning what he was before? In some cases, referral to family counseling may be helpful.
- It is important to understand the complexity of a family's life. Families may be blended or combined in unique ways. There are many constellations of families including foster families, adoptive families, LGBTQ-headed families, multi-generational families, and chosen families. Sometimes this information is gathered through intake, either in person or by completing paperwork, and the coach can use the information to better understand family dynamics and the communication channels. The more people who are involved, the more time and effort it can take to coordinate and follow through on activities. In your program, you may want to discuss how this information can be gathered in a participants-centered manner.
- Conversations about reproductive health are often best approached through a relationship lens. Reproductive health includes both partners. For parents in heterosexual relationships, programs often approach topics such as contraception as a woman's responsibility. It is important to engage male partners in this conversation to alleviate the burden this can pose on women. Other topics for a shared conversation between partners, regardless of sexual orientation, include pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and other issues.

POWERFUL QUESTIONS AND OTHER FAMILY-CENTERED INQUIRIES:

- Who is your biggest cheerleader?
- How does your religion or faith community provide support to you and your family?
- What network of friends/family do you rely on and can count on when you're in a bind?
- What story about your family/friends/relationship do you most often hear yourself telling?
- What story is holding you back? Story can be changed to reflect each relationship.
- What am I not asking you that may be helpful for us to discuss?
- What is the opportunity here? What is the challenge?
- How does this fit with your plans/way of life/values?
- If there is indication of an abusive relationship, ask "If you went to sleep tonight and this relationship was resolved, how will you know that? How would you be feeling?"
- What do you want to do with this (hard) conversation?
- What is your biggest fear around _____?
- Asking about someone's safety, particularly around domestic violence and substance abuse, can be approached through the use of motivational Interviewing. Motivational interviewing questions around Asking Permission and Normalizing are useful. Some examples are below:
 - Do you mind if we talk about (insert behavior)?
 - Can we talk a bit about your (insert behavior)?
 - A lot of people are concerned about changing their (insert risky/problem behavior).
 - Many people report feeling like you do. They want to change their (insert risky/problem behavior), but find it difficult.

INFORMATION FROM OTHER CONTENT AREAS CAN SUPPORT SUCCESS IN THIS ONE





This topic ties closely in with other topics such as child well-being and parenting; basic needs; financial; and legal. Looking at these areas provides insights into other interests, strengths, and potential challenges that can support or hinder a parent’s ability to make progress toward family, friends, and relationship goals.

OTHER CONTENT AREAS	QUESTIONS FOR THE COACH AND PARENT TO DISCUSS
CHILD WELL-BEING AND PARENTING	What are the ages of your children? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do they do during the day? - What child care, after school needs do they have? - What extracurricular activities do they have?
	Who can provide support for taking care of the children?
	What are the medical needs of your children or other family members?
	For example, if a child has asthma, a parent may have to attend many doctor appointments, or administer meds.
	How can family and friends help you meet the needs of your children/family?
BASIC NEEDS	Tell me about meals in your family.
	How long is the commute to school/training/job?
	Is there public transportation or a car to use?
	Tell me about your living situation.
	What are meals like in your family?
	How can you enlist the support of family and friends re: transportation, housing, food?
FINANCIAL	What do you need to earn to support your family? You should come ready to address this as the family may not know.
	Is anyone else in the family working?
	What other income is coming into the family?
	You can explore benefit options with the parent.

OTHER CONTENT AREAS	QUESTIONS FOR THE COACH AND PARENT TO DISCUSS
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	What are your goals for your own health?
	What has happened in the past when you have set out to do that?
	Are there things you worry about that might get in the way of making good choices related to your health? Your child's health?
	What do you want to be able to do for your child's health?
	Who is available to help you with your health goals? With your child's health goals?

The resources identified below are recommended by the Advisory Committee and Topic Experts for the Family-Centered Coaching Toolkit.

FOR YOUR TOOLKIT: IDENTIFY RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

-  Walk-in counseling centers
-  Crisis lines for parents
-  Community and cultural centers
-  Faith-based organizations

TOOLS/RESOURCES:

Social Capital is an Accelerator for Family Stability and Strength

<http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/pages/social-capital-is-an-accelerator-for-family-stability-and-strength>

Home Grown Social Capital

<http://tinyurl.com/y9k6otqd>

How to Create Healthy Boundaries

https://www.uky.edu/hr/sites/www.uky.edu.hr/files/wellness/images/Conf14_Boundaries.pdf

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

<https://thenationalcampaign.org/>

National Association of Social Workers – Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention

http://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/events/domestic_violence/assessment.asp

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

<http://www.nrcdv.org/>

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community, University of Minnesota

<http://www.idvaac.org/>

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

TTY 1-800-787-3224

Future without Violence

www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Love is Respect – the National Dating Abuse Helpline

Live chat at www.loveisrespect.org

1-866-331-9474

TTY 1-866-331-8453

Text “loveis” to 22522

RAINN – The Rape Abuse Incest National Network

For rape/sexual assault services, contact:

1-800-656-4673 (HOPE)

Secure, online private chat:

<https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>

The Responding to Intimate Violence in Relationship programs (RIViR) project

Funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families, aims to understand how to best identify and address intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of healthy relationship programming. The project has released research-based and expert-informed briefs on this topic.

<http://tinyurl.com/y9zqplyr>

Social Capital And Community Support - United Way

United Way supports 2-1-1, a free and confidential service that helps people across North America find the local resources they need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<https://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/featured-programs/2-1-1>