



# Training

## Menu of Training Services

Be Strong Families Workshops, Training, and Technical Assistance go beyond frameworks and overarching strategies to practical, hands-on, experiential knowledge and skill building. All offerings are strengths-based, family-centered, and trauma-informed as well as grounded in the principles of adult learning. We take a conversational approach in everything we do, engaging participants through their heads and hearts to surface and share their own wisdom and build upon their own experience and expertise. In this way, we strengthen both staff and parents from the inside out and promote the parallel process essential to effective work with families. Most workshops are available in a Train the Trainer format as well.

### BE STRONG FAMILIES CAFÉS

Be Strong Families is internationally known as an innovator in using structured, small-group conversation processes to facilitate transformation, healing, and peace. It began in 2007 with Parent Cafés. Dads Cafés quickly followed. Questions used for conversations in Be Strong Families Parent Cafés and Dads Cafés are based on the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors (see next section).

Due to the success of Parent Cafés, Be Strong Families has developed Vitality Cafés and A More Perfect Union Parent Cafés. Organized around six Vitality Domains (physical, mental / emotional, spiritual, environmental and social), Vitality Cafés both assist participants in charting their own path towards holistic wellness and transform well-being from a personal struggle to a community-based journey. Using the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors and the shared civic values of freedom, prosperity, safety, justice, and healing, A More Perfect Union Parent Cafés honor the broader context for parenting while promoting understanding of different perspectives to move towards unifying our society.

Be Strong Families has also adapted a café process for youth and young adults to empower, inform, and energize their journey to adulthood: Words of Wisdom (#WoW) Talk Cafés. #WoW Talk Cafés are delivered in a series of five 90-minute events, one on each Youth Thrive™ Protective / Promotive Factor.

All Be Strong Families Cafés provide an emotionally safe, nurturing, therapeutic environment for intimate, authentic conversations where participants share their values, dreams, successes, and struggles, and learn from each other about how to be the people and parents they want to be.

### Introducing Be Strong Families Cafés™ (2.5 hours) (Available in English & Spanish)

The best way to understand how and why a café works is to experience one. In this 2.5 hour session, Be Strong Families exposes participants to this highly structured, small-group conversation process that promotes peer-to-peer learning and deep self-reflection. A café begins with welcoming and introduction; next comes an active listening dyad exercise (or in the case of a #WoW Talk Café, a theme-related ice-breaker), followed by three rounds of hosted small-group conversations. After the last conversation round is concluded, participants make a written commitment to themselves to act on what they've learned in the café, debrief their insights and lessons learned through a large-group conversation, and conclude by sharing one word to summarize their emotional experience of the event. After the café experience, staff answer questions about how to get a successful café effort launched and sustained.

### Be Strong Families Café™ Training Institute (16 hours) (Available in English & Spanish)

A Café Training Institute is a two-day experiential and highly interactive training that prepares parents and providers to convene and conduct Be Strong Families Parent Cafés™ and to serve as table hosts at the cafés. By the end of the training, participants will know the anatomy of a Be Strong Families Café, the philosophical foundations and research underlying cafés as an educational and engagement strategy, how to create an ambiance conducive to maximizing the effectiveness of the café process, how to create their own café theme, and how to build on the café experience to enhance programming for parents and youth. Participants will also learn the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors in Parent and Dad Cafés, the YouthThrive Protective and Promotive Factors in #WoW Talk Cafés and the Vitality Domains in Vitality Cafés. They will also have had experience conducting and participating in three café experiences.

### Café Hosting (8 hours) (Available in English & Spanish)

This is a one-day training for parents, youth, program participants, and staff who have participated in at least one café. The café host sets the tone and holds the space for the large group during the café. The goal for participants is to become confident and competent as café hosts.

### Table Hosting at a Be Strong Families Café™ (8 hours) (Available in English & Spanish)

This is a one-day training for parents, youth, program participants, and staff who have participated in at least one café. The goal for participants is to become confident and competent as a café table host. Effective table hosting requires active listening skills, a clear understanding of the Be Strong Families Café™ Agreements, and ways to advance and deepen small-group conversations. It also requires knowledge of the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors for Parent and Dad Cafés, the YouthThrive Protective and Promotive Factors for #WoW Talk Cafés and the Vitality Domains for Vitality Cafés.



## **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ PROTECTIVE FACTORS and YOUTH THRIVE™ WORKSHOPS**

**The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework and the Youth Thrive™ Protective and Promotive Factors Framework were both developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, DC, as research-informed approaches to helping children, youth, and families thrive.**

**These approaches are based on working in partnership with clients to build:**

- Resilience
- Positive social connections
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social, emotional and cognitive competence
- Knowledge

**Be Strong Families has been at the forefront of creating materials appropriate for audiences of parents, youth and young adults, and staff to encourage their partnership in keeping families strong and preparing youth for responsible adulthood.**

### **Living the Protective Factors: Journey to Being a Tight, Loving, and Fabulously Strong Family (8 Hours) (Available in English & Spanish)**

This full-day workshop gives participants the opportunity to “test-drive” the five research-based Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors that are proven to keep children safe and families strong. Highly interactive, fun, and informative- the workshop begins with understanding the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and presents the protective factors as a concrete way to mitigate the long-term impact of trauma. For both parents and providers, this workshop results in participants having practical insight and strategies for overcoming obstacles and strengthening your own family-from the inside out.

### **Assisting Families with Living the Protective Factors (8 hours) (Providers Only)**

This workshop for providers builds on the core Living the Protective Factors (above). Participants surface the myriad ways that they are currently assisting families with building Protective Factors. They will learn how and why it's beneficial for the Protective Factors to serve as an action framework for parenting, as well as a common language between parents and providers, and how Protective Factors can be mobilized by parents to prevent ACES for their children. They will also identify barriers-in themselves and their programs- that get in the way of strengthening families and create action plans to overcome these barriers. Participants will leave with ideas that they can implement immediately upon their return and with a reinvigorated and expanded appreciation for the power of the Protective Factors.

### **Reducing Toxic Stress by Living the Protective Factors (4 hours)**

This workshop, developed for the American Academy of Pediatrics, introduces parents to the concept of toxic stress and explores its relationship to child development, trauma, and adverse childhood experiences. The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework is presented as a way to mitigate the impact of toxic stress. Participants learn ways to embed the protective factors in their family.

### **Living the Protective Factors 7-week Parenting Education Series (Parents only) (Available in English & Spanish)**

This parent education series is based on the Living the Protective Factors Workbook which contains 49 days of activities for parents to learn about, explore, and build the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors at home. During each two-hour class time, parents come together in a fun, inspirational and educational environment to share their experience, learn from each other, gain insight from the group and the group leader, feel supported in their parenting, expand their repertoire of parenting strategies, and gain a deeper understanding of what gets in the way of being a strong, loving and tight family-including childhood trauma.

### **Introduction to the YouthThrive™ Protective and Promotive Factors Framework (8 hours) (Providers only)**

Targeted to staff who work with child-welfare-involved youth, this workshop offers the Youth Thrive Protective Factors framework as a tool for thinking about, organizing, and enhancing their services. Through fun, interactive small-group work, professionals empathically experience the Youth Thrive™ factors. They also build critical thinking and human-centered design skills to their work with child-welfare-involved teenagers. Participants explore how the stages of teenage development are impacted by trauma, what it means to work with and help a teen; stages of development and how trauma impacts youth development are discussed.

### **Using the Protective Factors to Overcome Challenges at Work (8 hours) (Providers Only)**

The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors are a powerful tool for keeping families strong and children safe, but they can also be deployed to solve almost any thorny problem or complex challenge. This workshop uses Art of Hosting conversation technologies and interactive, experiential activities to surface issues that are sapping energy and causing frustration and burnout at work and then uses the Protective Factors to address them. This workshop adds depth and dimension to the practice of Living the Protective Factors. Participants leave feeling re-connected to their purpose and passion, supported by their colleagues, and with more tools in their toolbox to thrive at work and in their work.

## **PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

**Be Strong Families partners with people, organizations, and systems to develop transformative conversations that nurture the spirit of family, promote well-being and prevent violence. While all our activities and services advance the mission, the following workshops are specifically geared to enhance the parent and service provider relationship as a main goal.**

### **Customized Art of Parent Engagement Workshop (4 hours) (Providers only)**

Effective work with families depends on staff's ability to engage and partner with them. Utilizing an extended role-play format, this experiential workshop for professionals assists practitioners with developing empathy for their clients and in-depth understanding of the challenges they face. It encourages self-reflection as a foundation for strengthening their parent engagement skills. Be Strong Families works with practitioners to customize this workshop for their program's needs and the specific situations of their clients.

### **Building Strong Relationships with Families (8 hours) (Providers only)**

This hands-on, activity-based, experiential workshop builds family-serving staff members' parent-engagement skills. Participants also increase their understanding of how their personal attitudes and professional practices contribute to or undermine positive partnerships with parents. Promoting positive outcomes for children is best achieved when the whole family is accepted and supported in an approach that strengthens the family. Recognizing the parent-child bond as the first, most important relationship in a child's life, it is important to have strong, positive relationships with the whole family-including fathers. Having such relationships allows for programs to implement programs that value principles of family-centered practice. This training promotes awareness of the importance of developing skills in building relationships with families through a variety of reflective and interactive activities.

### **Recognizing and Responding to Signs of Family Stress (4 hours) (Providers only)**

Responding to signs of child abuse and neglect is crucial-but research now allows us to start earlier in keeping children safe and families strong.

By recognizing and responding to early signs of stress, family-serving staff can assist families with getting the support they need to promote the health and well-being of their family and prevent abuse and neglect. This training will help participants get in touch with their own stress and help them recognize early signs of family stress.

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### **Communicating with Families (4 hours) (Providers only) (Available in English & Spanish)**

Being able to recognize when a family needs support is important, but whether they get what they need is often impacted by how we, as service providers, communicate with them. This interactive workshop assists participants with understanding why certain conversations are difficult and how they could become less so. Participants will practice effective communication skills and develop action plans for implementing them with parents.

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### **Relationship Based Practice and Making Effective Referrals (8 hours) (Providers only)**

Everybody needs help sometimes and when the right assistance comes at the right time, it can be lifesaving. This workshop teaches participants how to implement a client-driven, partnership-based approach to Information & Referral Services (I&R) where the focus is on building parents' skills to research and access services as they both build their knowledge of what's available in the community.

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## **WAKE UP! TO YOUR POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

**Be Strong Families has developed its own personal- and professional-development system, an energy-based leadership training to develop individuals' capacity to lead in their own life and in the life of their family, as a foundation for assuming leadership roles in the larger community and society. This personal development system is a multi-disciplinary integral synthesis: it is grounded in tenets of positive psychology and humanistic psychology, drawing on strategies from life coaching as well as techniques of cognitive behavioral therapy, and incorporating elements of Eastern / yoga philosophy and practice.**

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### **Wake Up! To Your Potential™ Orientation (4 Hours) (For Parents and Providers) (Available in English & Spanish)**

This workshop gives participants an introduction to the concepts undergirding Wake Up! to Your Potential as well as the type of experiential learning activities that make up the personal-and professional-development system. Participants learn about assessing and harnessing their positive energy and directly experience how their leadership is enhanced as they do this.

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### **Wake Up! To Your Potential: as a Person, as a Parent, as a Leader (For Parents and Providers) (Available in English & Spanish)**

Three eight-hour modules available in two-, four-, or eight-hour segments. Modules are:

- **Maximizing Positive Energy to Direct Your Life**—Learn new ways to build your own resilience and social and emotional

skills; strengthen your personal and professional network of support; reduce stress; communicate more effectively with friends, co-workers, and family members; and increase your understanding of and love and respect for yourself.

- **Clarifying Your Vision and Setting and Achieving your Goals**—Use collage and guided meditation, among other techniques, to gain clarity about living your best life. Learn and practice a flexible, dynamic process to set goals that will put legs on your dreams.
- **Motivating and Inspiring Yourself and Others to Action**—Gain insight into yourself as a leader-including your personal leadership style and its strengths and weaknesses. Learn about communicating as a leader with and without words. Develop listening and public speaking skills.

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### **Wake Up! to Your Potential Leadership Training for Youth and Young Adults to Build the Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors (1.5 hours per module) (Youth and Young Adults only)**

12 experiential, activity-based (nondidactic) 90-minute workshops that promote optimal development for youth and young adults.

- Wake Up! To Your Potential Unit 1A-C: Maximizing Positive Energy to Direct Your Life
- Wake Up! To Your Potential Unit 2A-C: Clarifying Your Vision and Setting and Achieving Your Goals
- Wake Up! To Your Potential Unit 3A-C: Leadership: Motivating and Inspiring Ourselves into Action

**These workshops assist participants with:**

- Preparing for adulthood
- Developing listening and public speaking skills
- Handling stress
- Dealing positively with negative emotions
- Sustaining healthy relationships
- Clarifying a vision for their future

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## **TRAINING FOR CHILD WELFARE AUDIENCES**

**Be Strong Families works in partnership with child welfare systems to bolster their family-centered, strengths-based, trauma-informed services for children and families. All Be Strong Families offerings listed above are available in a customized form for child welfare-involved youth, parents, and professionals. The ultimate goals behind knowledge and skill building in child-welfare-specific workshops are to strengthen families; facilitate permanency, especially through family reunification; keep foster care placements stable; and effectively prepare youth and young adults for successful emancipation.**

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## **FOR CHILD WELFARE SERVICE PROVIDERS:**

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### **Art of Parent Engagement Workshop- Customized for Child Welfare (4 hours) (Providers only)**

Effective work with families depends on staff's ability to engage and partner with them. Utilizing an extended role play format, this experiential workshop for child welfare professionals assists practitioners with developing empathy for their clients and in-depth understanding of the challenges they face. One workshop is targeted for staff working with intact families. Another is customized for staff working with families whose children are placed out of their home. Both encourage self-reflection as a foundation for strengthening parent engagement skills and surface practical parent engagement strategies for staff to put to work in their daily practice.

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### **Assisting and Supporting Birth Parents with Getting on the Fast Track (4 hours) (Providers only)**

Be Strong Families has worked (and is working) with former birth parents to develop resources that support parents whose children are in the foster care system in getting their kids back and keeping them safely at home. In this workshop, staff will learn about the Get on the Fast Track workshop and group support that they can make available to their clients and the benefits that parents report on participating in the workshop.

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### **Integrating the YouthThrive™ Protective and Promotive Factors Framework into Your Work (8 hours) (Providers only)**

Targeted to staff who work with child-welfare-involved youth, this workshop offers the Youth Thrive Protective Factors framework as a tool for thinking about, organizing, and enhancing their services. Through fun, interactive small-group work, professionals empathically experience the Youth Thrive™ factors. They also build critical thinking and human-centered design skills to their work with child-welfare-involved teenagers. Participants explore how the stages of teenage development are impacted by trauma what it means to work with and help a teen; stages of development and how trauma impacts youth development are discussed.

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### **Living the Protective Factors in Child Welfare (8 Hours) (Providers only)**

This full-day workshop for child welfare professionals introduces the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework as an important component of a comprehensive Wellbeing paradigm and links the framework to trauma-informed child welfare practice, demonstrating its practical benefits for bridging communications between child welfare staff, courts, and families.

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### **Maintaining Family Connectedness (4 hours) (Parents and Providers) (Available in English & Spanish)**

Navigating the child welfare system is difficult for any parent and doing the work to get one's children returned home is a monumental feat. When reunification is the permanency goal, maintaining strong family ties while the child is out of their parents' home is essential. Child welfare staff can do a lot to facilitate the process of maintaining family connectedness. This four-hour workshop highlights the importance of maintaining family connectedness and assists child welfare frontline staff with understanding how they can strengthen family ties throughout the life of a case.

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### **Shared Parenting: How Workers Can Assist Birth and Foster Parents with Building Collaborative Relationships (4 hours) (Providers only)**

This workshop introduces child welfare staff to Be Strong Families' Shared Parenting workshop for birth and foster parents. It also assists them with promoting healthy, meaningful working relationships and partnerships between birth parents and foster parents. The curriculum is also infused with strategies for effectively engaging parents and enhancing capacity to:

- Find commonalities and promote harmony and collaboration between foster parents and birth parents
- Practice communication skills for challenging conversations
- Expand empathy and let go of judgment
- Develop strategies to work together to benefit children in care

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### **Trauma-Informed Parenting: Using Lifebooks (4 hours) (Parents and Providers) (Available in English & Spanish)**

Often when children are involved with child welfare, elements of their history can be lost due to a variety of reasons, including multiple placements. Lifebooks are an essential tool in trauma-informed parenting. This training is designed to assist participants with understanding the value of a lifebook for a child in care and the ways in which the collaborative process of developing a lifebook can promote psychological wellbeing and assist with maintaining positive family ties as well as partnerships between birth and foster parents.

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### **Trauma-Informed, Strengths-Based, Family-Centered Practice in Child Welfare (4 hours) (Providers only)**

For child welfare staff who understand the basics of trauma-informed practice and the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors, this workshop takes practice one step further. Participants explore how the concept of emotional safety contributes to transformation and healing and the importance of emotional safety as part of safety and wellbeing, transformative child welfare practice, and parenting. This training introduces participants to Appreciative Inquiry as an interviewing method that, along with the Protective Factors, can surface meaningful strengths to

build on for family reunification. Participants use a case-study method, working from a sample case plan description, to create a Strengths-Based Parent Profile.

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### **Trauma Stewardship (8 hours) (Parents and Providers) (Available in English & Spanish)**

Other people's trauma impacts our wellbeing, whether the other people are our friends, clients, or foster kids. Learning how vicarious trauma affects us is the first step to improving our wellbeing and ability to sustain positive relationships. The workshop begins with learning about and identifying our own signs of trauma exposure response and our emotional triggers. Participants practice strategies for deescalating their own and others' emotional responses in the moment. Further, they learn a framework for reading and shifting their own and others' energy to move into a positive relational zone. This workshop offers tools for increasing staff awareness, skills, and tools for understanding how to best respond when trauma or trauma history is in play. The workshop concludes by exploring the ways in which supervisory relationships can best support trauma-informed care and how workers can create space for reflective practice.

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## **TRAINING OF TRAINER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING TRAININGS FOR BIRTH PARENTS, FOSTER PARENTS, AND YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN CARE:**

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### **Get on the Fast Track to Getting your Kids Back (10 hours) (Available in English & Spanish)**

Get on the Fast Track is an experiential education and support series that provides practical tools and strategies for child-welfare-involved parents to reunify their families. It begins with a 4-hour highly experiential and psychodynamic workshop that surfaces, validates, and then temporarily neutralizes negative emotions related to being involved with the child welfare system. After acknowledging the stress that is inherent in the process, participants brainstorm positive and negative ways to handle the stress. The last hour of the workshop is devoted to an empowerment-based method for birth parents to take control of their destiny and their struggle to get their children back at home. The 3-S concept, **Strategy–Strength–Support**, is shared. Birth parents gain practical knowledge, insight, and conviction about their potential to effectively lead the reunification process. All participants receive Be Strong Families' publication *The Get Real Guide to Getting Your Kids Back* or in Spanish, *'La Neta de los Padres.'*

There are four follow-up or stand-alone 1.5-hour supportive workshops on the following topics:

- Social Connections
- Caseworker Relationship
- Visitation
- Relationship with the Caregiver

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### **Get on the Fast Track to Keeping Your Kids at Home (4 hours)**

The first six months after the return home are extremely challenging for newly reunified families. The difficulty of the transition can be exacerbated by lack of preparedness and unrealistic expectations. This workshop, developed for and with former child-welfare-involved birth parents, assists with emotionally and practically preparing parents for when their children return home. Included are: reconnecting with your children, acknowledging your children's emotions and experience, learning from foster parents, getting support from the child welfare system, and handling communications and relationships with friends and family.

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### **Shared Parenting: Developing Collaborative Relationships Between Birth Parents and Foster Parents (4 hours) (Available in English & Spanish)**

This training brings birth parents and foster parents together, creating an opportunity to understand each other's unique shared parenting role within the child welfare system with the goal of strengthening each participant individually and collectively as a team. This workshop allows parents to take a deeper dive into what does it mean to co parent and respect each other to help the child.

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### **Trauma Stewardship for Foster Parents (6 hours-delivered in 2-hour modules)**

What is important for parenting a child who has experienced trauma? How can foster parents recognize and compassionately and therapeutically respond to behaviors that stem from trauma? How can foster parents recognize when their children's trauma is getting under their own skin? The first workshop in the series begins with learning about and identifying our own signs of trauma exposure response and our emotional triggers. Participants practice strategies for deescalating their own and others' emotional responses in the moment. The second workshop introduces and explores a framework for reading and shifting their own and others' energy to move into a positive relational zone. This workshop offers tools for increasing staff awareness, skills, and tools for understanding how to best respond when trauma or trauma history is in play. The third workshop introduces the Anu Family Services healing trauma paradigm shift from Blame-Shame-Punish-Disconnect to Protect-Connect-Grieve-Regulate and begins a conversation about practical, realistic, responsive trauma-informed parenting.



**To schedule professional development for your team, contact Be Strong Families at: [info@bestrongfamilies.net](mailto:info@bestrongfamilies.net) or (800) 805-2505**