

# Engaging

## Engaging

Talk about what has been working for you as you meet with families. If you would like to enhance and become more comfortable with engaging families, this guide can support you.

### **Explore:**

When you think about talking with families, what do you see as your strengths?  
 What changes would you like to make in the way you relate to families?

## Assessment

### **Scaling:**

On a scale of 1 (need to learn) to 10 (can mentor), where would you place yourself?  
 (Record on the functional assessment.)



### **Scaling Continuum:**

<u>Learning</u> Learning the Skills	<u>Working</u> Using the Skills with Families	<u>Mentoring</u> Using the Skills to Mentor
1. Belief in human beings' ability to change and grow.	1. Belief that families can change, grow, and learn new ways of behaving and coping.	1. Belief in human beings' ability to change and grow.
2. Belief in the ability to support families through change and growth.	2. Support families through growth, change, and the learning process.	2. Belief in the ability to support individuals through change and growth.
3. Desire to improve professional competence to support others through growth and change.	3. Acknowledge to families that they are the experts on their family and you are there to support them in making and carrying out their plan.	3. Desire to improve professional competence to support others through growth and change.
4. Respect others' knowledge, values, and ability to determine what is right or what works for them.	4. Acknowledge value differences and families' rights and responsibility to adhere to their own value system.	4. Respect others knowledge, values, and ability to determine what is right or what works for them.

<b><u>Learning</u></b> <b>Learning the Skills</b>	<b><u>Working</u></b> <b>Using the Skills with Families</b>	<b><u>Mentoring</u></b> <b>Using the Skills to Mentor</b>
5. Enjoy talking with others about their experiences and begin to build trust.	5. Help families connect to their own family culture and history as a source of their strength.	5. Enjoy talking with colleagues to build supportive relationships.

## **Planning**

1. What will it look like when you are relating to others as a strengths-based social worker?
2. What steps can you take that will lead to the desired result?

## **Practice Opportunities**

<b>Mentor with Caseworker</b>	<b>Caseworker with Family</b>	<b>Family with Family</b>
Have a discussion around a value that you and the caseworker agree on or disagree about. Discuss how respecting others' differences help us strengthen our own values and how finding common ground helps build working relationships	Have a discussion around a value that you and the family agree on or disagree about. Discuss how respecting others' differences help us strengthen our own values and how finding common ground helps build working relationships	Support or facilitate a discussion around a value that the family and a child agree on or disagree about. Discuss how respecting others' differences help us strengthen our own values and how finding common ground helps build working relationships
Find examples in your work where withholding judgment was helpful in creating an atmosphere of change for the family.	Work in an environment of full disclosure with a family and observe how full disclosure contributes to building a trusting relationship.	

## **Knowledge Base**

### **Concept:**

Developing engaging skills

### **Basic Elements:**

Engaging  
Values

Attitudes  
Full disclosure

### **Definitions:**

#### Engaging

Engaging is a foundation skill for strengths-based social work. It is the basis for developing and maintaining a trusting relationship with families and team members. It is founded on a caseworker's respect of individual attitudes and values. To engage families it is vital to believe in a family's ability to change and grow. It is also important to trust a family's ability to identify solutions and steps to meet their needs.

#### Values

Values are strong beliefs that emerge from the way one feels and that guide human actions and behaviors. Social work values include:

- The worth and integrity of individuals and families.
- The self-determination of individuals and families.
- The purposefulness of human behavior.
- Individuals' and families' capacity to grow and change.
- Individuals' and families' need for opportunities of growth and development.
- Individuals' and families' right to participate actively in the child welfare and teaming process

#### Attitudes

When looking at our own attitudes we see them in the context of our life experience, values, strengths, needs, wants, desires, and feelings. When we are assessing the attitudes of others it is important to remember that we are not able to place their attitudes and responses into the context of their experience, values, strengths, needs, wants, desires and feelings. Attitudes are further influenced by fear (which is important for the Child and Family Services worker to remember), health, current circumstances, etc.

#### Full disclosure

Open, honest, respectful discussion with birth family on rights, responsibilities, timeframes, permanency options, consequences, expectations of the agency; gentle confrontation about ambivalence to plan or be involved in planning. It honors the integrity of the process and ensures that birth parents and resource parents have the same information, thereby allowing them to make informed decisions. Full disclosure provides the birth parents with a "lay of the land" and a road map of what needs to occur and when/if their children are to be returned home.