

# Promoting Child Well-Being and Permanency Through Healthy Relationships

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Webinar Transcript Provided by PGI Global

**Operator:**

Please stand by. We're about to begin. Good day and welcome to the Promoting Child Well-Being and Permanency Through Healthy Relationships Conference Call. Today's conference is being recorded.

At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Rebecca Fairchild. Please go ahead ma'am.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Thank you so much and hello everyone. Quickly before we get started, if you are watching in a group, could you please just let us know how many people are sitting with you in the box that is on the right side of your screen? I'm going to give people a couple seconds to put some information in and then we'll get started.

All right. I'd like to welcome you to the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Webinar entitled, "Promoting Child Well-Being and Permanency Through Healthy Relationships." My name is Rebecca Fairchild and I am part of the Resource Center Team.

I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today. Before we get started I'd like to go over a couple of items to - housekeeping items before we go.

Today's audio is being broadcast through your computer speakers. Make sure that the volume for your computer speakers is turned up so that you can hear the presentation.

New featured resources that will be discussed in today's Webinar are available for you to download from the pod in the top right corner of your screen designated with the word "File." Please click the name of the file you wish to view from the download button to open and save a copy to your resource to your computer.

The resources and video shown today will also be available on our Web site, [healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://healthymarriageandfamilies.org). To visit our Web site, click the link in the middle pod on your right designated with the words "Web link."

We will be taking questions at the end of the presentation but we encourage you to submit any questions you have throughout the duration of the Webinar. To do this, find the question and answer pod designated with the letters "Q&A" in the right bottom portion of your screen.

Type your question in the open field at the bottom and then click the "Send Question" button or hit enter. A recording of this presentation, the slides, a transcript, and a question and answer document will be posted to the "Past Events Archive" on our Web site, [healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://healthymarriageandfamilies.org) under the "Training, Technical Assistance, and Events" tab.

The objectives of today's Webinar are to introduce the Children's Bureau's Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training Project and to discuss its outcomes and impacts. We will also identify research-based resources and skill-building tools available to support the integration of relationship education into various service delivery systems.

Today's Webinar will be moderated by our Resource Center staff members, Ted Futris, Training and Technical Assistance at the National Resource Center and Debra Gilmore, Operations Manager with the National Resource Center. So with that I'd like to turn the call over to Ted here at the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. Ted?

**Ted Futris:**

Thank you Rebecca. Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us this afternoon for this wonderful Webinar. We are very fortunate to have as guest speakers with us Dr. David Schramm from University of Missouri, who's the project lead for the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training Project.

He'll share a little bit with us about the project and what it's done, as well as Sue Tew Warming, who's a Consultant with 2 Consulting in Iowa, a training participant who also has been supporting efforts in her state encouraging others to attend the training. She'll share a little bit about what they have been doing in Iowa.

And Amanda Ratliff, a Program Coordinator with Parents as Teachers in North Carolina, also a participant. She'll share with us a little bit about her experience with the training.

Before we get started with their presentations, I wanted to give you a brief overview and description of the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, particularly for those of you who might be joining the Webinar for the first time and learning about it for the first time.

The mission of the Resource Center is about connecting healthy marriage education skills and safety net services as an integrated approach to strengthening families. Families that you serve require a lot of targeted services and many times services directed toward strengthening couple relationships are often overlooked but often very critical to sustaining positive change and helping families.

So the Resource Center is there available for stakeholders to engage to identify resources they could use to prepare them to do this work. And by stakeholders - you hear stakeholders, you hear safety net providers, and by that what we refer to are federal, state, tribal and local government agencies such as those that are listed here in the diagram which includes: Child Support, Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, as well as work force investment boards and community partners.

Safety net providers also include child welfare professionals, particularly those who were targeted as part of the Healthy Relationship and Marriages Education Training Project. Healthy marriage education specifically really focuses on teaching those interpersonal skills such as communication, conflict resolution, along with other critical skills such as parenting and financial literacy.

So the goal of the Resource Center is really to help safety net service providers understand what healthy marriage relationship education is, provide resources to develop the competencies to teach those skills to the clients that you work with.

So with that brief overview of the Resource Center, I'm now going to turn it over to Dr. Dave Schramm who can share a little bit more about what the Healthy Marriage Relationship Education project was all about. Dave?

**Dr. David Schramm:**

Hey thanks Ted. Hi everybody. My name is Dave Schramm and I'm an Associate Professor and State Extension Specialist in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies here at the University of Missouri. I'm also the lead on the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training Project funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Children's Bureau.

I'm happy to be a part of the Webinar and share some information about the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training project, or HRMET, we call it for short, and the impact the project has had on the integration of healthy marriage and relationship education into child welfare services.

To get a little background, about five - let's see, are we having trouble on the - okay, looks like we're going to take a quiz here, a little pop quiz I'll begin with.

Approximately how many children in the United States were in foster care in 2012? I'll give you a few seconds to select an answer there on your screen. See the numbers moving - give you a few more seconds. Okay. Good.

According to one government source at the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System, there were nearly 400,000 children in foster care as of September 30, 2012. And there's a body of research indicating that healthy marriage and relationship education can benefit the parents and caregivers of these children, and this includes benefits to single parents, co-parents, married parents, grandparents, relatives, and other foster parent care takers in addition to youth.

So to give you a little bit of background on the project, it was about five years ago our extension team, which I'll describe on the next slide, was awarded a five-year cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau under the Administration for Children and Families.

And our task was to review several decades of research in relationship and marriage education programs, essentially taking the best of the best from these programs and then developing, disseminating, and evaluating this relationship and marriage education curriculum as a way to share skills and resources and tools to support child welfare professionals and social workers in building protective factors in families which may help prevent future child welfare involvement.

Ultimately, the big picture, one of the primary goals of the Children's Bureau is to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. And our method of doing that was by giving child welfare professionals the education and the tools so they could help parents and caregivers develop the knowledge and the skills they needed to form and maintain healthy couple and co-parenting relationships.

So you can see that the spillover effect -- spillover effect on your screen -- from couples to parents to children, and this concept, it really made sense for the professionals and the parents that we trained.

The project was developed with the help of a partnership between Extension of the University of Missouri in addition to the North Carolina State University, the University of Georgia, Iowa State University, and the University of Arkansas. We pulled and really adapted resources and information from the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network, or NERMEN for short.

And I should note that there was only one of these cooperative agreements awarded across the nation. And so our team felt very fortunate to receive this award and work together on this unique project.

So the HRMET curriculum consists of seven modules represented by the seven icons on the screen. I need to note up front that the training reinforces a “do no harm” approach and emphasizes that safety in relationships really is a priority. In fact, relationship and marriage education is not recommended if there’s domestic violence. That can actually make things go worse.

So the seven modules came from the core components featured in the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model, which are strength-based, they’re process oriented elements that build relationship quality. Now you’ll notice the four on the top row are things the individual controls and does for the relationship while the three on the bottom row are things the couple does together for the relationship.

And I’ll provide a very brief overview of these concepts to give you a basic idea of what they entail. So we start with care for self, which stresses the fact that if a person is taking care of himself and tending to their own physical, mental, and emotional well-being, it fosters healthier couple and marital relationships.

Next is choose, which emphasizes that strong, healthy, long-lasting relationships don’t just happen by chance but instead through deliberate and conscientious decisions to be committed, intentional, proactive. It’s strength-focused. And the focus is not only on the importance of choosing a partner but then also choosing to stay committed and invested throughout the relationship.

The concept of know has to do with developing intimate knowledge of each other’s personal and relational needs, interests, feelings and expectations. This concept also focuses on knowing before going into a relationship -- for those who are single -- as well as knowing as you’re going throughout the relationship for those who are already in a relationship. Things change over time.

The concept of care addresses the importance of investing in a relationship, so expressing kindness, attempting to understand and demonstrate respect and making time to be available and open to one’s partner. It’s all those little things that add up, that show your partner that you love them.

With the concept of share down below, the main idea is spending meaningful time together and fostering a shared sense of couple identity in order to sustain a close, enduring friendship based on trust and love.

And then manage deals with healthy ways and strategies to manage differences, contain stress responses, soothing their partner, listening attentively, making efforts to understand their partner's point of view. We also emphasize emotional and physical safety as well in manage.

And finally the concept of connect emphasizes the fact that the connections couples develop with their family, their peers in the community, offer a source of meaning, of purpose and support that influence the health of the couple relationship.

So that's a quick overview of basically a 6-1/2 hour day in a nutshell of these guiding concepts. I'll give you a little taste of some of the resources, the tools and things that we've developed.

We learned from some focus groups early on that child welfare professionals didn't have the time or the ability to get into deep discussions regarding relationships and go through quote/unquote "lessons" in a specific order as is often the case with traditional marriage relationship education.

What they wanted was something simple and brief yet had to be meaningful, that they could review with a parent or a couple and in fact leave with them this little tool. So we developed simple tools based on the principles taught in the training. So these tools are basically a one-sided handout that teaches a principle and then asks a parent to do something or write something or think about something.

For example, you'll see that one on top and they're talking about money tool. You see there it first mentions the fact that many couples have disagreements about money. And then it discusses expectations and then invites them to discuss things that they want and differentiate that from things that they need and then asks them to set goals, simple steps really to reach their financial goal.

Other tools are similar in that they teach a principle, then invite the participant or couple to check boxes or fill in some information or brainstorm answers together. On the other side of these tools, on the physical tools, are instructions for the child welfare professional to read and study beforehand, before they visit this individual or couple so they have an understanding about the purpose of the tool and to use it, how to sit down with an individual or couple and discuss it with them.

So the idea is for them to make copies of only the tool side of the handout and give to those they work with if they think it might be helpful for them. The bigger idea here is that we want the child welfare professionals and those who use this to pick and choose the tools that meet the needs of the parents and not feeling like they have to go in and here's a specific order, okay here's lesson 1. We sit down, we go through this long, lengthy principle.

But it's more they see a need. They're visiting with a couple. They say ah, I remember a tool that may be helpful and they can literally pull into their bag or come back next time and give them a tool.

You also see the relationship wheel that we created. It's about eight or nine inches around. And this wheel provides a bullet point summary of each of the seven concepts. So it's front and back and then you can see the principles by rotating the wheel. So

another tool that the child welfare professionals have said is very helpful. Some of them have actually given them to couples, individuals, and parents that they work with and they found those to be very helpful and always asking us, actually, for more of those.

I need to mention that a key assumption here is that the information is intended to help people who want to have a healthy relationship. So they have to have that desire. If there are other serious issues such as mental health or drugs or abuse, these tools shouldn't be used until those other issues are processed and worked through.

To date, our HRMET team has trained close to 1400 professionals across the five states involved in the project over the past three years. The first two years were really developing a curriculum and refining it.

The total training time as I mentioned is about 6-1/2 hours and are led or co-led by state extension specialists. And our evaluation efforts led by those at the University of Georgia focused on knowledge, awareness of relationship and marriage education resources, abilities, you know, how comfortable they are delivering these types of resources.

And this really is a pioneering effort when it comes to training child welfare professionals in relationship and marriage education, really the first time that these two fields have merged. So we wanted to better understand whether they feel this training is useful, if it's needed, whether they'll use the tools with families they serve and if they feel prepared to do so.

Here's a snapshot of two rounds of training, okay, so round three data currently are being collected. These charts show only three time points, but we actually have data at two-weeks post training and two-months post training as well. But this captures the significant differences from pre-test to six months post-test.

And most of the participants completed the pre-test online through Survey Monkey prior to arriving at the training. Then the post-test was completed at the end of the day of the training. They would fill that out a hard copy. And then the two-week, two-month, and a six-month post-test they completed online through Survey Monkey.

So if you're a trainer like us, you love to see these differences across our outcomes of knowledge and ability, comfort, and change in awareness of resources. In each area you'll notice there's a pretty drastic change. And even more impressive to us is that the change is sustained over time.

In addition to the numbers in the graphs, the feedback and comments from the participants, they tell a similar story. A participant from Iowa says, "I've given the tools to my workers and they are using them with my families. One family in particular used to have domestics frequently. Hasn't had one in about a two-month period. That is huge. It used to be weekly."

Another from Georgia says this, "In working with a couple who had been physically abusing their children, I've been able to make the connection with them about sharing and caring," - those are two of those little concepts we talked about earlier - "and they have been open to that information."

And finally from here in Missouri, someone said, "I used the wheel to show how they can be working together more as mother and father for their children." So in summary, we

found that the child welfare professionals are not only open to receiving this relationship and marriage education training, but they love the training and following training so they're ready to strengthen couple and/or co-parenting relationships. They also know when a situation warrants a referral.

So that's a mouthful. At this point, I think I'll turn the time over to Sue in Iowa. She can tell you more.

**Operator:** And Sue can you please check your mute function. We cannot hear you at this time.

**Sue Tew Warming:**

I apologize. Again, this is Sue Tew Warming, and I am a consultant with the Child Welfare Provider Training Academy here in Iowa. The Child Welfare Provider Training Academy is funded through our Department of Human Services, and our function is to provide trainings to our contractors that work directly with our youth and our families.

The contracts include in-home services as well as residential, shelter, supervised apartment living, and our after-care program. And the after-care program here in Iowa functions specifically for our youth 18 to 21 that have aged out of foster care.

We coordinate about 30 to 35 trainings a year. Those are live trainings. We also have online Webinars and other resources to support our field.

So how did the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education training come to Iowa? I was contacted by Anthony Santiago of the Iowa State University Extension. And he is the lead person here in Iowa. And Anthony and I met and we talked about the training goals of the HRMET as well as what is the function and the focus for the department here in Iowa.

And we found that the training goals really match up to the Iowa goals as far as safety, permanency, academic success and of course well-being. And so as the Child Welfare Provider Training Academy, our role became the one that would coordinate and help to market to the field. We worked with the administrators in the agencies all the time, and we were a natural fit to help to coordinate all of this.

The other thing that we obviously really liked about the overall approach was the holistic approach. As Dave just mentioned, it's strength-based and really focuses on what's going on for the family and for us very much for our youth-centered approach as well.

The other thing that was really drawn to this was the practical information, the tools and the resources, those things that can be used immediately with families. When working with agencies and providers here in Iowa, the one thing they always ask us all the time is give us practical applications that we can use tomorrow. They wanted something that they could use right away and they didn't want to go Google themselves to find good activities.

So working with Extension and especially with Iowa State Extension as much as I have, I knew that this would be research-based and a really good product coming out of the Extension world. So there was no concerns about moving forward with this.

And as we did move forward, the participants were really happy, basically, with the information and the tools. And again, they were very useful in home visits, for those that

worked directly with our families. But they also found that they were very effective with working with the older youth in care, those that were still in care and those that are in after-care or the ones that were just recently aged out.

Often they were finding that those older youth have never really experienced anybody having a good relationship, so they don't know what that really looks like. So there's been a lot of opportunity to work with those older teens.

They really liked a lot about the whole framework as Dave just went through, those seven concepts and how that was a foundational framework that they really could use with the families and with the youth as they went to have their sessions with them.

So the next step we had to talk about was really those strategies for success; how were we going to introduce this to Iowa? So the first thing obviously was we had to build the relationships. And Iowa like in many states, there is limited resources and it's hard for folks to get to trainings.

So administrators really want to know that the trainings are good things. So what I would do is I would take the 3-ring binder, which is just an amazing resource guide itself, and I would take that to trainings and I would take that to meetings and I would show the folks this is what you're going to get and to really create that relationship.

The other thing that really was a good tool for us for success was once a participant actually attended a training, they would like talk to everyone they knew about what a great resource it was and how the tools could be just pulled out and just used with everybody at any time.

The next thing we did for a strategy is we really followed up with our participants. We believe strongly that we don't want to do a one-and-done here in Iowa. And so through the Training Academy we offered more of a blending approach.

So once we do a live training, we do follow up with additional resources or information, something to remind them of the tool as well as to give them more information. And that was really easy working with this program because of the ongoing Webinars and the Web site through the National Resource Center, we've been able to just support mostly what we've done, through what's already been sent to us from the organization that's doing the whole initiative.

The other thing that recently was added was the list serve. And we sent that out to all of our participants. And I think we only had a few people opt out, to not participate. So they've all joined the list serve so they can get updates and more information.

And one of the reasons we feel this is so important is because of the communication with participants needs to be an ongoing thing. So many times we've all gone to those great trainings and we hear some really good information but then we get back to the office and there's 40 e-mails and 10 voice mails and a bunch of things going on and our day's already full the next day.

So it's real easy to put these resources on the shelf and kind of forget about them. So this ongoing communications and follow-up was another strategy that we did to remind people of the tool and of the resources that they have available to them.

One of the other things we wanted to do was to really find out what the participant feedback was. So we created a simple Survey Monkey for our participants here in Iowa. And we basically asked them four questions; what was the most useful; what have they integrated or applied; which concepts, which concepts do they feel the most useful; and what changes have they seen since they've been using the information from this program.

And basically as far as the integration strategies, the main thing they just talked about is it gives them things to have - they call them conversation starters. Sometimes when they go out to talk to a family, they just have a conversation about how are things going, but with the tools and this training, they can actually take - as Dave just mentioned in the last session - they can take things and they can share those.

So they can have a conversation today and perhaps follow up at the next session with even more of an in-depth conversation about a specific topic. It also can be very much customized. So if a couple or a young person is really struggling with connecting or care for self, they can focus in on that, and they can add resources that will go along with that to make it even more strong.

As far as the most useful concepts, it was a pretty even all across the board. They said the overall framework is the most helpful concept: having seven different areas to choose from to work with the families and with the young people that they work with.

And then when we talked about using the tools, they basically just said it was a way to reinforce what they were talking about and more importantly to take things to a deeper level. Again, a lot of our young people haven't always had the best role models and the ones that work with our youth that are in after-care really talk about how important it is to be able to - for them to know what a healthy relationship looks like.

The last thing I want to share with you is just a couple things that our participants gave us as feedback. One individual put, "I am better able to identify what areas couples need to work on." And again that goes back to having the seven different components to choose from and to really be able to individualize things.

Another person wrote, "One client is becoming more thoughtful about getting herself into relationships and we are able to discuss if her relationships are healthy or unhealthy."

And again this was one of our after-care advocates. And she was working with a 20-year-old that just had really never had good, positive relationships. And just being able to have that conversation, instead of saying, "You're making choices," to really help that teenager, that young adult, to learn and to figure things out for themselves.

Overall here in Iowa, the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training has been well received and embraced by all of those who have participated. In a field where staff have multiple demands on them at all times, one staff said that she felt that she was "more calm and comfortable with interacting with families". And that's what we really want with our child welfare professionals, to have the tools and the resources to be comfortable, calm and prepared to support our family and youth during these challenging times.

And with that I am going to turn this over to Amanda.

**Amanda Ratliff:**

Hi, I'm Amanda Ratliff and I coordinate a Parents as Teachers Program in North Carolina that serves families with children ages zero to five. And basically what Parents as Teacher is, it's a family-strengthening program that helps the family get the child ready to go to school.

And several of the families that we serve in the area are involved in the child welfare system. And I've been doing coordinating the program for 11 years. And I normally meet one-on-one with families through home visits, so I'm coming from a service provider perspective.

I participated in a Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training in August of 2012 - last year - here in North Carolina.

The training helped in many different ways with the program. It helped a lot with the resources that are important to the work I do with children and families. And a lot of times we don't consider healthy relationship development with the families because they're so focused on child development.

So it really made me stop and think about looking at the healthy relationships of the families we serve and if that's something we needed to incorporate in the program when the family and if the family expresses interest in this.

We've always said that if -- in the program, in Parents as Teachers - that if you want to meet the needs of the children, you also have to meet the needs of the family. So we started really looking at the tools once I came back from the training to figure out a way that we could incorporate it into the program.

My population that I serve is a very low literacy population that's mainly Latino. And it's been very challenging sometimes to adapt the tools because sometimes the handouts are very word heavy. With a lot of my Latino families, their basic education level is about an elementary education level.

So it's been challenging at times to adapt those tools to the population I'm serving due to those factors. Slowly, but surely, we began working on adapting the tools. I don't usually give the families a lot of resources with a lot of words on it, but the relationship wheel has been the most helpful.

It gives a visual for the families because the more concrete I can make it the better off they can understand it, and they can utilize the information in it. So a lot of times I usually read out the key concepts to our lower literacy families.

I also use the love maps tool a lot. That is a tool that has about 20 questions on it, things that - what's your favorite hobby? What's your favorite food? Things like that so that they can really start thinking about their relationships and their family well-being.

Normally when I'm working with a family, I normally talk through the tools with them orally to help them complete them instead of doing it on paper. I try to avoid writing down on paper as much as possible because that can be intimidating to the families. And since I work with a lot of Latino families I also can translate the tools into Spanish for them during my conversations with them.

Mainly, once I started looking at the tools, I mainly did a trial and error with the resources and tools. Sometimes some of it worked with the families, and some of it did not. But I just had to get in there and get my feet wet with it.

So I had to spend some time getting to know the tools and some of them I just jumped right in and used them right away. Because of the setup of the program, there's not a lot of direct support that is needed, so my supervisors are not supportive but they're also not unsupportive.

So the families I serve have been very supportive and receptive to the information. And I think a lot in Parents as Teachers especially, we get so focused on the needs of the children that we don't need really focus on the needs of the parents because we're so busy trying to get them ready to go off to school.

Most of the couples I work with currently are not married so they're in co-parenting relationships. And integrating the healthy marriage and relationship education into the program has helped the parents to focus a little bit more on themselves and their health and well-being so that they can be better parents and we can preserve those protective factors in the family as well.

Most of the parents are very focused on the children and trying to be the best parent they can be. But several of the tools have helped them realize that their well-being, including their relationship, is important for the well-being of their children. And this can ultimately help them to be a better parent and their child benefits.

The Latino families especially in my experience are so focused on their children. We try to encourage healthy relationships as well for the well-being of their children.

And one of the concrete examples I can give is of a family that - they're young parents and they were just newly married. And they have one child and the mom is expecting another child. And I don't get to work with a lot of fathers during the home visits, but with this family I get to see the father of the child from time to time.

Again, they were very young parents. They were very young when they became parents. And over time I've been actually able to watch the father grow up. And we've - during one of the home visits with the couple -- we had been talking about them spending time together. And the mother and father both expressed a lot of interest in this topic.

And so I was able to later on the home visit bring back some tools for them. And I started to use the wheel to talk about the key healthy relationship concepts. And we had talked about a situation during a home visit where the mother felt like her feelings weren't being validated by her husband, and he wasn't giving her the affection and respect that she felt that she needed and deserved.

And she really talked a lot to me about how this was starting to affect her parenting of the child. So I used the wheel as a guide and we talked about how they do express affection and appreciation toward each other. Then the father began to think about his actions and ultimately their children.

And also one of the tools I used with this particular situation was the Love Maps which was 20 questions. So I kind of made it into like the Newlywed Game on TV to where that

they could - you know, they had a really good time playing it and it was very concrete for them, and they also learned from it. And then also kept it very light-hearted for them.

And so they really started thinking about remembering why they got into the relationship and why they ultimately decided to get married. But a lot of my families have a lot of different various obstacles in their way and they don't get to enjoy each other a lot.

So this couple really got into talking about the different questions and Love Maps tool. And then after that session, there were several home visits later, the father started asking me questions about healthy relationship skills and you could really see he was starting to take it to heart and so was the mother.

So every time I was able to provide them with more tools. So slowly with a lot of time and persistence we're incorporating more of the tools. And we've already seen some positive results in such a brief period of time.

But now I'll turn it back over to Dave.

**Dr. David Schramm:**

Thank you. I just want to reiterate some points made earlier and share some additional insights. At the beginning of the project, many of the child welfare professionals including many directors and administrators, they were reluctant -- suspicious maybe -- and even hesitant about the whole idea of sharing relationship and marriage education with workers.

For many it was difficult to see the connection to their work of promoting child well-being and permanency. However, we invited them to come as well to see what the training was like. And afterwards they better understood the spillover effect I described earlier about, you know, when things are not going well in the couple relationship, it often spills over into the parent-child relationship.

And when children are abused and neglected - not always but often - it's in the context of an unhealthy couple relationship. And so we were able to hopefully clarify a few things. Some of them - you know, we had to make it clear up front that we're not turning them into therapists. This isn't therapy.

In fact, I don't have any background in therapy. This is skills training that they were hungry. They wanted something more than Dr. Phil when they had - because they would encounter parents that had questions.

So we received great feedback. Many of the child welfare professionals, they came up afterwards and said, "We've never received anything like this." And many felt that this should be included in their orientation, in their ongoing training.

So we're excited about the work that has taken place these past five years and we look forward to partnering with those in the child welfare field in other states to strengthen families and promote healthy child outcomes.

And I will transition to Debra.

**Debra Gilmore:**

Thanks Dave and thanks to our other presenters as well, to Amanda and Sue. I am

going to give you a sense of how we decided to use the HRMET curriculum and build on it.

So the Resource Center took what the Children's Bureau project -- the HRMET as it's been called -- project did. They took that some of those lessons learned that you've heard about. And we also knew that there was a great demand -- for a variety of reasons there's been a great demand -- for an online, more and more online training.

And so we tasked ourselves with taking the core curriculum, the lessons learned, and that need for online training, and building it for not only child welfare workers but the broad range of safety net service providers who we're not only targeting but who are really all out there building trust relationships with parents and different family members and are becoming credible sources for not just the information that they went to school to provide parents with but are becoming credible resources for all the needs of families.

So we took what was in the curriculum and it had those seven core principles that Dave went over and we built it into seven chapters of an online training course. We're going to take you to our virtual training center now and Rebecca is going to be my on-screen navigator to take you to the Virtual Training Center.

What I want to do is walk you through the Virtual Training Center itself so that our training center becomes a resource to you and not an unknown scary thing that's out there. I know I like to see what a thing is and that it's not some strange lite version that someone's going to ask you for money later or anything like that. You'll see the resource itself and then how we took the HRMET curriculum and what that looks like on our Virtual Training Center.

So this is what we have on our screen now is our Web site and the Virtual Training page under "Training, Technical Assistance and Events." It takes you to the Virtual Training Center. Under "Courses and Tutorials," you'll see that we have two courses that we renamed "Strong Relationships, Strong Families."

The introduction is specifically that, it's an introduction to the healthy relationship education concept - what it is, what it is not. Some of you may have been on our Webinars or participated in our Integration Institute. We really go more into that in those arenas. That course is about - it's usually no more than an hour to go through if you yourself are looking for more information about what this really is.

The second one, "Integrating Healthy Relationship Education Skills into Social Services" is what we adapted from the HRMET curricula.

So we're now going to take a look and register at the registration process. If it is your first time registering for the course, you're going to be on the right side of this two-column page. And we're just going to take a peek at what's there by clicking on "Create New Account."

We're not really going to do that today. This is just to give you a sense of what we collect and what we ask you for. The only storage thing I think that you will see is that as you're going through inbox number 2, you will see that the state does not follow city - and coming between city and country. That is actually because the software that we use does not come from the United States so we had to add state as a separate thing.

Why do we ask you for all of this? The reason is because we are a funded project and we want to make sure that we are serving our stakeholders - serving your needs - and one of the ways that we can do that is by collecting some basic demographic information about who you are.

We encourage you always, always to contact us another way and give us more substance to the content, feedback on what you're seeing. But this is just one of the basic ways that we can collect information about who's finding our site, at least who's going up to register for it.

So we're now going to go back to the log-in page. And go ahead and mark "in." So that's how to register. I actually - I apologize, Rebecca, I'm going to have you go back once again to the log-in page.

The first thing I'm going to do is show you as a new user what you will see for the second course for the Integrating Education into Social Services course. So we're going to log-in as "socialworker1". And if you'll all give me a moment I'm going to be silently letting Rebecca know what the password is.

We really, really want to collect your information though - who you are logging onto the site. Just to prove that we are live, we are going to do a couple of things wrong.

Okay so as a new user, Rebecca, if you'll take a look in the left navigation under "Home" you'll see "Courses." And when you first come in as a new user, that's the home page you'll see. And you'll see under "Courses" our course catalog.

So right now we have two actual training courses. Those are the two that we mentioned on our Web site page that are both from the Strong Relationships, Strong Families Series.

And then you'll also see that we have one tutorial. You'll see more tutorials and more courses coming in the months ahead. Tutorials are based on our products and they walk you through those products. So another one that's in addition to this one, that is the Toolkit for Stakeholders in Addressing Family Violence Prevention.

The next one that you will see coming soon is our Curriculum Guide. And it will walk you through if you're looking for your low-cost research-based curriculum to use and to integrate. It will walk you through a process of choosing the best ones based on who you're serving and what kinds of information you want to provide.

Coming back up to the courses -- I did neglect to mention but should -- but these are built so that we are not a continuing education unit course without an approved provider of continuing education units. You generally have to go back to your certified agency or organization to receive those. But what we do provide is as much information as we found generally folks need for that.

So you will receive a course completion certificate when you complete one of our courses. You will find a course description -- which we can show you in just a minute -- where you'll find that, that gives the basic information, the target audience, who provided the training and what the objectives were.

And you'll also - each of the courses will have some type of testing atmosphere and you don't receive your certificate until you've gotten an 80% passage. But we will get to that in slightly more detail in just a moment as well.

So Rebecca's just going to show you how you can choose to start the second course. And you would just enroll me, or yourself. And then we magically figure out where we went to. Again we just want you to know this is really live.

And this is what you'll see when you enroll yourself. All of them have that enroll me option because this same course software is designed for teachers who can enroll students based on paid courses. So the course description will be here when you enroll yourself into a course. We have also included for the Strong Relationships, Strong Families curriculum a print version so you can print our entire course curriculum from here.

And you will also see in the pod on the right side of your screen that we have included this same course curriculum right there for you. So if you're interested right away in downloading it, feel free to download it straight from that pod in your screen.

Rebecca, do you mind scrolling down just a little bit? And the other thing that I wanted to show you in this new person view is that you have access as a new user to only Chapter 1. This is one of the ways that we built in for giving you CEU information including that 80% passage rate.

What we did to make sure that you took all seven courses and received an overall 80% rate but didn't have to take some horrible, onerous test at the very end of everything, is we built in quizzes in each chapter. So when you get four out of five questions right - and you can take the quiz as many times as you need but most people shouldn't have to take it more than once.

We tried to develop that balance of making sure you are answering with knowledge of the information with not making it some horrible Socratic method, you know, test. So the passage of each quiz in each chapter unlocks the next chapter.

And with that I'm going to take maybe one more minute to bring you into the course itself - actually maybe two minutes. And Rebecca, if you can log back out. We're going to log in as me because I have passed the course already and I have access to all the chapters.

We're going to log - right. We're going to log in to that separate course again. I'm already enrolled so you'll zip past that right away. We're going to go to Chapter 2. And there are three things that we did in being mindful of this reaching of our target audience, keeping all the things that were great about the original curriculum, and making sure that we emphasized both the practical application and emphasized this - as Dave said - that this is about people who want to have a healthy relationship.

So we wanted to emphasize the fact that this is not a safety intervention. So there are literal safety flags. There are little safety flags. So if you go to "Chapter Choose -- Areas Worth Knowing" from the left side.

They give you basic information that really emphasize that throughout and really make the point of what the healthy relationship skill or principle is and how it's really

distinguishable from signs that there is a safety issue going on and something that is beyond just either reducing risk with a family or strengthening protective factors or making that family more resilient.

And then the practical tools that you've heard throughout - that application of activity worksheets, the Love Maps that Amanda has been using - all of those are in two places in here. So Rebecca is showing you where in the course itself it comes. And we did add the conversation starters that were mentioned as part of the lessons learned.

You'll find that there are strength-based conversation starters for each of the seven chapters and seven core principles. You'll find them here in the chapters. And they will open up literally is a PDF. Again it's something you can view, print, download right away from it.

And we took it from the book so that if you have the written course curriculum you'll recognize it from the book as well. And then we'll show you one other place where you can access these in case you come back to the course later.

I want to make sure that we also give you time to ask questions about the HRMET project and anything to do with us as well, and do a little bit of wrap-up. So Rebecca can you scroll back up to the top.

In order to get you the proper resolution as I understand it - and this is my novice understanding - we've got this scrolling that you should not have to do when you're looking at it on your screen.

So yes, in this left hand corner, you'll see a couple of cute little tools. That is a listing of all those tools in all of the chapters.

So if you have thoughts about, you know, I really want to start a conversation with a family about getting areas of getting to know one another or about physical and mental health and its impact on relationships, then you can come here and you can take a look through and you can look at - it's a quick reference to find those activities or handouts and the conversation starters that are in each of the chapters.

We're going to return from here to our main presentation. We're going to skip a couple of slides that we put in that were just in case we had bigger technical difficulties than we could manage. And we're coming back about the resources including the Curriculum Guide itself that are in the right side of your screen.

These are just a few of the more than 600 resources that we have either in our virtual library, or in the case of the curriculum, in our Virtual Training Center. These ones are both we thought, you know, particularly relevant to today's topic and to integrating, for example, child welfare and healthy marriage and relationship education, the research that talks about how it impacts folks who are impacted by the child welfare system or involved in it.

And we know that that ranges from the children who may be removed from a home or may simply be - or families who are involved but are intact and also involves older youth who are transitioning to independent living and need to be prepared for that.

We have a wonderful video that we had hoped to be able to show you - again had some technical difficulties with. We may be able to take a look at it in our media gallery online, we'll see.

But there's a video you'll see that talks about how -- within less than five minutes -- talks about how relationship education impacts work in Head Start with children and families, impacts - and from the stakeholders themselves - talks about how it impacts folks entering into the work force, staying in the work force and how those skills translate into work force skills and talks about the use in public health as well.

Quick peak at our Web site and you'll see that those videos are here in our media gallery. And the one that I'm referring to is the one all the way on the left.

And the main thing that we wanted to let you know is just the broad range of expertise that the Resource Center itself brings to you. As you get into this process and get more and more excited about or involved in integrating relationship education into the skills or services and information resources that you provide to families, then you can reach out to the Resource Center on a wide variety of areas.

Our expertise with the, not only the core team that works on it, but the folks that we can bring in and have already agreed to be experts for us. Our expertise ranges from the research behind marriage and relationship education all the way to developing partnerships, using volunteers as one of your resources and how to manage that and engaging both the volunteers, engaging family members in the process, strategic planning and looking at both the tools and resources for memoranda of understanding that we have samples of on our Website to -- all the way from developing logic models and using those in order to work out where it is that you really want to wind up and what outcomes you expect to see from it.

We also have expertise from child protection and partner violence, through work force development and our poverty and you can see some of the others that are listed there. This is just a sampling of the wide range of experts that we have at our fingertips to be resources to you, to help build that connection that we talked about between integrating relationship education and the safety net services that you are already traditionally providing.

With that I will turn it over to Rebecca. And thank you for helping me out.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Thank you so much Debra. I'd like to thank everybody for their presentations today. At this time we'd like to transition to our question and answer session. We've had some questions submitted but I'd like to encourage you to continue submitting questions that we would like to pose to the presenters.

Once again, in order to submit a question, you can send a Q&A box on the bottom right side of the screen. Feel free to type in a question and then you can either hit "Enter" or you can select "Send Question."

So Debra I think the first question that we have is directed towards you. How many of the children in care are in kinship situations?

**Debra Gilmore:**

Thank you Rebecca. One of the hats that I wear for the Resource Center is as its designated child and family safety expert. So I took a look at the AFCARS data knowing this question was coming. And I can tell you there are almost 108,000 children who are designated being in foster care and in a relative placement. So that captures all of the children in foster care placement.

You should note that that does not capture all the children who may be informally placed, so parents who may be actually involved with Child Welfare Services but their children have not been formally removed from them. And they may be using a relative as a resource to them, a temporary resource. Or they may or may not be involved in child welfare and they're using a relative as a permanent or semi-permanent resource. Those kids would not be captured in these specifics.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Thank you Debra. I actually have another quick question for you. Is there a cost to doing the online course?

**Debra Gilmore:**

There is no cost to any of our courses. It is a resource to you. It will always be a free resource to you.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Thank you. Dave, we have a question for you. What is the availability of training in my own state?

**Dr. David Schramm:**

You know, that's a good question. I'm happy to take that to the team. The grant - the cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau -- actually ends at the end of this month. But we're definitely open to talking, you know, offline if they want to e-mail me and we can talk about a possibility of doing a face-to-face training or a kind of train the trainer option which we haven't done with other states because we've been so busy.

But we're happy to talk more about that and just discuss opportunities to travel and do trainings.

**Rebecca Fairchild**

Debra do you have something to add for that?

**Debra Gilmore:**

Yes I'll just add that the Resource Center also provides what we've called Integration Institutes. And those Integration Institutes give the overview that is very similar to our introductory course that I showed online.

And we can also at times - I'm sorry I should apologize - that is a one-day training that is brought to states. We generally try to bring in, again a range of stakeholders, and we work with the person who's asking for that to identify others who may be able to be supports and partners in the community with that idea of holistic approaches.

So we do that and everyone leaves that with an action plan that we help them work out that helps them, again, just strategically decide how to go about doing whatever their

individualized goal is for integration. And we also can provide some tailored training and technical assistance to stakeholders is one of the reasons that we exist.

So we welcome contacting us either at our [info@healthymarriageandfamilies.org](mailto:info@healthymarriageandfamilies.org) e-mail. Or you will actually see on our Web site if you're touring around on there, you'll see a training and technical assistance form under the "Training, Technical Assistance, and Events" tab.

**Ted Futris:**

And also another thing I would add as well to that question is -- as Dave mentioned earlier in his presentation -- the partnership across multiple states within cooperative extension. And so I encourage folks on the call, if this is something you're interested in, in addition to reaching out to the National Resource Center, also encourage you to reach out to your state's cooperative extension specialist.

Every land grant university within a state has specialists who support family programming and engaging in conversation with that specialist to see if this is a resource that they have available or they could work with you to try to bring to your state as well.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Thanks everyone. We have another question. And Sue, I believe this might be best directed towards you. Did you sense any feedback or where there any barriers integrating some of the stuff into services - so maybe leadership or front line staff. Do you have any suggestions on kind of dealing with barriers on integrating relationship education?

**Sue Tew Warming:**

Here in Iowa we didn't really have any barriers. The biggest barrier was just getting staff to trainings. I would say if there is barriers, I would really just encourage them to show them the resources you're talking about. Show them the online opportunities and information.

I think that once people looked at the information then they really bought into it. Before that there was a little resistance. I think the other thing is to make sure that people realize two things that have been talked about. One is that this isn't for domestic violence or anything - people have to want to have a healthy relationship.

And the other thing is that we're not promoting marriage. That was one thing we heard a few times here in Iowa. Well, we're not promoting marriage. Well, no, that's not what this training's about. The training's about healthy relationships and if there is a marriage to have a healthy marriage.

So I think those were the biggest things is just show them the resources and then show them that information online too would be helpful.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Great, thanks Sue. Amanda did you have any barriers in implementing the program in North Carolina?

**Amanda Ratliff:**

No, no major barriers other than travel and budgeting and things like that - budgeting to get to the sites for the training.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Great thank you. So we've had one last question submitted. And Dave, I think this is probably best for you. Can this be used with single parents who are not married?

**Dr. David Schramm:**

That's a great question and it's actually something I wanted to clarify so I'm glad it was asked. Many child welfare professionals, that's one of the concerns; They say "wow, most of the people I work with are single. How does this apply to them?" And we say "absolutely it applies to them."

Most single parents will eventually re-partner. In fact, many of them re-partner with multiple partners over time. And so what better time to get this information to folks than when they're single and that will help them to make healthier choices, again, that will impact their child. So absolutely for single parents, yes.

**Sue Tew Warming:**

And this is Sue and I just want to just add the same kind of comment. Here in Iowa, most of our young people that may be single parents, this has been probably the most effective with our young adults and really learning what a healthy relationship is.

So they were in a relationship. They'll get back in a relationship. And that is probably the biggest impact that we've seen is with the young adults.

**Rebecca Fairchild:**

Great. Well once again I would like to thank our presenters and thank everybody for submitting great questions. As a reminder, a recording of this presentation, the slides, a transcript, and a question and answer document will be posted on our Web site, [healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://healthymarriageandfamilies.org), under the "Training, Technical Assistance, and Events" tab.

At the close of the meeting, a survey will appear in your Web browser. If you could please take a moment to respond, this will help us improve our future Webinars. Just as a reminder, all of your responses are anonymous and this really helps us plan and make sure that we're providing Webinars and information that is most useful to our stakeholders.

I'd like to thank everyone for joining us and have a great afternoon.

**Operator:**

And that will conclude today's call. Thank you for your participation.

**END**