

Stacia Stribling, PhD and Kelly Henderson, PhD  
August 29, 2023

# Who I Am...

- Kelly Henderson- Mom; Executive Director; Adjunct Faculty, Special Education at GMU [Kelly.Henderson@FormedFamiliesForward.org](mailto:Kelly.Henderson@FormedFamiliesForward.org)



# Who I Am...

- Stacia Stribling - Mom; Training and Administrative Coordinator; Part-Time Farmer; Former Elementary School Teacher; Former Assistant Professor, Education at GMU  
[Stacia.Stribling@FormedFamiliesForward.org](mailto:Stacia.Stribling@FormedFamiliesForward.org)



# Formed Families Forward - who we are...

- A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families who are raising children, youth & young adults with special needs, and professionals who work with our families.
- We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - peer support groups; webinars; virtual trainings; videos and other resources.
- Family partner to Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS; a VDOE project)
- Hosting [Fairfax Kinship Peer Support Groups](#), starting September 2023

Certificates of  
Attendance

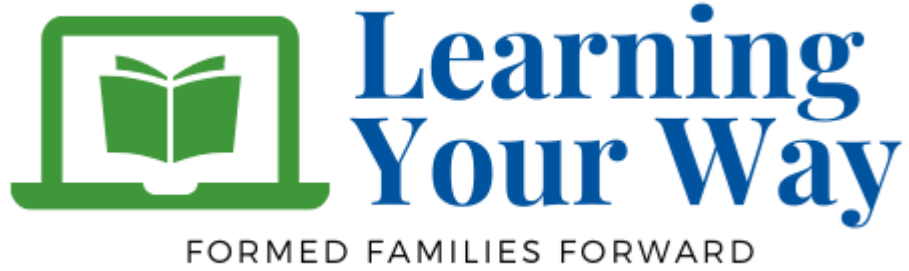
# Upcoming Offerings

**September 27** - [From Referral to Eligibility: What it Takes to Get Through the Door](#)

**October 4** - [Special Education for Formed Families: Making it Work!](#)

**October 11** - [Communication, Collaboration, and What to Do When You Just Can't Agree](#)





<https://LYWfall23.eventbrite.com>

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## STRIBLING ORCHARD

# Apple Picking

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2023

9 AM - 5 PM

Formed Families Forward is hosting a family apple picking day! Come to Stribling Orchard in Markham, VA between 9AM-5PM on Sept. 9. Receive a 50% discount on the apples you pick. (Be sure to tell the greeters that you are a Formed Family to receive a wristband for the discount at checkout.)

**ALSO from 1-2 PM- Stacia Stribling will offer a free brief tour for families - learn about what it takes to grow apples and meet some of the farm animals!**

Check out the website: [www.striblingorchard.com](http://www.striblingorchard.com) for directions and more about the farm. (The orchard is open rain or shine!)

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# *Stronger Together* Youth Peer Support Groups

- IN-PERSON for youth and young adults ages 14-22
- Weekly for 8 Thursday nights, 6:30 – 8 PM, starting Sept 28. Clinician-led. FREE of charge.
- In Fairfax city
- Register at <https://strongertogetherfall2023tickets.ventbrite.com>





## *Formed Families Together* parent and caregiver support groups

- TWO Formed Families Together peer-led support groups for **adoptive and foster parents and kinship caregivers** meet monthly
- Virtual group- First SUNDAY each month, 7:30 – 9 PM
- In-person group- Third WEDNESDAY of each month on site in Fairfax city, 7- 8:30 PM
- Led by trained FFF staff and a volunteer
- <https://ffttogether.eventbrite.com>



# POLL

Mark all that apply:

- Foster Parent
- Adoptive Parent
- Kinship Caregiver
- Birth Parent
- Professional



# Overview of the Webinar

- Back to School Challenges
- Creating Effective Routines
- Managing Anxiety & Helping Students Regulate
- Building Effective Working Relationships with School Staff
- All About Me!

## ALL STUDENTS

## STUDENTS IN FOSTER, ADOPTIVE & KINSHIP FAMILIES

Adjust to a new classroom, schedule, teachers and peers



Difficulty with transitions, sleep issues, trust issues

Tackle new academic challenges



High prevalence of disabilities and trauma impact on learning

Seek to meet the expectations of others



Adversities and mental health issues

# Back to School Challenges

# The Foster, Adoptive & Kinship Connection

- **Reasons** for entering care are associated with disability. In 1 state, more than a quarter of children over age 5 with **substantiated maltreatment** were identified as having disabilities. (Lightfoot et al., 2011)
- 37% of infants and toddlers in **nonrelative foster care** had developmental delays. 29% of children 3 to 17 years old placed in **nonrelative foster care** have identified developmental, cognitive, or academic needs. (Casanueva et al., 2020).
- **Adopted children** are more likely to have ever been diagnosed with depression, ADD/ADHD, or behavior/conduct disorder. (NSAP, 2009)

# These Challenges Create Stress



Brief increases in heart rate,  
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.



Serious, temporary stress responses,  
buffered by supportive relationships.

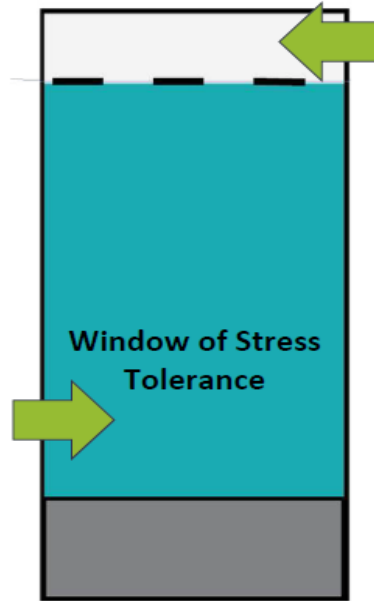


Prolonged activation of stress  
response systems in the absence  
of protective relationships.

# The Window of Stress Tolerance

## Regulated (Within Window)

- The child is able to manage emotions and control impulses
- They are generally able to handle life and school activities
- Functioning from the upstairs brain



## Dysregulated (Above Window)

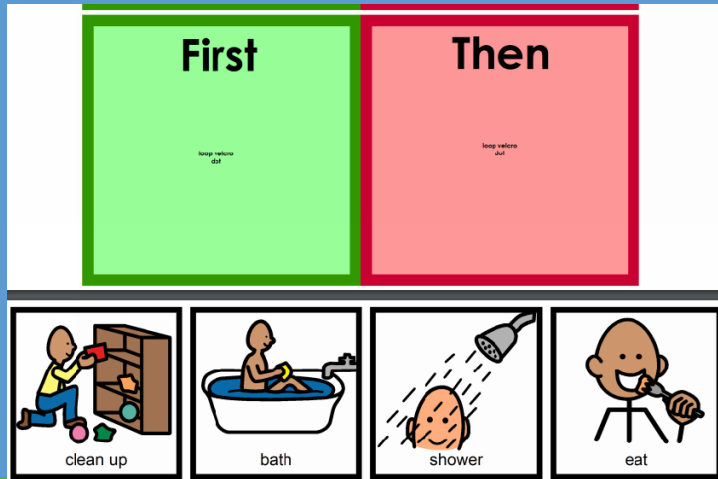
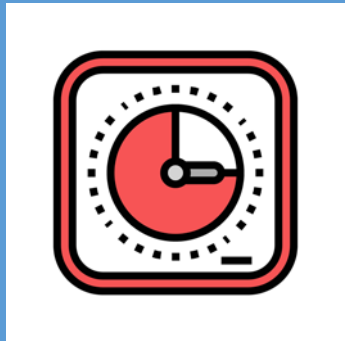
- Stress or sensory input has triggered an alarm state in the child
- Functioning from the downstairs brain
- Child has difficulty listening and comprehending (not in learning mode)
- They will often display maladaptive behavior

Image Source: South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center



# Creating Routines

- Predictable structure eliminates “unknowns” and can reduce stress
- Routines eliminate the opportunities for negotiation





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# Managing Anxiety

- “Behavior is the language of trauma. Children will **show** you before they tell you that they are in distress.”  
-Micere Keels
- Key strategies are rooted in:
  - Co-regulation
  - Modeling (tools)
  - Connection

I can use words to tell people how I feel.

I say, "I am mad."

I'm mad!



or

"I don't like that."

I don't like that!



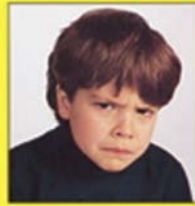
happy



shy



sad



angry

## FEELINGS THERMOMETER

How do you feel?



**ANGRY, FURIOUS, EXPLOSIVE**

▶ Yelling, Stomping, Meltdown



**FRUSTRATED, ANNOYED, IRRITABLE**

▶ Arguing, Refusing, Shutting down



**ANXIOUS, WORRIED, UNSETTLED**

▶ Pacing, Avoiding, Clingy



**SAD, NEGATIVE, LONELY**

▶ Crying, Withdrawn, Slowed/Disengaged



**HAPPY, CALM, CONTENT**

▶ Smiling, Laughing, Engaged

What can you do about it?

- Vigorous physical exercise
- Breathe deep breaths
- Take a warm shower or bath

- Meditate/pray
- Listen to favorite music
- Take a fast-paced walk

- Talk to a family member/friend
- Pay attention to each of your 5 senses
- Focus on what you *can* control

- Set a positive goal for the day
- Call a friend or relative
- Journal about your feelings

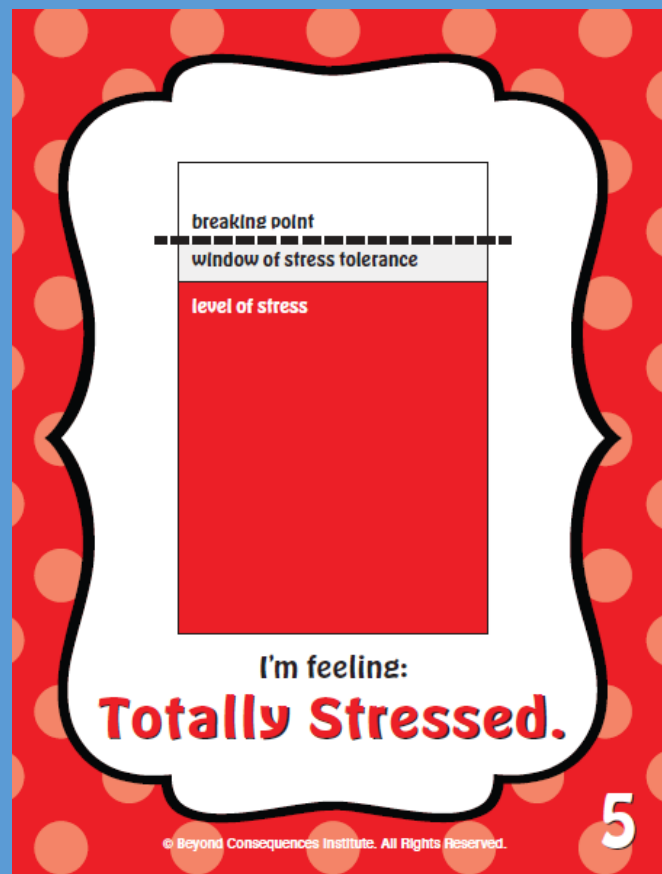
- Help someone else
- Notice and enjoy your positive mood
- Engage in an enjoyable activity



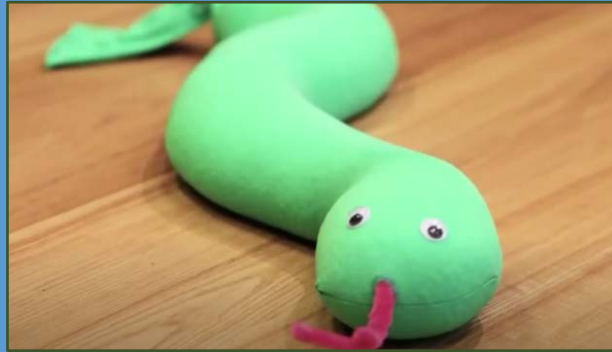
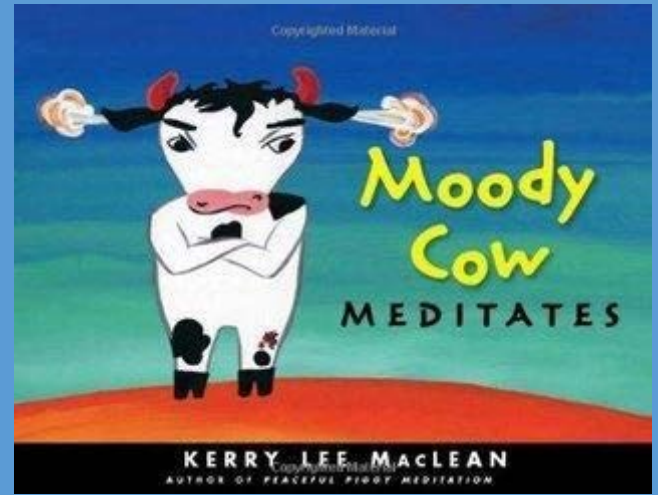
Wisconsin Office of **Children's Mental Health**

[children.wi.gov](http://children.wi.gov)

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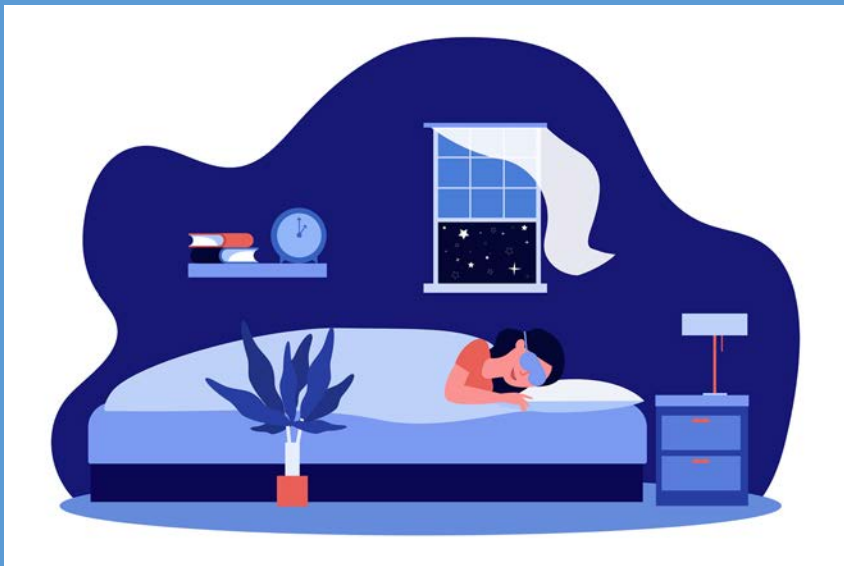






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# I Wonder...

Use “I wonder...” statements to help your child articulate emotions and root causes; prompts ideas to begin brainstorming solutions...

- I wonder if you really like P.E., and you feel sad when this class ends...
- I wonder if writing makes you feel icky and frustrated...
- I wonder if it is hard for you to leave home and start your day at school...
- I wonder if you really want to play with (insert name) and want some help to let them know...
- I wonder if the lunch room is too loud for you, and you would prefer an option to eat in a more quiet space with just one or two friends...

# Ampersand Cards

I feel angry



&

I can...

- Find a quiet place to sit
- Anchor my feet
- Picture a stream
- Practice "Square Breathing"



# More Ampersand Cards

I don't know how to  
start my homework

&

I can...

• Ask for help:



- Can you explain that part again?

- Can I show what I know another way?



- Can I talk it through with you first?

# Building Relationships

- Meet in person - lay the groundwork for a reciprocal relationship - each person brings expertise
- Be proactive - share your child's challenges with teachers BEFORE they happen
- Share what works and what doesn't work with your child (and why!)
- Create a culture of problem solving



# All About Me!

- A positive student profile helps quickly and visually orient teachers and other staff with whom your child will be working
- Clarifies important family and other background information
- Clearly states what information is/is not to be shared
- Succinctly states strengths/challenges
- Leaves no room for lack of contact!

# Let's do this!

Form in Word & format guide at  
[https://www.formedfamiliesforward.org/resource\\_category/special-education-advocacy/](https://www.formedfamiliesforward.org/resource_category/special-education-advocacy/)

**All About Me**

Name:

You will see me for: (fill in classes, times, periods, etc.)

Photo

I am good at:

- Interests
- Academics
- Hobbies
- Sports
- Personality traits, etc.

I have trouble with:

You should know: family information, medical information, etc.  
I do/don't want this information shared with other students.

What works for me at school:  
Physical arrangement of room, lesson preparation/ academic accommodations, assignments, test taking, organization, behavior/ reinforcement, health/medication, home/school communication, etc.

Contact me by   
Student email, cell, home phone; study hall or support periods?

Contact my parents/caregivers by   
Email, phones, times of day, preferred frequency of contacts



# Other Student Profile Formats

- [Student Personal Profile](#) (IU)
- [Student Introduction Letter](#) (Understood.org)
- [Positive Student Profile](#) (UNC)
- [Understanding Me: An Individual with FASD](#) (FASD Success)

# Formed Families Forward – Stay in Touch!

**PLEASE COMPLETE EVALUATION** right after we end.

**\*\*Certificates (only available for those who attended the live session) Email: [Stacia.Stribling@FormedFamiliesForward.org](mailto:Stacia.Stribling@FormedFamiliesForward.org)\*\***

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