

Stacia Stribling, PhD and Kelly Henderson, PhD
August 20, 2024

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



Who I Am...

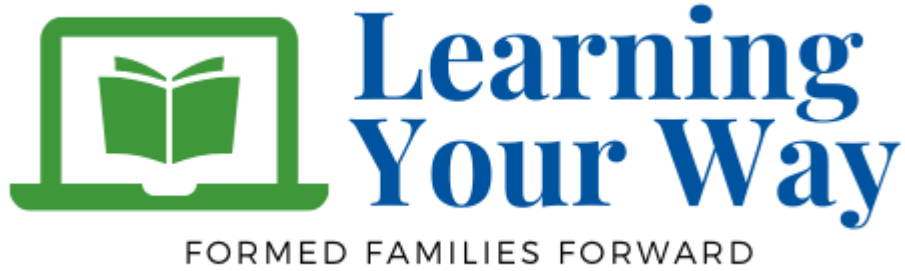
- Kelly Henderson- Mom; Executive Director; Adjunct Faculty, Special Education at GMU Kelly.Henderson@FormedFamiliesForward.org



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 specialized 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)

Certificates of
Attendance



<https://bit.ly/FFFLYWfall24>

FREE ONLINE COURSES

LEARNING YOUR WAY
Self-Paced Classes open now!

FREE access to topics:

- Special Education 101
- Constructive Communication and Collaboration
- Trauma Basics
- Dispute Resolution
- Kinship Care
- Other Health Impairments: ADHD, FASD, Tourette Syn.
- Positive Parenting

Now Open!

STRIBLING ORCHARD

Apple Picking

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

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. 22. 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.)

FFF will have a table set up with information about upcoming offerings as well as some outdoor games for the kids!

Check out the website: 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 Tuesday nights, 6:30 – 8 PM, starting October 1. Clinician-led. FREE of charge.
- In Fairfax city
- Register at <https://bit.ly/STgroupfall24>



Upcoming Offerings

Sept. 10, 7-8 PM Changing Tough Behavior: A Focus on the Nervous System webinar

Oct. 2, 7-8 PM Communicating Effectively: The Hard & The Easy webinar

Nov. 13, 7-8 PM Functional Behavior Assessments: What Families Should Know



Starting the School Year Safe and Calm

9/9/2024, 6:30 - 8:00 pm: Fairfax County @ the Sherwood Community Center, Fairfax City

9/20/2024, Noon - 1:30 pm: Virtual via Zoom

9/23/2024, 6:30 - 8:00 pm: Manassas @ the Pat White Center at Ben Lomond

Free Training!
STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR SAFE AND CALM
INFO, STRATEGIES, AND RESOURCES TO BOOST KINSHIP AND FOSTER FAMILY SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Register at: FormedFamiliesForward.org

EASY STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SAFETY RISKS



EVIDENCE-BASED STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS & TOOLS

WHERE TO FIND HELP



CONNECT WITH OTHER FAMILIES

Made possible through a grant from VA DBHDS



IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Choose what works for you:

Zoom: 9/20, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

In-person in Fairfax city: 9/9/24, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

In-person in Manassas: 9/23/24, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Register at: FormedFamiliesForward.org

Refreshments, take-away items, and childcare stipend available at in-person sessions!



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Peer Support Groups



Fairfax Kinship Support Group-
Virtual on first Thursday
evenings; In-person on third
Thursday evenings



Formed Families Together
(foster, adoptive and kinship)
Support Group- Virtual on first
Sunday evenings; In-person on
third Wednesday evenings

POLL

Mark all that apply:

- Foster Parent
- Adoptive Parent
- Kinship Caregiver
- Birth or Step 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



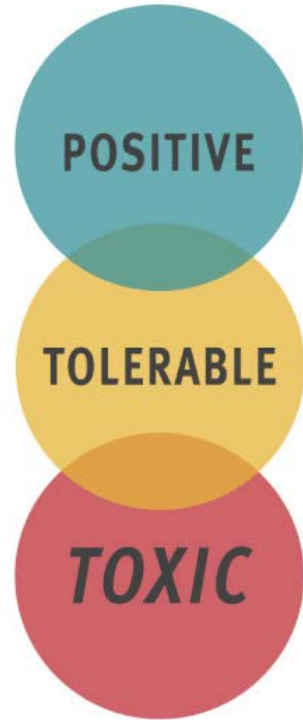
Adversities and mental health issues

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** have developmental delays. 29% of children 3 to 17 years old 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)
- Although the rate of intercountry **adoption** is decreasing, the percent of adoptees with a disability is increasing. (Roach, 2023)

These Challenges Create Stress



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

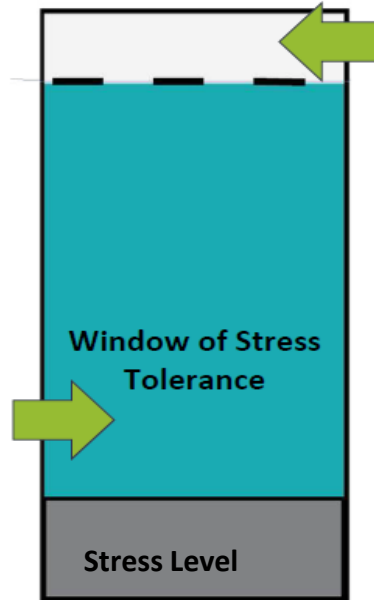
Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

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 adapted from South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center

POLL

What creates the most stress for the child(ren) in your care:

- Mornings
- In School - academic subjects
- In School - social situations
- After school - homework
- Bedtime



Creating Routines



What

- Routine - a regular procedure or sequence of actions regularly followed. Is predictable; typically occurs at a specific time of day or in a specific order.



- Predictable structure eliminates “unknowns” and can reduce stress
- Reduces negotiation
- Makes the child AND adult feel more competent

What are key routines in your home?

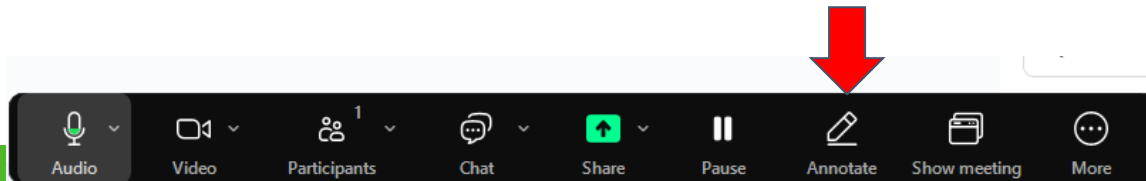
WAKE UP

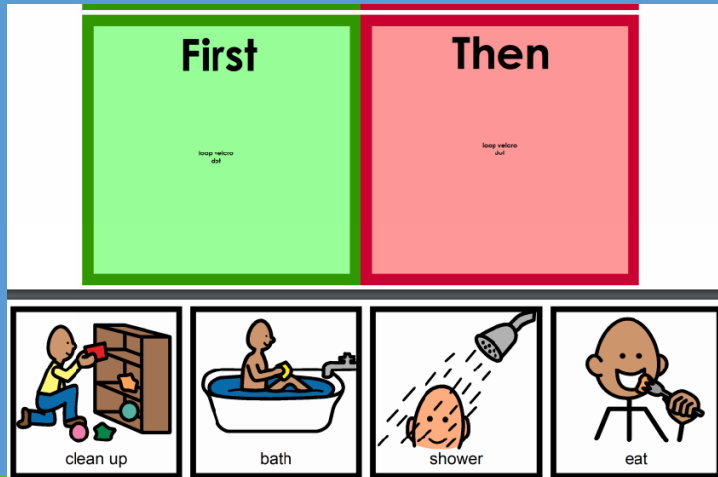
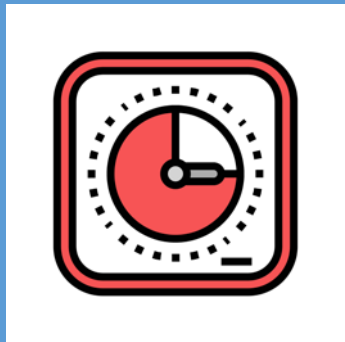
MEAL TIMES

AFTER SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES/ HW

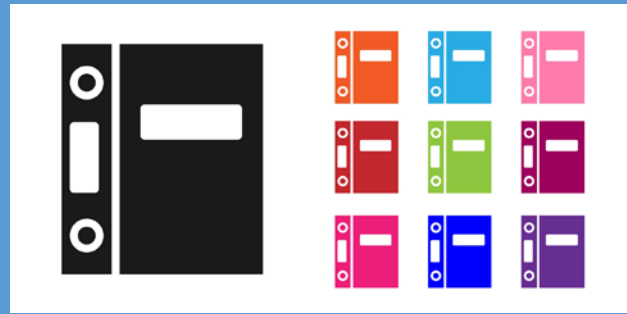
BEDTIME

ADD OTHERS:





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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

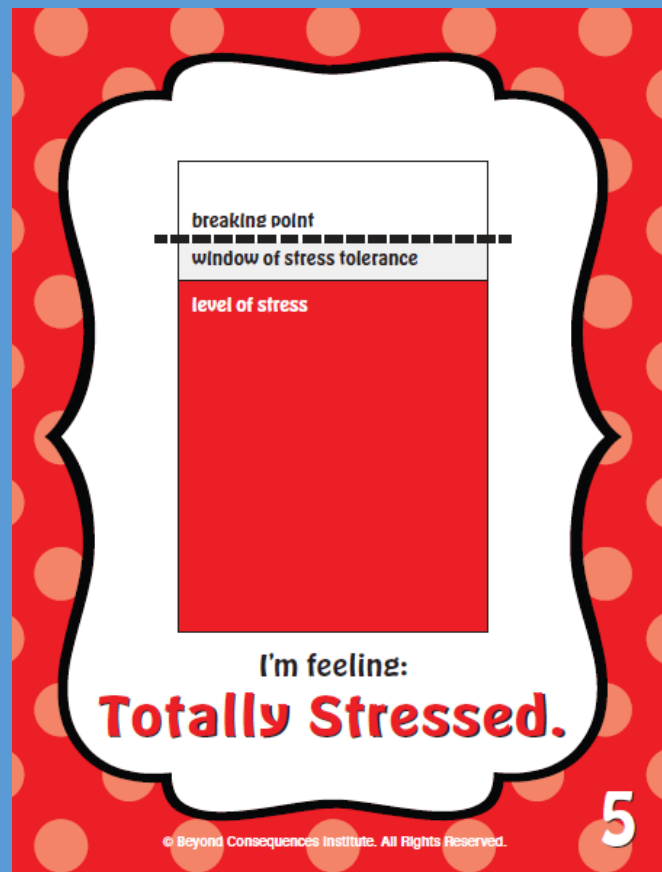


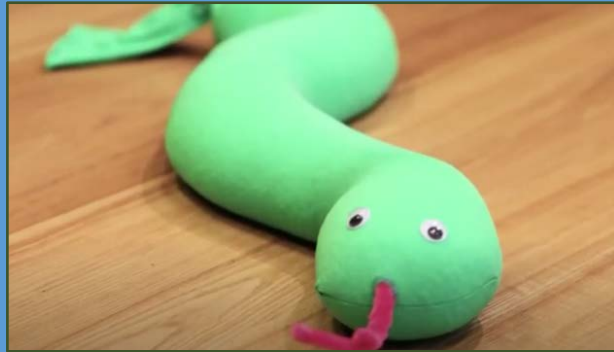
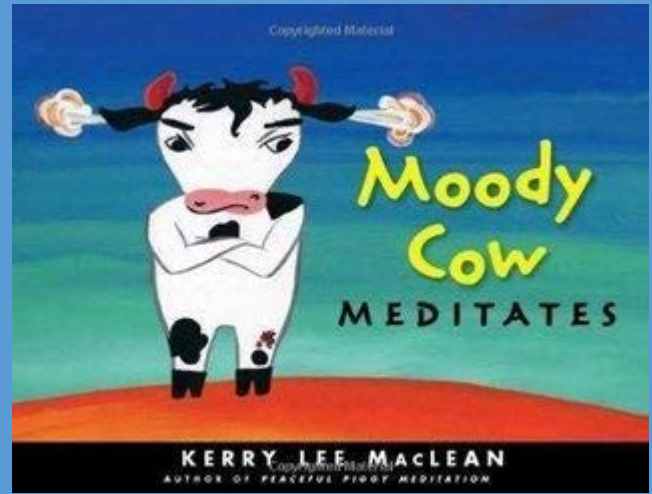
Wisconsin Office of **Children's Mental Health**

children.wi.gov

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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?

POLL

How would you describe your relationship with your child(ren)'s school:

- Contentious - constant conflict
- Minimal - no news is okay news
- Collaborative - respectful & supportive
- Depends on the day



Building Relationships with School Partners

- 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/

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)
- [Dear Teacher, What I Want You to Know About Me](#) (Embracing the Brain)

Time to Talk



Session Evaluation



Formed Families Forward – Stay in Touch!

PLEASE COMPLETE EVALUATION right after we end.

****Certificates (only available for those who attended the live session) Email: Natalie.Johnson-Abbott@FormedFamiliesForward.org****

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