



Introduction to the Healthy Relationship Principles

Why Healthy Relationship Principles

In March 2021 the Fathers Corps began meeting with a variety of direct service providers and mental health specialists to identify the set of Healthy Relationship Principles (HRP). The HRP were developed to support service providers with their discussion about coparenting with families.

Review and Practice HRP

We ask providers to regularly review, discuss, and practice these principles to ensure we, as community and family support professionals, are doing our best to assist parents with building strong and healthy co-parenting relationships.

Breakout Discussion (3 per room)

What are families experiencing?

1. What challenges are your clients/families experiencing related to co-parenting?
2. What are the challenges when supporting clients/families that are in these complicated/unhealthy relationships?

Report out

Healthy Relationship Principles

1. Maintain focus on the well-being of the child(ren) in all interactions with families.
2. Acknowledge and reflect on your life experiences, and on systemic and personal biases, to ensure these experiences and biases do not negatively impact your engagement with and support of parents.
2. Reinforce, coach, and model healthy communication skills.
 - a) Healthy communication includes respecting the other parent's perspective and engaging in non-judgmental, deep, active listening.
 - b) Providers are helpful when they model healthy communication, and provide opportunities for parents to practice communication skills (e.g., role play difficult conversations).

Healthy Relationship Principles

4. Remind parents that their children are watching and learning how to manage positive and negative emotions and how to resolve conflict. Children will remember who took the “high road” as they grow older and reflect on their family relationships.
5. Acknowledge and normalize the emotional complexity and challenges of parental relationships.
6. Support parents with separating emotions and expectations regarding the other parent when discussing or making parenting decisions.

Healthy Relationship Principles

7. Use inclusive language (i.e., co-parent, child's mother/father, team approach, parent experiencing challenges) that uplifts and honors parents and eliminate the use of harmful stereotypical terms.
8. Be an advocate for your client, allowing space for them to vent frustrations and disappointments, while consistently emphasizing the importance of all caregivers functioning as a team while adhering to any standing legal orders.
9. Emphasize the importance of quality time spent with children.
10. Be knowledgeable of, and connect both parents to available resources that support their individual needs.

Breakout #2 (3 per room)

- What are your thoughts and initial reaction to the HRP?
- How do you see the HRP being used in your work?
- What support is needed for you to begin utilizing the HRP?

Report out

Next Steps

- Introduce to the BOS
- Establish learning community focused on rolling out HRP into direct service programs
 - Includes training, technical assistance, and implementation
- Eventual adoption by the BOS
- Media campaign focused on normalizing healthy coparenting relationships