

Module III: Trauma Resolution and Consolidation

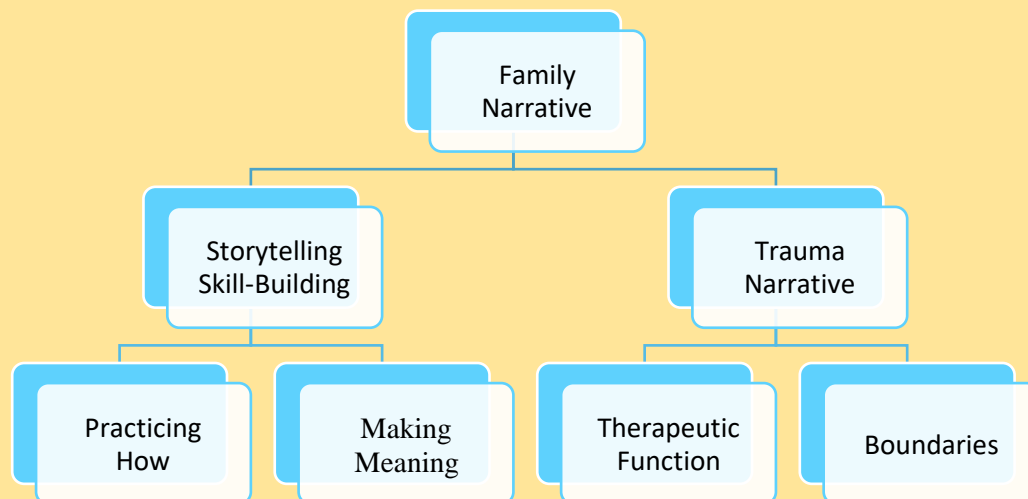
This Module provides . . .

In SFCR, Module III moves from family storytelling to narration. Some definitions may be helpful for understanding this process.

Family Storytelling is the routine process that families use to share experiences.

Narrative implies a facilitated sharing of experiences.

Family Trauma Narrative comprises a facilitated, co-constructed storytelling with a specific focus on the family's experience of trauma.



Between Modules II and III, a facilitator team meeting is held to discuss the narrative work that might benefit each family. This meeting is important for planning the family work involved in Module III including readiness for a family trauma narrative, timing of the narrative work, strategies for working with the family and with each individual family member, and communication of potential issues that might arise as the family moves through creation of a shared family story.

Facilitators, along with each family, develop a specific plan for the narrative work that occurs during Module III. Some families will continue with storytelling skill-building while others will engage in a co-constructed trauma narrative. Both storytelling skill-building and co-constructing a trauma narrative have significant therapeutic benefit and provide the families with skills they will need to process difficult times or events that may happen in the future. Some reasons that a family might **not** want to proceed with a family trauma narrative include significant avoidance and dysregulation of some family members, legal issues involving the trauma, etc. Samples of session activities for families who decide to do narrative work instead of a trauma narrative are provided including: Elephant in the Room and Managing Crises (Session 10 folder).

Given that trauma often creates a sense of powerlessness, sharing power through this process of creating a narrative plan is very important. Facilitators can honor the expertise by exploring the family's goals for narration along with providing information about how the narrative process may be beneficial to the family. Sharing power can also involve trusting a family's assessment of their readiness to directly talk about their trauma history and working with them to identify pieces of their story they are ready to process.

Module Overview

Session Number

10	The Power of Stories
11	Our Healing Stories I
12	Our Healing Stories II
13	Moving Forward
14	Good Things Happen Too!
15	Celebration
Post Session	Reevaluating Trauma and Family Functioning

Narrative Activity: Managing Stressors & Crises



50
Minutes



Goals:

- To encourage families to appraise stressors and to problem-solve collaboratively.
- To build crisis management skills.
- To prioritize keeping the family safe.



Materials:

Phones for recording (1 for each family)
Paper Pen/markers/crayons



Handouts:

Family Crisis Management
Plan

Crisis Management Facilitator
Discussion Guide



Instructions:

Family Facilitator: Exploring the problem. Help the family name and define the problem by exploring dimensions and context of the current situation. “Crisis means different things to every family. The family’s own definition of the problem and the level of associated risk/chaos are important to helping the family develop a management plan they will own and want to use.

Scaling the problem. Determine how big the crisis is. Scaling the crisis is important for helping the family determine how many resources to put into managing the crisis. Many families invest lots of time, energy, resources, and worry into situations that they see as bigger problems or more serious than they really are. Help the family to scale the crisis. Use the triangle to help the family evaluate the extent of the crisis. What factors do they use to decide? How can they use these factors to put their experiences into perspective? Also look at how the family has coped with similar situations in the past.

Solution-focused problem-solving. Work with the family to determine the best outcome for the crisis. Focus first on short-term solutions that will have immediate impacts at de-escalating the situation or ensuring safety. Help the family understand the importance of maintaining structure, routine, and limits during the crisis. Pay attention to what is meaningful for the family now. Examine many possible solutions.

Planning for action. How about we make a plan so you can invest just the right amount of energy into actions that are most likely to work? Then you can have more time for other more pleasant things in your family life.

Give the family a copy of the “Family Crisis Management Plan”. Support the family in developing a plan (see discussion guide included with the handout).

Make sure that the plan is concrete, doable, and likely to succeed. Have the family talk about the likelihood that they will use the plan. If it doesn’t seem usable, make modifications.

Obtain a commitment from the family to put the plan in place.

Plan follow-up contact to monitor how the plan is working.

Encourage the family to think about how they could use this process again when another crisis happens. Give the family some blank copies of the Family Crisis Management Plan.

Adapted from:

Crisis intervention strategy (James et al. 2012); Solution focused therapy (Hopson et al. 2004);

CRISIS PLANNING TOOLS FOR FAMILIES: A Companion Guide for Providers

FINAL VERSION: March 29, 2011 http://www.masspartnership.com/Provider/pdf/Crisis-Planning-Tools_Guide_for_ProvidersFinal.pdf

Narrative Activity: Elephant in the Room



50
Minutes



Goals:

- To encourage families to talk about difficult topics in safe and healthy ways.
- To develop a list of communication rules for having safe and healthy conversations.
- To practice safe and healthy conversations.



Materials:

Phones for recording (1 for each family)
Paper Pen/markers/crayons



Handouts:

Elephant in the Room



Instructions:

Family Facilitator: Family Secrets and Other Tabooed Topics. Start by discussing why families should talk directly about difficult things. Making a list of difficult conversation topics that families (not necessarily this family) might discuss is a good way to get family members to share.

Communication Rules. Have family members recall difficult conversations their family has had in the past. Have them think about conversations that were safe and healthy, and ones that were not that way.

Discuss what the family did to make conversations safe and healthy. It is important to remind parents that young children can take part in difficult conversations, but parents/older children need to limit the information shared and use simple appropriate explanations to protect their emotional security.

Make a list of tips for having safe and healthy difficult conversations.

Practice with Difficult Conversations. Have the family pick a difficult conversation topic from the list made at the beginning of the session. It is not necessary for the family to pick a topic that is relevant to them unless they are ready to do so. Role play having a difficult conversation using the tips listed.

Have family members share about their experiences in the conversation including what they think will work at home and where they feel they might get stuck, derailed, or fall back on old communication patterns.

Narrative Activity: Family Trauma Timeline



30
Minutes



Goals:

- To understand and plan the trauma narrative process.
- To help the family construct a timeline that chronicles the traumas they have experienced.



Materials:

Phones for recording (1 for each family)
Paper Pen/markers/crayons
Note Cards
Envelopes



Instructions:

Family Facilitator: The Family Trauma Timeline is a good starting point for assessing whether the family is ready for co-constructed family trauma narrative, for helping the family plan their family trauma narrative, and to get the family started on their narrative.

For families who are planning to do a trauma narrative, explain the process of developing the trauma story. A good strategy for starting the family trauma narrative is developing a Family Trauma Timeline. Working with the family to complete this process is also another good way to determine whether the family is ready to co-construct a trauma narrative.

First, you are going to make a list of the bad things that have happened. You can then use this list to talk about when things happened, and which things were the least scary and which were the scariest. You can also use this list to decide which things had the biggest effect on your family. Finally, you can use this list to decide what is important for your family to talk about together.

The family constructs a Family Trauma Timeline about the different traumas that the family has experienced. First, each family member writes on a blank postcard each traumatic event that has occurred. Families might want to order their list starting with mildly traumatic events and ending with the most traumatic events that have happened to them. The families can also put the cards in chronological order after all the traumas are listed. Give the families about 20 minutes to complete their Family Trauma Timelines. The families can store their timeline in the envelope provided.

Proceed with family trauma narrative plan as planned.