



Fostering Relationships Between Foster Parents and Families of Origin

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A stylized, colorful illustration of a city skyline. The buildings are represented by various geometric shapes and colors, including teal, orange, blue, yellow, and green. A prominent feature is a large, semi-transparent white circle on the left side, which contains the title and a bullet point. The background is a light, warm tone.

SaintA – Milwaukee, WI

- SaintA is a human services organization in southeastern Wisconsin whose mission is to facilitate equity, learning, healing and wellness by restoring the connections that help children and families thrive

SaintA – Milwaukee, WI

- St. Aemilian started as an orphanage responding to Milwaukee's cholera epidemic (168 years ago!)
- SaintA is no longer *responsive* as much as it is *preventive*
 - TIC is woven into all programs, including shared-parenting, and the Fostering Relationships model for family visitation
 - SaintA has trained approx. 75,000 individuals in TIC
- It is one of only nine agencies in the world with NMT Flagship Status from the ChildTrauma Academy
- SaintA is humbled to have been part of a *60 Minutes* segment on trauma and resilience with Special Correspondent Oprah Winfrey

* NMT - Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics



7 Essential Ingredients of Trauma Informed Care

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- Prevalence
 - Impact
 - Perspective Shift
 - Regulation
 - Relationships
 - Reason to Be
 - Caregiver Capacity

Relationships are key to reaching a traumatized child and mitigating the effects of trauma. Strong relationships help create resilience and shield a child from the effects of trauma.





Regulation
Relationships
Reason to Be

- Implementing trauma informed care starts with recognizing trauma's prevalence. The treatment comes from REGULATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, and REASON TO BE
- Fostering Relationships supports all of these core concepts



SaintA's Fostering Relationships Framework

- 8 front-line Master's level staff assess families their first week in out of home care with caregiver transporting
- Foster parent(s) or Kinship caregiver join visit
- Caregiver takes over – sometimes in their home, based on their comfort level
- 4 Caregiver Support Specialist and 14 Family Preservation Specialists provide support and coaching after assessment completed

SaintA's Fostering Relationships Framework

- Implementing since 2016
- 25 licensed foster parents trained in the model
 - Training offered to newly licensed foster parents only
- 75+ kinship providers implementing concepts based on coaching from Family Preservation and Caregiver Support Specialists
- Gathering data on placement stability and trauma symptoms





SaintA's Fostering Relationships Framework

- Primary push for kinship providers - always ask “what is your plan for connecting together?”
- Trend in past 2 years: uptick in initial court orders for visitation. Judges often order 8 hours of fully supervised per week, up to 10 hours with no less than 48 hours in between face-to-face visits

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

Foster Parent
Hesitation

Birth Parent
Hesitation

Scheduling
Conflicts

Lack of
Documentation

Legal Parties
Resistance

High Risk
Families

Additional
Training for
Caregivers

Age Limits on
Intervention