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## GENERAL INTEREST ARTICLES

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### **An Analysis of Communication for Foster Parents: Interpersonal, Small Group, and Public Speaking Skills Necessary for Foster Parenting**

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#### **Abstract**

*Communication is a core aspect of what foster parents do every day. However, communication research focusing on foster parents is limited. Foster parents should understand interpersonal communication, small group communication, and public speaking. Understanding the basic principles of these communication disciplines will help foster parents succeed in their role. Interpersonal communication creates relationships between the foster parent and child through inclusion, control, and affection. Small group communication aspects of group roles, meeting facilitation, and conflict management are used in interactions with caseworkers. The public speaking skills of preparation and practice are used during court proceedings, orientations, and support groups. Providing foster parents with these communicative skills is crucial for successful placement outcomes.*

For foster parents, communication is a vital part of their job. This includes building relationships with their foster child, facilitating communication between their foster child and social workers, and engaging in public speaking such as testifying in court. The state of Minnesota defines a foster care provider as “a person or entity licensed to provide foster care” (State of Minnesota, 2007). This paper will focus on licensed individuals providing foster care and refer to them as foster parents. I have experience with both foster care and communications. My parents fostered and adopted from foster care. As a family, we fostered children and adolescents of all ages. Some we fostered for emergency 72-hour (about 3 days) placements,

while others we became an adoptive home for. I observed how my parents created relationships with my foster siblings, worked with social workers, and communicated in various public speaking settings. I have studied communications in college and hope to use my knowledge to help foster parents communicate their best.

This paper was written to complete my communication studies capstone. Its purpose is to demonstrate the foundational principles of interpersonal communication, small group communication, and public speaking in a relevant context. The context chosen was foster parenting. There is limited research on how communication plays a role in foster parents' lives, how it affects placement outcomes, and the interconnectedness between researchers and foster parents (Brewsaugh et al., 2022; L. Nelson, 2014; Nelson & Colaner, 2020). This paper is a literature review hoping to relate relevant communication skills to foster parenting.

I begin by discussing interpersonal relationships and how communication builds healthy relationships by providing inclusion, control, and affection. In small group communication, I will focus on the relationship between foster parents and social workers. This will consist of discussions on understanding group roles, facilitating group communication, and managing conflict. The last section of the paper will cover public speaking. Here I will explore public speaking situations foster parents may find themselves in and tools for presenting.

### **Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication is used to create and maintain relationships. Being the most intimate form of communication, it is typically conducted between two people (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). It can be both transactional and relational. In a transactional communication exchange, the communication is focused on the event taking place. Relational communication is conducted to build or maintain relationships. Relationships are important because they provide

us with inclusion, control, and affection (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Interpersonal communication is what allows a foster parent to develop a healthy relationship with their foster child.

### **Inclusion**

Building a relationship with a foster child can be a unique challenge. Not only is a foster parent meeting the child for the first time and building a relationship, but the foster parent must include their foster child in their family and parenting style. Parenting style is a factor that affects the health of the parent-child relationships. Parenting style is the way a parent feels towards their child and the emotional climate they create (Chodura et al., 2021). Children in foster care may be unused to the style of parenting their foster parent uses. Researchers for *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* discuss aspects that allow a foster parent to parent successfully. They define functional parenting as responsive, warm, and having clear boundaries. Functional parenting also includes the foster-care-specific aspect of facilitating a healthy attachment between a foster parent and child (Chodura et al., 2021). This research article promotes the idea that functional foster parenting supports the adaptive development of a foster child.

Communication is an important part of any parenting situation but especially foster parenting. Adaptive behaviors a child learns in an abusive situation can be problematic in a non-abusive environment (Chodura et al., 2021). Being able to communicate about these behaviors and include the foster child in setting boundaries gives them a sense of inclusion. Effective foster parenting can be seen as a parenting style that facilitates healthy attachments, communication, and warmth between a foster child and their foster parent.

Establishing a relationship is necessary for effective foster parenting (Chodura et al., 2021). Foster parents must first understand their motivations for fostering children *before* they

can develop a healthy relationship with their foster child. In 2003, the journal *Qualitative Social Work* released a study detailing the motivations and success of different foster parents. They discovered that genuinely caring for the foster child was the factor leading to the most success in foster parenting. Participants in the study also reported that the most significant reward of foster parenting is making a difference in a child's life (Buehler et al., 2003). Before a relationship can begin to be established, foster parents must understand their motivations for foster parenting.

### **Control**

Relationships are important for three reasons: they provide inclusion, control, and affection (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Control in a relational sense refers to being valued and respected. In any relationship, people want to feel that they have influence and that their voice matters. When feeling out of control, individuals are likely to act out to gain that attention or become reclusive and limit their participation (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Foster children are at a higher risk of feeling out of control and displaying behavior problems (Turney & Wildeman, 2016). They are moved from home to home often with little explanation. In some cases, they may not even know why they were removed from their parent's care in the first place. When foster parents utilize the communication skills of listening and disclosing, they can allow their foster child to feel in control and valid within the relationship.

Listening is one of the fundamental principles of communication (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Listening can be explained as hearing to understand. Understanding a foster child's perspective is important for communication. When a foster child is not listened to, miscommunication and problem behaviors may increase. Researchers for the journal *Child & Family Social Work* discovered that when foster parents and foster children do not understand or agree on the severity level of a behavior problem, the foster placement is more likely to break

down (Strijker et al., 2010). This disagreement occurs due to a lack of communication and listening. Communicating with foster children to understand their perspective on their placement and behavior is vital for successful foster parenting. As the researchers discussed, foster children often do not realize how their behavior affects their foster parents (Strijker et al., 2010). Foster parents must listen to their foster children to understand their perspective. Feeling understood will allow a foster child to maintain a sense of control in the relationship.

Listening goes hand in hand with disclosure. Disclosure, also referred to as strategic sharing, is the process of sharing information with someone to intentionally grow the relationship (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Many times, foster children are not given the necessary information they need to have a sense of control and security. In 2003 *Adoption Quarterly* published a paper titled “The Family Adoption Communication (FAC) Model” (Wrobel et al., 2003). The FAC Model focuses on adoptive families and how they share information with the adopted child about their biological family and adoption history. While the research focuses on adoptive families it can easily be adapted for foster families. The FAC Model focuses on three stages of adoption communication. In phase 1 the adoptive parents initiate the communication and regulate the information. In phase 2 the child is curious about their adoption, and this prompts the parents to respond. In phase 3 the child seeks out information on their own. The article also discusses that development through the three phases is not linear and depends on the child’s curiosity, the child’s developmental stage, and the adoption’s level of openness (Wrobel et al., 2003). The same communication patterns can apply to foster families. Like adopted children, foster children may have varying levels of curiosity, developmental stage, and access to information about their case or birth parents. Foster parents must be able to communicate with their foster children based on the limited information they have and determine what information is developmentally

appropriate. Ultimately, this disclosure will allow the foster child to feel in control of their situation and develop a healthy relationship with their foster parent.

### **Affection**

The third aspect of relationships is affection. Affection shows foster children that they are loved and cared for. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* Author Philip Fisher explains that because of past trauma or negative experiences with other parental figures, some foster children may be resistant to displays of affection. Some foster children may struggle to form attachments to their foster parents. However, Fisher goes on to explain that there is hope and that many foster children are resilient (2015). Affection can be shown in many ways, but it is best to gain verbal consent from a foster child before engaging in displays of affection—especially physical displays such as hugs or high fives. Nonverbal communication is one aspect of communication foster parents can use to build or break trust.

Nonverbal communication encompasses everything we use to communicate except for the actual words (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Nonverbal messages can include hugging someone, how close you stand to someone, your facial expressions, and even the tone of your voice. It is important to understand that nonverbal communication may contradict one's verbal message. This is especially crucial to understand when interacting with children. According to research conducted for *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, the responsibility for clear communication falls on the parent. Because 55% of communication is conducted nonverbally, it is important to make sure it is used appropriately. When communicating with their child, parents need to use a calm tone and suitable body language (Runcan et al., 2012). Contradictory nonverbal and verbal messages will confuse any child. The article states it best: "When the parent tells the child that he/she is forgiven and this message is accompanied by a smile, the

child understands the message transmitted and believes it much easier than if the message of forgiveness would be accompanied by a frown” (Runcan et al., 2012, p. 905). Fundamentally foster parents must make sure their verbal messages match their nonverbal messages. This will prevent mistrust that develops due to conflicting messages.

Foster parents can adopt a warm and responsive parenting style by communicating with and including their foster child in setting boundaries. They can allow their foster child to develop a sense of control and value by listening to and sharing information with them. Lastly, foster parents can develop a sense of trust with their foster child by using situationally appropriate nonverbal messages. These elements of interpersonal communication come together to minimize disruptive behaviors and create a healthy foster home for the child. However, interpersonal communication is not the only communication exchange foster parents will engage in. Next, we will discuss key skills for communicating in small group settings.

### **Small Group Communication**

Small group communication reaches a broader audience than interpersonal communication. However, it still relies on relational and task orientated communication. Small group communication is conducted among several people working towards the same goal (Linabary & Castro, 2021). Through the child welfare system, foster parents often communicate in small group settings. They must be familiar with the roles, necessary facilitation, and conflict resolution skills required in small group communication. Being effective in small group communication settings will allow foster parents to maintain relationships with social workers and provide the best possible environment for their foster child.

### **Roles within a case**

Working relationships with social workers, doctors, and attorneys are based on the case's main goal. In a podcast with MN Adopt, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Brandon Jensen expresses that goals are case specific. He explains that understanding the primary goal of the case is the first step to establishing relationships in the foster system. According to Jensen, several people a foster parent might interact with include the foster child's Guardian Ad Litem, school staff, social workers, county workers, therapists, physicians, and biological family (MN Adopt, 2022b). Foster parents can best adapt their communication style when they know who is participating in the group.

### ***Task Roles***

Foster parents can apply small group communication roles to the people involved in their foster child's case. Task-focused group roles include the task leader, the expeditor, the gatekeeper, the information seeker, the information provider, and the recorder (Linabary & Castro, 2021).

The first three task roles—leader, expeditor, and gatekeeper—help to facilitate group communication (Linabary & Castro, 2021). The task leader will lead the group's effort in accomplishing their task. Social workers can fulfill this role to make sure the child's case goals are being met. The expeditor is responsible for the group making progress toward its goal. This role can be fulfilled by a social worker, Guardian Ad Litem, or foster parent. In this role, a group member helps keep the group on track and makes sure deadlines are met. The gatekeeper regulates the flow of information and makes sure that everyone is listened to. Any member can fulfill this role. A social worker may fill this role as they coordinate with everyone involved with the case. (Linabary & Castro, 2021).

The last three task roles—information seeker, information provider, and recorder—deal with the communication content (Linabary & Castro, 2021). The role of an information seeker can be fulfilled by any group member who collects data on the case. This role may be fulfilled by an attorney working on the case, social workers, or the Guardian Ad Litem. In this role, they actively listen and ask questions to seek out vital information for the case. A foster parent can act as an information provider. Foster parents provide information on their foster child's well-being and behavior. In ideal group communication, everyone shares their information and ideas openly. Lastly, the recorder takes notes on what is discussed in group meetings (Linabary & Castro, 2021). By participating in notetaking, foster parents can make sure they do not miss any important details regarding their foster child's case.

### ***Maintenance Roles***

Foster parents often bridge the gap between professional and personal relationships. Being competent in small group communication settings requires an understanding of maintenance roles alongside task roles. Maintenance roles focus on the relationships between the group's members rather than the group's tasks. Four key maintenance roles are the social-emotional leader, the supporter, the tension releaser, and the harmonizer (Linabary & Castro, 2021). Maintenance roles can be performed by any member of the group.

The first two maintenance roles—social-emotional leader and supporter—provide the group with a sense of social leadership. The social-emotional leader is responsible for balancing the group dynamics and performing multiple maintenance roles. A foster parent may act as a social-emotional leader by providing support for and facilitating communication between their foster child and other case members. The supporter is a role fulfilled by multiple people. In this role, group members provide encouragement and emotional support for each other (Linabary &

Castro, 2021). This could be done in one way by a Guardian Ad Litem providing the foster parent with encouraging words after a difficult court hearing.

The last two maintenance roles—tension releaser and harmonizer—help regulate conflict and group relations. The tension releaser is a group member who can lighten the mood. A foster parent might do this by sharing a positive milestone their foster child reached. While the tension releaser helps the group feel comfortable with each other, the harmonizer helps the group members work with each other. The harmonizer is an impartial group member who helps resolve conflict. A social worker can harmonize by making sure each member of the foster child's case is working together (Linabary & Castro, 2021). Anyone in the group can help fulfill these roles. Maintaining group relations is a fundamental part of facilitating group communication.

### **Facilitating meetings with the foster child**

When it comes to facilitating a meeting, preparation is important. Foster parents should contact the parties involved ahead of time to determine what information to have ready for the meeting. Social workers and the Guardian Ad Litem might want information from the foster child's doctor appointment or school evaluation. Foster parents may be required to record information on their foster child's behavior. Therapists or doctors may need medical records or other information. Once the foster parent knows what needs to be prepared, they can plan for when and how to meet. Meetings can vary based on several factors. Meeting locations will depend on whom they are meeting with. Some social workers will need to meet in the child's current home. Meetings with specialists and therapists could be conducted at an office, clinic, or during a home visit. Creating a plan and understanding what needs to be communicated is an important part of the small group communication process (Linabary & Castro, 2021).

How a meeting is conducted is critical to its success. Research published in 2016 by *The British Journal of Social Work* observed 82 social worker interactions with 126 children and adolescents in the UK. The researchers discussed that communication with the social worker consisted of the child, the case, the social worker, and the context. Context is an important part of how communication is facilitated. Context can include using activities such as playing with Legos or coloring to make a meeting more comfortable for the foster child. Older children may be more comfortable meeting with a social worker alone while others prefer to have their foster parents present. The researchers emphasized that flexibility is needed to create contexts in which all parties are comfortable communicating (Winter et al., 2016). Determining an appropriate context and being flexible within it are needed when facilitating communication between a foster child and social worker.

### **Conflict**

In any small group setting, conflict can happen. It is important to work through conflict for the sake of the foster child. Conflict can be described as a struggle between two interdependent parties who view their goals as incompatible. Within this definition, there are several types of conflict including perceived conflicts, substance conflicts, value conflicts, process conflicts, and relationship conflicts (Linabary & Castro, 2021). Foster parents commonly run into perceived and process conflicts. Perceived conflicts occur when the parties involved miscommunicate and believe they disagree (Linabary & Castro, 2021). Because foster parents often coordinate with several social workers, miscommunication can occur leading to perceived conflicts. Process conflicts occur when there is a shared goal but disagreement on how to reach the goal (Linabary & Castro, 2021). An example of a process conflict could be between a social worker and a foster parent on setting up a visitation schedule. Even though the goal of visitations

is held by both, the process of when and how might be disagreed upon. Learning to resolve conflict and miscommunication is important to maintain healthy relationships and promote the foster child's well-being.

The relationship between foster parents and social workers is often overlooked. However, that relationship is crucial for foster parent retention. A study published in 2016 in the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* analyzes the opinions of 1,095 foster parents on their relationship with child welfare workers. The study discusses how a healthy relationship between foster parents and social workers promotes foster parent retention, which will provide placement stability to the foster child. The article states that foster parents' "ability to provide care is impacted directly and indirectly by their interactions with public child welfare agencies and workers" (Geiger et al., 2016, p. 23). A foster parent's ability to care for their foster child is impacted by their relationship with the social worker. Because of this, it is important to use conflict resolution skills to maintain healthy relationships with social workers and other case participants.

Preventing conflict can include emphasizing group goals, facilitating dialogue, and avoiding win-lose situations (Linabary & Castro, 2021). By emphasizing group goals case members can set aside personal feelings and remember that the purpose of the case is the child's well-being. Facilitating dialogue is important to avoid perceived conflict. Openly communicating with different parties clears up confusion and miscommunication. Avoiding win-lose situations keeps relationships healthy by removing competition. It is important to remember that the parties in a child welfare case are not competing. Foster parents, social workers, and birth parents are not competing. The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau, explains that there are three nationally held goals for child protection established in The Adoption and Safe Families

Act of 1997. These goals are the child's safety, permanency, and well-being. This Act states that every child deserves to be safe, live in a permanent home (this might be with their birth parent, relatives, or adoptive family), and be provided for (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018). Keeping these central goals in mind can help the members of a child protection case prevent conflict.

Resolving conflict is a collaborative process. Social workers and foster parents must be willing to work together to resolve complications. American scholar John Dewey believes that there are five steps to solving a problem (Linabary & Castro, 2021). Step 1 is defining the problem. When conflict arises determine with it is about. Conflict over visitation schedules might be because the visits happen on a school night when the child is tired. Perhaps the conflict is due to transportation issues. No matter the context, the first step is to define the issue. Step 2 is analyzing the problem. In this step, the reason a problem is occurring is looked at. In Step 3 workable solutions are generated. If transportation is an issue for visitations, various transportation solutions are generated at this stage. Step 4 involves evaluating those solutions; determining which solutions are useful and which are not. Lastly, in step 5 the agreed-upon solution is implemented and assessed. In the example of visitations, a social worker might arrange a ride service to transport the foster child to and from the visitations. Once the solution is implemented it should also be assessed to guarantee it is working. These five steps can help groups work through conflicts that arise.

Working in any team will have its difficulties. Utilizing conflict resolution skills can help foster parents find their way through difficult foster care situations. Positive communication exchanges can be fostered by using facilitation skills such as planning and paying attention to context. Focusing on both the distinct roles involved and the common goals of the team will

benefit all the members involved and increase their communication effectiveness. Small groups that consist of various child protection members can face conflict at times, but they can also provide support to the foster parent and the foster child.

### **Public Speaking**

Public speaking is the final communication discipline this paper will cover. At times foster parents may find themselves communicating through public speaking. Public speaking has been taught for thousands of years and is one of the fundamental aspects of communication. Public speaking is the act of communicating a message publicly to an audience (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). Foster parents should be familiar with the many speech purposes, audiences, and presentation techniques involved in public speaking.

### **Speaking Purpose**

There are three main forms of public speaking. They are informative speaking, persuasive speaking, and special occasion speaking (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). When speaking in court, foster parents often engage in informative speaking. Informative speaking is done with the intent to educate or share information with the audience. In other settings, a foster parent might choose to speak persuasively. Persuasive speaking is meant to change the opinions of the audience. Foster parents might use persuasive speaking at foster care orientations or informational seminars. In these settings, foster parents can use persuasive speaking to recruit new foster parents. Lastly, a foster parent may partake in ceremonial speaking at a foster child's adoption or reunification. These three types of speaking will guide what the foster parent speaks about (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). Determining their role and purpose allows the foster parent to have confidence as they craft their message.

For any speaking endeavor, a foster parent should understand their role. A common setting foster parents are asked to engage in public speaking is in court. To help foster parents better understand court proceedings and their role in court, MN Adopt (2022a) published a podcast episode titled “Let’s Talk – Foster Care 101 – Part 7: Foster Care & Court.” This podcast interviews a Minnesotan Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) Kirsten Langerman, who has her master's degree in social work. She explains that foster parents are at court to provide facts, not opinions, about their foster child’s care. Her advice for court proceedings includes contacting one’s social worker ahead of time to know what information to prepare and to take notes on aspects of one’s foster child’s care (MN Adopt, 2022a). This helps set the groundwork for the way a foster parent prepares for court. However, if a foster parent is speaking at a foster care support group, their opinion and experiences are what they will be relying on. Determining their role in the speaking event should be a foster parent’s first step in determining their purpose

### **Audience Analysis**

Audience analysis influences how a foster parent presents their message. Foster parents must be able to analyze who is in their audience and how to adapt their message accordingly. Audience analysis consists of understanding the audience’s demographic and adapting the message to fit the audience. The audience is the reason for the speech (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). Because of this, analyzing and adapting to the audience is vital for positive communication outcomes.

Determining the audience's demographic starts with the context of the speaking event. A foster care orientation audience will be vastly different from a courtroom audience. Audience demographics may include ethnicity, age, gender/sex, income, occupation, religion, and

education level. Understanding the demographics will help foster parents tailor their message (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). If the speaker knows that a foster care orientation's audience is full of young couples who do not have children, they may adapt their message to focus on parental skills and building relationships with the foster child. However, if the audience has a demographic that leans towards kinship foster care, the speaker might adapt their speech to focus on collaborating with social workers and other aspects of the foster care system. Audiences may have a wide range of demographics. The audience in the courtroom can include anyone involved in the foster child's case (MN Adopt, 2022a). Judges, attorneys, social workers, the Guardian Ad Litem, and birth parents are commonly present during a court session. Understanding who is in the audience is important when developing a speech. By using audience demographics, foster parents can understand whom they are speaking to.

Once a foster parent has analyzed their audience the next step is to adapt their message to the audience. Ancient Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle developed three rhetorical proofs that can appeal to a broad range of audiences. These lines of argument consist of pathos, emotional appeals; ethos, ethical appeals; and logos, logical appeals (Lunsford et al., 2021). Appeals to emotion, pathos, can generate emotions in an audience. Sharing positive stories of successful foster placements can bring feelings of hope and encouragement to other foster parents. Ethical appeals, ethos, build a sense of trust with an audience. These types of arguments focus on giving the speaker a sense of trustworthiness and credibility. When speaking to an audience that includes birth parents, foster parents can build a sense of trust by listening to the birth parents' concerns and showing that they have the foster child's best interests at heart. Lastly, logical appeals, logos, focus on the facts. These types of arguments focus on the content of the message. In many cases, a foster parent will be asked to speak about their observations and facts

of the case without bringing in their personal feelings. When combined, pathos, ethos, and logos create a sound argument that can reach a diverse audience. Understanding their speech purpose and audience allows foster parents to feel confident in their message.

### **Presenting**

When giving a speech, not only is the content of the message important but so is the way one presents it. Presenting well will increase a foster parent's credibility and reach. The best way to ensure an effective presentation is to practice. Practicing a presentation ensures that the prepared material is properly conveyed to the audience. Presenting a speech includes the words spoken as well as the nonverbal paralanguage, gestures, eye contact, and visual aids (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). Preparing and practicing are two of the key elements to a successful presentation. However, speech anxiety and limited time can affect a speaker's presentation quality. Learning to handle these unique situations will ensure that foster parents can communicate clearly and effectively.

Speaking to court professionals, judges, or birth parents can be stressful. Foster parents may experience speech anxiety. In his article for the *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, Corporate Trainer Farhan Raja (2020) discusses the causes and remedies of speech anxiety. Raja explains that anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness or fear often experienced by public speakers. Some of Raja's recommendations to accommodate speech anxiety include understanding that stress is natural, preparing and practicing the speech, and anticipating audience questions. Foster parents can find comfort in knowing that their stress is normal. If anything, it shows that they want to do well and care about their speech's impact. Practicing is a tested and true way to overcome speech anxiety. Contacting their foster child's social worker or event coordinator ahead of time to clarify their role can help foster parents feel more confident in

preparing their speech. Anticipating audience questions and preparing responses ahead of time will also help foster parents in reducing speech anxiety. Proper preparation allows foster parents to be confident in their message and its delivery.

There will be situations in which a foster parent will not have the opportunity to prepare a speech ahead of time. In court hearings or case planning meetings, foster parents may be asked questions and expected to present at a moment's notice. In this situation, practicing impromptu speaking will ensure that a foster parent communicates clearly. Impromptu speaking is giving a speech with little to no preparation (Schreiber & Hartranft, 2022). Foster parents can practice impromptu speaking by simply picking a topic and presenting it. This can be done by themselves, in front of a mirror, in the car, or virtually anywhere. For most impromptu speeches it is best to keep them simple and direct. A popular technique among public speakers is to find what is most important to say and select three key things they want to communicate. The three key points can be easily memorized or written on a card to keep the speaker on track. Practicing impromptu speeches will give foster parents the confidence to speak in court and meetings with limited preparation.

Foster parents may face many situations in which they are asked to speak publicly. They can become more confident in their public speaking by preparing and practicing beforehand. Determining the purpose of their speech, analyzing the audience, and understanding how to adapt allow foster parents to be confident in their speech's content. Public speaking should be something foster parents can use to speak effectively in court, at orientations, at adoptions, and in a variety of other settings.

## **Conclusion**

Through interpersonal communication, relationships can be built. Providing a foster child with inclusion, control, and affection lays the groundwork for developing a healthy relationship with them. Building relationships with foster children leads to better placement outcomes (Chodura et al., 2021). Communicating with caseworkers and care team members can be challenging at times. Foster parents can succeed at small group communication by understanding group roles, preparing for meetings and their context, and learning to handle group conflict by using both preventative and resolution strategies. Foster parents can use their public speaking skills to effectively inform or persuade their audience. By understanding their purpose, paying attention to audience demographics, utilizing presentation techniques such as impromptu speaking, and handling speech anxiety, foster parents will become confident public speakers.

Moving forward, research should be conducted on communication between the foster parent and the foster child. It would be useful for researchers to focus on common communication exchanges within the context of foster care. Further research could also be conducted on how home displacement and trauma can affect a foster child's ability to communicate with their foster parent. Foster parents can use communication to parent effectively and promote system relationships. Foster parenting is a journey filled with many challenges and rewards; communicating effectively creates a clear path toward the foster child's well-being.

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