



# What if it were you? Using Unconditional Care to Support Families even when Systems Fail Them

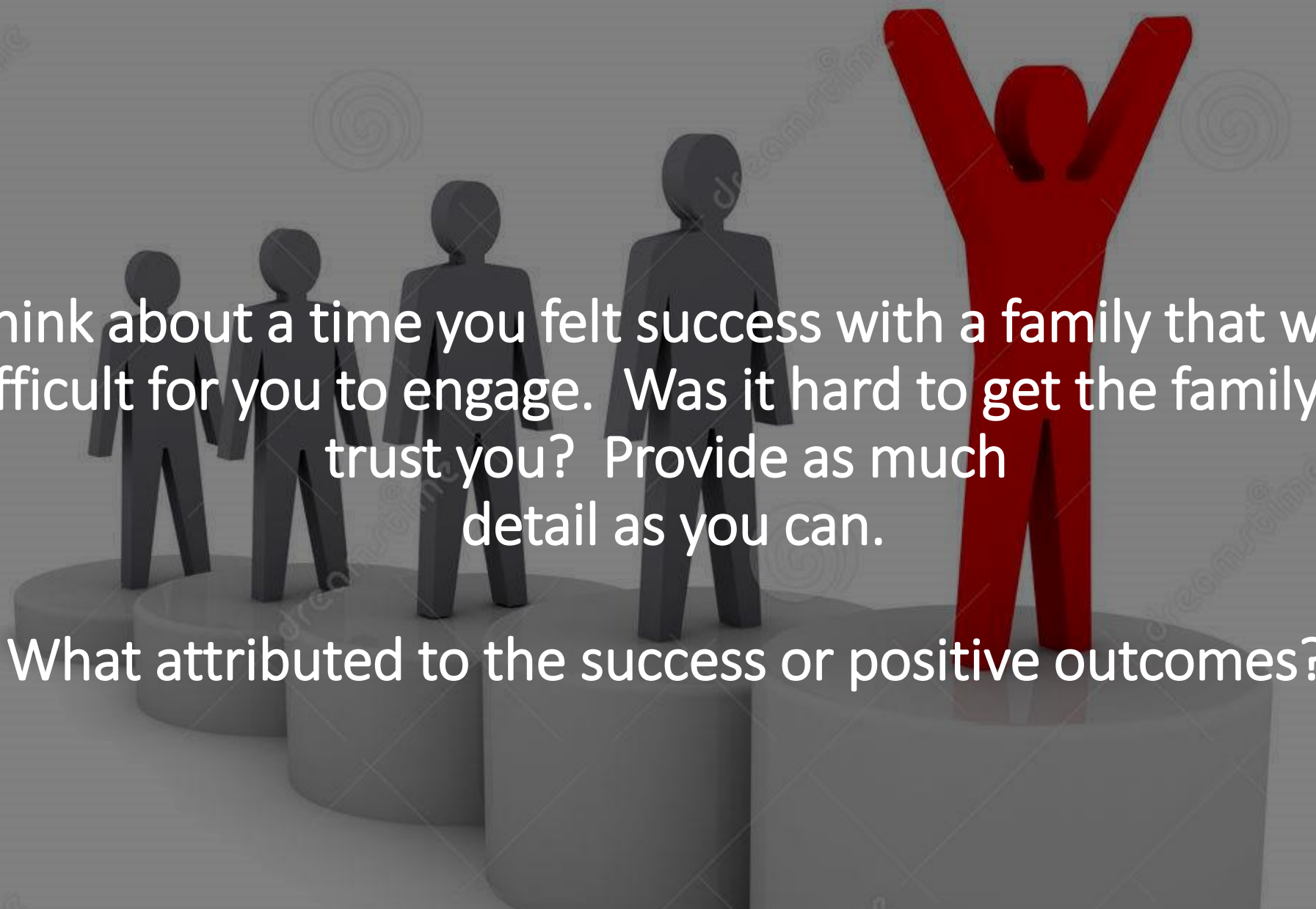


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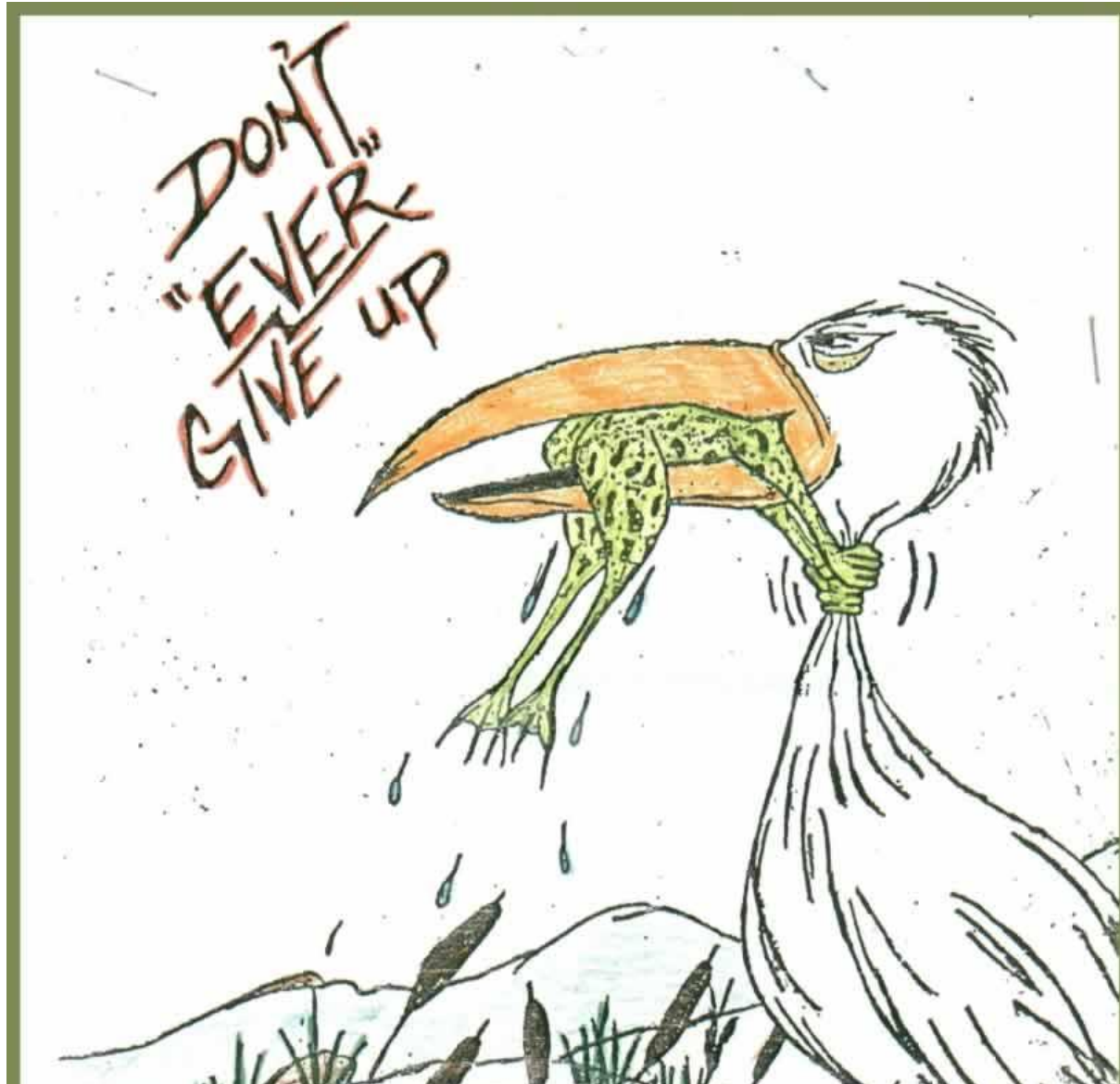
## Objectives

- Understand how a team's commitment to supporting youth and family regardless of behaviors, placement, or availability of resources can provide a different experience.
- Participants will consider how an unconditional care approach can be applied to the Wraparound process to individualize supports and interventions to support families in their communities.



Think about a time you felt success with a family that was difficult for you to engage. Was it hard to get the family to trust you? Provide as much detail as you can.

What attributed to the success or positive outcomes?





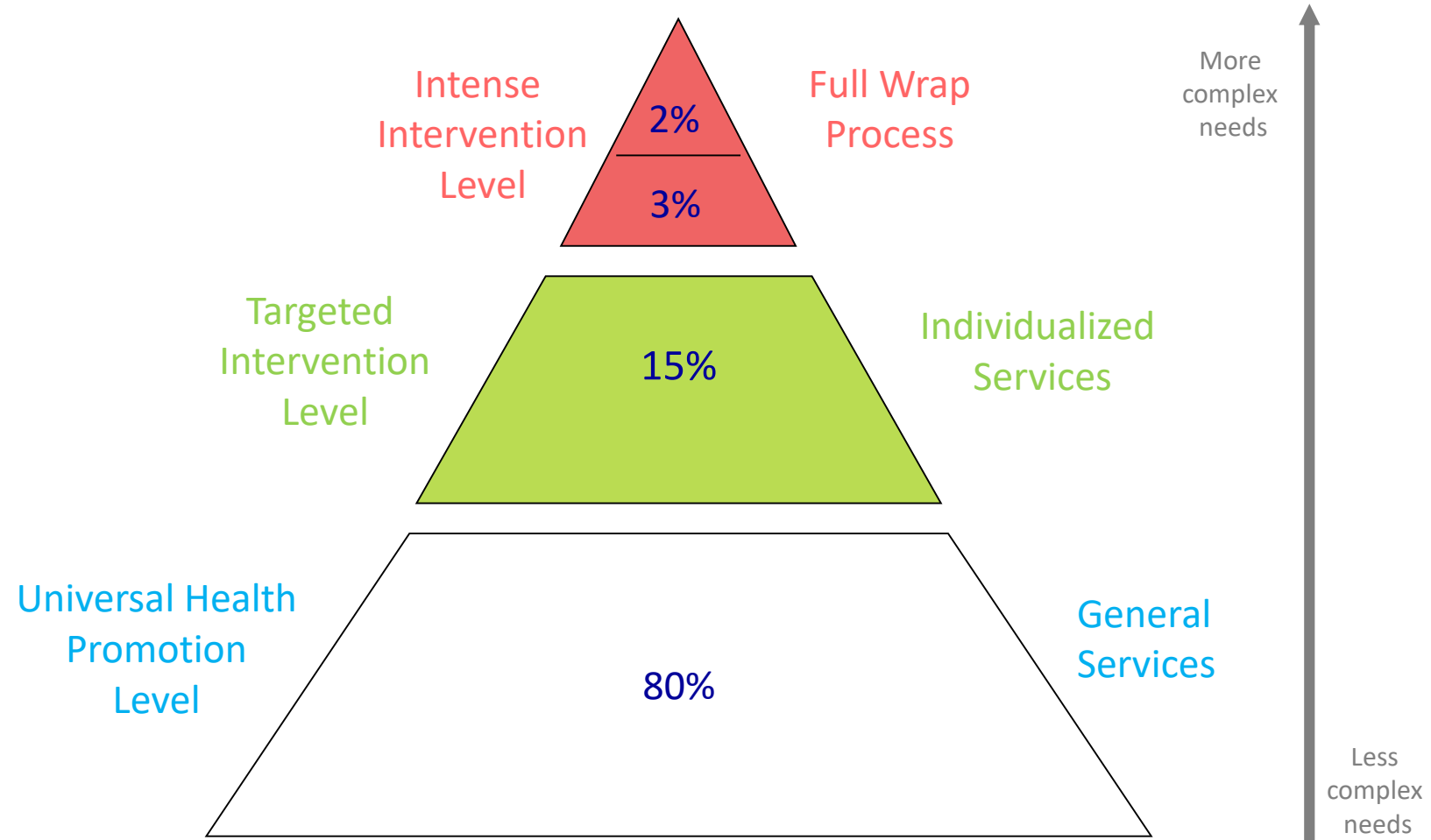
# Unconditional Care

- Being unconditional means that our attitude toward a person is not depending on his or her behaviors. Regardless to what the person does, we keep to our promises and we give him the help and protection he needs. Unconditional doesn't mean that we have to be 24/7 for the person. It's about what happens in the moment of contact.

--Gentle Teaching

- “Unconditional care” can be characterized both as a core value or principle as well as an actual method of intervention. In the former sense, it refers to our conviction and policy that we will not discharge youth from our programs for the behaviors that brought them to us in the first place. In the latter, unconditional care can be seen as an implicit treatment intervention that informs and infuses all interactions between staff members and youth.

--Seneca Family of Agencies





# Negative Effects of Placement Disruptions

- Placement disruptions have the greatest negative impact on children and youth with histories of trauma and maltreatment because they combine a message of rejection with a sense of powerlessness.
- These often sudden disruptions can do profound emotional harm to children and youth who may have already experienced the loss of birth parents, siblings, friends, school and neighborhood.

# Research



- Youth's experiences of failure and exclusion in systems and treatment programs leads them to believe this new setting may be an opportunity to be revictimized
- Traumatic experience has the capacity to disrupt the development of affected youth, and it often recurs in the lives of victims (Main and Hess, 1990)
- In the most extreme situations, youth entering residential treatment programs have experienced more than 20 placements, on average, most youth have between five or six placement (Baker and Curtis, 2006)



Unconditional  
Care as an  
Intervention—  
Examples from  
the field



How will you present  
the family?

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Develop a plan for next steps

Who will you reach out to?

How do we start planning?

How do you  
demonstrate  
Unconditional  
Care in Practice?



# What Does Unconditional Care Look like in Practice?

- Showing up
- Attempting to understand a youth and family's situation without judgement or blame
- Fundamental commitment to build and care for connections
- An intention to remain committed to the youth and family regardless of behavior, circumstance, or placement
- Not discharging the youth and family from care
- Being attentive to moments of exception





Practice

Practice

Practice



## Goals of Unconditional Care

- Providing care and support in a way that is different from anything the family has experienced in the past
- Being recognized
- Being included
- Being listened to
- Revision of the youth and family's "internal working model"—their perspectives of themselves



It is critical to meet the child's inevitable expectation  
of failure with an even stronger commitment to  
sustaining a relationship with him

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--Unconditional Care, Berrick and Sprinson, 2010

ANY?  
QUESTIONS?

The image features two lines of 3D rendered text. The top line, 'ANY?', is positioned higher and further back than the bottom line, 'QUESTIONS?'. Both lines are composed of thick, blocky letters. The front-facing surfaces of the letters are a vibrant cyan color, while the recessed and side surfaces are a light gray. The text is set against a plain white background and casts a soft, light gray shadow onto the surface below it. The perspective is from a low angle, looking slightly up at the letters, which emphasizes their three-dimensional quality.

# Contact Information

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