



# Environmental Changes to Boost Client Success

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# Presenters

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# 2018 Learning Community: *Coaching for Success*

- The Learning Community component of the IIEESS project, a technical assistance contract of the Office of Family Assistance, has the following goals:
  - Provide TANF programs with training on client-centered coaching strategies;
  - Offer peer-to-peer exchange opportunities and on-going technical assistance provided by teams of client-centered coaching and program implementation experts; and
  - Provide one-on-one assistance and support to integrate client-centered coaching strategies into existing TANF program models for improved employment outcomes.



# Learning Community Sites

ACF Region	State
Region 1	New Hampshire
Region 2	New Jersey
Region 3	District of Columbia
Region 3	West Virginia
Region 4	Alabama
Region 6	Oklahoma
Region 7	Missouri
Region 8	South Dakota



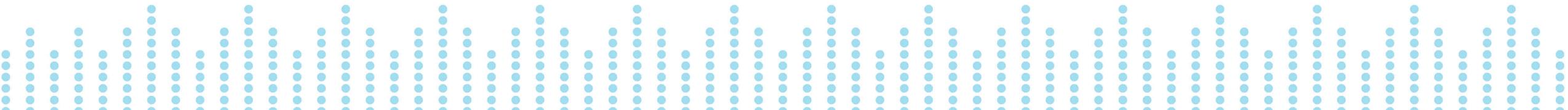
# Purpose

- Increased understanding of how the stresses of living in poverty impact the skills needed for moving out of poverty.
- Share simple changes to your office environment that can reduce stress and support goal achievement.
- Learn one or two strategies you want to try in your office.



# AGENDA

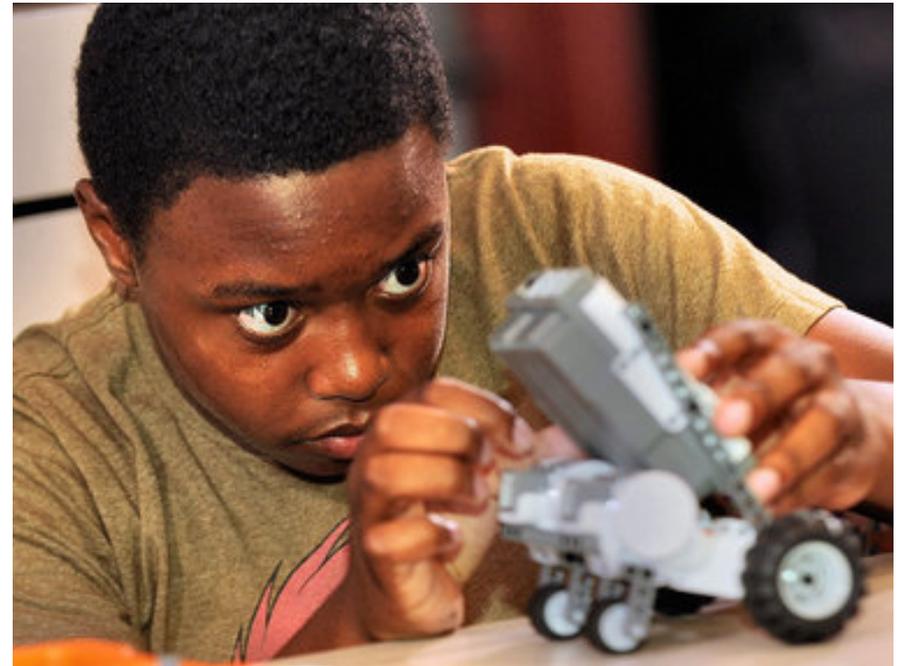
- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **Environmental change: what is it and why is it helpful?**
- **Examples from the field:**
  - First impressions matter (slide 21)
  - Convey high expectations (slide 23)
  - Focus on the customer (slide 25)
- **Q&A**



# Environment plays a huge role in who we become

**If we grow up experiencing life as predictable and filled with many opportunities, we become experienced at:**

- making plans
- looking for the best choices.....
- weighing our options....
- investing in ourselves for the future.....



# Environment plays a huge role in who we become



**If we grow up experiencing life as a series of crises, where new problems wait for us around every corner, we become experienced at:**

- reacting....
- focusing on battling our immediate problems....
- trying to follow what people say we have to do to get what we need....
- never planning too far ahead.....



# Current life experiences also strongly affect how we think and behave

- Science shows that current life stresses also affect brain functioning for all of us—regardless of childhood experience;
- Brain wiring gets swamped by stress and the quality of memory, impulse control, and decision-making are all compromised.

*Where did I put that computer password?*



*How am I going to pay all these bills?*

*Why did I just eat that whole container of ice cream?*



# Universal Design



We need to design programs and services to work for all - even though not everyone has extreme stress and/or trauma.



# Where would a stroller go?



# Trauma-Informed

**Definition:** An approach in which the provider is sensitive to the widespread impact of trauma regardless of specific knowledge of an individuals' past experiences.



# Create a Safe Environment

- Play soft music, use noise machines; train staff to use lower voice.
- Arrange waiting room seating so visitors are facing out and not directly across from one another
- Softer lighting can reduce stress
- Plants promote peace, tranquility, enhances self esteem



# Avoid Re-traumatizing Clients





ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

# Executive Functioning-Informed

**Executive Function:** the ability to focus on and solve problems, control impulses, and hold and switch between multiple pieces of information

**Executive Function-Informed:** The use of tools and approaches to enhance executive functioning skills





# Help! Where am I? (insert better example of poor signage)



# Look at the clutter in my office!





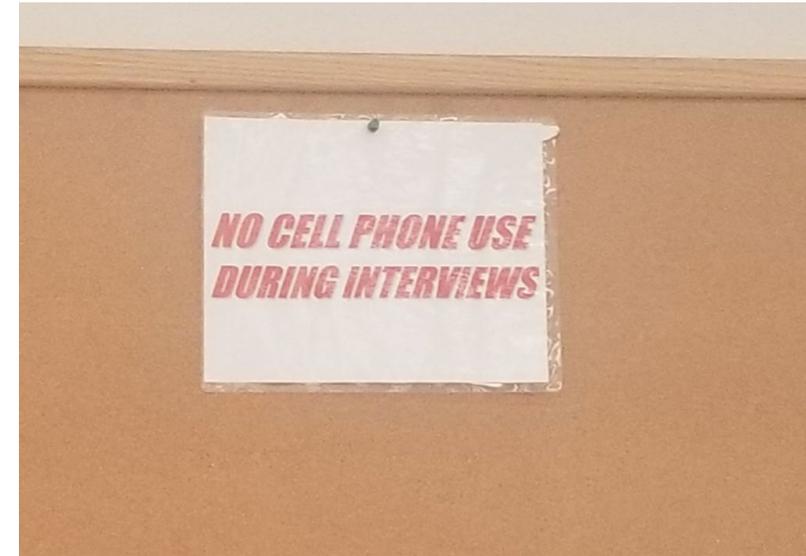
# First Impressions Matter



- Use signage to make office welcoming including removing signs that start with “No” or “Do Not” and contain jargon or abbreviations.
- Make office more inviting by cleaning and repainting, blue, green, and purple are calming; light colors create the feeling of space
- Check the space each day – eliminate clutter
- Rearrange furniture to reduce congestion



# How do these flyers make you feel?



# Convey High Expectations

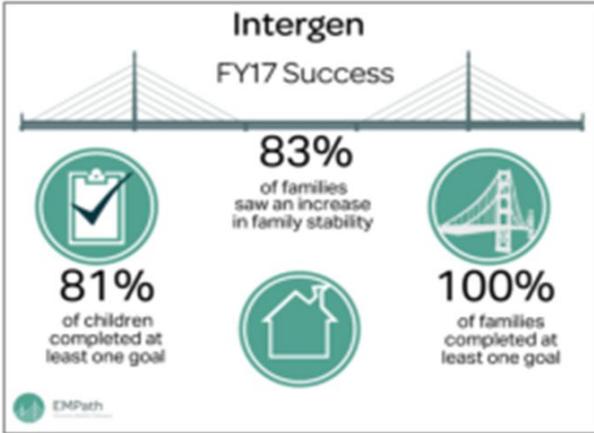


**MISTAKES**  
*are proof*  
*that you are*  
**TRYING**

- Hang motivational artwork which includes diverse people
- Consider whether security officer must wear uniforms and if metal detectors are necessary
- Landscape paintings are associated with increased positive affect and comfort, but don't hang too much on wall.

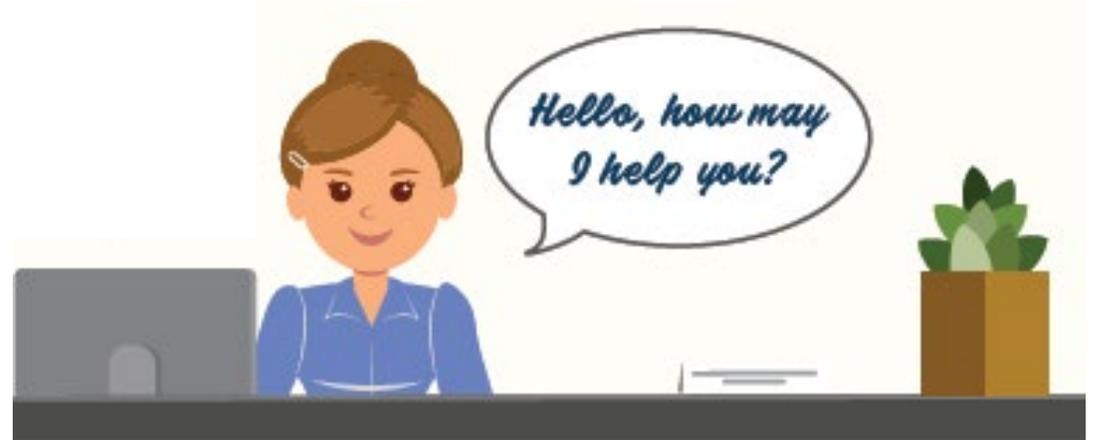


# Saturate the office with achievement

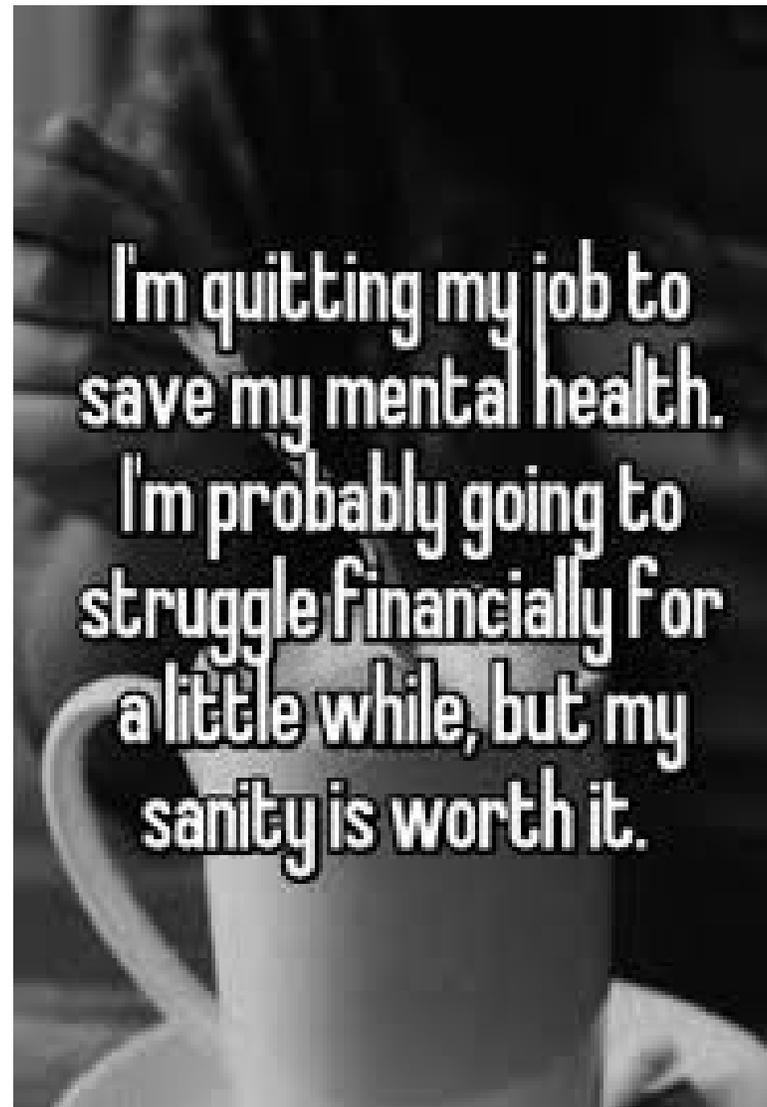


# Focus on the Customer

- Train front counter staff in customer service. Greet each client with a friendly “hello, how may I help you?”
- Add drop boxes and special lines for quick transactions.
- Some clients respond better if seated corner to corner rather than across from staff



**How does this make  
the client feel?**





**No need to wait in line to drop off papers**



# Activity: Make it easier for clients to succeed!

