

**Title of Training:** Responsive Circle

**Board Present:** Jennifer Bowman – President, Rebecca Dunahoo – President Elect, Emma Tempest – Secretary, Nicole Bedard – Benton County Member-at-Large, Anna Cannon – Washington County Member-at-Large, Terri Teters - Ex-Officio, Elizabeth Scudder – Advisor, Debbie Mays – Advisor, Susan Edwards – Advisor

**Participants in attendance:** 28

The meeting was called to order at 6.30pm by Jennifer Bowman. Jennifer welcomed the participants to the NWAECA meeting. She thanked Josh and Amy Routt who were facilitating the Responsive Circle, as well as Curricula Concepts and Child Care Aware for their sponsorship of this event. These Responsive Circle meetings will be a regular event in our NWAECA calendar this year and we hope you will leave feeling connected and with new ideas to take back to your settings to help the children and families you serve, as well as to help yourself as we navigate these new challenging times.

Josh began the circle by reminding everyone that research shows that if children have one stable adult in their life who is committed to a relationship with them, they are more likely to be successful and resilient when faced with adversity. In early childhood, we are often that adult for children. It is more important now than ever to create that stable relationship.

*“What are you feeling right now?”*

- uncertain, overwhelmed, grief, missing out, fear of the unknown.

*“How have you been impacted by Covid?”*

- isolation, losing social connection, fewer children in class, job loss, no closure from end of previous school year, not seeing family, can't get out of the house, navigating resources with family members, too much togetherness with family members in close quarters, not being able to physically give hugs hurts, trying to maintain some sort of normalcy, missing social events, worrying about doing everything right

Josh explained that all the above feelings and thoughts are normal and being felt all over the world. Children and young adults are feeling new depressive feelings that they have never felt before, and this is something expressed through frustration and anger. In young children, feelings are usually labelled as happy/sad/mad/scared. They might not have the vocabulary to describe feeling bored, anxious, or frustrated. Acting out behaviors are likely to increase. Josh explained that children are resilient and can adapt to new situations easier when the adults around them are displaying positive behaviors. If children see adults responding to stress with anger, they pick up on – they can sense changes in tone, facial expressions and will act accordingly. Josh advised that providers talk to

families if they see new behaviors in the children they care for and that everyone is trying their best with the strategies they have access to.

Regarding parent connection with providers during this time, attendees shared some great ideas to maintain relationships with families who perhaps cannot come into settings anymore due to Covid restrictions. These ideas and more can be found in our Google Doc that anyone can add to – please check it out and add your ideas to it, we all work better together! <https://bit.ly/NWAECAGoogleDoc>

“What’s one thing you’re doing to move forward?”

- breathing exercises, choosing to take control of SOMETHING and then doing it, taking it one day at a time, looking for the positive, examining our own principles and deciding what we are willing to uphold and what we are choosing to let go of, maintaining daily tasks and checking off at the end of the day to feel successful, following a routine, finding joy in the journey, looking for the best and worst times in the day and sharing with someone, assessing what’s of value to me and cultivating more of that

Josh talked about decision fatigue and how making decisions ahead of time, where possible, means you don’t have to make yet another decision later on when you might be burned out that day e.g. meal planning for the week so you don’t have to think about what to have for dinner every night. He also talked about how shifting your mindset to connecting with other providers who may have already solved your problem and thinking, “What CAN I do about it?” helps you to move from an overwhelmed state to a positively problem solving state.

Please reach out to your colleagues, friends, and us here at NWAECA, Child Care Aware and Curricula Concepts. You are not alone! We are all in this together!

**Meeting was adjourned by Jennifer Bowman**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 6.30-7.30pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4798416326>

**Topic:** Tour Modern Day Miss Tizzy’s Childcare Space **Presenter:** Debbie Mays

*Minutes shared by Emma Tempest*