

CERTIFIED FACILITATOR

OXYGEN Singles Relational Readiness Training Guide

STRONGER FAMILIES
Oxygen for Your Relationships



OXYGEN for Singles is a curriculum that focuses on developing essential skills to enhance the readiness of individual service members in forming and maintaining relationships. The program aims to improve communication, decision-making abilities, resilience, and goal achievement in various relationship contexts, including friendships, work relationships, family dynamics, dating and partnerships, as well as parenting and co-parenting. When you purchase the program, you receive six modular lessons and the OXYGEN personality assessment for individuals.

The Facilitator Guide consolidates all six topics into a single manual, arranged in the recommended order for facilitating the curriculum. Each topic builds upon the previous ones, allowing for a seamless progression. One of the key advantages of OXYGEN for Singles, known as "Relational Readiness," is its flexibility. You can customize the program by selecting and teaching one, two, four, or all six topics, depending on the specific needs of your event. This flexibility extends to the ability to mix and match topics and determine the order in which they are facilitated.

If you choose to follow the suggested sequence outlined in the table of contents, we provide a PowerPoint presentation on your Facilitator Dashboard titled "OXYGEN Singles Relational Readiness – ALL Topics." This presentation eliminates redundant information regarding the OXYGEN Profile Assessment Compass found in each topic.

We are always available to consult with you before you lead an event. If you would like to schedule a 30-minute call, please email us at events@strongerfamilies.org.

Thank you for selecting OXYGEN!
Stronger Families Team

OXYGEN Singles Curriculum Table of Content

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SESSION 1

LEADING FROM YOUR STRENGTHS

What are your personal strengths? How can you leverage those strengths to become an essential part of your team?

Facilitation Insight:

Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider. EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"

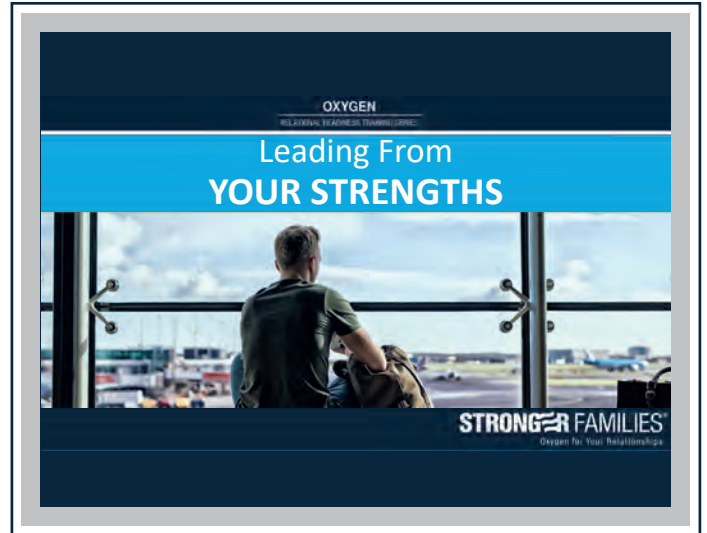
Instruction:

*Specific instructions for the Facilitator:
EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question."*

Script:

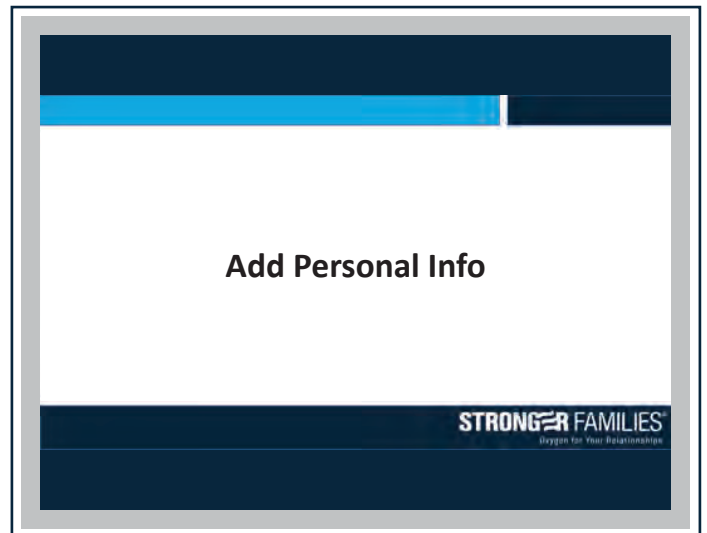
"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.)

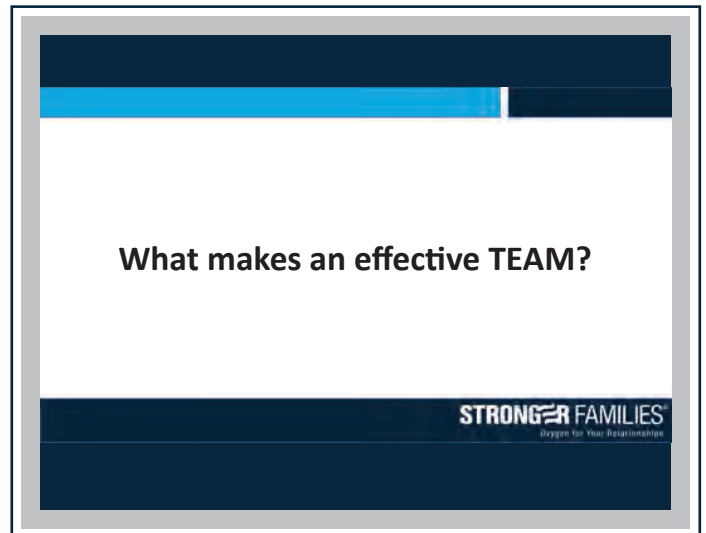


"Welcome to today's training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Leading From Your Strengths. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____."

Advance to your family picture slide (optional to form connection with students)



Advance to the *What Makes an Effective Team?* slide



What makes a good team? This is an interesting question. I am sure that in this room we have some opinions, maybe even strong opinions, regarding the answer. What do you think?

Allow the audience to share and feel free to allow a discussion to grow amongst the audience members. You can monitor and keep things on track. Try and identify any suggestions that will relate well to what is coming through the curriculum. Themes of personalities working or not working well together, different strengths and weaknesses, blending different approaches to decision making, stress management, reacting to change, will be important ones to note

Thank you for sharing! There were some great answers shared and I think our discussion has set up well for what we will be covering in today's topic -- Leading from Your Strengths.

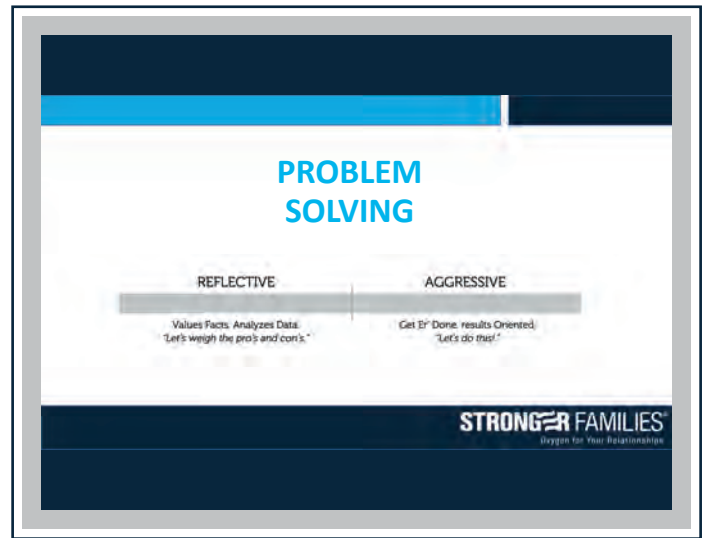
Each person in this room is uniquely equipped with a combination of traits based on their personality. Identifying and understanding how these traits impact our ability to navigate relationships on the job will make us more successful as a team member. Yet this doesn't happen overnight. This takes time. It takes practice. In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it.

In this training we will explore the 4 areas where the strength of your personality will have an impact: Solving Problems, Influencing Others, Reacting to Change, and Making Decisions. Let's get started!

This training involves a personality assessment known as the OXYGEN Profile. In a few moments, we will all be taking the assessment together which will generate a report specific to your unique personality. You will explore the various sections of your report as we progress through this program.

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

Advance to the Problem Solving slide



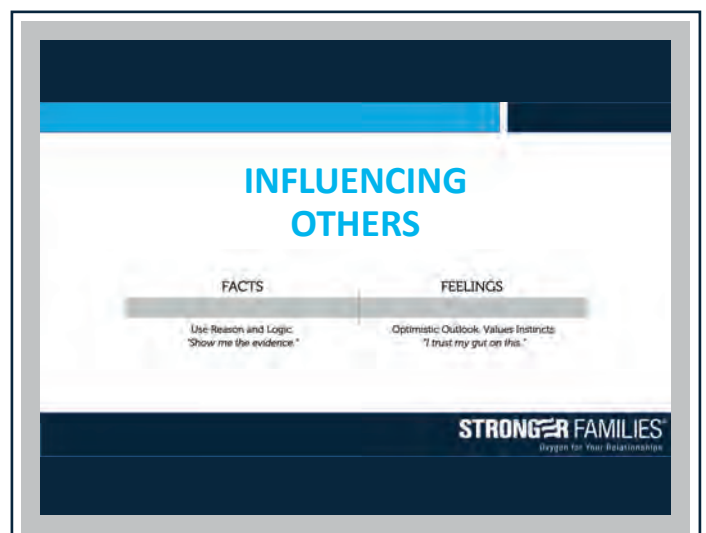
The ability to solve problems is a key indicator of a team's overall effectiveness. We are all wired differently and have different approaches to solving problems when they arise. Typically, people fall along a scale between being reflective or aggressive when confronted with problems.

Those who are on the Reflective side tend to value facts. They analyze the data and take time to evaluate all possible options and every possible outcome those options could lead to. They rarely move quickly.

Those on the Aggressive side move fast! They are results oriented and aren't always concerned with how the problem gets solved as long as it's solved! They don't want to sit around and talk about the problem when they could act instead.

Many people fall somewhere in between. Where do you think you would map on this scale?

Advance to the Influencing Others slide



We all influence the people we live and work with, in varying degrees. However, we do not all influence others using the same tactics. There are two different approaches which can cause friction if not recognized and accounted for.

On one side of the scale, you have those who rely on Facts to influence people. Reason, Logic, and Hard Evidence are their default tactics when trying to have an impact on people. Emotions can be a distraction and muddy the waters.

On the other end of the scale, you have people who influence others through Feelings. They are highly instinctual, emotions play an important role when engaging people, and they tend to “trust their gut”. Facts are great, but they can only move people so far!

Many people fall somewhere in between. Where do you think you would map on this scale?

Advance to the Reacting to Change slide

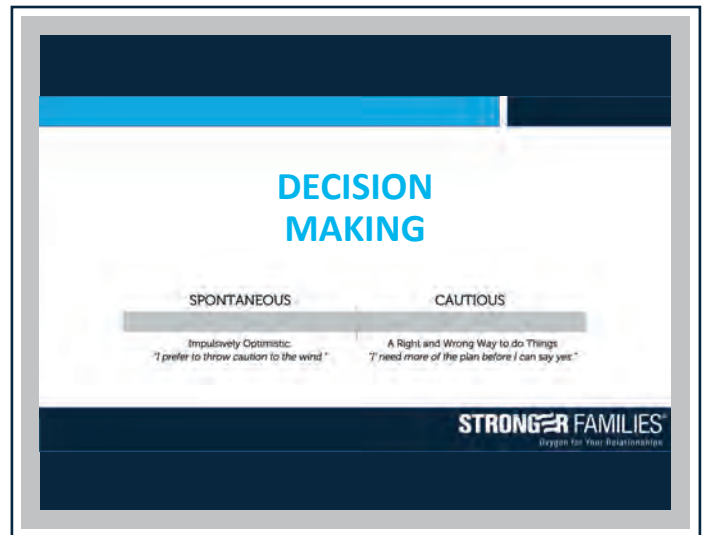


Change is inevitable. In a team dynamic, reacting to change as one cohesive unit can be very difficult. Most people have a natural way of responding to change that falls between the following extremes.

On one side we have those who readily and easily Accept change. They want variety. Doing the same thing each and every day is exhausting. They thrive with options and actually seek out change for the sake of change. They can sometimes waste effort and energy on the “new” when the “old” was working just fine.

On the other side we have those who naturally Resist change. They are most comfortable when they know what to expect. Routine allows them an opportunity to improve on their performance, keeps them safe from the unexpected, and makes their lives orderly. They can get stuck in “the way we’ve always done it” and miss opportunities.

Most people fall somewhere in between. Where do you think you would map on this scale?



When making big decisions, teams will rely on a leader. But each individual on the team will make decisions that contribute to and impact the team dynamic on a regular basis. When making decisions we find that people are either Spontaneous or Cautious in their approach.

Those who are Spontaneous tend to be impulsively optimistic. They rely on a strong sense that it will work out in the end. They aren't afraid to "give it a try" and "see how it works out". Spontaneous folks aren't thrown off by making mistakes. For them, making a mistake just gets them closer to finding the right course of action. If they aren't careful, those who are Spontaneous can end up exhausted from the trial-and-error approach.

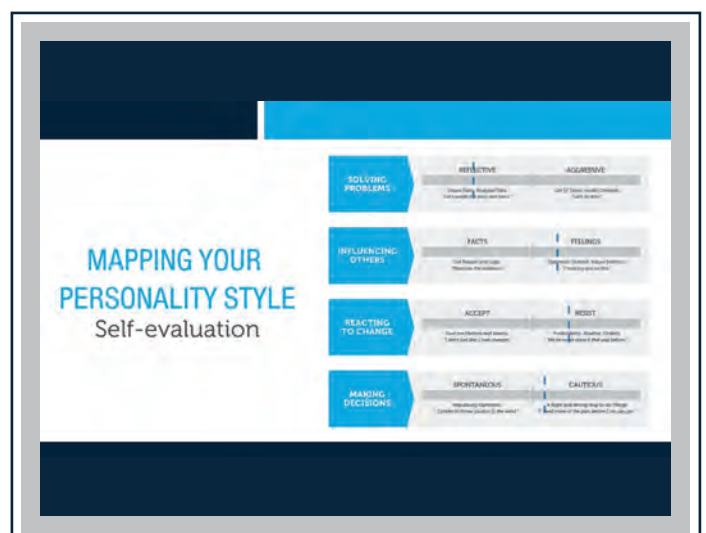
Those who are Cautious take a very different approach. They are often driven by the idea that there is a right way and a wrong way to do things and they wouldn't dream of doing it wrong! They investigate, ask questions, take measurements, whatever it takes to feel a level of certainty before making a decision and committing to a course of action.

Most people fall somewhere in between. Where do you think you would map on this scale?

Before you take this assessment and get your specific report, I want to take a minute and do a self-assessment around the four key areas where personality has an impact. Then we can compare what we think about ourselves versus what the assessment reports.

Follow along in your Study Guide on page 2 with the first key area... Solving Problems.

Give instructions to the participants to place a line indicating where they map on each of the four scales after we review them, being mindful to make sure the line is one side or the other of the midline.



Advance to the Assessment Instructions slide.
Invite the participants to now take the OXYGEN Profile assessment.
Make sure you have entered in your respondent link and be prepared to walk participants through the process if needed.
Allow about 15 minutes to complete. Once completed, Allow the audience to respond and share about their report either with the whole group or their tables.



It is important that participants do not feel as though they are being forced to identify with results they don't agree with. Your role is not to convince them. It's ok if they feel as though the assessment got it wrong. Your goal is to shift their focus to what the assessment got right! Be prepared to engage individuals who are struggling with this process. They may need some help looking past those areas they don't agree with to focus on the areas that can benefit them as they seek to grow in their self-awareness.

Sharing about your profile and how it can impact your team is a great way to make this concept come to life.

Consider a personal story based on your OXYGEN Profile.

Advance to the slide - Understanding Your Personality Profile



"We can all agree that our personalities impact how we interact with others but in what way? Well, different personality tendencies will produce different values. For some a direct, aggressive, fact-based approach is valued. For others, they would prefer a softer, more tactful approach. Let's look at the OXYGEN Compass and see if we can discover some values that may influence how we engage those we interact with throughout our day.

There are 2 scales at work within this compass revealing 4 personality tendencies. First, the vertical scale. At the top of the scale are the Task-Oriented personalities and at the bottom are the people-oriented personalities. Task-Oriented personalities will focus almost exclusively on the tasks that need to be accomplished in any given situation. The People-Oriented personalities will focus on the people and relationships in any given situation."

You can poll the audience to see who identifies with each side of the scale. A good team has variety! It is highly likely that both Task and People Oriented tendencies are at work within your group. Sharing a personal story that helps capture the balance and/or tension these tendencies create will help people lean in.

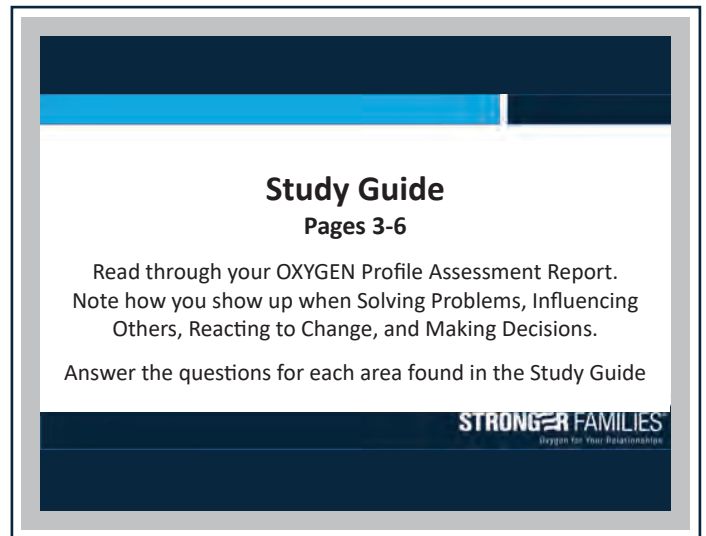
"The other scale is the horizontal scale. On the right side of the scale are the Fast personalities and the left side are Slow personalities. This is not a reference to IQ! This identifies personality tendencies when it comes to processing information and coming to a decision. The personalities on the Fast side of the scale will react quickly. They want responses quickly, they want action, they prefer a wrong decision over no decision! Those on the fast side of the scale don't mind change. They actually enjoy the process of change. The personalities on the Slow side of the scale tend to take more time in making decisions. They investigate, research, seek out 3rd party validation. They ask a lot of questions and are influenced by others' opinions but will not be rushed into forming theirs. They feel that making a wrong decision is just about the worse thing they could do.

Now it's time to get specific and see how having faster or slower tendencies and being task or people oriented shows up in your unique report. Follow the instructions on the Breakout slide and in your Study Guide to learn more about how you show up in the 4 key areas we explored earlier.

Advance to OXYGEN Compass slide



Advance to the Breakout Activity slide and have the participants follow the instructions. Allow 10 minutes to complete.



Study Guide
Pages 3-6

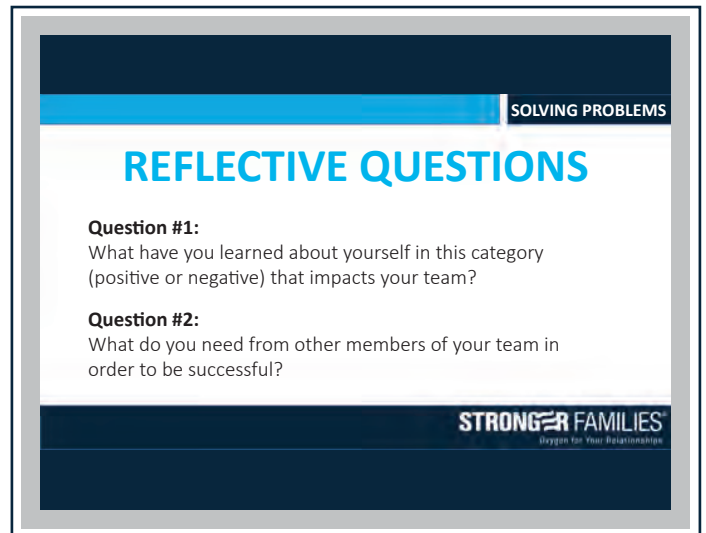
Read through your OXYGEN Profile Assessment Report. Note how you show up when Solving Problems, Influencing Others, Reacting to Change, and Making Decisions.

Answer the questions for each area found in the Study Guide

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Welcome back! I trust that this exercise has provided you with insights on how your personality shows up in these four key areas. The next step is to share these insights with others for the purpose of finding ways to blend your personality style with others to make an effective team.

Advance the slide to the Reflective Questions for Solving Problems. Divide the audience into groups of 3-5. Have participants read through the Solving Problems section of their report and prepare a response to the 2 questions on the slide and share their responses with their group. When each person in the group has been able to share, ask for volunteers to share what they discovered with the whole group.



SOLVING PROBLEMS

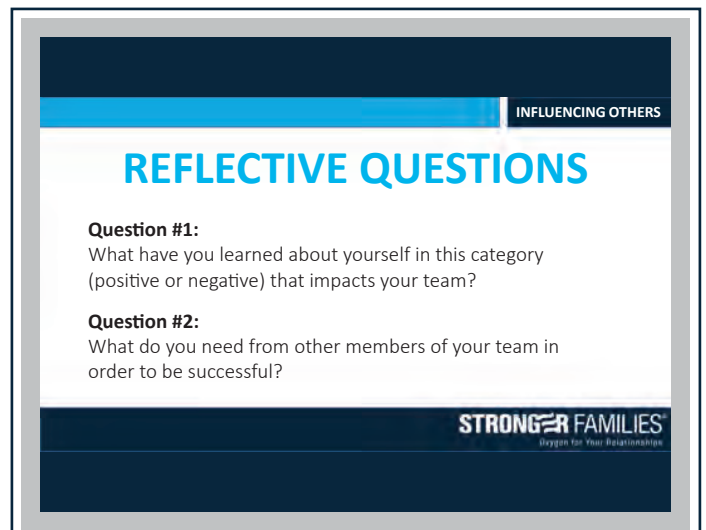
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Question #1:
What have you learned about yourself in this category (positive or negative) that impacts your team?

Question #2:
What do you need from other members of your team in order to be successful?

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Advance the slide to the Reflective Questions for Influencing Others. Have participants once again return to their groups and prepare responses to the 2 questions on the slide, this time, as it relates to the Influencing Others section of the report. Allow enough time for everyone to share and ask for volunteers to share their discoveries.



INFLUENCING OTHERS

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Question #1:
What have you learned about yourself in this category (positive or negative) that impacts your team?

Question #2:
What do you need from other members of your team in order to be successful?

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Advance to the slide Reflective Questions for Reacting to Change and have the participants answer the 2 questions in their breakout group and share their discoveries when finished.

REACTING TO CHANGE

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Question #1:

What have you learned about yourself in this category (positive or negative) that impacts your team?

Question #2:

What do you need from other members of your team in order to be successful?

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Advance the slide to the Reflective Questions for Making Decisions and facilitate the breakout session as you have for the previous 3 sections.

MAKING DECISIONS

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Question #1:

What have you learned about yourself in this category (positive or negative) that impacts your team?

Question #2:

What do you need from other members of your team in order to be successful?

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Advance to slide "How are you Adapting at Home and Work"

HOW ARE YOU ADAPTING AT HOME AND WORK?

The infographic is titled "HOW ARE YOU ADAPTING AT HOME AND WORK?". It is divided into two main sections: "ADAPTIVE" and "MALADAPTIVE". Each section contains several strategies, each with a corresponding bar chart showing the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategies are:

- ADAPTIVE:**
 - PROBLEM-SOLVING:** A bar chart showing a high level of effectiveness (around 80%).
 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION:** A bar chart showing a high level of effectiveness (around 80%).
 - PROBLEM-SOLVING:** A bar chart showing a high level of effectiveness (around 80%).
 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION:** A bar chart showing a high level of effectiveness (around 80%).
 - PROBLEM-SOLVING:** A bar chart showing a high level of effectiveness (around 80%).
 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION:** A bar chart showing a high level of effectiveness (around 80%).
- MALADAPTIVE:**
 - PROBLEM-SOLVING:** A bar chart showing a low level of effectiveness (around 20%).
 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION:** A bar chart showing a low level of effectiveness (around 20%).
 - PROBLEM-SOLVING:** A bar chart showing a low level of effectiveness (around 20%).
 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION:** A bar chart showing a low level of effectiveness (around 20%).
 - PROBLEM-SOLVING:** A bar chart showing a low level of effectiveness (around 20%).
 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION:** A bar chart showing a low level of effectiveness (around 20%).

At the bottom right, there is a logo for "STRONGER FAMILIES" with the tagline "Steps for Our Relationships".

"So far, we have explored how your personality tends to respond in normal circumstances. Yet many of us are faced with responsibilities, tasks, expectations, or occurrences that are far from normal. When stressors come, our personalities will often adapt to deal with it. When our natural way of engaging isn't appreciated, isn't effective, or is otherwise not working to deal with what we are facing, we will adapt and try a new approach. Sometimes, adapting is easy. We immediately see the benefit of it and find all the motivation we need to continue to invest in this new way of showing up.

Other times adapting is difficult. Showing up in a way that doesn't come natural to us may be what the situation calls for, but it takes a lot of energy and is not sustainable.

In your report, there are several indicators of how you are having to adapt.

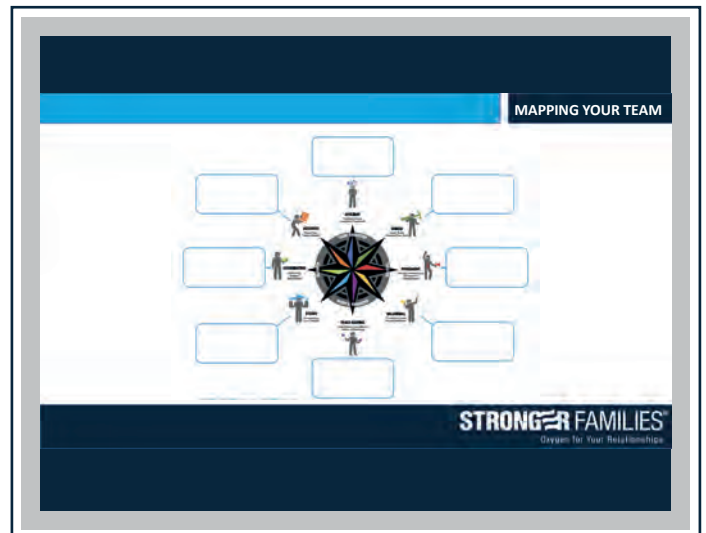
The BLUE indicates your natural way of responding and is therefore tracking no adapting in that category.

YELLOW indicates that you are feeling moderate pressure to adapt by increasing or decreasing your tendency in that area. In other words, if you are naturally Cautious when making decisions, a yellow indicator would identify that you feel the need to be more cautious or less cautious, but you are still within the Cautious parameters. This could represent a healthy change that is sustainable, or it could be the first step towards the final indicator.

If your report is showing RED, this is an area in which you are crossing from one tendency to another. Continuing with our example, if you are naturally Cautious and your report is indicating RED, it means that you are feeling pressure to adapt across the midline and become Spontaneous. This is extremely difficult to sustain. It takes a tremendous amount of energy to adapt to that extreme. Investigating this area and finding ways of relieving this pressure may be a necessary next step.

Take a few minutes and explore this section of your report. Discuss your findings with your breakout group.

Advance to the Mapping Your Team slide



We have explored the powerful ways that our personalities can clearly impact those we live and work with. Yet a picture can make it even clearer. It may be helpful to get see a visual representation of how your team maps according to the OXYGEN Profile Compass. In your Study Guide, you will see a compass with empty text bubbles next to each profile just like the image on this slide. Add the people you work the most closely with OR the people you do life with, according to their profiles. Once finished, answer the following questions individually, and discuss your answers with your breakout group.

Advance to the Mapping Your Team – Reflective Questions slide. Give participants time to answer and discuss with their groups. When finished, ask the audience to share any discoveries and observations they were able to make.

MAPPING YOUR TEAM

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Question #1:
Is the map of your team evenly spread around the compass? What does that mean for your team dynamic?

Question #2:
What strengths are indicated by the map of your team? What is one thing that your team does very well because of that strength?

Question #3:
What challenges are indicated by the map of your team? Provide an example of when your team has had to face that challenge?

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"This concludes our training on LFYS. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally." (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to www.strongerfamilies.com

SESSION 2

BUILDING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

How can we overcome the barriers that have impacted good communication?

Facilitation Insight:

Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider.

EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"

Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator. EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.)



"Welcome to today's Relational Readiness Training on Communication. We will be using the Wellness Training Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Relational Readiness. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____.

Display your Family/Team Photo slide and introduce yourself and those you do life with.

What we will cover today applies to many areas of our job where communication can either make or break the moment. As we interact with community members, co-workers, children, partners, other family members, etc., communication is essential. Yet effective communication doesn't always come naturally. Developing good communication habits takes time. It takes practice. In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective communication tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it."

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

Put up the OXYGEN Profile Assessment Code and Instruction slide (or instruct the participants to retrieve their OXYGEN Profile report if they were able to take it in advance)

"This Training also involves a personality assessment known as the OXYGEN Profile. We will explore how different personality types tend to communicate so make sure and have your report in front of you.

How many of you felt as though the assessment got it right?
Was anyone surprised by their results?"

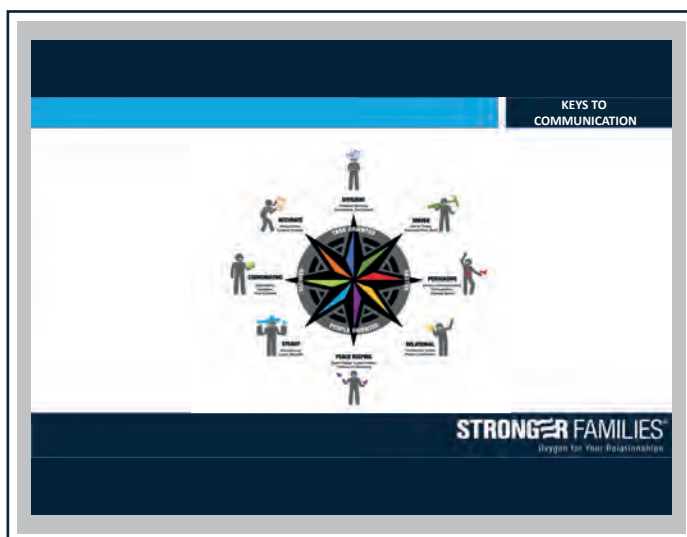
Allow the audience to respond and share about their report.

It is important that participants do not feel as though they are being forced to identify with results they don't agree with. Your role is not to convince them. It's ok if they feel as though the assessment got it wrong. Your goal is to shift their focus to what the assessment got right! Be prepared to engage individuals who are struggling with this process. They may need some help looking past those areas they don't agree with to focus on the areas that can benefit them as they seek to grow in their communication skills.

Sharing about your profile and how it can help or hinder healthy and effective personality is a great way to make this concept come to life.

Consider a personal story based on your OXYGEN Profile.

Display the OXYGEN Profile Compass slide



"We can all agree that our personalities impact how we communicate but in what way? Well, different personality tendencies will produce different values when it comes to communication. For some, direct, fact-based communication is valued. For others, they would prefer a softer, more tactful approach to communication. Let's look at the OXYGEN Compass and see if we can discover some values that may influence communication.

There are 2 scales at work within this compass revealing 4 personality tendencies. First, the vertical scale. At the top of the scale are the task-oriented personalities and at the bottom are the people-oriented personalities. Task-Oriented personalities will focus almost exclusively on the tasks that need to be accomplished in any given situation. The People-Oriented personalities will focus on the people and relationships in any given situation."

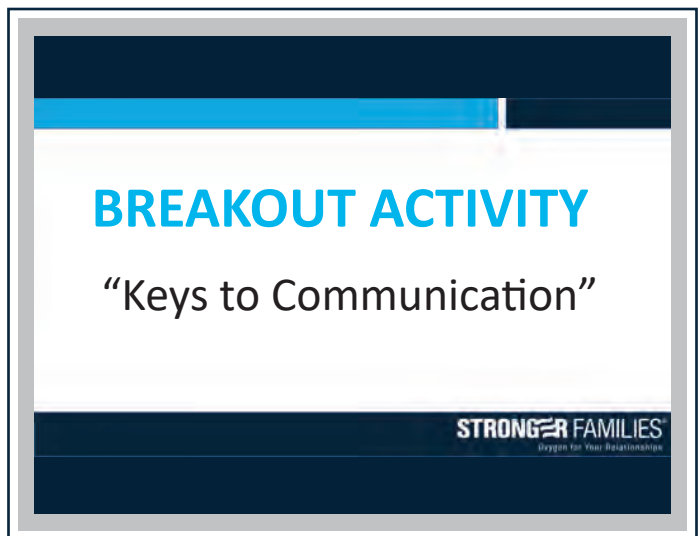
You can poll the audience to see who identifies with each side of the scale. Opposites attract! It is highly likely that both Task-Oriented and People-Oriented tendencies are at work within your relationship and that of your couples. Sharing a personal story that helps capture the balance and/or tension these tendencies create will help couples lean in. However, if both you and your partner have the same tendency, share how that dynamic plays out in your relationship.

"The other scale is the horizontal scale. On the right side of the scale are the Fast personalities and the left side are Slow personalities. This is not a reference to IQ! This identifies personality tendencies when it comes to processing information and coming to a decision. The personalities on the Fast side of the scale will react quickly. They want responses quickly, they want action, they prefer a wrong decision over no decision! Those on the fast side of the scale don't mind change. They actually enjoy the process of change. The personalities on the Slow side of the scale tend to take more time in making decisions. They investigate, research, seek out 3rd party validation. They ask a lot of questions and are influenced by others' opinions but will not be rushed into forming theirs."

*Ask the students: Based on what we just heard about the OXYGEN Compass can you identify anything that would relate to communication differences between personality types?
Discuss with the group*

"Now let's get specific. Turn to the Keys to Communication section of your OXYGEN Profile Assessment report. Take a few minutes to review the information found there and answer the following questions:"

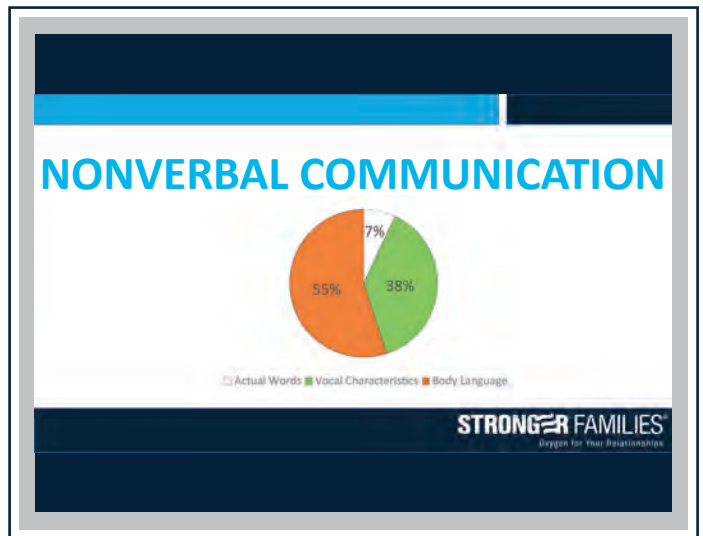
Display the Keys to Communication Breakout Slide. Have the participants divide into groups of 2 or 3 and follow the instructions in their Study Guide After each group has finished, poll the students for any takeaways that relate to workplace communication.



"We can all agree that personality plays a big part in communication. The way our personalities show up at work and at home can support healthy communication or create tension, confusion, and misunderstandings. Exploring how personality factors into our communication tendencies will provide a greater opportunity for effective communication.

"One variable that we don't always consider when talking about communication is the non-verbal factor. Our facial expressions, tone, body language, gestures, pauses, etc., are all non-verbal signals. These signals send messages which can either powerfully reinforce our words OR make things quite confusing. When the meaning of the words we choose to say does not match what our non-verbal signals are communicating people are less likely to believe your words."

Display the Albert Mehrabian
"Elements of Communication" slide

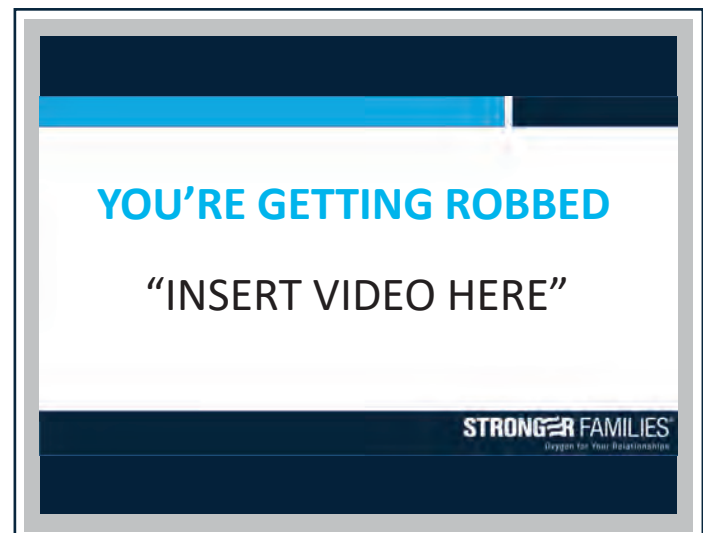


"In fact, research has shown that among people who know you well, your words only have a 7% impact on what the listener believes. 38% is vocal characteristics and 55% is body language and facial expression. Your body language, gestures, and tone are all communicating, whether you realize it or not so be intentional. Choose your words carefully, then make sure that your non-verbal signals reinforce your words."

Listening With Empathy

"It's easy to limit our thinking about communication to only the delivery of information whether verbal or non-verbal; however, one of the most underinvested elements of communication is not how we deliver information, but how we receive it. Listening is an important and essential part of good communication!"

Play the "You're Getting Robbed" video



"What a great reminder to not jump to conclusions! The store clerk came to a decision based on the information that was being delivered. He did not consider who the information was meant for, the context of the information being shared, or who was sending the information. In other words, there was a complete lack of understanding regarding what was behind the words being said. He lacked empathy."

This video by author and researcher Brene Brown does a great job highlighting the power of empathy."

Play Brene Brown "Power of Empathy" video.



"Listening with empathy is truly listening to what the other person is saying. Instead of waiting for an opening to get your own point across, you are willing to listen with the sole intent of understanding what the other person thinks, means, or feels—NOT to judge, rebut, advise, or contradict."

Listening with empathy is a learned skill; it's not something people generally develop automatically. We have a skill set for developing listening with empathy. It's called the Empathetic Communication."

Empathetic Communication

Display the Empathetic Communication Slide and discuss the content



"Empathetic Communication is a conversation framework that will guide you through listening with empathy. It is particularly beneficial when the conversation you are having, or are about to have, with a coworker is heavy with frustration and could get derailed by emotion, disagreement, or misunderstanding.

Ask the audience to think of a frustrating situation they have experienced at work or at home. Then ask for a volunteer who would be willing to share their experience with the group. Once selected, have the volunteer exit the room for a few minutes while you go over how Empathetic Communication works with the rest of the group.

Display the Empathetic Communication How It Works Part 1 Slide

HOW EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION WORKS

Part 1 – Mirroring (Listening Step)

Speaker: Sends their message in small enough pieces to be easily repeated.

Listener: Repeats back what they heard the Speaker Say with the intent to learn and understand.

1. "What I heard you say is..."
2. "Am I correct?"
3. "Is there more?"

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There are 3 parts to Empathetic Conversation.

Part 1 – Mirroring. When an engagement with a coworker fits the criteria we just described, begin to implement Part 1 – Mirroring.

Allow the speaker to share their thoughts and repeat back what they express. You may need to frame your intention by stating something like: "What you are saying is important. I want to make sure I don't miss anything so I would like to repeat back what you are saying as you say it to make sure. Are you ok with that?" Most likely the speaker will agree, and you can continue. If they do not agree, take that as a sign that some space may be needed before continuing with the conversation so that damage is not done.

As the speaker continues, you as the listener, will repeat back (or mirror) what the speaker just said to clarify the message and demonstrate that you understand what was shared. You can do this by following the prompts on the slide. Once the Speaker is finished, we move on to the next part."

Our brains have an amazing ability to filter through an incredible amount of information picking out only what we feel is relevant. This Mirroring technique is essential for helping us avoid the mistake of adding or taking away from what someone says to us. Remind students to refrain from drawing conclusions or making assumptions beyond what is clearly stated by the Speaker. This could be a great opportunity to incorporate a personal story about a time you assumed or drew a conclusion and were wrong! You can also refer to the opening video as an example.

*Display the Empathetic Communication
How It Works Part 2 Slide*

HOW EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION WORKS

Part 2: Validation (Thought Level)

When the **Speaker** says, "That is all," the **Listener** then validates the **Speaker**.

Examples:

- a. "I can understand how you would think..."
- b. "I see why that bothers you."
- c. "I would probably be upset too, if that happened to me."

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"Part 2 – Validation. The goal of this step is to make sure the speaker feels validated. In other words, they know that what they have just said matters and has value, whether or not you agree with what the Speaker has just said. You, as the listener, will craft a response to what was shared that validates the speaker's thought process.

An example of validation is to say, "I can understand how you would think that..." or "I can see why that bothers you..."

*Advance to the Empathetic Communication
How It Works Part 3 Slide*

HOW EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION WORKS

Part 3: Empathy (Feeling Level)

Goal = to feel what the other person is feeling.

Examples:

- a. "I imagine you might be feeling..."
- b. "I imagine you might have felt..."
- c. "If I were in your shoes, I might feel... Do you feel like that?"

Then, trade roles. The listener now speaks, and the speaker listens.

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Part 3 – Empathy. The goal of empathy is to try to identify what the speaker may be feeling and then put yourself in their shoes.

Communicating empathy can sound like, “I can imagine you might be feeling...” or, “If I were in your shoes, I might feel.... Do you feel like that?”

A good point to make here is not to be over-confident in your empathy. It's wise and humble to ask if your guess is right.

“Empathetic Communication requires your full attention. Make sure that you can be fully present with no interruptions or distractions. It may be necessary to reschedule the conversation if the situation you are in makes it difficult to fully engage. That's okay! If now isn't a good time, then find a time when you are both available.

So, we've got three parts: Mirroring, Validating, and Empathy. Let's see how this would play out in a real-life situation.”

Invite the Volunteer back into the room. Ask them to join you up front and share with you about their frustrating situation. Remember to frame how you will be interacting with the information so that they are not thrown off by the Part 1 – Mirroring.

As they share their frustration follow the Empathetic Communication framework arriving at a point of expressing validation, and empathy to the volunteer.

When finished feel free to interview the volunteer about their experience ultimately discovering if they felt heard and/or understood.

Reference the Study Guide, page 8, “Perception... Is it Reality?” tying the results of the study to what the volunteer expressed.

Please put up Empathetic Communication “Activity” slide



"Now it's your turn.

Remember the situation you identified that has been frustrating for you to deal with at work or at home? Great! Let's get back into our small groups and this time I want you each to take turns sharing your frustrating scenario while someone else from the group follows the Empathetic Communication framework and listens with empathy. The others can observe making sure each part of Empathetic Communication is engaged. Then trade roles so that each person in the group has an opportunity to both express their frustration and listen with Empathy,

Allow the students to complete the activity. Make yourself available to help guide the process as needed and answer any questions that may come up.

"This probably feels a little scripted to you, but the three steps are a framework for conversation where strong feelings are involved which can derail communication efforts. It may feel "unnatural" however, what comes naturally is often fight or flight... neither of which are helpful for effective communication. Trust the process it really does work.

When finished, consider engaging the audience about their experience. Some will immediately see the benefit and have made useful conclusions they will want to share. Others will have found it difficult. A personal story can help validate their feelings as well as reinforce the effectiveness of the Empathetic Communication framework. Feel free to acknowledge the reality... no one talks this way in real life! That's true! Give the participants permission to find wording that better fits their way of talking while making sure to stay true to the process!

Conclusion

"Knowing our own communication tendencies based on our personalities, learning the Empathetic Communication framework, and being mindful of our non-verbal signals are all powerful tools for more effective communication. But as with any skill set, practice makes perfect!

This concludes our Training on Communication. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to **www.strongerfamilies.com**

SESSION 3

UNDERSTANDING AND BUILDING ON OUR DIFFERENCES

How can we overcome our differences to be a productive team?
How can we learn to view our differences as opportunities?

Facilitation Insight:

*Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider.
EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"*

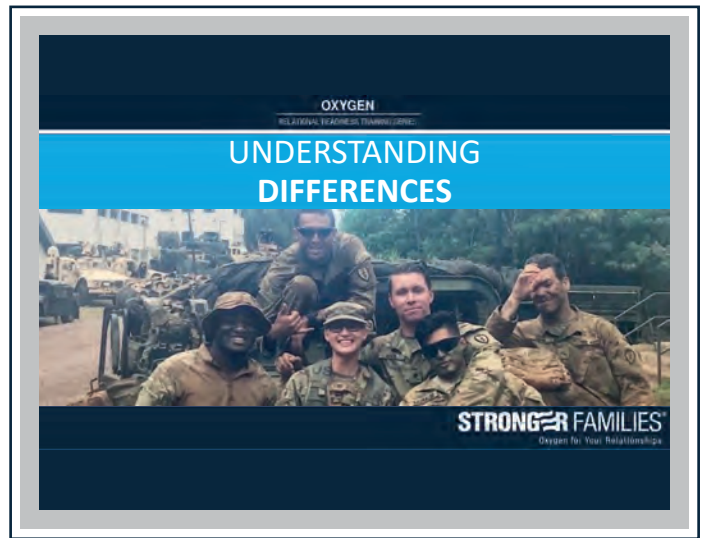
Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator. EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.)



"Welcome to today's training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Understanding Differences. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____.

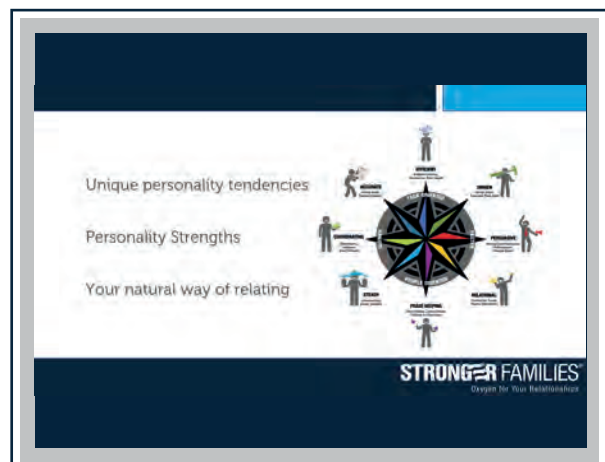
Advance to your family picture slide and briefly introduce your family. (optional to form connection with students)

"No two people are alike. Everyone is unique. The differences between human beings can be subtle or obvious but they are apparent in every relationship. Tall, short, blonde, brunette, introvert, extrovert... there are so many differences and each one can have an impact on how well we work together. Learning to understand our differences is the first step towards creating healthy and effective engagement on the job. This takes time. It takes practice.

In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it." "In this Training we will explore the results of your OXYGEN Profile Assessment. This report will help us avoid the trap of viewing the aggravating differences between us and our coworkers as wrong. They are not wrong... just different! Having this perspective is a significant key to transforming how these differences can enhance your relationships in the workplace. The more we can understand what motivates our coworkers, supervisors, even our families the more we can empathize instead of criticize.

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

Put up the OXYGEN Profile Assessment Code and Instruction slide (or instruct the participants to retrieve their OXYGEN Profile report if they were able to take it in advance)

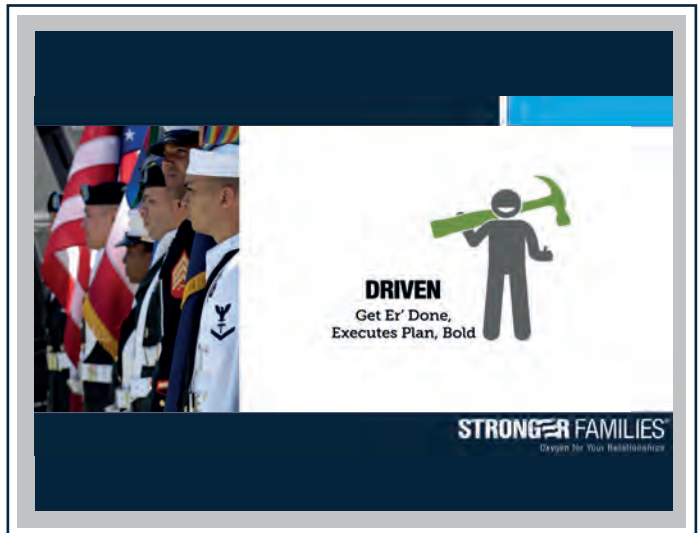


"Imagine if each of you were from a different country. To work together effectively, you would have to learn about each other's cultural differences and how to adapt to them. You might even need to learn a new language!

Our personal differences can be understood the same way. The OXYGEN Profile Assessment helps us discover who we really are and what motivates us. It is an easy assessment where what you select can reveal great insights into who you are.

In taking this assessment, you are essentially casting emotional votes for traits belonging to distinct personality temperaments. These temperaments can be grouped into four core personality types found on page 2 of your Study Guide in the OXYGEN Compass: Driven, Relational, Steady, and Accurate.

Advance to the DRIVEN profile image and discussion its unique qualities with the group. Continue to advance the slide with each new profile.



Driven Profile: Driven people live by the motto of 'Get er done' and wake up in the morning looking at their to do list and what needs to get checked off the list. For those that live in the world of Driven, they process stress through the lens of tasks and what needs to be accomplished. Unlike, relational partner who will reach out to others during times of stress, Driven is known for driving through the task in order to reach the goal. The challenge in working with Driven people is that they often miss the emotional cues of others. Achievement is the goal and can come at the cost of a harmonious relationship with coworkers. This can be difficult when connecting emotionally is needed and yet their focus is on the project, business, or task at hand.

How many of you identify with Driven?

Relational Profile: Relational people are often known as the life of the party. They are the connectors relationally. They love to cheerlead others and have been known to have 25 "best friends." The challenges that can surface when working with a Relational is that they can overcommit to social events, need to talk through their emotions on a daily basis, and avoid conflict at all cost.

How many in the room would raise your hand and say I identify with the Relational profile?

Steady Profile: Steady people are often heard singing the melody of Hakuna Matata or they live by the motto of 'Don't worry, be happy.' They are unwavering, loyal, and reliable. They have a keen ability to keep the peace at all cost. They are professional conflict stuffers. What I mean by this, is that when conflict comes up, they will do whatever is necessary to stuff the conflict away and maintain peace in the relationship. This stuffing is often at their own expense of peace and joy, but they wouldn't want it any other way. This also raises a challenge with this personality type. For Steady people, you only have so much space to bury conflict and suppress it in the working relationship. This usually results in what we call emotional vomit. This is when stored up conflict all comes out in very strange and often uncharacteristic ways emotionally.

How many of you would raise your hand and say, I identify with Steady Profile?

Accurate Profile: Accurate profiles are often the creatives, engineers, or detailed oriented individuals. They value facts over feelings, data over dreams, and rarely will make an impulsive decision without careful thought and consideration. For those who are married to or in relationship with someone that is Accurate, it can feel at times like they are critical of what you are doing. They will often share the right way to do something that can come across as demeaning or demanding. The challenge with Accurate is that they don't see these actions as critical or demeaning, but rather as loving and supportive. Many will think they are providing great feedback on how the world should work and the best way to go about getting things done. This can be challenging if you are on the receiving end of their feedback.

How many of you identify with Accurate?

We've covered the 4 core personalities in the OXYGEN Profile Compass, but you might be asking what about the other 4 personalities. What about Persuasive, Peace Keeping, Coordinating, and Efficient. Where do they fit into the compass? They are a combination and blend of the 4 core personalities. There is nothing worse than being pigeonholed to one profile. The combination creates unique and different expressions of the 4 core.

So, I have to ask, how many of you felt as though the assessment got it right? Was anyone surprised by their results?"

Advance to the "Personality Insights" slide.



The Compass is comprised of 62 points of data while the Personality Insights is comprised of 118 thousand points of data. This means that while you and your partner could occupy the same dominant profile on the compass, you will have different Personality Insights. You are unique!

This Narrative about you has 3 paragraphs, made up of general statements unique to your personality tendencies, representing the strengths of your natural way of relating to the world around you. Take a moment and read over this section if you haven't done so already.

How many of you would say the report nailed it? This is 95% accurate to who you think you are.

How many would say it was pretty close? The report is 75-80% accurate.

How many would say this report missed the mark? This isn't you at all.

Most of you found that it is pretty accurate. For those of you who struggle with the results there could be a few reasons.

1) Check with someone who knows you well to see if they feel it describes you. Often, we take on a

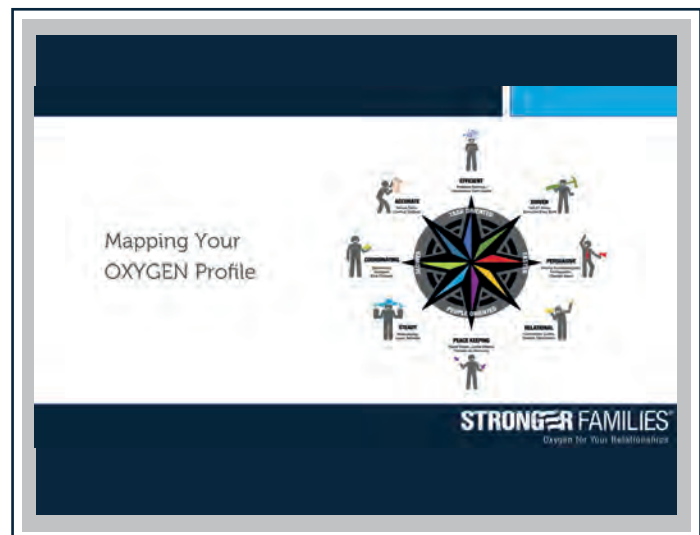
certain persona while at work or in group settings and it changes the way we perceive ourselves. It's necessary for doing our job or getting through a social function but it is not how we show up in everyday life. A coworker, significant other, or longtime friend is a great sounding board to help us broaden our self-impression.

2) Next, if both you and a trusted sound board feel as though the assessment is not accurate, think back to when you took it. Were you focused on something outside of your normal routine? This could factor in.

It is important that participants do feel as though they are being forced to identify with results they don't agree with. Your role is not to convince them. It's ok if they feel as though the assessment got it wrong. Your goal is to shift their focus to what the assessment got right! Be prepared to engage individuals who are struggling with this process. They may need some help looking past those areas they don't agree with to focus on the areas that can benefit them in this session.

"In fact, we are going to take a few minutes and work through our Personality Insights section and identify the statements that resonate the most with us.

Advance to the Breakout Exercise Slide. Instruct participants to refer to their Personality Insights section of their report and follow the instructions in their Study Guide on page 3. When finished, have participants form groups of 3-4 and share what they identified with the most about their report. Encourage them to ask for feedback from their coworkers to gain additional insights about how they show up on the job. Allow 10-15 minutes for this activity.



You may consider asking the group to share what they discovered during the BREAKOUT, about themselves and/or their partner. It can be a great way to maximize engagement.

"Welcome back. Stay in your groups for now as we will have another group exercise in a few minutes. Now that you have been able to explore your Personality Insights section, let's consider how this can impact the way you respond, relate, and reinforce those you work with, and how they do the same for you on a daily basis.

The 3 R's get to the heart of how your personality responds when under stress and pressure. Think of the 3 R's as the cliff notes on how to communicate best with a given personality type. Because we are unique, we often have a preferred way to receive information and communication. Knowing how to respond, relate, and reinforce your coworkers based on their personality is a paradigm shift.

Advance through the 3 R's slides and refer to that section of the Study Guide beginning on page 4. Have students select which suggested ways of relating, responding, and reinforcing resonate with them the most and keep it to themselves for now. Next, instruct the group to choose one member to focus on, known as the Spotlight. The Spotlight will only reveal to the group which profile they are. All other group members will guess as to which suggestions from the 3 R's resonate the most. Take turns until each person in the group has been the Spotlight. Challenge the groups to be observant, ask questions, and take note of any patterns or themes that emerge as their fellow group members submit their guesses. This exercise can reveal how we may be presenting ourselves to others on the job. Give participants about 10 minutes to complete the exercise.

DRIVEN – 3 R'S

How to Respond to Driven individual

- Be firm and direct
- Focus on actions and goals
- Caring confrontation may be necessary to get their attention

How to Relate to Driven individual

- Be brief and to the point
- Explain "how to achieve goals"
- Allow them time to consider your ideas

How to Reinforce Driven individual

- Offer appreciation—this is their greatest need
- Give bottom-line instructions
- Get out of their way

DRIVEN
Get Er' Done,
Executes Plan, Bold

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It can be helpful to share what resonates with you about the 3 R's for your profile to get students on the right track.

Advance to the "Keys to Motivating" slide.

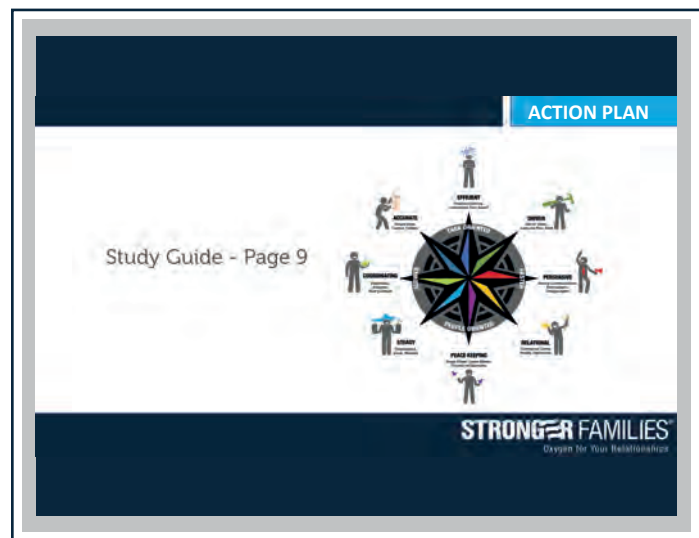
KEYS TO MOTIVATING

What motivates YOU?

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"The last section of the OXYGEN Profile assessment we are going to cover today is the Keys to Motivating section. In your report you will see a section that identifies ways that you are motivated. Understanding how you and your coworkers are best motivated will reduce the risk of misunderstandings that can create "hot spots" in your day-to-day interaction. The motivations that populate your report are listed in a bullet point format and will show up as general statements, reflect current and active motivations, and represent goals to reach. These motivations give your team insights into the ways each of you operates best.

Advance to the Action Plan Slide. Direct students to follow the instruction found in their study guide. Conclude this time by having them return to their groups of 3-4 and share their top motivator as well as a motivational guideline they can create to help their coworkers understand how their motivation works. EX: My top motivator is: Thrives on encouragement. My motivational guideline is: When correcting, suggesting, or critiquing my performance (formally or casually) please include positive reinforcement!



Sharing a real example or personal story from your engagement with Keys to Motivating is essential. Students will be more inclined to be honest and forthright if they see the value through a practical example.

"Different ways of seeing the world have allowed for great innovations and advancements throughout history. Differences can make us better. Learning how to effectively communicate what makes us unique is not difficult but it does take time to establish as a healthy habit. The same goes for learning how to identify and respond to ways that our coworkers are different from us. This is the first step to creating healthy engagement around our differences on the job.

"This concludes our training on Differences. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally." (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to www.strongerfamilies.com

SESSION 4

CREATING COLLABORATION THROUGH CONFLICT

How do we show up when conflict is present? Where do we get stuck when managing our feelings and actions?

Facilitation Insight:

Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider.

EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"

Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator. EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.

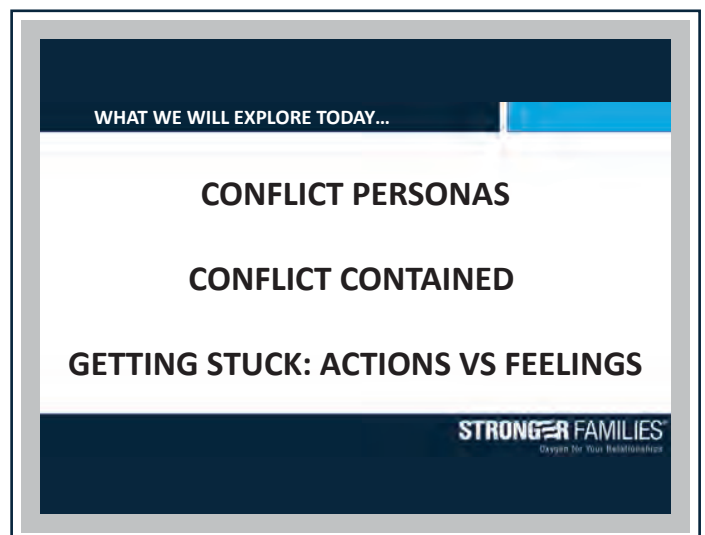


"Welcome to today's Relational Readiness Training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Conflict. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____."

Display your Family/Team Photo slide and introduce yourself and those you do life with.

Today's topic applies to many areas of our job where conflict can either create controversy or collaboration. As we interact with community members, co-workers, children, partners, other family members, etc., conflict is inevitable, but it doesn't have to be destructive. Developing good conflict management habits takes time. It takes practice. In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective conflict management tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it."

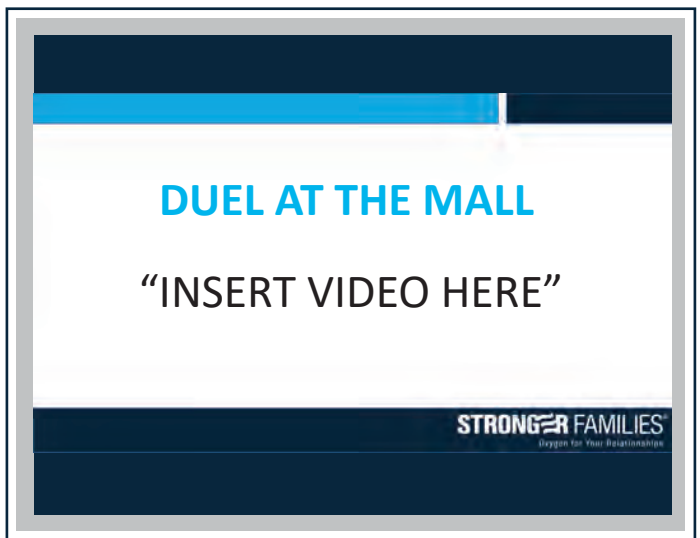
Put up the "What We Will Explore Today" slide



"In this training we will explore how we tend to show up when conflict is present (Conflict Personas and the OXYGEN Profile Assessment), a tried-and-true tactic to de-escalate when conflict begins to get out of control (Time Out), and a framework for discovering the deeper issues that fuel conflict by untangling the feelings from the actions (Getting Stuck).

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

Play the "Duel at The Mall" video with no set up. After the video let the students react to what they just saw and monitor the comments.



"Hopefully, none of you have had to deal with THAT kind of conflict recently. Yet this is a great example of how quickly it can move from a simple mistake that could be easily addressed to a catastrophe where significant damage is done. Disagreements happen. Conflict is inevitable. But Conflict is not inherently bad just like fire is not inherently good or bad. How and where it is used can determine its potential. Fire can heat your home, cook your food, forge tools or weapons. But it does not discriminate and will burn things of value to ash if engaged irresponsibly. Conflict is like a spark that can be easily extinguished. Yet if that same spark is not managed responsibly, it can quickly lead to destruction. Often when this happens levels of anger and frustration begin to rise. Rather than speaking calmly and respectfully, accusations fly, criticisms are made, and voices are raised or go silent. Instead of listening empathetically, we interrupt, ignore, or belittle the other person.

Physiologically speaking our fight, flight, or freeze response is triggered. Each person involved goes into protection mode leaving it difficult to have any regard for anyone else. In this state of escalation, it's not uncommon to say or do things we later regret. Moreover, it is nearly impossible to have a productive conversation that leads to a mutually satisfying resolution.

Consider inserting a personal story that illustrates the pain point mentioned above. Sharing your experience with this fight, flight, or freeze response to conflict can help students identify their own tendencies. Ask the group to think of a time when they experienced this type of scenario. How did it make them feel? How did they remember responding? Etc. You will inevitably hear responses that make a great segue into our next section on Conflict Personas plays out within your relationship.

Advance to the Conflict Persona title slide



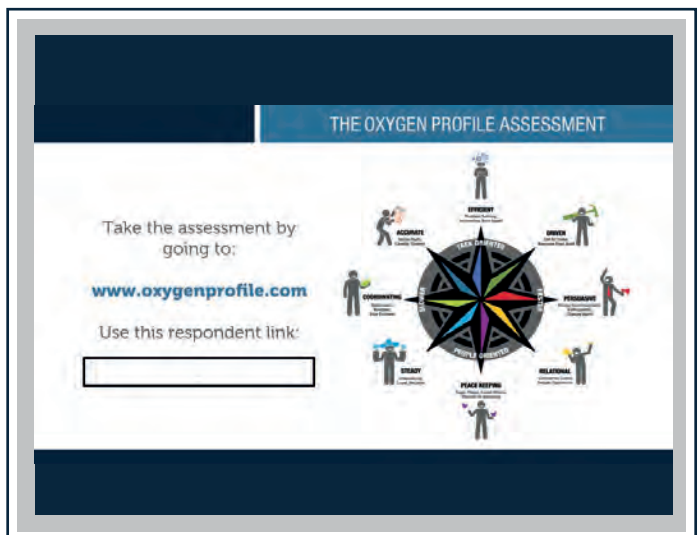
Generally, there are 4 conflict personas that people default to when experiencing conflict. Each persona manifests a different response tendency and can have a significant impact.

Advance to Persona #1: The Blame Game. Have a volunteer read the description found in the Study Guide. Poll the audience to determine how many can relate to this persona.

Advance to each Conflict Persona slide continuing to engage volunteers to read through each description asking questions and adding comments for context and clarity.

"There are many contributing factors to why conflict personas can show up in a workplace environment. Stress on the job, issues with management, or even conflict at home can create unhealthy pathways when it comes to workplace conflict. However, these factors don't always address the core of why certain conflict personas take root in our lives. One of the driving forces that can result in why we choose a certain persona is tied to our personality.

Only put up this slide if participants haven't already taken the assessment. If you are doing this as part of a series, it is not necessary to include this slide. Put up the OXYGEN Profile Assessment Code and Instruction slide (or instruct the participants to retrieve their OXYGEN Profile report if they were able to take it in advance)



"This training also involves a personality assessment known as the OXYGEN Profile. We will explore how different personality types tend to communicate so make sure and have your report in front of you.

How many of you felt as though the assessment got it right? Was anyone surprised by their results?"

Allow the audience to respond and share about their report.

It is important that participants do not feel as though they are being forced to identify with results they don't agree with. Your role is not to convince them. It's ok if they feel as though the assessment got it wrong. Your goal is to shift their focus to what the assessment got right! Be prepared to engage individuals who are struggling with this process. They may need some help looking past those areas they don't agree with to focus on the areas that can benefit them as they seek to grow in their conflict management skills.

Sharing about your profile and how it can help or hinder healthy conflict management is a great way to make this concept come to life. Consider a personal story based on your OXYGEN Profile.

After you completed your assessment online, your results were plotted on the OXYGEN compass. It is important to remember this is the personality type that most resembles you. If you read through the report and certain aspects don't necessarily resonate 100%, it's OK. Most people find, however, that the results are spot on. The OXYGEN Profile is NOT simply about your personality. It is also about what motivates you, how you best communicate, and how you handle conflict under stress.

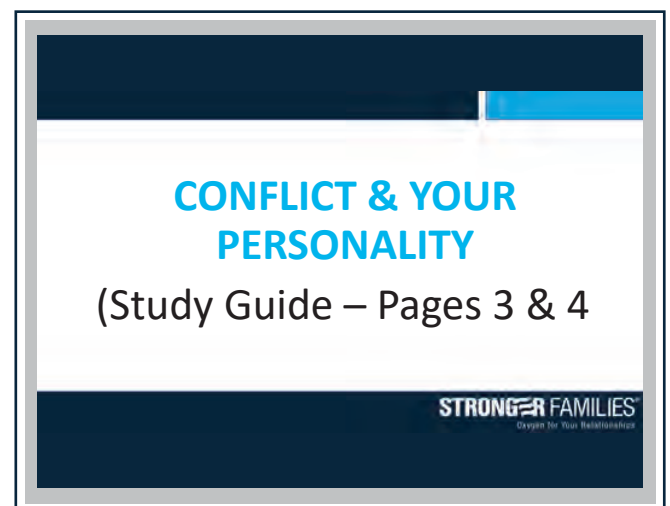
Before we jump into the nitty gritty details of this assessment, let's review the OXYGEN Compass together. There are 2 scales at work within this compass revealing 4 personality tendencies. First, the vertical scale. At the top of the scale are the task-oriented personalities and at the bottom are the people-oriented personalities. Task-Oriented personalities will focus almost exclusively on the tasks that need to be accomplished in any given situation. The People-Oriented personalities will focus on the people and relationships in any given situation.

The other scale is the horizontal scale. On the right side of the scale are the Fast personalities and the left side are Slow personalities. This is not a reference to IQ! This identifies personality tendencies when it comes to processing information and coming to a decision. The personalities on the Fast side of the scale will react quickly. They want responses quickly, they want action, they prefer a wrong decision over no decision! Those on the fast side of the scale don't mind change. They enjoy the process of change. The personalities on the Slow side of the scale tend to take more time in making decisions. They investigate, research, seek out 3rd party validation. They ask a lot of questions and are influenced by others' opinions but will not be rushed into forming theirs.

Understanding what side of the compass you fall on will help you avoid falling prey to a negative conflict persona.

Task-Oriented personalities generally have no problem addressing conflict head on. On the other hand, People-Oriented personalities will avoid confrontation at all costs. This can become a problem when we think about the conflict personas. Task-Oriented personalities under stress will default to blame game and becoming the cat in the cat and mouse persona. People-Oriented personalities under stress will default to simmering teapots and shutting down emotionally when conflict comes up.

Display the
"Conflict & Your Personality" slide



Take a moment to turn to the section in your study guide that is called, "Conflict & Your Personality". Answer the questions found in the Breakout Activity attached to this section of the Study Guide.

Give the group time to interact with their report and the study guide questions. Your personal experience with the material may help participants to engage. Feel free to share a personal story.

The connection between your personality and how you handle conflict is significant. However, the question remains; how do I deal with my Conflict Persona before it becomes toxic? We recommend the Time Out tactic.

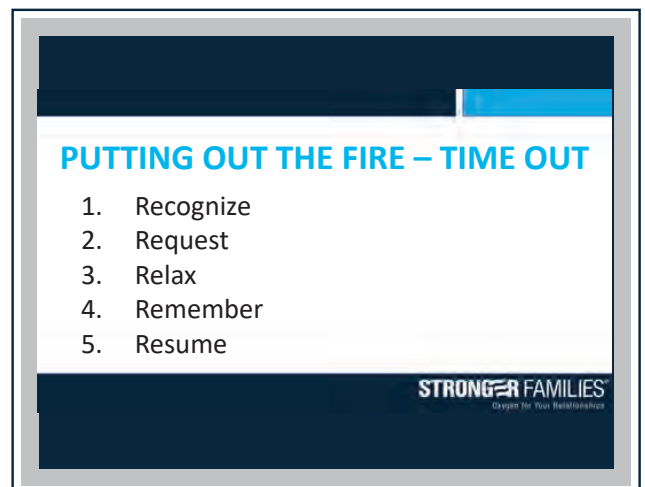
Display the Putting Out the Fire - Time Out slide



When you hear the words "Time Out", what comes to mind? (Allow the audience to respond) Most of us think of a toddler getting into trouble and having to spend some time alone thinking about what they've done. That is not the type of Time Out we are talking about. We are referring to is the kind of Time Out a coach would utilize when the game is on the line. When the team is losing control and playing chaotically a wise coach will know to call a Time Out. The action stops, the team gathers around the bench or on the sideline. The coach reviews the game plan while the team catches their breath and gets on the same page. Finally, the team returns to the field of play and executes the game plan.

You and your coworkers are a team. When conflict shows up and the game feels out of control, implement a Time Out to keep your collaboration strong. Here's how it works

Refer to page 7 of the Study Guide. Review the 5 R's with the students. Ask for examples, share personal stories that help clarify.



1. Recognize: Recognize your need for a time out. Is your heart beating fast? Do you feel like you are about to say something you may regret? Are you breathing rapidly? Are you overwhelmed by the intensity of the other person? Do you feel like you are emotionally getting out of control? Are you shutting down emotionally? What are signs or signals that you need a Time Out?
2. Request: Can you imagine if a coach decided to just walk out on to the court, or the field of play, and gather the team around without requesting a Time Out from the officials? He would be penalized! Make sure that everyone involved understands your intention by clearly requesting a break from the conversation. Then, so as not to trigger others involved, make sure you request it for yourself rather than for the other person. That may sound parental and condescending. Request a Time Out for yourself and propose a new time to resume the conversation.
3. Relax & Reflect: Relax and calm down. Take some deep breaths. Go for a walk or run or work out at the gym. Take a bath. Write in your journal. Read, pray, or watch television for a while. Do something that will help you relax and recover from the emotional intensity. What relaxes you or helps you work out your frustrations? What method(s) could you use to calm down? Part of calming down is to assess what is the original emotion behind the anger or conflict. Take a moment and think through the conversation. What emotions were present before the Time Out was called? You might think, "I felt angry," or, "I felt mad"; however, anger is never the original emotion.

The original emotion, often, is vulnerability, and our knee-jerk reaction to vulnerability is a defensive response. When an argument occurs, it is the defensive response talking and not the person's heart. Many couples think that an argument is the same thing as a discussion or vice versa. It is important to recognize that a discussion is when both partners are in control of their emotions. An argument is when one or both spouses' emotions are controlling the conversation. When you are more concerned with making your point than coming to a peaceable agreement, it is an argument.

4. Remember: Remember what's important. Many times, coworkers want the same result, they just have a difference of opinion regarding how to make it happen. Keeping the big picture in mind can help you focus on what is most important. Taking some time to consider the other person's point of view can soften our response. Great teams are not made up of people who agree on everything. They are made of individuals who despite their differing points of view, find a way to move forward in unity.
5. Resume: This can be a difficult step, but it is essential! Once the emotion of the original conversation settles down it can feel counterproductive to re-engage... after all, that conversation already went sideways, why start it up again? The reality is that even though we are feeling better in the moment, resentment and bitterness can grow very quickly around issues that do not have closure. Make sure you resume the conversation.

The Time Out technique can be beneficial to help deescalate and allow couples to regain a more positive perspective, but it can also be abused. Some personalities who avoid confrontation at all costs can tend to rely on the Time Out as a way to avoid any difficult situation and never face the conflict. It's important to emphasize the 5th R and challenge students to commit to RESUMING the engagement and not abuse the technique.

Display the "Where Do You Get Stuck" slide (1 of 2)

WHERE DO YOU GET STUCK?

SSG Jones says...

"I get stuck when you RAISE YOUR INTENSITY ,

When I get stuck, I feel OVERWHELMED ,

When I feel this way, I SHUT DOWN/DON'T ENGAGE ,

How does this impact you? ■ - ACTION ■ - FEELINGS

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"As important as it is to resume the conversation, it can be intimidating to make it happen. The possibility of repeating the same mistakes that led to the conflict in the first place can leave us feeling stuck in the process. The following exercise will help clear a way forward in these difficult conversations.

These two slides can be edited as it is recommended that you explain the exercise using a real-life example from a conflict you've experienced. Sharing the context will help the students identify their own experience. Break down your scenario according to the instructions in the Study Guide separating the feelings from the actions. This creates an opportunity to validate the feelings and make "course corrections" for any negative actions discovered. Consider the following example to get you started: Make it interactive

Part 1:

Work Scenario:

A piece of equipment went missing. SSG Jones and SSG Smith have been tasked to track it down. SSG Smith wants results, and wants them yesterday. He believes the best method for finding the lost equipment is a quick scan over the entire inventory. If it is not discovered, a deeper search may be necessary. SSG Jones wants to be thorough. She believes that a slower, more thorough search is what is needed. A confrontation occurs. SSG Smith steamrolls SSG Jones by raising his voice, and is enthusiastically contending for his method to be the course of action. SSG Jones reacts by going along with SSG Smith to end the argument and respond as a team in the heat of the moment. The equipment is eventually found (there was a typo in the inventory log that had them looking in the wrong place). Later, SSG Smith and SSG Jones have an opportunity to discuss what took place and how they could improve their efficiency as a team in the future.

SSG Jones

I get stuck when you **RAISE YOUR INTENSITY**. When I get stuck, I feel **OVERWHELMED**. When I feel this way, **I SHUT DOWN/DON'T ENGAGE**.

SSG Smith

When you **SHUT DOWN/DON'T ENGAGE** I feel **UNHEARD**. When I feel this way, **I DISREGARD YOUR INPUT**.

Repeat the process above as many times as needed to see the full impact of the cycle of conflict. Advance to the next "Back On Course" slide. This is where the "course corrections" are discovered. Each person owns their feelings, acknowledges the negative action taken, and determines an alternative action that will help them navigate conflict more effectively in the future.

BACK ON COURSE			
OWNER:	FEELINGS:	NEGATIVE ACTION:	ALTERNATIVE ACTION:
JONES	UNCERTAIN	SHUT DOWN	CLEARLY STATE MY STATUS
SMITH	UNHEARD	RAISE INTENSITY	ASK FOR FEEDBACK

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Part 2:

OWNER:	FEELING:	NEGATIVE ACTION:	ALTERNATIVE ACTION:
SSG Jones SSG Smith	OVERWHELMED UNHEARD	SHUT DOWN RAISE MY INTENSITY	CLEARLY STATE MY STATUS ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

There are two contributing factors in this cycle of conflict above that can leave you feeling disconnected and insecure: feelings and actions. Initially, when a feeling shows up, it's not something we can control. Therefore, we are not going to focus on changing or judging the feelings. Instead, we are going to own our feelings and address the actions we take in response to those feelings. Based on the results of Part 1, identify your feelings and negative actions in the space below. Then, explore possible alternative actions that you could take to stop the cycle of conflict dead in its tracks.

Each round of conflict will have unique feelings and actions to investigate. Don't be afraid to have students work through this exercise multiple times to address each layer. It's helpful to note that healthy and productive collaboration can only be sustainable when each interaction concludes with all parties feeling more positive about the relationship than when they began. If students leave an interaction feeling negative, have them reflect on why, and discuss a course correction with that individual.

"Mastering the Time Out tactic, understanding how our unique personalities respond and react to conflict, and identifying where we get stuck between our feelings and actions can change the impact conflict can have on the job, moving us away from catastrophe to collaboration. But as with any skill set, practice makes perfect! This concludes our training on Conflict. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to www.strongerfamilies.com

SESSION 5

UNDERSTAND THE APPRECIATION STYLES OF YOUR TEAM

How can we overcome our differences to be a productive team?
How can we learn to view our differences as opportunities?

Facilitation Insight:

*Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider.
EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"*

Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator. EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.)



"Welcome to today's Training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Appreciation Styles. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____."

Today's topic applies to many areas of our job where each person's unique Appreciation Style can either create tension or harmony on the job. As we interact with community members, coworkers, children, partners, other family members, etc., understanding these different Appreciation Styles is essential for an effective team dynamic. Learning ways to best support and be supported according to our Appreciation Style takes time. It takes practice. In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it."

"In this Training we will explore the 3 levels of healthy relational engagement (Relational Pyramid), the qualities that fuel each level (Honesty, Trust, and Acceptance), and how our Appreciation Style can be lived out daily in the real world (Relational Style Assessment and Group Activity)

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

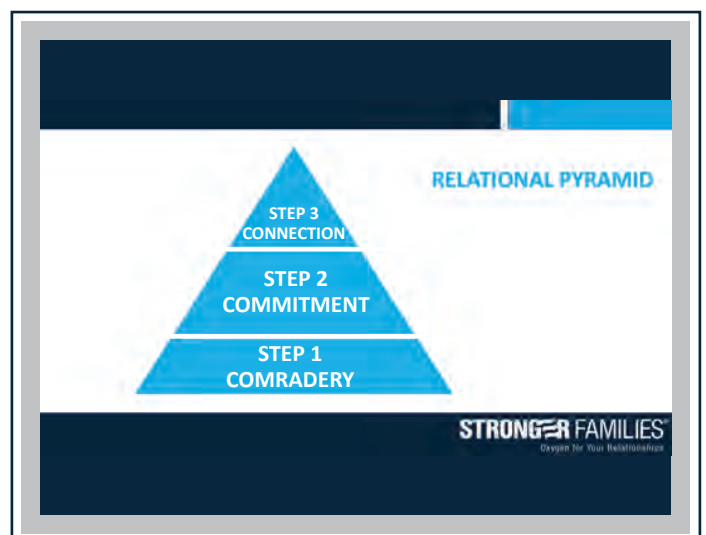
Play the scene from Friends video with no set up. After the video let the students react to what they just saw and monitor the comments.



There are very clear differences between Monica and Joey displayed in this scene. When it comes to cleanliness, Monica is very uptight and has strict rules and Joey is relaxed and easygoing. The way that each of them relate to others is not right or wrong. Each has value depending on the circumstances. Learning when to tailor our Appreciation Style to fit the circumstances we are facing can be of great value in creating a healthy relational dynamic in all areas of life.

Consider inserting a personal story that supports the theme of the video. Sharing your experience can help students identify their own tendencies. Ask the group to think of a time when they experienced this type of scenario. How did it make them feel? How did they remember responding? Etc. Look for responses that segue nicely to the next section.

Advance to the Relational Pyramid title slide



Connection with others is a primary pursuit for mankind. Whether in romantic relationships, families, work environments, or even casual encounters, healthy connection is a powerful motivation. Advertisers have tapped into this desire for connection in just about every product sold! The desire for a strong and healthy connection is the common denominator uniting us all.

Understanding the Appreciation Styles of your team members can be a great step toward creating the type of connection that we all want to experience in the workplace.

Building this type of healthy relationship with your team members isn't easy! It doesn't just happen without work. You attending this class today is a great display of intentionality.

There are 3 levels of healthy relational engagement illustrated through this Relational Pyramid: Camaraderie, Commitment, and Connection. These 3 levels are progressive, each level is supported by the level that comes before. You cannot truly experience Connection without an investment in the previous 2 levels.

As you continue to talk through the Relational Pyramid progressively move through the slides displaying all three levels as you go

"Many work relationships begin without a lot of intention as they are arranged through the common experiences of your job. Nonetheless, a foundation is established as you initially get to know one another. The quality of the foundation is determined by the intentionality put into its construction. Camaraderie is the foundational level of the relationship. It is more than just spending time with another person. The type of camaraderie that leads to a healthy work environment goes deeper than the superficial. It requires seeing your team member at their best and worst and making a decision to accept them where they are at.

The threat to camaraderie is that so many of us are reluctant to reveal any flaws or weaknesses we have, especially in the workplace, as we fear it could impact our jobs. Instead, we broadcast (Loudly) our best qualities and hide our worst. For camaraderie to be established, a deep and honest knowledge of team members is required. With this type of investment, trust will grow. Without trust, the relationship can never move to the next level of the Relational Pyramid.

Advance the slide to the next level of the Relational Pyramid

"After camaraderie is established, the foundation is laid for the next level of the Relational Pyramid to be built... Commitment. Commitment is essential, especially in the Military. It is a conviction that goes beyond how you feel moment to moment. It is a firm decision powered by an understanding of your team members. It is willing to ride out the difficult situations. Commitment, built on the foundation of camaraderie, creates the bandwidth to withstand anger, frustration, disagreements, and other relational strain when the job gets tough. Commitment rises to the challenge and says, "I will walk through this mess with you. I'm not going anywhere. I can be counted on."

The threat to this commitment is suspicion. Suspicion can ruin even the best of relationships. When team members do not invest in honest camaraderie, commitment is in jeopardy. No matter the stage of your work relationship, it's impossible to be firmly committed to someone you don't trust! Make the investment to know your team members and let yourself be known to them. If you do, commitment will result. It will minimize suspicion, and your working relationships can be strong and effective.

As Camaraderie and Commitment take shape it, a true Connection is experienced. In this space of connection there is safety, support, and a sense of belonging that motivates each team member to value and support the other. It is this connection that will motivate and sustain an effective team dynamic.

There are 3 traits that function as the main ingredients for each level of the Relational Pyramid. By focusing on developing and displaying these traits we can be sure we are on the right path.

HONESTY is the trait that leads to Camaraderie and is a daily expression of commitment, and selflessness. True honesty is expressed through action. We desire honesty in our work relationships.

TRUST is the trait that leads to Commitment and is a type of knowing. When we trust someone, we will know them better, know their integrity, strengths, and abilities. We have confidence in who they are and how they will perform their duties.

ACCEPTANCE is the trait that leads to Connection and is meeting your team member where they are today. Acceptance allows a person to be more transparent with you, to communicate more, to feel safe. Feeling accepted where you are right now is a need we all have.

It is important to note that the depth of connection will vary depending on the naturally occurring chemistry that exist between team members. People can seem to effortlessly connect due to several factors outside of the Relational Pyramid. That's great! For those on the team who don't have that natural connection, Intentionality and investment can go along ways towards establishing an impactful connect across the entire team.

Sharing about a time when you made such an investment can help students identify ways that they can make an investment as well. Consider a personal story where you failed to connect as an example of what not to do. People relate to failure more then they relate to success! Being willing to tell on yourself, use self-deprecating humor, or times when you struggled is the quickest way to break down any walls between you and the students.

Before we move on, it's important to point out that many factors can contribute to the breakdown of this progression. In modern society, the primary reason is what is called the "fast-food" mentality. Fast food has become such a successful industry in our society because it is a short cut. We get a meal, and maybe one for our family, without having to do all the preparation ourselves.

This desire for shortcuts has trickled into every aspect of our society, and certainly shows up in the way we view relationships. Rather than developing true camaraderie, choosing commitment, and making the way for a trust-filled connection, we instead take the short cut, and settle for the fast food version: an easy, short-lived connection facilitated primarily through a consumer approach... get what I want as quickly as possible. When we choose the "fast food" route in a relationship, we are in a constant state of disconnectedness. Ultimately, this superficial interaction doesn't meet our need for connection and, inevitably, the relationship sours or worse, becomes toxic.

In an ideal scenario, we would all intuitively know not to short-cut the connection process. There is hope for those of us who haven't done everything perfectly from the beginning (most of us)! While there may be some bad habits which threaten to interfere with our pursuit of healthy and effective relationships, it is also never too late to begin investing in the areas of camaraderie, commitment, and connection.

Your Training Guide has some questions to consider.

Display the Break Out Activity slide. Have the students pair up, discuss the 3 levels of the Relational Pyramid, and share with one another which of the 3 levels they do well at, and which needs some attention. Allow about 5-7 minutes for this discussion.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

Study Guide – Pages 3

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How did you rate yourself? Does anyone here feel as though they thrive at all 3 levels? For most of us we realize very quickly improvement is needed in at least one level, but we are at a loss how to get started. It's easy to feel as though a major change may be needed but research has shown that the opposite is true. Small things done with consistency have the greatest impact on relational improvement. Learning your Appreciation Style and the Appreciation Style of your coworkers is a great first step!

Display the Appreciation Style Assessment Slide. Instruct the students to complete the assessment before continuing. Reviewing each Style ahead of time may influence the input they give while taking the assessment and skew the results. It is preferable to have the students take the assessment first and when finished review the 5 Appreciation Styles together.

APPRECIATION STYLE ASSESSMENT

Study Guide – Pages 6-7

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- VERBAL AFFIRMATION**
Includes verbal compliments, notes, words of appreciation, words of encouragement.
- SERVICE**
Doing things you know your team member would appreciate help with, can include setting the table, helping prepare a meal, washing dishes, proofreading a report, all done with a positive attitude.
- GIFTS**
Something you give your team member to show them that you are thinking of them (i.e. cup of coffee or treating them to lunch).
- TIME**
Giving your team member undivided attention, which can include quality conversation.
- TOUCH**
A pat on the back, fist bump, high five, or a hug after a difficult call (consensual).

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Let's review each of the Appreciation Styles together before we do a group activity.

Touch – a hug, a pat on the back, fist bump, high five used to show approval, kindness, excitement, appreciation, etc.

Gifts – something given to show that shows the recipient is being thought of and valued. i.e.: a cup of coffee, a stick of gum, a slice of pie, a sticker, etc.

Quality Time – Intentional and dedicated attention. This can include quality conversation, play a game together, sharing a meal, attending a sporting event, etc.

Verbal Affirmation – Compliments, encouraging notes, words of praise, “cheerleading”, verbal expressions of gratitude.

Service – doing things you know team members would appreciate help with; can include cooking a meal, washing dishes, proofreading a report, all done with a positive attitude.

Now let's see how all of this plays out in real life... and you get to be the Subject Matter Experts.

Display the Subject Matter Expert activity slide. Post five signs around the room, each labeled with a Appreciation Style. Ask individuals to stand or sit by the sign that indicates their top Appreciation Style. Give the newly formed groups 3-5 minutes to brainstorm 5 ways to express their Relational Style. Take turns asking each group what they want from those who prefer other Styles. After hearing from each group, direct participants to return to seats.



It is interesting to hear how other people like to be related to. You may be like me and find that there are some Appreciation Style expressions that I do not relate to at all! But that's the great part... we are all different. Those differences create an amazing opportunity to build upon. They give us endless opportunities to show up for each other, ways that we can invest in each level of the Relational Pyramid, small things... done consistently... to create the kind of connection we want and need in our work environments. But as with any skill set, practice makes perfect!

This concludes our Training on Appreciation Styles. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to **www.strongerfamilies.com**

SESSION 6

MANAGING LIFE'S ONGOING TRANSITIONS

How can we overcome our differences to be a productive team?
How can we learn to view our differences as opportunities?

Facilitation Insight:

*Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider.
EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"*

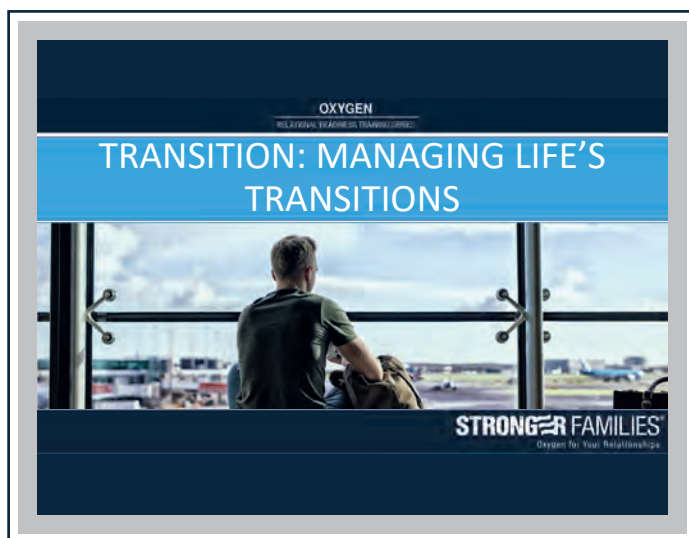
Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator. EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.)



"Welcome to today's Training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Transition. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____.

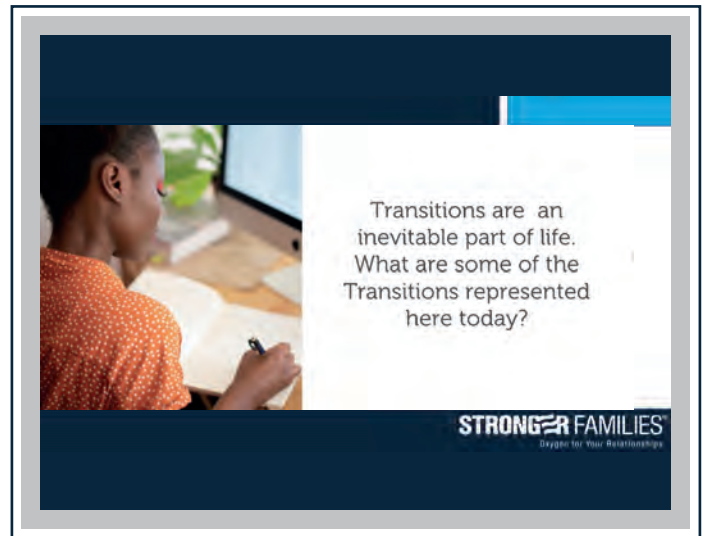
Advance to your family picture slide (optional to form connection with students)

"Today's topic is one that impacts everyone. Transitions are an inevitable part of life. As we interact with community members, co-workers, children, partners, other family members, etc., recognizing the impact times of transition can have will increases the likelihood of a successful transition period. This takes time. It takes practice. In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it."

"In this Training we will explore the 3 areas of transition: the stages of transition (Ending, Neutral Zone, and New Beginning), The Wheel of a Life in Transition (areas of our lives that are impacted by the transition we face), and traits we can rely on to serve us through transition (Personal Strengths). We will also focus on one area of life to improve upon in light of our transition."

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

Advance to the Slide "Transitions are inevitable..."



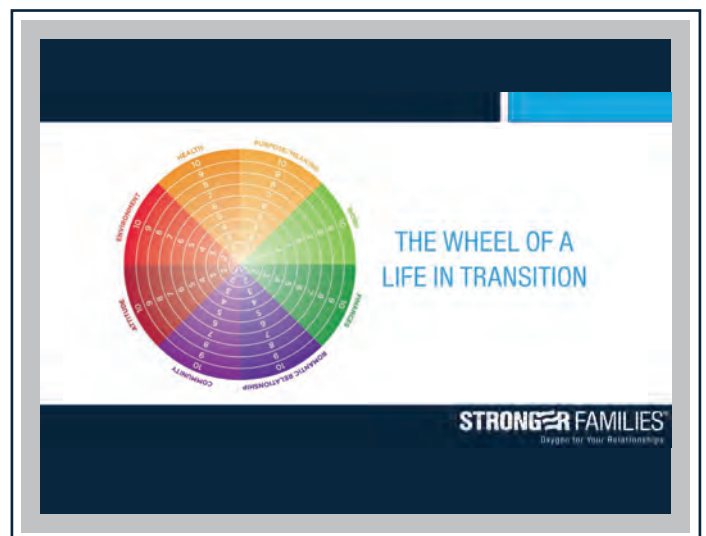
"We all experience transitions from the time we are born until the time we die. Can you list some common life transitions?"

Lead the group through the 3 questions found in their Study Guide eventually arriving at a specific transition they are currently facing.

Most likely, everyone in the class is experiencing a transition but it may be hard for them to recognize it. This is a perfect opportunity to share the Stages of Transition. Students will often focus only on the Ending of a season when thinking about a transition, but the New Beginning and Neutral Zone can be just as disruptive. A personal story of a transition you have managed can help students identify their own transitions.

"Now that each of you have a transition in mind, we are going to evaluate which areas of your life is most impacted by the transition you've identified."

Advance to the Wheel of a Life in Transition Slide



"There are 8 spokes that make up the Wheel. Each spoke represents an area of your life that could be impacted by the transition you are facing. You will have an opportunity to rate your level of satisfaction with each spoke of the wheel in a few minutes, but first let's define each spoke."

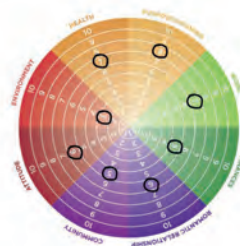
Advance to the Spokes Defined slide and talk through each spoke.

1. **Purpose/meaning** – what you wake up for every day
2. **Work** – how you support yourself and others
3. **Finances** – how much compensation you receive for your work
4. **Relationship/significant other** – level of intimacy, quality of communication, mutual support and encouragement
5. **Community** – friends/family, those whom you go to for support and comradery
6. **Attitude** – the tone of your thoughts toward the future, the present, and the past
7. **Environment** – physical location, pace of community, lifestyle of surrounding community
8. **Health** – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual

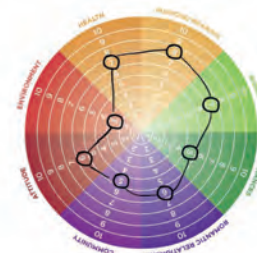
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"Take a few minutes to fill in the wheel in your handout. With your transition in mind, rate your **current** level of satisfaction, not what you've felt in the past or what you aspire to. Once you've marked your wheel, connect the dots forming a new shape."

Give participants a few minutes to complete their evaluation of the Wheel as it relates to their transition. When everyone is finished, continue exploring the new shape that has been created on their wheels.



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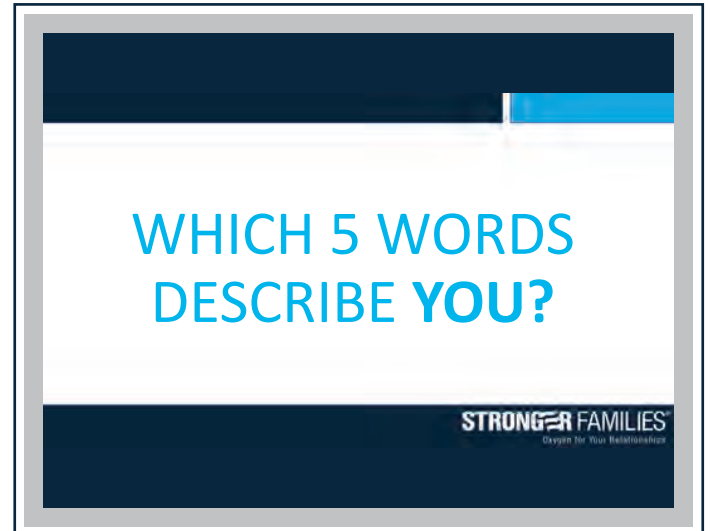
"Look at the shape of your wheel. For most of us, the new shape is anything but round! When the spokes on the wheel aren't equal, the ride is bumpy or not manageable, but a more balanced wheel is a smoother ride. That's not to say that all scores need to be equal, but if one area is especially low, it makes a significant difference in the shape of the wheel and your quality of life.

Now that you've marked your current scores, take a few moments to consider what your **ideal** scores would be for each spoke. Stay realistic. Mark your ideal scores on the wheel in a different color and connect the dots forming a slightly different shape. See how the two shapes compare. This will show you where attention is needed in the coming months."

Give students 3-5 minutes to mark their ideal scores.

"Each of us is uniquely equipped with skills, traits, and strengths that we utilize on a regular basis. When facing periods of transition, the anticipated changes can leave us feeling uncertain of how we will be able to manage the new normal. This next exercise provides an opportunity to explore our strengths and adapt them to work for us during the transition we are facing."

Advance to the "Which Words Describe You?" slide.



"When you joined the Military, you likely discovered strengths that you weren't aware of before. Maybe you honed your skills to excel in a specific role in your department. Either way, you contributed to your department and made an impact through your unique blend of strengths. Let's look at how uniquely equipped you are.

In your Study Guide there is a list of 160 traits. Read through this list and select the 5 traits that you feel best represent you at your best."

Give students 3-5 minutes to identify their top 5 traits. When finished, ask everyone to stand. Next, ask a volunteer to read through the traits they identified for themselves nice and slow so that everyone can hear clearly which traits they've identified. When they are finished ask the group,

"If you have at least 1 trait in common with our volunteer, please remain standing. Everyone else can be seated. For those who remain standing, if you have at least 2 traits in common with our volunteer remain standing, otherwise be seated..."

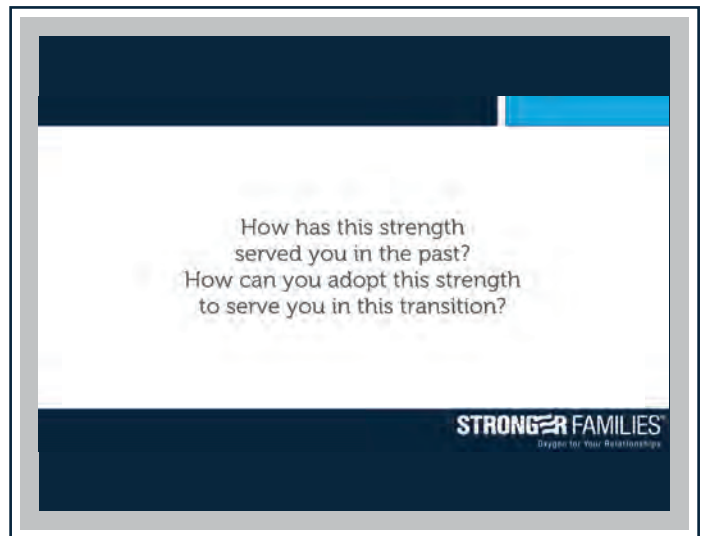
Continue with this exercise until all are seated but the volunteer.

"We could very likely do this exercise with every person's list and no one would match all 5 traits. You may share some traits, but not all five.

Each person is unique. Your traits and the way they interact means that you can contribute in ways no one else can. Wherever you go, you play a valuable role in your workplace, community, and family.

We're going to take a few minutes so you can write down your traits and brainstorm concrete ways that you can adapt your traits to help you through your current transition."

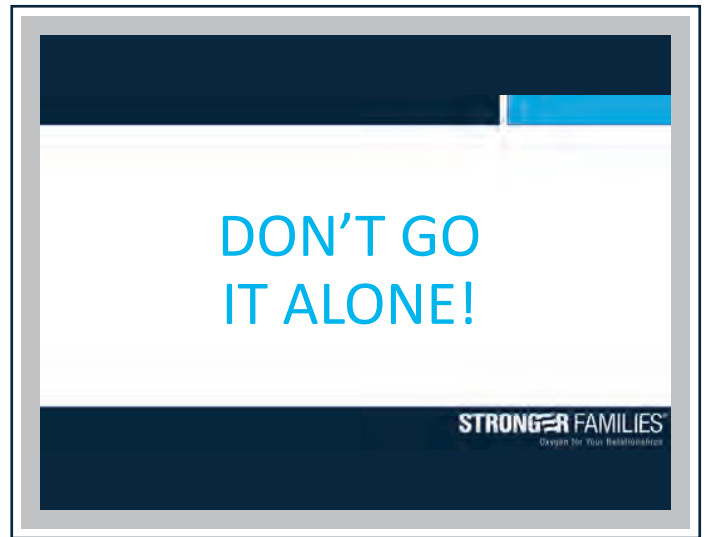
Advance to the "How Has this Trait Served You in the Past? How Can You Adapt..." slide and give participants time to complete the exercise in their Study Guide and highlight the instructions as needed.



A personal story highlighting how to adapt a familiar strength to serve in new ways will help students understand how to approach this exercise.

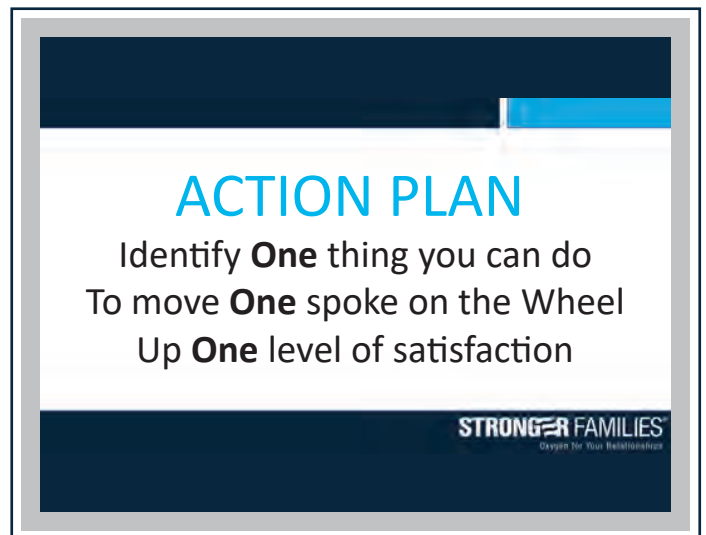
"To take this a step further, identify the traits you think will serve you the best during this season of transition and list them in the spaces provided in your Study Guide on the last page."

Advance to the "Don't Go It Alone!" slide.



"What communities could you seek out that would help you invest in these traits and support you? Being intentional about who we spend our time with can serve to reinforce the strengths you rely on. List possible communities or groups you may consider becoming a part of to support this transition you are facing."

Advance to the Action Plan slide.



"Let's revisit the Wheel of a Life in Transition. Before you go it's important to put some practical steps in place. What is ONE area of the wheel that needs some attention. Come up with ONE action you can take to move up ONE level of satisfaction in the next week."

Give the students a few minutes to complete the ONE, ONE, ONE exercise outlined above and then advance to the last slide.

"This concludes our Training on Transition. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally." (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to **www.strongerfamilies.com**

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- understanding and building on your differences
- how to communicate more effectively
- the power of forgiveness and how to forgive
- negotiating conflict
- the 7 keys to incredible sex
- creating a relationship game plan and support system for your marriage

This participant guide supplements the principles and activities of the OXYGEN seminar with expanded study material, self-assessment, discussion starters, and action plans—a useful resource for years to come.

"Being a part of the OXYGEN seminar was a last-ditch effort for us. We were living separately and in a bad place. We are together today because of Stronger Families and the OXYGEN Program."

—Dom and Leah Dimino, US Veterans

"This seminar is filled with great information to enrich, revitalize, and restore relationships. It is guaranteed to impact the lives of the couples that attend. We had fun and learned a lot about our relationship and how to show up better in our relationship. I highly recommend this program."

—D.H., OXYGEN facilitator



Noel and Karissa Meador are the co-authors and creators of the OXYGEN seminar and the OXYGEN Profile. They live in Rockwall, TX with their four kids, Drew, Noah, Myles, and Kaylea. Noel serves as President and CEO of Stronger Families, a non-profit organization in Kirkland, Washington. He has a Masters of Education and hosts the national podcast, *Heroes At Home*, which highlights top relationship experts with informative interviews. Karissa Meador is a business consultant, writer, and speaker. The OXYGEN seminar has been shared in 7 countries, 44 states, and on 76 military installations worldwide, serving over 76,000 people. They are passionate about seeing relationships transformed through tools and techniques that empower couples.