



Boundaries Checklist

Is...

- triangulation happening?
- an alliance being created between parent and one relative caregiver?
- a key person or persons being left out of decision-making? (Am I keeping secrets?)
- there potential damage to relationship of those in the triangle?
- there an impact on the child/ren, emotionally and/or physically?
- it enabling the person to continue problem behaviors?
- it risking placement of children?
- the decision I'm being asked to make increasing my stress or chaos in my life?
- a boundary I want being set or maintained?
- it easier to say "no" next time?

Common Challenges in Relative Caregiving

What are Your Big Five?

Instructions.

1) Look individually to identify what you see as the 5 biggest challenges facing relative caregivers.

2) Then talk to 1 or 2 other people about what you chose. Identify any commonalities.

_____ Guilt

- Feeling responsible for family breakup because of calling DHS, or of not calling sooner.
- Feeling responsible for taking away the parent's child
- Guilt for feeling successful with the parent's child
- Guilt for having to share negative information about the parent(s)

_____ Self-blame

- Sentiment of having done a bad job raising ones child since their children are in care (Grandparents who are caring for grandchildren)

_____ Embarrassment

- Due to birth parent's inability to remain the primary caregiver
- Due to having to deal with public agencies
- Due to having to ask for help
- Considering how others view one's family

_____ Stress

- Feeling overwhelmed by the difficulty of parenting someone else's child
- Having to deal with the bureaucracy of DHS, the courts, etc.
- Dealing with DHS expectations for parenting and one's house

_____ Discord

- Dealing with resentment from the parents who see the care provider as having "taken" their child
- Handling disagreement among family members about who should be parenting the child.
- Dealing with resentment from one's own children who feel that they are getting less from the relative caregiver.
- Other grandchildren (or nieces and nephews) who don't understand the placement and feel deprived

_____ Disclosure

- Knowing how and what to say to the children about their parents
- Knowing how to talk to others about why one is caring for their kin

_____ Visits

- Managing visits when they are held in the caregiver's home
- Maintaining boundaries
- Knowing who should be present and who shouldn't
- Knowing what to do if something goes wrong

_____ Being in the middle

- Between my adult child (or sister/brother) and DHS
- Between my adult child (or sister/brother) and their child
- Between the child and service providers, CASA, school, attorneys, etc.

_____ Redefined roles and boundaries

- Moving from being a supportive relative to being the primary caregiver
- Moving from being an advisor to their adult child (or sister or niece) to being the main decision maker in the child's life
- Moving from being a friend to the child to being the authority figure for the child
- Having to be the enforcer of DHS expectations with the parent(s)

_____ Anger and resentment

- Imposition of being put in this position
- Impact on financial situation, dreams, retirement, work life, schedule etc.
- Family drama being dragged into one's own home
- Anger at parent(s) for not learning the skills needed to manage life
- Anger at parent(s) for hurting their children

_____ Changes in childrearing

- DHS policy is different from the parenting practices the relative caregiver has used in the past, if they have raised their own children
- Learning to parent children who have been impacted by trauma

Triangulation Scenario Instructions

In your small group read the Triangulation Scenario and discuss the questions below.

1. What do you think the grandmother, Reesa, is feeling or experiencing in this situation?
2. What do you think Reesa is going to be inclined to do if there's a pattern of triangulation in the family?
3. What are some other options?
4. Identify at least one good outcome that does not involve triangulation.

Triangulation Scenario

The birth mother, Stacie, is homeless as a result of her drug abuse. A court order decrees that she may not live in the home where her children reside. They currently live with their grandmother, Reesa and their step-grandfather, Ricardo. Stacie asks her mother, Reesa, if she can stay for a few days until she can get something else lined up for housing.

The step-grandfather, Ricardo, is retired military, a follow-the-rules kind of guy. He occasionally mentions the last time Stacie stayed with them; instead of staying for a week, she was there until the caseworker found out, who told Reesa and Stacie that she had to leave. Ricardo was upset when he learned that Stacie staying with them was a violation of court order.

Stacie also stole money from her mother's purse and her stepfather's dresser drawer. Without talking to Ricardo, Reesa gives Stacie \$500 to help her with housing...which they really can't afford.

TRIANGULATION DIAGRAM

