

Let's Talk

Season 1 – Episode 2

1. **Intro message** –

Welcome to Let's Talk... a podcast of the Office of Research and Child Well-Being to educate, provide updates and support the implementation of best practice within IL DCFS. Our goal is to provide valuable information that will strengthen well-being, the use of best practice within the field, and increase awareness of Family First programs and practices. We're glad you tuned in with us today. ... Let's Talk!

2. **Introduction**

- a. **La Tanya** – Hello good people We are so excited to be back with you on Let's Talk MI where we chat about all things Motivational Interviewing. I'm LaTanya Riggs ...
- b. **Michelle** - and I'm Michelle Moreno
- c. **La Tanya** - MI is one of the best practices for supporting your work in child welfare that we've encountered in all our years in child welfare. We hope you are ready for Let's talk...MI.
- d. Before we get started we have an affirmation to share with you.

3. **Affirmation** – Add music in Production Guest – Hello...I'm (say name and role) Today's affirmation is

4. **Explanation of what's in store**

- a. **Michelle** – What a great way segway into today's topic – MI & The Righting Reflex Trap!
- b. **In our last episode we gave you a brief overview of MI. If you missed it you should definitely go back and listen in.**
- c. **La Tanya, to get us started I have a few questions for us to reflect on.** How do you build and maintain your relationships in your personal and professional life? Think about that for a moment...(pause) I bet you thought of things like spending time together, sharing experiences or eating together, talking or other activities that give you a strong foundation to build on. Building relationships with the people we are helping can be challenging. After our talk today we hope you can add a few MI skills to your toolbox to help you feel more confident in how to build and maintain those relationships in both your personal and professional life.

5. **Topic 1 – MI & The Righting Reflex Trap – La Tanya**

- a. Remember, Motivational Interviewing or MI is a *collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. MI supports the development of relationships by...avoiding TRAPS.*

b. Traps are behaviors that we can easily fall into that do not support lasting change.

c. **Supporting point**

- i. There are 6 MI traps. Today, we are going to focus on just one The Righting Reflex. It is defined as the natural impulse to jump into action and direct individuals toward a specific change. This is a directive style and in our child welfare work is likely to keep the family from embracing change.
- ii. If you have fallen into the Righting Reflex Trap, you may hear sustain talk from the family like...*I don't want to, I'm not sure I can, what does it matter* or discord may appear as [arguing, interrupting, discounting, or ignoring](#) behaviors from the families you are serving.
- iii. Does any of that sound familiar? Has that ever happened to you? No worries, it's happened to all of us!

a. **Supporting data – Michelle**

- i. Let's look at a few examples of Righting Reflex behaviors we should all try to AVOID::
 1. Giving advice or making suggestions based on assumptions of the problem – like: “You should go to the AA group that meets on Wed”
 2. Providing feedback or information without the family's permission.
 3. Or Sharing unsolicited stories of similar circumstances. Like saying: “The last case I had, the baby was placed in foster care and adopted because the family refused to go to services”.
 4. Probably the most common righting reflex, is Telling families what they need to do (even if they ask). I know that sounds weird, but we will talk more about this in a minute.
 5. The Righting Reflex also includes Persuading, lecturing, Or Focusing only on the reasons to change when the family is ambivalent about change. For example: “It may not be what you **want** to do, but it is the best thing for your child.”
- iv. Obviously, our task is to address the safety, permanency and well-being of the children and their families. We know our intentions are good when we fall into the Righting Reflex trap. Let's see how we can use MI to avoid this trap and be helpful during the change process.

b. **Supporting point – La Tanya**

1. There are several ways MI can help you to avoid the Righting Reflex trap. The trick is to find the one or two ways that work for you and the situation that you are facing. **The first way to avoid the Righting Reflex Trap is to Ask permission** to share or give feedback. This gives the family voice and choice. Finding out what the family knows and asking if they want additional

information gives them voice and choice in their change process. And we want our families to be empowered!

2. **You can also Use reflective listening.** When meeting with the family focus on listening and using your reflective listening skills to gather information and understand what the family wants.
3. And finally, and frankly the most important thing you can do, is **focus on connecting and building a partnership** with the family. When we partner with families in the process, we successfully use MI to support change.

c. **Supporting quote**

- i. *In a quote by Helen Keller she stated, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*

d. **Transition**

- i. As we grow our personal and professional relationships, we can become skilled at using MI to avoid the Righting Reflex by asking permission before giving advice, using reflective listening and focusing on connection and building relationships to create the sustainability we need to support real change for the families we work with.

6. **Topic 3 – The spirit of MI & the Righting Reflex Trap – Michelle**

a. **Supporting point**

- i. **The Spirit of MI also reminds us that Partnership, Acceptance, Compassion and Evocation are essential to MI. We use the acronym P.A.C.E. to remember it. Partnership, Acceptance, Compassion and Evocation. Let’s take a closer look at partnership.**

b. **Supporting data**

- i. Partnership with the family promotes a family-centered approach.
- ii. Partnership acknowledges the family strengths, seeks, and values the family's contribution, and asks permission before giving advice, suggestions, or sharing insights. Sounds like the ways we just discussed to avoid falling into the Righting Reflex trap ...
- iii. Remember, when the Righting Reflex urge kicks in, **pause and curb the urge you are feeling.** We totally understand that pausing or silence may feel awkward, but it is better to feel the awkwardness than to fight to be right which can really damage your relationship with the family you are partnering with.

c. **Supporting quote**

- i. A quote from *Andreas Fransson* is a great reminder, “*In the silence behind what can be heard lies the answers we have been searching for for so long*”.

d. **Transition**

- i. **La Tanya that was a lot of information, what did it mean to you?**

7. **Topic 3 – Closing – La Tanya**

a. **Main point**

- i. It took me down memory lane of sitting in some of the homes of families I worked with. In that moment, I was fighting the urge to right what I saw as wrong even before I gathered all of the information.
- ii. When we partner with families, we can experience more productive meetings and intentional conversations that will move the family through the change process a bit smoother. Avoiding the Righting Reflex using the MI skills we learn can really make a difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Not to mention, decrease our stress level and improve the quality of our work life.

b. **Supporting point**

- i. Remember partnership is the goal!

c. **Supporting data**

- i. As we continue our MI journey together on Let's Talk...MI, we will show up each time to partner with you by providing tips, tools, and education on Motivational Interviewing.

d. **Supporting closing quote**

- i. Zig Ziglar said, "*A goal properly set is (a goal) halfway reached.*"

8. **Outro – Michelle**

- a. To recap today's episode, we discussed the Righting Reflex Trap and how to avoid it using our MI skills.
- b. In our next episode we can't wait to talk about one of my BIG traps the **Expert Trap**. You won't want to miss it!

9. **Call to action – Michelle**

In the meantime, we would love to hear from you! So, Let's talk! Tell us what you think about the episodes, make suggestions, ask questions, or anything else MI you'd like to talk about. Just email us at DCFS.LetsTalkMI@illinois.gov. And you never know we may choose to answer one of your questions on a future episode. We can't wait to hear from you.

10. **Closing Song & Message**

- a. Michelle – I'm Michelle Moreno
- b. La Tanya - and I'm La Tanya Riggs. We hope you enjoyed your time with us and we can't wait for you to join us again on Let's Talk ... MI.

11. **Sponsor & Disclaimer message**

- a. LaNia - The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is providing the content of this podcast for public service training purposes only it is neither a legal interpretation nor a statement of DCFS policy. It does not replace professional advice. Reference to any specific product, service, or entity does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by DCFS. The views or opinions

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