

# APPENDIX 7

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## Questions and Guidelines

# BRAIN STORY CERTIFICATION COURSE

## Guidelines for Organizations & Groups

### Purpose

This guide is intended to prepare and assist facilitation for groups taking the Brain Story Certification course.

### Starting Point

Before the organization or group dives in with the course, a good place to start is to have an introductory presentation by a AFWI staff member and for the group to play the Brain Architecture Game. All organizations are different and should identify the best process that works for them. For example, some items to consider are the time frame to complete the course, including facilitated discussions, staff time to take the course etc. The feedback we have gathered has shown there are a number of different processes but having group discussions to go over the course content and discuss how this new knowledge can be applied to the work has proved to be valuable.

If a facilitated process is chosen, it is recommended the facilitator take the Brain Story Certification Course before facilitating a group. After taking the course, the facilitator should be comfortable with the scientific content as well as discussing possible application of this new knowledge. Feedback from organizations has also shown that it is valuable to have an internal facilitator (someone from within the organization) to lead regular discussions to help bridge the gap between the scientific content and what it can look like in practice within their own organization.

A key area of success for completing the course is setting expectations. It is important, to begin with communicating with the participants what the schedule will look like and topics will be covered. Example of a 4-month timeline is below.

### Facilitated Session Layout

Many like to think of this process similar to a book club; assigning the number of modules you wish the group to complete before the next session, then have a discussion about what you just learned. Meeting in a commonplace that is easy for everyone to get to, such as a boardroom or a classroom, can be helpful for people, or during a lunch hour. Depending on the size of the group, you can split people up into tables with a leader at each table responsible for keeping the conversation on track and reporting back to the larger group. One way to help people stay engaged is to have the groups or individuals write down thoughts or answer to questions on index cards then share top three ideas with the group.

## Timeline Example

### Brain Story Certification Schedule

#### Objective:

To use the science included in the Brain Story Certification course to develop a Community of Practice.

#### Focus of discussion:

1. Review key concepts from Brain Story Certification Course modules, and
2. Discuss how could/does the science of the Brain Story apply to one's individual or program clinical practice?

Time: 2-3 modules to complete every 2 weeks with biweekly meetings for discussion

Date (example)	Modules	Discussion Highlights	Clarifying Questions
January 11, 2019 (Session 1)	1. Welcome to Brain Story Certification  2. Brain Architecture – How Brains Develop  3. Gene Signatures – How Gene-Environment Interactions Shape Brain Architecture & Outcomes		
January 25, 2019 (Session 2)	4. Sense & Return – How Social Interactions Shape Brain Architecture  5. Toxic Stress – How Early Adversity Shapes Brain Architecture		
February 1, 2019 (Session 3)	6. Air Traffic Control – Building Executive Function & Self-Regulation Capacities  7. Interventions Addressing Child Maltreatment & Neglect		
February 15, 2019 (Session 4)	8. Children's Mental Health, Part A – The Influence of Child Temperaments on Anxiety & ADHD  9. Children's Mental Health, Part B – Improving Services		
March 1, 2019 (Session 5)	10. ACEs, Part A – The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on a Range of Adult Health Outcomes  11. ACEs, Part B – Using the Science of ACEs in Practice		
March 15, 2019 (Session 6)	12. ACEs, Part C – The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on PTSD and Depression  13. Addiction & the Brain, Part A – A Neurobiological Perspective		

## Timeline Example

March 29, 2019 (Session 7)	14. Addiction & the Brain, Part B – Process Addictions  15. The Effects of Toxic Stress, Addiction, & Depression on Parenting		
April 12, 2019 (Session 8)	16. Addiction Treatment, Part A – FamilyBased Approaches  17. Addiction Treatment, Part B – Specialized Approaches for Women & Indigenous Populations		
April 26, 2019 (Session 9)	18. Addiction Treatment, Part C – Improving Services  19. Using the Science of Early Brain Development to Build Resilient Children, Families, & Communities		

The timeline will depend on the organization or group. Some might have time during work hours to take the course and time during work hours/lunch for the discussion.

Examples of Questions to ask during sessions:

- How does this impact your perception of clients and how you interact with them?
- Discuss what you can currently change at work with this new knowledge?
- What did you learn about (stress, genetics, ACEs, treatment, intervention) that was new to you?
- How can we bring more stress reduction and coping skills into our own lives, clients lives and others around us?
- How does knowing this information inform your work and work with partner organizations?

### Additional Resources:

The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative website has many other resources and the full-length symposium presentation videos if there is a need for clarification or more information. You can also contact [brainstory@albertafamilywellness.org](mailto:brainstory@albertafamilywellness.org) for more information.