

Maine Families CUES Messaging

(C) Confidentiality, (UE) Universal Education and Empowerment, (S) Safer Supports

Guiding Principles:

Home visitation is a dynamic, innovative model grounded in perspective taking, attunement and authenticity among a myriad of other elements.

Each family is unique. Each relationship is unique. While there are universal tools to be shared with all families, the way they are shared is through the authentic relationship between family and visitor.

CUES was adopted by Maine Families to support the goals of home visitation and provide templates for communicating with families about how to reduce isolation and safely get help to address domestic violence. Visitors can adapt the specific language of the scripts and texts to their individual voice and style.

Context:

The intention of CUES is to enhance the work that visitors are already doing with families. All of the work in Maine Families is based in the relationships that are created with the families served. The CUES approach is intended to be embedded in the conversations that visitors are already having with families and to create opportunities for a family to tell their visitor if they feel unsafe. It is a strategy for addressing safety that is effective when it is combined with what the visitor already knows about a family and their professional judgment as a visitor.

Visitors should be cautious when using the words ‘domestic violence’ with families. Some people may think domestic violence only refers to physical violence, not all the other ways in which power and control happen in a relationship that affect well-being, parenting, safety, coping and stress. Consider using proxy language such as “complicated relationships,” “stressed relationships,” “struggles in relationships,” or “all relationships have their struggles” to understand where your client is in their relationship and understanding of its impact on their own well-being. Using the words they use to describe their relationship and situation with a partner will demonstrate attunement with them. Our goal is to reduce feelings of isolation, help them know it’s ok to talk about these kinds of situations, and open the door for them to go further with discussions when they choose.

In addition to introducing 211 as a universal resource, we encourage each site to reach out to local domestic violence organization to understand what supports are available for participants who may disclose risk factors or are interested in receiving support.

To better understand the resources we provide to families, Visitors should call 211 to learn what families will experience when they use the resource and can describe it to their clients. The website 211maine.org is available in over 100 languages, and other language services may be available for phone calls. Staff should learn what information the 211 operators would give a client if they said they were struggling in a complicated relationship and ask about a direct referral from 211 to alternate hotlines such as suicide prevention or domestic violence hotlines.

CUES Messaging

CUES messaging should be shared through conversation with all families with follow-up via text message or in person, as appropriate, based on the visitor's professional judgment. The goal is that participants understand the range of services offered, including those for complicated relationships.

The following are suggested scripts and texts that can be used to initiate CUES conversations. All of these are suggestions and samples of what could be said. Visitors are the experts about their families and if any of these don't feel right, please skip or adapt them using one's own words and style in ways that fit within the relationship established with individual families.

As a reminder, safety is a top priority and others may potentially access the caregiver's phone/computer. Always ask first if it is safe/ok to send a text. If it is not, it serves as a reminder that caregivers are the expert in their experience.

Confidentiality Message:

"Hey, I just wanted to mention, I know while we are talking folks may walk into the room and you may not feel like continuing our conversation for whatever reason—if you ever feel uncomfortable, please feel free to change the subject and I will follow your lead."

Universal Message:

"Because of the stress brought on by parenting, we share this resource with all of our families. It has information about additional supports that folks might not be aware of to help build community support for each other. 2-1-1 is a 24/7 confidential resource that has everything from info on food banks to substance use, mental health, child-care, parenting supports and help for folks experiencing stress in their relationships. All of these things can affect our health and resilience while parenting. You may already know this, I just want to remind you that we can talk about any of these areas during our visits, and I can help connect you to local resources, if you'd like."

Universal Text Messages:

Quick thought for you in times of stress- Saying hopeful things often, and out loud, can help us manage our stress.

Helping others can help us feel better too, so pass this along

2-1-1 is a free, confidential referral helpline that connects people of all ages and from all communities to the essential health and human services they need, 24/7. 211 can be accessed by phone or computer: <https://www.211.org>

- Including food and clothing, shelters, housing, utility assistance
- Job training, employment services, transportation assistance
- Support for complicated, stressful relationships
- Information about childcare, child supports, parent supports

On-Going CUES Scripts and Texts

Confidentiality:

“So, tell me about who will be joining us today for our visit.”

“Since the last time we checked in, have there been any changes to who is living with you or where you are living?”

“The house sounds so quiet—are you on your own today?”

“I can’t remember if [partner’s name] is joining us today or if today is one of their work days?”

“Is there any chance you can take yourself/we could go out for a walk while we talk? If not, no worries, sometimes it’s just nice to have another adult one on one to talk with so we can focus on each other.”

Universal Education:

“Parenting can be hard and sometimes stressful. So many relationships experience stress. You are not alone.”

“All relationships can have their challenges— have you noticed more stress in your relationships recently?”

“I think it’s natural that relationships are more stressed with a young child, I have heard that from lots of parents I visit. How are things going for the two of you?”

“One of the things I’m talking to all my families about is that when we are struggling or hurting, we may lash out at each other or even our kids. Or we may yell, make someone feel ashamed, or we may stop listening. The question is what can help and where can one go to get support?”

Sample Text to Support Healthy Relationships:

How are things going for you at home?

Relationships are stressful, parenting is hard, and we all need support sometimes.

Are you feeling supported by the important people in your life?

Are you being listened too, cared for, respected, and treated with kindness?

Connecting with people who support us is healing—saying I love you, care about you, I miss you can be a lifeline— a little love goes a long way.

If you or someone you know needs supports for stress about parenting or relationships, call 2-1-1 for ideas and information.

Disclosures

If a family discloses, visitors should follow the Maine Families *Intimate Partner Violence* and *Crisis* Policies and Procedures.

Disclosure Scripts:

“Remember support is available at any time. A lot of people struggle in their relationships and it can be hard.”

“Thank you for sharing with me.”

“You (and your children) deserve to feel safe and treated with respect.”

“You are the expert on your life and family; you get to decide what is next. I can connect you to a resource for whatever you decide.”

“You are not alone. I am here to support you.”

“There are confidential services I can help you connect to – or support you by staying on the line during a phone call – if you’d like.

If you make a phone call to a referral source: “Hi, I am [FV Name]. I’m a family visitor and I have a client with me who is in a complicated relationship and asked me to help connect them to you.”

Disclosure Text message:

Thank you for sharing with me—I care about you.

You are the one in charge of your life and you get to decide what you do next.

I want to support you with what is important to you.

I appreciate you and you are resourceful.

24/7 confidential Domestic Violence Hotline that you can chat, text, or call: 1 (800) 799-7233
<https://www.thehotline.org/>

CUES Documentation Guidance

Planning Guide: “Share CUES confidentiality and universal messaging” will appear in the list of Reminders on the Planning Guide. Once the universal message has been shared via a visit or a contact, the reminder will no longer appear on the planning guide.

Visit Details: A question has been added to the Visit Details screen asking, “Did you share the CUES confidentiality and universal messages with the caregiver during this visit?” Visitors mark “yes” when they discuss CUES with the family and “no” when these messages have not been shared. Once this question has been marked “yes” on a visit or a contact (after enrollment), it will not appear on future visits or contacts.

In addition, visitors should use the narrative section of the Visit Details to document the conversation with the family and any important information learned. During initial visits if the universal message has not been shared, the narrative can be used to document the reason why.

Contact: The same CUES question is on the Contact Screen to capture whether the CUES was shared during a call, email, or text with a family. Note: It is not required that these messages happen outside of a visit. Additionally, if the messages are shared prior to enrollment, they will need to be shared again during the first 30 days to establish a clear understanding of how the Family Visitor will handle confidential information and to continue to build rapport with the participant.

Referrals: Once the visitor enters “yes” as the response to the CUES question and hits save, ERIN will automatically create a referral with the date of the visit that a visitor can complete to document the referral to 211. The referral can be updated as needed to mark it completed, however it is not required to be marked completed. Additionally, other local resources beyond 211 may be provided.