

CONNECTION BEFORE CONTENT

Webinar Facilitator's Guide



TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR THE
GIFTED & TALENTED

Connection Before Content

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you describe your child to others?
- How do other adults describe your child (teachers, coaches, leaders, etc.)?
- How does your child describe themselves?
- What rhythms can you put in place to help create psychological safety at home?

- What roadblocks do you anticipate when trying to build new habits in the family routine?
- What strategies can you see using to help support your child?
- What can you do to deepen the connection with your child?
- What can you do to help your child deepen their connections with others?
- Are there any lingering effects of the pandemic that you see present in yourself and/or your child that can affect their emotional wellbeing?

About the Speakers

CHRIS THOMAS

Chris has yet to meet a stranger. During his 30-plus years in corporate management of consumer goods and products, both domestically and internationally, Chris has literally made thousands of friends through his innate ability to connect with and care for other people. A gifted college athlete, Chris played an integral role in coaching and developing the athletic achievements of his children, Ella and Solomon. People are immediately put at ease by his big laugh and zest for life, and by his ability to communicate a message of positivity and hope. As a senior executive at Procter & Gamble, Frito-Lay and Alberto Culver among others, Chris brought a drive for excellence to his work, earning recognition and industry awards including Salesperson of the Year and Supplier of the Year. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, as well as Touched By Suicide (TBS) board member, AFSP Project 2025 board member, and College of Wooster Ad Hoc Alumni Trustee. He and his wife Martha and son Solomon were recipients of the 2019 AFSP Lifesaver Award. Chris often jokes that, as Solomon's dad, he had the rare privilege of raising his own favorite NFL player, and no player has a more enthusiastic father in the stands. Chris continues to play sports, travel, and barbecue some of the world's best ribs.

MARTHA THOMAS

Martha draws young people like a magnet. She exudes warmth and welcome to everyone she meets. As a teacher and educator for 30 years, Martha brings authenticity and an open heart to her work with students. Nominated by her school district as Teacher of the Year, Martha prioritizes the well-being of her students, and provides creative and compassionate leadership both inside and outside the classroom. Martha co-founded The Defensive Line to honor her daughter, Ella, and to bring a message of hope and help to other at-risk young people. She is the roots of her family and believes and demonstrates fundamentally that connection is our greatest source of strength together. Martha, Chris, and Solomon were recipients of the 2019 AFSP Lifesaver Award. Martha resides in Coppell, TX, with her husband, Chris, and two rescue dogs Mickey and Rebel. She is a marathoner and devoted friend to a very lucky many, as well as a huge fan of the New York Jets for whom her son, Solomon, plays defensive lineman. Dr.

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ALLIE GRODZKI

Dr. Allie Grodzki is a Licensed Psychologist in Texas. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Neuroscience at North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND where she grew up. She earned her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology and Doctorate of Psychology degree at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology in Schaumburg, IL. Dr. Grodzki completed her American Psychological Association (APA) accredited pre-doctoral internship at a community mental health center in Denver, Colorado. She comes from a very diverse background of training and work experiences in various settings, including private practice, day programs, residential care, and inpatient hospitals where she has worked with children and adults of all ages. Dr. Grodzki specializes in intellectual giftedness, twice-exceptionality (2e), learning disabilities, processing disorders, anxiety, OCD, depression, behavioral disorders, ADHD, Autism, and other forms of neurodivergence. Dr. Grodzki's past experience has also included medical evaluations (e.g., disability, veterans, pre-surgical, nursing facility admission), as well as parent-child interactional assessments. She is well-versed in providing trauma-informed care and services.

HEATHER LAMBERT

In the summer of 2017, in response to the urgent need for mental health services in her community, Heather Lambert left her 17-year career in education and founded Clearhope Counseling. Clearhope began with the simple mission to remove access barriers to high-quality mental health services. Today, Clearhope has 5 locations and partners with Houston-area school districts to provide on-campus mental health services, and a trauma-informed training to support educators and students. Heather is the author of *Overcoming Toxic Air: A Path to Healing and Hope-Filled Exhales*. Heather is also involved in political advocacy and was appointed to HB 906 Mental Health Task Force to study and evaluate mental health services to improve mental wellness in public schools across the state of Texas. Heather is driven by her personal mission that "No one should hurt alone." Heather has been married to Pastor Brian Lambert for 28 years. Brian and Heather have 4 children.