

AN OCEAN OF

# POSSIBILITY

At every CRB review, board members have a uniquely challenging responsibility: They must ask strangers for detailed, often sensitive information about some of the most traumatizing events that have occurred in their life. Board members must accurately perceive the meaning of the responses they get and determine whether the information is accurate or trustworthy. Then, the board members must use that information to immediately make judgments about the sufficiency of individuals' efforts or about whether a vulnerable child they have never met is safe.

Sounds tough enough, right? But that's not all.

Every party at the table during this endeavor is dealing with something intense: The children are experiencing the confusion and loss inherent in foster care while working to recover from past trauma. The parents, who typically have experienced significant trauma of their own, are facing involuntary and public accountability for mistakes they likely did not intend to make in the first place. The entire family is suffering the heartbreak of separation and failure. There may be unmet needs that will remain unmet when the review closes. Even the caseworkers and attorneys at reviews can be exhausted by their caseloads and the compassion fatigue that comes with working to ameliorate other peoples' crises all day long.

And just like parties at reviews, each CRB board member brings their own lifetime of experiences, perspectives, biases and areas of expertise to the table. Board members can have good days and bad ones, feel frustrated during one review and hopeful during the next. After all, board members are human beings too!

As representatives of the Oregon Judicial Department, CRB board members recognize these many challenges inherent in the work we do. We exercise objectivity and respect for all people at the table, regardless of our own (or others') personal feelings, histories, or emotions of the day.

But how? At reviews, boards do not have time to build personal relationships with every party at the table first. They must instead rely on their own "toolbox" of important skills to accomplish their mission: Emotional intelligence, honesty, patience, self-awareness, solid preparation, and intentional empathy (for ourselves, and for others).

These are valuable skills that are worth the time to thoughtfully develop and nurture. Not only will CRB board members benefit in their roles as CRB volunteers and in their personal lives, but so will the community and all with whom we communicate. There is an ocean of possibility here for personal growth and excellent service to the people of Oregon.

The series of videos we have assigned comes with a purpose. They are intended to introduce you to perspectives that may help you better understand yourself and others at the table with you. As you engage with these videos, you will be consciously and unconsciously upgrading the tools you already have in your mental "toolbox" for engaging effectively and compassionately with people who are different from you.

Perfection is not our goal; But thoughtful empathy for others and for ourselves *is*. If we open our minds to the experiences of others, that empathy will carry us through even the toughest of CRB reviews. So let's jump in!

# Video Homework

Consider the questions below as you watch the eight short videos on the CRB Orientation Training Homework playlist at:

[www.tinyurl.com/CRB-OT-Video-Homework](http://www.tinyurl.com/CRB-OT-Video-Homework)

## What is Unconscious Bias?

By: The Ethics Centre

*How do our brains help us navigate a complex world without becoming paralyzed by details?*

## Did Rats Start the Drug War?

By: FreeThink

*When rats' needs are not met and they are placed in solitary confinement, what happens to sober rats? When addicted rats' needs are met, what happens to their heroin addiction?*

## What Kindergarteners Taught Me About Gender

By: TEDx/Batya Greenwald

*For what purpose does someone else's gender matter to you?*

## Our Hidden Biases

By: Picture Alternatives

*What do you think this young man needed from the interviewer more than her advice?*

## Introduction: 4 Rules for Achieving Peace and Justice

By: Bryan Stevenson

*Are you ready to change the world?*

## Are You Biased? I am!

By: TEDx/Kristen Pressner

*Do you know anyone who is unbiased? Why is it so uncomfortable to confront or even acknowledge our biases?*

## The Best Explanation of Addiction I've Ever Heard

By: Gabor Mate

*How do adverse childhood experiences relate to the development of addiction? What does this mean for how to most effectively treat addicted individuals?*

## Private Violence Presents: Why I Stayed

By: Private Violence/Markay Media

*Can you explain why a parent might stay with an abusive partner in order to protect their children?*

## Taken Into Foster Care – Through the Eyes of a Child

By: The Kansas City Star

*What are some reasons a teen in foster care might "misbehave" or reject good advice?*