

Strengthening Families

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Introduction to the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Describe the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework that includes five research-based protective factors.
- Deepen the intentional integration of this strengths-based approach into their work by incorporating practical strategies and everyday actions to build protective factors among families.



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Five Protective Factors



1. Parental resilience
2. Social connections
3. Knowledge of parenting and child development
4. Concrete support in times of need
5. Social and emotional competence of children



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The Four Big Ideas Behind Strengthening Families™

- Building protective and promotive factors, not just reducing risk
- An approach – not a model, a program or a curriculum
- A changed relationship with parents
- Aligning practice with developmental science – research-based

Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



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Strengths-Based Mindset

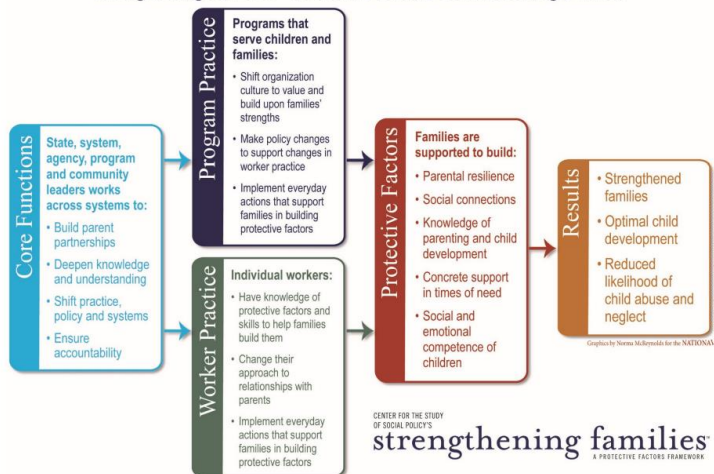
- Culture impacts protective factors
- Examining our beliefs and putting aside our biases
- Exploring the power dynamic of “helping”
- Identifying protective factors in our own lives

Adapted from the National Alliance for Children's Trust and Prevention Funds

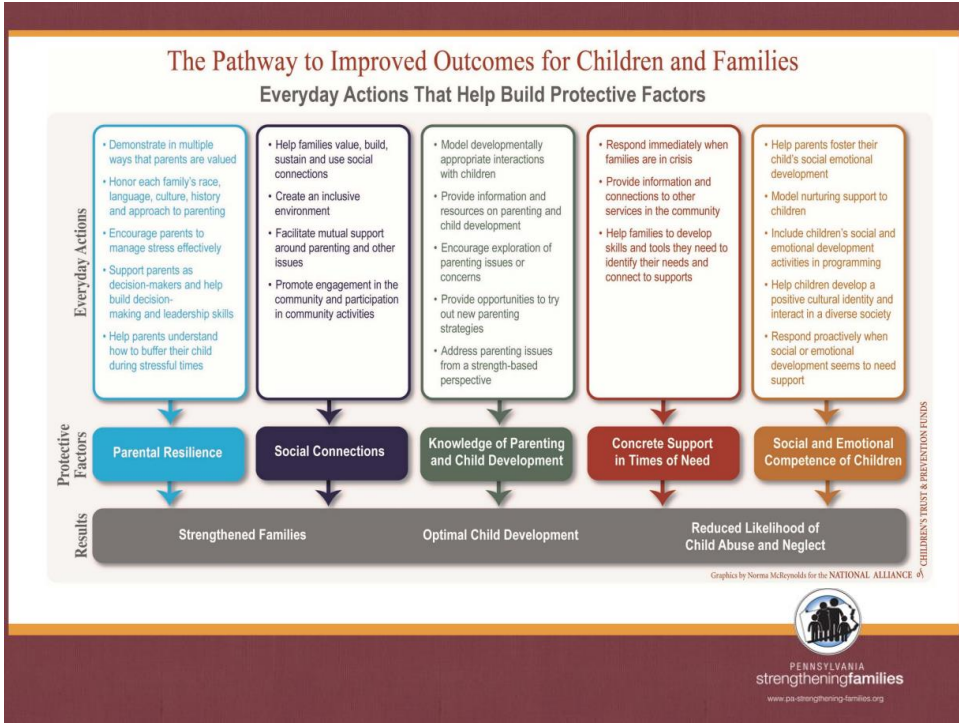


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The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework Logic Model



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Parental Resilience



“I will continue to have courage during stress or after a crisis.”

Courage | Be strong and flexible

Protective Factors definitions from Community Café

Parental Resilience

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.

- Lifelong process
- Bouncing back and bouncing forward
- Two components to Parental Resilience
 - General life stress
 - Parenting under stress

Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



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Parental Resilience

Resilient parents are:

- Stronger
- More patient
- Able to reduce stress when it occurs



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Parental Resilience

The role of family support professionals:

- Show parents they are valued
- Provide strategies to reduce stress
- Encourage leadership and decision making



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Large Group Reflection: Parental Resilience

How do you support parents and caregivers to build parental resilience?



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Social Connections



Community | Parents need friends

“I have people who know me –friends. And at least one person who supports my parenting.”

Protective Factors definitions from Community Café

Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support

- Everyone needs support
- Reduce isolation
- Quality relationships

Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



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Social Connections

Parents who have social connections:

- Are less likely to be isolated
- Feel supported
- Share positive norms about parenting



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Social Connections

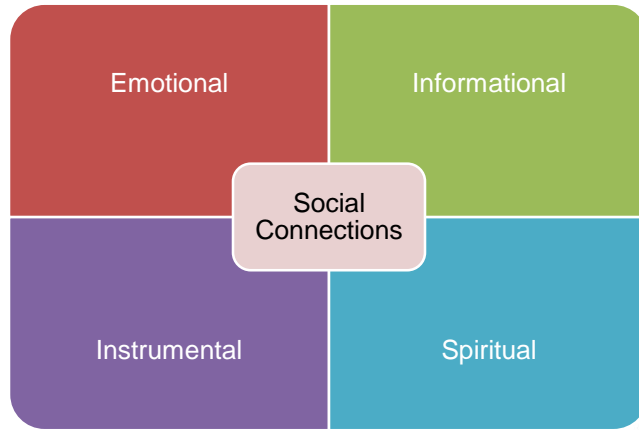
The role of family support professionals:

- Provide opportunities to interact with other parents
- Model positive relationships
- Support parents to develop social skills



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Individual Reflection: Social Connections



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Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development



“I stay curious and am responsive to what my child needs.”

Health | Being a great parent is part natural and part learned

Protective Factors definitions from Community Café

Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.

- Parenting is contextual
- Families are cultural systems

Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



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Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

Parents who have knowledge and skills:

- Have appropriate developmental expectations
- Can provide safe, nurturing environments where their children learn and grow.



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Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

The role of family support professionals:

- Provide opportunities to gain knowledge *and* practice skills
- Direct families to accurate, up-to-date child development information



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Large Group Reflection: Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development



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Concrete Support in Times of Need



Freedom | We all need help sometimes

“My family can access basic needs when they need it.”

Protective Factors definitions from Community Café

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges

- All families have strengths and all families have needs
- Families are successful when their needs are met
- More than material resources

Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



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Concrete Support in Times of Need

Parents with access to concrete supports are:

- Less stressed about providing for their children
- Advocates for their children



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Concrete Support in Times of Need

The role of family support professionals:

- Act as a bridge to services
- Provide opportunities to give back
- Reduce stigma



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Small Group Reflection: Concrete Support in Times of Need

“Somehow we’ve come to equate success with not needing anyone. Many of us are willing to extend a helping hand, but we’re very reluctant to reach out for help when we need it ourselves. It’s as if we’ve divided the world into “those who offer help” and “those who need help.” The truth is that we are both.”

Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*



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Social & Emotional Competence of Children



**“My child feels loved,
a sense of belonging and can get along with others.”**

**Compassion | Help your children communicate and
give them the love and respect they need**

Protective Factors definitions from Community Café

Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

- Foundation of development
- Begins with nurturing and attachment

Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy



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Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Parents who understand and nurture their child's social and emotional development:

- Model healthy social skills for their child
- Understand the source of difficult behavior
- Build strong, nurturing relationships with their children



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Social & Emotional Competence of Children

The role of family support professionals:

- Model nurturing care
- Provide access to resources
- Support parents when a delay or concern is detected



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Reflection: Social & Emotional Competence of Children

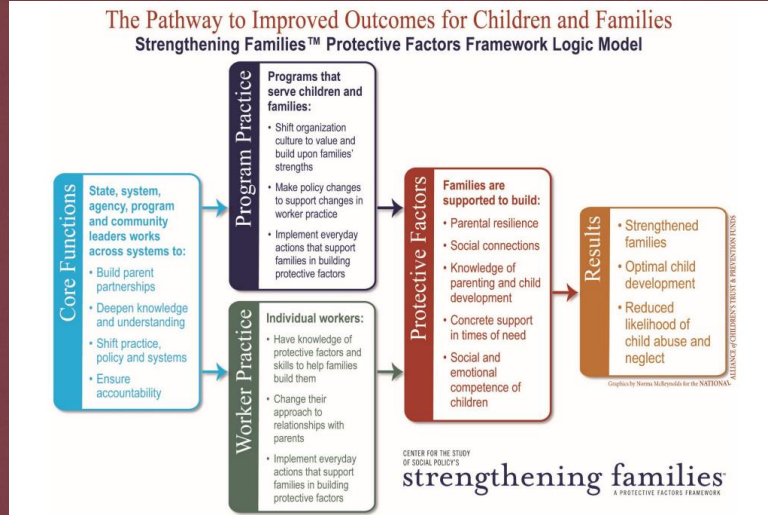
"Just Breathe" by Julie Bayer Salzman & Josh Salzman (Wavecrest Films)

<https://youtu.be/RVA2N6tX2cg>



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Learning More about Strengthening Families



Strengthening Families in Pennsylvania

Weaving the Protective Factors into:

- Policy
- Practice
- Systems

Relationships * Strong Families * Respect



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Professional Development

- Understanding the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework
- Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work
- Be Strong Parent Café Training Institute



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Opportunities to Learn More

- Center for the Study of Social Policy
<https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/>
- National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
<https://ctfalliance.org/>
- Be Strong Families
<http://www.pa-strengthening-families.org/>



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Opportunities to Learn More

- Motivation Monday Messages
<http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/covid-19/>
- PA Strengthening Families
<http://www.pa-strengthening-families.org/>



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Summary

- Partnerships with parents
- Five protective factors = strong and safe families
- Purposeful and intentional
- Protective Factors in our lives



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Commitment

What is one thing you can affirm or will change in your work with families?



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