Strengthening Families™

Participant Handouts

K-W-L Table

K: What I **Know**	W: What I **Want** to know	L: What I have **Learned**

My Social Connections: People Who Are Very Important to Me

First Name	Relationship (e.g., sister, friend, neighbor)	What does this person do that makes her or him very important to you?

Strengthening Families Glossary

Key Terms	Definitions
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Traumatic events that occur in a child's life that are strongly related to psychological, behavioral, and health problems across the lifespan.
Child Resilience	The process of using effective coping skills in the presence of stressors; learned as a result of parent-child interactions.
Concrete Support in Times of Need	Helping parents to identify, find and receive the assistance or services they need in order to address whatever stressful situation they are faced with; providing parents with experiences that enable them to understand their rights in accessing services, gain knowledge of relevant services, and learn how to navigate through service systems.
Cultural Humility	An active self-reflection of one's own assumptions, beliefs, and values that may influence communication and interaction with individuals from a different race or culture
Deficits-based Perspective	A point of view that conceives parents, children, families, and communities that experience problems as deficient or deprived, and does not recognize their existing resources and strengths.
Developmental Trajectory	The course or pathway of development across the lifespan.
Executive Functions	A broad number of interrelated processes that contribute to self-regulation and influence both cognitive processes and social-emotional behaviors.
Help-Seeking	Intentional, positive actions by an individual who perceives himself/herself as needing personal, psychological, health or social services.

Insecure Attachment	The distant, avoidant, or ambivalent reaction of a child to a primary caregiver who is indifferent, inconsistent, or harsh in their caregiving to the child. Children who are insecurely attached display fear, distrust, anxiety, or distress and are at risk for long-term adverse effects.
Neurons	Nerve cells.
Parental Resilience	Calling forth one's inner strength to proactively meet personal challenges and those in relation to one's child, manage adversities, heal the effects of trauma, and thrive given the unique characteristics and circumstances of the family.
Positive Stress	Biological and emotional responses that result from brief negative experiences (e.g., first day at new school; failing a test); necessary for the development of a healthy stress response system
Protective Factors	Conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk and actively enhance well-being.
Resilience	The process of managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma.
Risk Factors	Conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that increase the likelihood of poor outcomes.
Self-Advocacy	Effectively communicating, conveying, negotiating, or asserting one's own interests, desires, needs, and rights.
Secure Attachment	A close, loving, and enduring emotional bond between a child and a primary caregiver that results from experiences with an attuned, emotionally available primary caregiver. Young children with secure attachments develop a sense of trust, feel safe, gain self-confidence, and are able to explore their environments because they feel they have a secure base.

Self-Regulation	The effortful control and coordination of one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, as well as the ability to adapt one's behavior in order to achieve a desired outcome.
Serve and Return Interaction	A child-adult interaction that involves a young child soliciting an interaction through babbling, gestures, facial expressions, or focusing on an interesting object (the "serve"), and an adult sharing and supporting the child's experience by responding in some manner (the "return").
Social and Emotional Competence	The developing capacity of the child from birth through 5 years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture.
Social Connections	Healthy, sustained relationships with people, institutions, the community, and a higher power that promote a sense of trust, belonging, and a that one matters.
Strengths-Based Perspective	A point of view that conceives parents, children, families, and communities as having existing resources and strengths that can be identified and mobilized to resolve problems and achieve positive outcomes.
Stress	Biological and emotional responses to experiences perceived to be challenging or threatening.
Stress Response System	The series of bodily changes—such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, and production of stress hormones—that are automatically triggered by the brain when an individual is faced with a challenge or threat.
Stressor	Experiences that are perceived to be challenging or threatening.
Synapse/Synaptic Connections	The critical communication link between neurons.

Synaptic Pruning	The process through which unused or underused connections between neurons (nerve cells) are eliminated, which improves the efficiency of neuronal functioning.
Tolerable Stress	Biological and emotional responses that result from more intense negative experiences (e.g., death of a loved one; frightening accident); may become toxic if not buffered by supportive relationships and environments
Toxic Stress	Biological and emotional responses that result from strong, frequent, prolonged adversity (e.g., child abuse and neglect, family violence)
Trauma-Informed Care	An approach to working with individuals who have experienced one or more traumas in their life that focuses on the impact of the trauma(s) on their current functioning.
Two-Generation Approach	An approach that emphasizes the importance of responding to the needs of parents and children at the same time, rather than supporting parents and children in isolation from one another.
Traumatic Experiences	Horrific, uncontrollable events or conditions that can create intense and sustained toxic stress if adequate support and intervention is not provided.
Well-Being	The state of good physical health and development, emotional functioning, behavioral functioning, and social functioning, as well as healthy family relationships and attachment to a caring and reliable adult.

CORE MEANINGS OF THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective Factor	Core Meaning
Parental Resilience: Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma	<u>Resilience Related to General Life Stressors</u> a. managing the stressors of daily life b. calling forth the inner strength to proactively meet personal challenges, manage adversities and heal the effects of one's own traumas c. having self-confidence d. believing that one can make and achieve goals e. having faith; feeling hopeful f. solving general life problems g. having a positive attitude about life in general h. managing anger, anxiety, sadness, feelings of loneliness and other negative feelings i. seeking help for self when needed <u>Resilience Related to Parenting Stressors</u> a. calling forth the inner strength to proactively meet challenges related to one's child b. not allowing stressors to keep one from providing nurturing attention to one's child c. solving parenting problems d. having a positive attitude about one's parenting role and responsibilities e. seeking help for one's child when needed

Social Connections: Having a sense of connectedness with constructive, supportive people and institutions	a. Building trusting relationships; feeling respected and appreciated
	b. Having friends, family members, neighbors and others who:
	  • provide emotional support (e.g., affirming parenting skills)
	  • provide instrumental support/concrete assistance (e.g., providing transportation)
	  • provide informational support/serve as a resource for parenting information
	  • provide spiritual support (e.g., providing hope and encouragement)
	  • provide an opportunity to engage with others in a positive manner
	  • help solve problems
	  • help buffer parents from stressors
	  • reduce feelings of isolation
	  • promote meaningful interactions in a context of mutual trust and respect
	c. Having a sense of connectedness that enables parents to feel secure, confident and empowered to "give back" to others

CORE MEANINGS OF THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective Factor	Core Meaning
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Understanding parenting best practices and developmentally appropriate child skills and behaviors	Seeking, acquiring and using accurate and age/stage-related information about: a. parental behaviors that lead to early secure attachments b. the importance of • being attuned and emotionally available to one's child • being nurturing, responsive and reliable • regular, predictable and consistent routines • interactive language experiences • providing a physically and emotionally safe environment for one's child • providing opportunities for one's child to explore and to learn by doing c. appropriate developmental expectations d. positive discipline techniques e. recognizing and attending to the special needs of a child
Concrete Support in Times of Need: Identifying, accessing and receiving needed adult, child and family services	a. being resourceful b. being able to identify, find and receive the basic necessities everyone deserves in order to grow (e.g., healthy food, a safe environment), as well as specialized medical, mental health, social, educational or legal services c. understanding one's rights in accessing eligible services d. gaining knowledge of relevant services e. navigating through service systems f. seeking help when needed g. having financial security to cover basic needs and unexpected costs
Social and Emotional Competence of Children: Forming secure adult and peer relationships; experiencing, regulating and expressing emotions	Regarding the parent: a. having a positive parental mood b. having positive perceptions of and responsiveness to one's child c. responding warmly and consistently to a child's needs d. being satisfied in one's parental role e. fostering a strong and secure parent-child relationship f. creating an environment in which children feel safe to express their emotions g. being emotionally responsive to children and modeling empathy h. talking with one's child to promote vocabulary development and language learning i. setting clear expectations and limits j. separating emotions from actions k. encouraging and reinforcing social skills such as greeting others and taking turns l. creating opportunities for children to solve problems Regarding the child: a. developing and engaging in self-regulating behaviors b. interacting positively with others c. using words and language skills d. communicating emotions effectively

Strategies to Build Parental Resilience

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued

- Ask parents what they do to when they are faced with stressful situations

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Strategies to Build Social Connections

- Create an inclusive environment

- Promote engagement in the program or community and participation in program or community activities

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Strategies to Build Knowledge

- Model developmentally appropriate interactions with children

- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development

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Strategies to Build Concrete Support

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis

- Provide information and connections to other services in the community

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Strategies to Build Social & Emotional Competence

- Creating an environment in which children feel safe to express their emotions

- Being emotionally responsive to children and modeling empathy

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