Caring Communities Can Help Reduce ACEs
Mental Health

“Mental health is indispensable to well-being, relationships, and contribution to the community or society.”

Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships......

are the key to mentally healthy children and adolescents
What is Resilience?

Good outcomes in spite of serious threats, toxic stress.

Resilient people:
• are prepared to be effective in the world
• can adapt to challenges
• are mentally healthy
Resilience is:

• Feeling connected to caring family and community
• Self-regulation skills
• Positive view of self
• Motivation to be effective in your environment
Protective Factors

• Are conditions that increase health and well-being for children

• Are buffers that provide support and coping strategies for parents
Protective Factors

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Effective Parenting Skills and Child Development
- Concrete Supports in Time of Need
- Nurturing and Attachment
Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships

SAFE = free from harm

STABLE = a high degree of consistency

NURTURING = compassionate, responsive caregiver(s)
Concrete Supports in Time of Need

- Food, Shelter, Basic Services Critical to Child Well-Being
- Link Caregivers to Community Resources and Extended Family
- Work on Sustainability
Nurturing and Attachment

- Observe and Attend to Children
- Provide Safe and Stable Home Life
- Model Caring Behavior
- Respond to Child’s Needs
- Use Positive Discipline
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

- Create Healthy Parent & Child Roles
- Encourage Positive Behavior
- Address Developmental Challenges
Social Connections

• Make it Easier to Care for Children
• Provide Support in Crisis
• Create Opportunities to Help Others
What Can We Do To Promote Good Beginnings for Kids?
7 Strategies to Build Strong Communities
Provide Information

Raise public awareness

Display Strong Communities Raise Strong Kids posters

Hand out Strong Communities Raise Strong Kids brochures
Enhance Knowledge & Skill

• Help educate colleagues about ACEs
• Educate parents about how to build resilience in children from birth
• Teach child care providers, home visitors, physicians and others to build resilience in families
Teach skills to youth
Be a caring adult

Spend quality as well as quantity time with a child; read a book, share a meal.
Talk with Family, Friends and Neighbors

• Share and discuss the ACE questionnaire with your family
• Ask about ACEs, acknowledge your own
• De-stigmatize ACEs can be therapeutic
• Volunteer
Contribute to Community Programs
Enhance Access
Reduce Barriers

• Seek support for needed resources (grant proposals, local collaborations, etc)
• Offer concrete supports (food, shelter, seek professional help if needed)
• Link families to effective community resources (faith based activities, after-school programs, recreation, parenting classes, counseling, domestic violence shelters/education)
When communities make family mental health services available, they bolster kids’ ability to handle stress and prevent damage to the developing brain.
Change the Physical Environment

• Lead a school clean up effort
• Initiate a change making your school/community safer
• Volunteer
• Support your local Child Abuse Prevention Council
Change Consequences
(Incentives & Disincentives)

• Thank someone for their hard work
• Publicly recognize a community group that strengthens families
• Publish an article in a newspaper highlighting someone in the community
• Give rewards to individuals or businesses for helping in the community
Support Family-Friendly Public Policies
Modify/Change Policy

• Talk to legislators and philanthropists about supporting effective programs
• Contribute to child abuse prevention programs via a tax check off
• Support positive parenting programs, domestic violence and mental health education and services
If our **society is to prosper in the future**, we will need to make sure that **all** children have the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially and emotionally.
Information & Resources

• ACE Study findings and information
  - www.acestudy.org or www.cdc.gov

• National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University
  - www.developingchild.net

• Academy of Pediatrics
  - www.brightfutures.aap.org
More Information & Resources

• National Center for Trauma-Informed Care – www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic

• National Child Traumatic Stress Network – www.nctsn.net.org

• Center for the Study of Social Policy -Information on Strengthening Families and Protective Factors – www.cssp.org

• Center for Injury Prevention and Control – www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention
Strong Communities Raise Strong Kids