

# Caring Communities Can Help Reduce ACEs



strong communities raise strong kids

# Mental Health



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

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1999.*





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

are the key to mentally healthy children and adolescents



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# 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

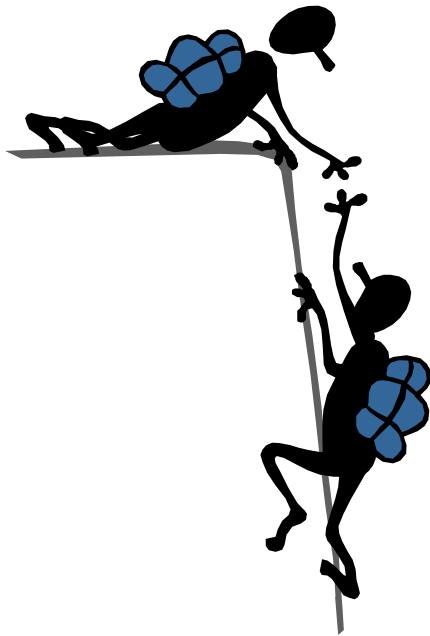


**NURTURING** =  
compassionate,  
responsive  
caregiver(s)





# 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?





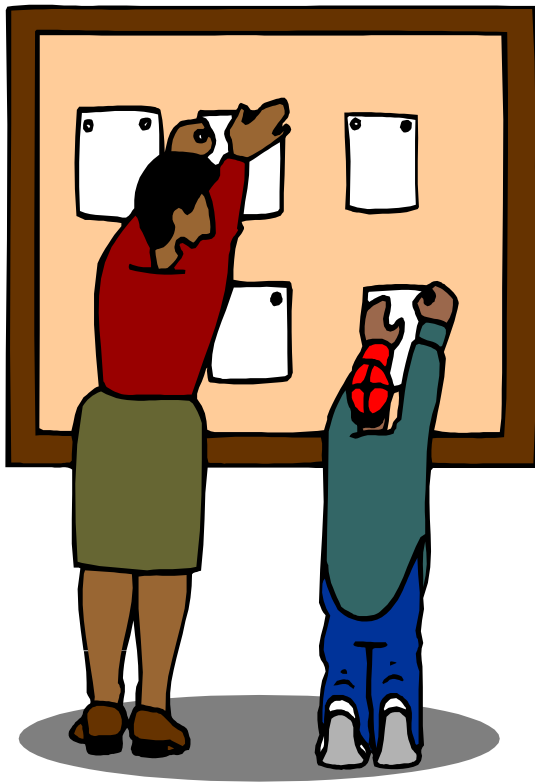
# 7 Strategies to Build Strong Communities



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# 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



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# 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](http://www.acestudy.org) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University
  - [www.developingchild.net](http://www.developingchild.net)
- Academy of Pediatrics
  - [www.brightfutures.aap.org](http://www.brightfutures.aap.org)





# More Information & Resources

- National Center for Trauma-Informed Care – [www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network – [www.nctsnet.org](http://www.nctsnet.org)
- Center for the Study of Social Policy -Information on Strengthening Families and Protective Factors – [www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)
- Center for Injury Prevention and Control – [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention)





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