

strengthening families

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Stakeholder Toolkit

Introduction

This toolkit is designed to help stakeholders beyond the early care and education sector identify existing and potential strategies to integrate the Protective Factors into their work. It is meant for states who are interested in applying the Strengthening Families Framework as a cross-sector prevention approach. The toolkit was developed for Strengthening Families states to use with leadership teams, other stakeholder groups, communities, and individual agencies. The Toolkit assumes basic familiarity with the Protective Factors, so it is important for all partners at the table to have a general overview of the Protective Factors. The Toolkit provides a framework for facilitated discussion to:

- 1) identify services that support and strengthen families;
- 2) identify current and potential partnerships to support the work;
- 3) identify strategies to integrate Strengthening Families and Protective Factors into systems work;
- 4) identify and planning specific strategies to integrate the Protective Factors into programs and services;
- 5) identify related outcomes and measures to document changes as a result of Strengthening Families and Protective Factors
- 6) shift thinking about prevention from a risk model to a strengths model.

The Framework (flower) provides a visual example of what a system that has integrated the Protective Factors might include, but is certainly not exhaustive.

Parts of the Toolkit

The toolkit has a number of components. Depending on how you are structuring your dialogue with stakeholders, how much time you have, and your end goals you may use all or only some of these. The following resources are available for you:

- A power point slide show that is intended to:
 - Refresh and ground participants in the protective factors and what they're based on
 - Provide an illustration of how the protective factors can serve as a common framework across child and family serving sectors
 - Engage the group in a discussion of how the protective factors framework can be integrated into their own work
- A matrix worksheet that is intended to help individual participants think through and capture:
 - What type of changes they might make in their organizations work if they were adopting a protective factors framework

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- What the expected outcomes of these changes would be and how they would measure these outcomes
- A reflective exercise tool that can be used with dyads to:
 - Engage in the conversation about what applying a protective factors approach might mean in a more personal and interactive way
 - Open the door to the larger group conversation by increasing personal engagement on the issue
- Examples of how the toolkit impacted thinking in an individual child and family serving agency and the Attorney General’s Office in Kansas.

Some Tips

- Integrate examples from other states, communities, or agencies to help facilitate thinking around the Framework. Examples are an important tool to encourage brainstorming and idea generation.
- Use the blank Framework that is provided and customize to your state, community, or agency needs. Petals should be added or changed as needed to reflect the partners who are or who should be involved in the process. This is an opportunity to identify partners who are “missing” from the table and to plan for involving those partners.
- The strategy matrix (PF table) focuses on the specific strategies employed to increase Protective Factors to support and strengthen families. To complete the matrix, consider current and strategies needed to embed the Protective Factors on multiple levels--state, community or agency. Many entities may already be doing activities that support the Protective Factors. Those activities need to be acknowledged and documented. Encourage participants to take the work to a deeper level and consider how the framework can guide work and address gaps in services. Include outcomes or measures that are used to track progress on these strategies, which will help to ensure appropriate and effective evaluation of the Protective Factors in your state, community, or agency.
- “Additional strategies” should help to fill gaps identified by the “current strategies” work. While this is a useful brainstorming exercise, it is helpful to determine specific plans for future strategies in terms of leadership and timeline.

How was the Toolkit Developed?

The toolkit was developed collaboratively and iteratively by CSSP staff, staff at the National Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Fund, the Kansas Strengthening Families Initiative and Pennsylvania’s Strengthening Family Initiative. Please use and adapt the materials as needed for your state—but send back your additions and edits to nilofer.ahsan@cssp.org. We look forward to continuing to grow this tool—and to sharing your contributions with the network.