Strengthening Families Learning Community

October 24, 2012
1:00 to 3:30 p.m.
Norwalk Public Library
12350 Imperial Highway
Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 868-0775

MEETING AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions
Trish Ploehn

II. **Presentation: Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors**
Factors that mitigate risk and enhance healthy development and well- being for youth
Charlyn Harper Browne, Senior Associate for CSSP and Director of Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood

III. Early Childhood Development and Well-Being Learning Community De-Briefing
Michele Sartell

IV. Emerging Issues/Opportunities
Kathy Malaske-Samu, Facilitator

- First Five LA
  - Preventing and Intervening in Homelessness
  - Other Initiatives
- Professional Development/Trainings
  - How can we support inclusion of the Strengthening Families/Protective and Promotive Factors as a common framework for County department and community-based organizations' curricula?

V. Next Steps/Follow-up

Next Meeting Scheduled for January 16, 2013

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Healthy Development and Well-Being for Youth

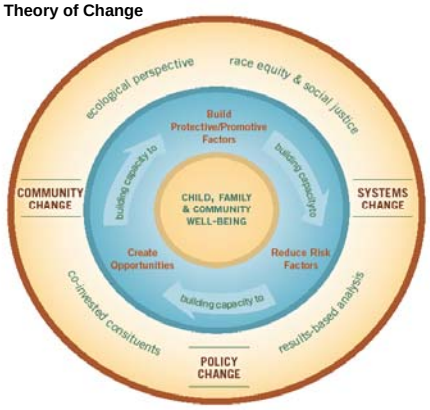
A Presentation for the

LA County Strengthening Families Learning Community

Norwalk, CA
October 24, 2012

Charlyn Harper Browne, PhD

CSSP's Theory of Change



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Can CSSP's Protective/Promotive Factors Framework Be Applied Across Multiple Contexts?

- Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Development
- Concrete Supports
- Developmental Competence

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Healthy Family Development and Well-Being

Healthy CHILD Development and Well-Being	Healthy YOUTH Development and Well-Being	Healthy COMMUNITY Development and Well-Being
Parental Resilience		
Social Connections		
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development		
Concrete Support in Times of Need		
Social and Emotional Competence in Children		

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The Task

Scan the lifespan development research:

- What does healthy development and well-being look like across the lifespan?
- How is healthy development and well-being achieved across the lifespan?

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Two Results

- Document

  "Scan and Compilation of Research Addressing Developmental Issues across the Lifespan (0 – 25), with Special Attention to Adolescent Development"

- Protective and Promotive Factors Framework for Youth Development

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YOUTHRIVE

PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

The goal of YOUTHRIVE is

To examine how foster youth can be supported in ways that advance healthy development and well-being and reduce the impact of negative life experiences.

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Premises

- Adolescence can be a difficult stage, particularly for youth who have experienced adversity.
- Much can be learned about helping at-risk youth by understanding what healthy development entails for all youth.
- When a state removes a child from the home, it has an obligation to meet the developmental needs of the youth.
- As adolescence is a unique developmental period, youth need developmentally appropriate service delivery approaches.

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Premises (cont.)

- Child welfare *alone* cannot address the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being of youth.
- Advancing healthy development and well-being for youth must focus on increasing both protective and promotive factors and reducing risk factors.
- Such an approach must be adopted by multiple youth serving systems.
- Research in positive youth development, resiliency, neuroscience and the impact of trauma on brain development can inform policy and practice.

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Adolescents in Foster Care

- Approximately 44 % of the children in care are over the age of 11
- 1 in 3 of the children who *enter* foster care are over 11 years old
- Last year, almost 30,000 youth exited foster care without a safe and permanent family
- Outcomes for Aging Out Youth:
  - 24.4% of adolescents who aged out did not have high school diploma or GED compared to 7.3% of general population
  - 52% were unemployed compared to 24.5% of the general population
  - Only 57% had health insurance compared to 78% of the general population
  - 30% of the young people reported homelessness for at least one day by age 24

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Federal Mandate on Safety, Permanency and Well-Being

Safety:

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect
- Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate

Permanency:

- Children have permanency and stability in their living arrangements
- Continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children

Well-Being:

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs

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Key Findings

- Adolescent Brain Development
- Trauma and Toxic Stress
- Resiliency
- Positive Youth Development
- Risk, Protective, and Promotive Factors

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PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

Risk Factors: conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that **increase the probability of poor outcomes**

Protective Factors: conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that **mitigate or eliminate risk**

Promotive Factors: conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that **actively enhance well-being**

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YOUTHRIVE

PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

Major Premise

Healthy development and well-being cannot be explained simply as mitigating, coping with, or eliminating risk.

Protective + Promotive Factors:

- Interdependent factors that both mitigate risk and contribute to healthy development and well-being for youth
- Increase the probability of positive, adaptive, and resilient outcomes, even in the face of risk and adversity.

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Risk, Protective, & Promotive Factors

- **30+ Risk Factors** that threaten healthy youth development
- **100+ Protective and Promotive Factors** that buffer risk and aid in healthy youth development
- **75+ Dynamic Outcomes** that are considered to be characteristic of healthy youth development and well-being

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Individual Dynamic Outcomes

- Physically and emotionally healthy
- Hopeful, optimistic, compassionate, curious, confident identity
- Supportive family and social networks
- Ability to form and sustain caring, committed relationships
- Success in school and workplace
- Service to community or society

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Risk Factors

- Psychological stressors
- Inadequate/negative relationships with family members, adults outside family, or peers
- Insufficient or inadequate opportunities for positive growth and development
- Unsafe, unstable, inequitable environments

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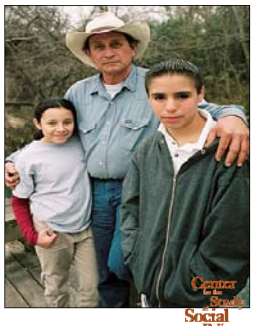
- Personal Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Youth Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social, Emotional, Cognitive, Moral, Behavioral Competence



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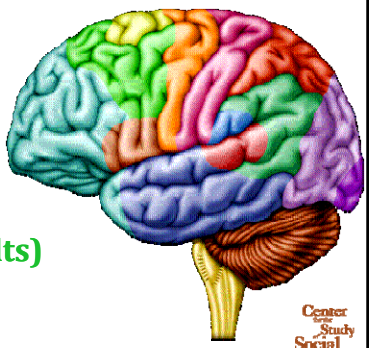
Youth Protective/Promotive Factors

Knowledge of Youth Development

(Youth & Adults)



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Knowledge of Youth Development

Youth and adults have accurate information:

- adolescent biopsychosocial development with particular attention to brain development
- ways to promote healthy development
- trauma and toxic stress
- preventing or mitigating negative outcomes
- developmentally appropriate ways of connecting with you

- **Recognize that all youth have strengths**

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Understanding Development

- Development involves several processes: biological, psychological, cognitive, social

- Development influenced by total ecology/ life situation in multiple contexts:
  - * family
  - * school
  - * cultural
  - * gender
  - * neighborhood
  - * socioeconomic status
  - * sociopolitical
  - * cohort

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Understanding Development (cont.)

- The person within the context; how person "makes meaning" out of their experiences

- The resources a person needs to develop successfully vary by age/stage

- Critical life events: turning points in lifespan

- The study of development must include data and theories from numerous academic fields

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Developmental Neuroscience

A field that examines:

- Brain development across the lifespan
- Impact of environmental factors (e.g., toxic stress/trauma) on neurodevelopmental processes, physical health, and mental health

Key Understandings in Developmental Neuroscience

- Much evidence points to the central importance of prenatal and early postnatal (birth-3) brain development
- Early experiences affect the quality of brain architecture
- Brain development is life-long
- Adolescence is a time of profound change in brain structure and function

Adolescent Brain Development

- Increased **prefrontal cortex** maturation begins *gradually* and continues into adulthood
- Functions of the prefrontal cortex:
  - impulse control
  - setting priorities, organizing, and planning
  - decision making
  - sensitivity to feedback
  - self-control, self-regulation
  - initiating appropriate behavior
  - inhibiting inappropriate behavior

- *Rapid* changes in limbic system, related to
  - emotionality and mood state
  - reward/pleasure seeking
  - processing social information
- Gap in timing of gradual prefrontal cortex maturation and more rapidly developing limbic system
- Positive experiences with and guidance from caring adults and institutions are essential in building complex adaptive brains

Youth Protective/Promotive Factors

Personal Resilience

Stressors & Stress

Stressor: real or perceived pressure; event or experience that causes stress

- Typical events and life changes
- Unexpected events
- Individual factors
- Social factors
- Community, societal, environmental conditions

Stress: feeling overwhelmed by an event or experience

Youth & Stress

How individuals respond to stressors is much more important in determining their outcomes than the stressor itself.

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Youth & Stress

- The extent to which stressful events have lasting adverse effects is determined by:
  - youth's response to the stressor
  - past experiences
  - availability of a supportive adult
- A youth's ability to cope with stress in the early years has consequences for physical and mental health throughout life.

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Personal Resilience

- **Resilience:** the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma.
- Not an "all or nothing" characteristic
- Does not always solve problems, remove adversity, or undo trauma

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Personal Resilience

- **Youth Who Demonstrate Resilience:** call forth their inner strength to positively meet challenges, manage adversities, heal the effects of trauma, and thrive given their unique characteristics and circumstances.

Facilitated by:

- a trusting relationship with a caring and competent adult who provides positive guidance and promotes high expectations.

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Impact of Personal Resilience

- Positive identity, positive self-concept
- Self-worth
- Self-compassion
- Sense of competence and self-efficacy
- Sense of personal responsibility
- Autonomy
- Timely help-seeking
- Belief in one's ability to influence the environment positively
- Self-advocacy
- Healthy coping

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Trauma and Toxic Stress

- Strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity without adequate adult support
  - violence and exposure to violence
  - abuse, neglect, abandonment
  - accumulated burdens of economic hardship
  - betrayal of a trusted person or institution
- Disrupts brain development
- May induce hypersensitivity to stressors
- Increase risk for psychopathology and physical illness

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Complex Trauma

"The dual problem of exposure to multiple traumatic events and the impact of this exposure on immediate and long-term development. For young adults in foster care, traumatic events might include poverty, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, separation from and loss of family, or multiple moves and relationship disruptions."

Ambiguous Loss

"A loss in which there is no verification of death, no certainty that the person will come back, or no assurance that the person will return to the way she or he used to be. This form of loss lacks clear boundaries and has no clear ending. There are often no culturally or societally recognized rituals for grieving or even for acknowledging the loss."

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. (2011). *The Adolescent Brain: New Research and Its Implications for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care*. St. Louis, Missouri.

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Impact of Trauma and Toxic Stress

- Problems with trust, autonomy, initiative
- Difficulty with independence, intimacy, and self-care
- Patterns of intense, unstable relationships and interactions
- Interferes with cognitive development
- Difficulty interpreting and identifying emotional responses

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Youth & Resilience

- Youth need some experience in managing stressful situations
- The process that enables youth to thrive even in the face of adversity
- Not an invulnerability to stress and adversity
- The promotion of resilience in youth related to
  - changing attitudes of adults in their lives
  - various internal characteristics
  - various external characteristics of families, schools, and communities
  - deliberate policies, practices, and interventions (e.g., trauma-informed care)

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Youth Protective/Promotive Factors

Social Connections

- The availability and quality of social connections are important considerations in the lives of youth.

Youths' Social Connections

- Physically and emotionally safe, stable and supportive environments including equitable schools, communities and social institutions
- Healthy, supportive, caring relationships with family and other adults who provide positive advice; promote high expectations; and set developmentally appropriate limits, rules and monitoring
- Healthy, supportive, caring relationships with peers and intimate partners
- Opportunities for constructive engagement in family, school, community and social institutions

Benefits

- **Emotional support**
  (e.g., affirming skills)
- **Informational support**
  (e.g., explaining puberal changes)
- **Instrumental support**
  (e.g., providing transportation)
- ***Spiritual support***
  (e.g., providing hope and encouragement)

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High Levels of Social Support

Associated with:

- Feelings of Security/Connectedness
- Self-Confidence
- Sense of Purpose
- Future Orientation
- Timely Help-Seeking
- Lower levels of anger, anxiety, and depression
- Buffering youth from stress

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Social Isolation & Loneliness

Associated with:

- Disengaged youth
- Depression
- Increased likelihood of psychopathology/ sociopathy
- Antisocial activities

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Two Essential Elements

- Opportunities to create and strengthen sustainable, positive social connections
- Experiences that foster a sense of connectedness between the youth and *at least one other healthy adult* so that meaningful discourse may occur

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Youth Protective/Promotive Factors

Tutoring

Youth Programs

Counseling

Legal Services

Concrete Support in Times of Need

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Provision of Concrete Support

Involves:

- Understanding a youth's needs
- Recognizing their own personal resources for meeting needs
- Knowing where and how to access services and goods
- Providing timely and relevant assistance
- Being treated with dignity

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Trauma-Informed Care

- Recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in a person's life
- Paradigm shift from:

  "What's wrong with you?"
  to
  "What has happened to you?"

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Using a Positive Youth Development Approach

- Youth must be understood in their own terms
- All youth have strengths
- Although challenges and adversities exist, youth development is more than overcoming deficits and risk
- Youth can overcome adversity and thrive, but they must have protective factors embedded in social institutions

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Youths' Concrete Support

- Opportunities for additional skill building (e.g., tutoring, counseling)
- Crisis assistance (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, health, housing, workforce development, legal, recreation, respite)
- Psychoeducational assistance (e.g., cognitive, behavioral and academic assessment and services)

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Youth Protective/Promotive Factors

Social, Emotional, Behavioral, Intellectual, and Moral Competence in Youth

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Youths' Developmental Competencies

Preparation for developmental transitions influenced by:

- Earlier developmental histories
- Nature of current relationships and contexts

To navigate developmental transitions, youth need:

- Nurturing adult support
- Wholesome experiences

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Essential Developmental Competencies

- **Executive functioning**
  - Cognitive flexibility
  - Future orientation
  - Cognitive self-regulation
  - Emotional self-regulation
  - Behavioral self-regulation
  - Planning
  - Working memory

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Developmental Competencies (cont.)

- **Sense of Self**
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-concept
  - Self-esteem
  - Self-efficacy
  - Self-improvement and mastery
- Personal Agency
- Forming and sustaining healthy personal relationships

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Developmental Competencies (cont.)

- Displaying a sense of right and wrong
- Exploring spirituality
- Engaging in prosocial behaviors
- Engaging in positive risk taking
- Avoiding antisocial, health-threatening, and future-jeopardizing behaviors
- Consuming nutritious food and exercising within ones means

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Developmental Competencies (cont.)

- Building critical thinking, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills
- Building communication skills
- Demonstrating character strengths
- Experiencing positive emotions
- Deepening cultural knowledge
- Learning essential life skills

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We believe the YOUTHRIVE framework

Will contribute to an understanding of how all youth, in general, and foster youth, in particular, can be supported in ways that advance healthy development and well-being and reduce the impact of negative life experiences.

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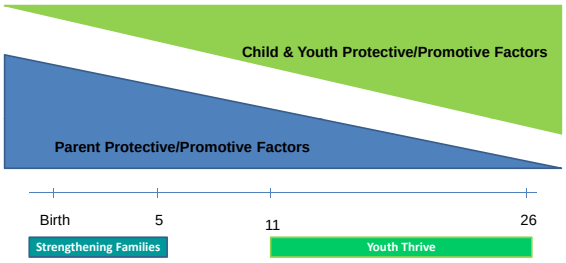
Applying a Protective/Promotive Factors Frame Across Development



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Healthy Family Development and Well-Being

Healthy CHILD Development and Well-Being	Healthy YOUTH Development and Well-Being	(To be determined) Healthy COMMUNITY Development and Well-Being
Parental Resilience	Personal Resilience	
Social Connections	Social Connections	
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	Knowledge of Youth Development	
Concrete Support in Times of Need	Concrete Support in Times of Need	
Social and Emotional Competence in Children	Social and Emotional Competence in Children	

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Some Initial Recommendations

Source: Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. (2011). *The Adolescent Brain: New Research and Its Implications for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care.* St. Louis, MO.

- Take a positive youth development approach to all opportunities for young people in foster care.
- Provide "interdependent" living services that connect young people with family and caring adults.
- Engage young people in planning and making decisions.
- Be trauma-informed to promote healing and emotional security.
- Promote community partnerships that create a web of opportunities for youth and their families that enhance healthy development and well-being.

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PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

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