

## **Strengthening Families 7-17**

### **The Situation**

Not only do all kinds of healthy families provide children and adults security and stability, family members also model satisfying relationships that can lead to greater emotional stability and resilience in times of adversity. Family units and individual family members establish long-term as well as occasional relationships with friends, colleagues, care-providers, organizations, and public networks each and every day. These relationships can be positive and often support well-being for everyone involved. However, relationships – even among family members and friends — can be negative, strained and traumatic. For nearly 30 years, researchers at the CDC have linked relationship trauma during ages 0 to 18 to poor health and social outcomes in adulthood. Those adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are often linked to social and economic determinants. Determinants such as poverty, poor housing, and limited education, lack of job skills, toxic physical environment, family displacements, discrimination and bias, and weak social connections relate to family disruption and reduced quality-of-life. Consequently, it becomes critical to prevent traumatic relationships from forming by strengthening skills and opportunities that support healthy relationships. Family unit relationship strength, comprised of six characteristics, can be built to strengthen families. Individuals also can contribute to family strength by helping others develop resilience across the lifespan. For example, we know that the first three years of life play an essential role in children's brain development. We know that positive parenting, quality child care and early education can greatly enhance children's lives and their long-term health and resilience. When children live in nurturing environments, they develop toward success in school, toward building friendships, and toward their futures as adults fulfilling roles in their communities. We see some improvements in the indicators of relationship health among Kansas families.

Evaluation Tool - coming soon

### **Short-Term (Knowledge)**

Family members improve their awareness and knowledge of the six qualities of strong families.

Couples improve their awareness and knowledge about the importance of relationships that promote resilience, healthful behaviors, and well-being.

Parents of school-age and adolescent children improve their awareness and knowledge, about the importance of: positive parent-child interaction; consistent, cohesive communication; adaptability and flexibility in parent practices; and effective parental monitoring.

Community partners begin to increase their awareness and knowledge of healthy relationships and well-being; how to build strong families.

### Indicators

- ~ Family members improve their awareness and knowledge of the six qualities of strong families.
- ~ Couples support relationships that promote resilience, healthful behaviors, and well-being.
- ~ Parents of school-age and adolescent children support positive parent-child interaction; consistent, cohesive communication; adaptability and flexibility in parent practices; and effective parental monitoring.
- ~ Community partners support healthful relationships and well-being to build strong families.

## **Medium-Term (Behavior)**

Family members regularly contribute to each other's well-being; relationship satisfaction; identity and family strengths; and development of resilience skills.

Couples regularly commit to a positive relationship; develop skills to manage stress and conflict; and contribute to the other's well-being.

Parents/Caregivers of school-aged adolescent children regularly practice positive parent-child interaction; clear and consistent communication, adaptable/flexible parenting practices; and effective parental monitoring.

Community partners regularly offer effective child, youth, and family programs; support healthy relationships and well-being

### Indicators

- ~ Family members regularly contribute to each other's well-being; relationship satisfaction; identity and family strengths; and development of resilience skills.
- ~ Couples regularly commit to a positive relationship; develop skills to manage stress and conflict; and contribute to the other's well-being.
- ~ Parents/Caregivers of school-aged adolescent children regularly practice positive parent-child interaction; clear and consistent communication, adaptable/flexible parenting practices; and effective parental monitoring.
- ~ Community partners regularly offer effective child, youth, and family programs; support healthy relationships and well-being.

## **Long-Term (Change in Condition)**

All individuals and families experience safe, stable and positive relationships where they live, learn, work and play. Those relationships lead to resilience, healthy development and well-being across the lifespan.

### Indicators

- ~ Parents/caregivers employ parenting practices that support the positive growth and development of children in the early years.
- ~ All people live in healthful, supportive, and nurturing relationships.

## **Public Value**

By implementing the Strengthening Families program it will contribute to environments where safe, stable and positive relationships flourish.

## Outputs

11 session series

Parents and their children (7-17) are targeted, but can do with just parents

The family skills training programs effectively addresses two of the largest predictors of juvenile delinquency

parenting style and family conflict while also training youth in family skills

pro-social behaviors and refusal skills.

SFP proves to reduce significantly problem behaviors, delinquency, and alcohol and drug abuse in children, and improves social competencies and school performance.