

Motivation Monday, April 27, 2020

We All Have a Part in Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parental Resilience

*“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”
- Nelson Mandela*

A Parent’s Definition of Concrete Supports, Adapted from the [PA Strengthening Families Website](#)

To acknowledge the importance of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Family Support Team is continuing to work to increase awareness and understanding of the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework through **Motivation Mondays!** This is important because when these five Protective Factors are present and robust in families, children are safe and families thrive.

This week, the Family Support Team is focusing on the Strengthening Families Protective Factor: Parental Resilience.

Why Is This Protective Factor Important?

Bouncing back. Getting up when you fall down. Staying strong when things are tough. These are all ways we have probably heard resilience defined. Building resilience is particularly important for caregivers because we know that raising children is a joy-filled but stressful job. Resilient caregivers not only bounce back from life challenges, but also those faced through parenting like soothing a colicky baby, handling temper tantrums, and navigating the tween and teen years. Caregivers also bounce forward from difficulties, applying what they learned from one challenge to the next one that comes their way. This builds their self-efficacy and confidence as caregivers.

How This Ties to Child Abuse Prevention & How to Talk About This

When caregivers have resilience, they are able to cope with stressors that come their way. They know how and when to dedicate time to take care of themselves. They know when it is time to count to 10, take a breather, and use positive parenting techniques to face the toughest challenges from their children instead of resorting to harsh punishment. And most importantly, resilient caregivers can buffer their children from stress and continue to providing a loving and nurturing environment – even when times are difficult.

Resources for This Protective Factor

One of the best ways family support professionals can help parents to build resilience is to offer ways to reduce stress and build coping strategies. 9

- Sesame Street has created [A Moment to Yourself](#) a PSA featuring Elmo’s dad letting caregivers know that they are doing great in this new normal and it’s ok to take time for themselves. Sesame Street also has great tips for caregivers on their [Caring for Each Other](#) webpage, including a [Self Care for Parents](#) tip sheet.
- The Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board’s website for caregivers [Five for Families](#) has excellent resources for [Building Inner Strength](#) for caregivers.
- Florida State University’s Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy (the developers of the Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum) is hosting a webinar called [Strengthening Resiliency](#) to help home visitors

support families to build this protective factor. They also have a great page of resources to [support families during COVID-19](#).

- Concerns about delays with their child's development can be stressful for families. Connecting with Early Intervention (EI) provides much needed supports. EI is still here for families during COVID-19! Check out the attached flyer to learn more about EI services during COVID-19 and as always – stay connected through their [portal](#).
- It's important for dads to be resilient too! Check out this brief on [Father Involvement and the Five Protective Factors](#) from the National Fatherhood Initiative.
- Check out these [Action Sheets](#) from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). One suggestion from this resource: to help caregivers reflect on resilience, you could ask "How are you able to meet your children's needs when you are stressed?"

Our Communities' Response:

- The [Berks Community Action Program Family Center](#) is helping families manage their stress through a journaling project. Caregivers received a journal to write down their feelings and concerns. A virtual gathering will happen soon to support parents in learning new ways that journaling can promote emotional and mental well-being.
- [Children's Aid Society in Clearfield County](#) is helping parents build resilience and providing concrete supports by offering a Group Connection on safe handwashing and making their own cleaning products and hand sanitizer. They provided families with the materials in advance and shared books about handwashing. They also had masks made for all their families and are giving them out with a printable social story ([We Wear Masks by Mike McGovern](#)) and information about safe mask wearing. Interested in sharing something positive from your community? Please send a message to your designated Family Support Consultant or Technical Assistance Specialist!

Social Media

Laughter builds resilience! Share some [Dad Jokes](#) from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse on your social media platforms and use #DadJokesRule. While on the website, check out their [DadTalk](#) blog for ideas for father-child activities while staying at home and the [Programs tab](#) for myriad of resources to make your program father-friendly!

Special Thanks

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning would like to thank Early Intervention Technical Assistance and the Center for Schools and Communities for their support in this messaging.

Resources

For Family Support Programs all resources provided in this email will be posted the next day to: <http://www.pa-home-visiting.org/covid-19/> under the appropriate Protective Factor heading. Please look for Parental Resilience in the menu on the right hand side of the page.

Please note that ChildLine is available 24/7 to anyone wishing to report child abuse and general child well-being concerns at **1-800-932-0313** and at www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov. ChildLine response will not change because staff are teleworking from their homes.