

Transcript of Promoting Protective Factors with Youth and Families

Amy Moritz:

Good morning! My name is Amy Moritz youth development coordinator with Pennsylvania's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program at the Center for Schools and Communities. I will be your moderator for today's session. Rijelle Kraft who is a family support technical assistance coordinator here at the center will be our presenter for today. It's my pleasure to welcome you to the promoting protective factors in youth and families webinar. It's now my pleasure to welcome Rijelle Kraft. Rijelle serves as the family support technical assistance coordinator at the Center for Schools and Communities specifically working with children's trust fund.

She provides technical assistance and support for grantees working to prevent child abuse as well as training and professional development in the area of strength-based family support practices. She is certified in the standards of quality for family strengthening and support from the National Network of Family Support and Strengthening Networks. She is also a certified trainer for bringing the protective factors framework to life in your work, a seven course series developed by the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds. She holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Mansfield University, a Master's degree in social justice from the School for International Training and a Master's degree in nonprofit management from Eastern University. At this point, I'd like to turn the microphone over to Rijelle.

Rijelle Kraft:

Okay, good morning everyone! I'm happy you were able to join us today. So we're going to go here and start our slides so you can see here we are looking at promoting protective factors with youth and families today. What I will tell you is that we're going to be speaking about two separate but complementary frameworks known as the strengthening families protective factors framework and the youth thrive framework. We're going to get into some specifics in just a second. First, I'd like to know how many of you have heard of the protective factors framework? There we go.

So we have a polling question that's going to be pulled up here. We want to know how familiar are you with the strengthening families protective factors framework. So go ahead and choose your answer there and we'll see how that's coming in. So it's look like you as people have voted and there are results here that are going to come up in just a second. It looks like most people have not heard of the protective factors framework, but you do have some that have may be heard of it, some that don't know about it at all.

Okay, so we're going to go ahead and move on to our next thing. It looks like we have a video coming up here. We are going to talk more about those frameworks today. So if you don't have a lot of information about them, that is okay because we're going to talk more about them today. Before we get started with that, we're going to watch a video. The good news about this video is that there is no ... the

only audio is music. So you'll just be reading something on the screen. So even if you lose your audio little bit ... related to our work with youth and families.

If you want to go ahead and type any reactions that you have or how you think it might relate to youth and families working with youth and families, you can go ahead and type those into the question box now.

So not a lot of responses but you're just getting warmed up. So what I will say is some things that I thought about when watching this video are a couple of things. First, you can tell that the husband in the video actually ... here we go. We have some answers coming in. So let me read some of these. So we have a couple of people who were not able to see the video. We're having some technical difficulties that we typically don't have this morning. So we're working on those, but one ... Barb here said that sometimes we only see the problems our kids are experiencing and we don't see the root of the issue. That's an excellent response Barb.

So I think since we're having so much trouble with this video and some audio, I think what we'll do is we'll make sure to send out a link to it so that you can view it. Just to give you an idea of what the video said was that ... so there's a new couple. They move into the neighborhood and the wife and the husband while they're eating breakfast every morning, they're watching their neighbor go ahead and hang out her laundry for the day. When she hangs out the laundry, then the wife says, "Oh, wow, the laundry is really dirty." She says this a couple of times. Then one morning she wakes up and she says, "Wow, look the laundry is clean. Someone must have taught her how to do laundry." The husband responds, "Well, actually I got up early this morning and washed our windows."

So you can imagine some of the things that might come out of that, some of the considerations that we might bring from that video are as Barb said that sometimes we can't always see the problems our kids are experiencing. It also looks like Bianca mentioned that hidden bias can affect our outlook on circumstances of families and youth we serve. The last part of that video says as it is with life, sometimes we have to think about the lens through which we're viewing people and that can have an effect on how we look at them.

So how does that relate? What does that look like for strengthening families and for youth thrive? Well, what it relates to is a couple of things. The strengthening families protective factors framework really pushes us as well as youth thrive to think about families and the youth that we work with from a strength-based perspective. We are often asked to consider risk factors. These approaches really ask us to think about families and youth from a strength-based perspective.

Bianca, you brought up that sometimes we're quick to judge. We can have hidden biases. It's easier sometimes to find the negative in things than it is to find the positive. Sometimes another thing, one of the interesting things in this video and I apologize for those of you who weren't able to see it, another thing that the wife says is maybe somebody should tell what kind of laundry soap to use.

Sometimes as people who support families and youth, we're quick to try and solve problems or find the negative things or sweep in with a solution when in reality a lot of families and youth have strength that they can rely on to get through challenging times.

So what we'll do from here on out is we're going to talk a little bit about these two frameworks. Now, again, these frameworks are complementary not competing frameworks. So we are ... go here to our next slide. So what we're looking at now are the four big ideas behind strengthening families. We're just going to back up one. There we go.

So the four big ideas behind strengthening families. Now this is the protective factors framework that's related to parents and to families in general. Now this approach really began in 2001 with a Center for the Study of Social Policy was trying to figure out what is the recipe, what are the things that need to be present for families to be strong and children to stay safe. This work really came out of a desire to come up with effective child abuse and neglect prevention models. Rather than look at what are the risks for child abuse and neglect to occur in a family, the Center for the study of social policy said, "You know what? We want to see what's already there, what is already strong."

So they came up ... they looked at the research and they came up with these five protective factors. Now this idea about protective and promoted factors and not just reducing risk is centered around the idea that there are characteristics that buffer, that protect from toxic stress. So yes there are risk factors in a family. There are stressors. That's life but there are things that can be present that help to buffer children and families from that stress. A promotive factor is something that actively promotes well-being. It doesn't just protect or buffer, it also actively promotes well-being.

So another idea behind strengthening families is that this really is an approach. It's not a model. It's not a program or curriculum and youth thrive is the exact same way. These are things that we can do alongside of whatever program or curriculum we're running because they are in another program. They're not another check to check off on your checklist. It's really about the way we approach parents and the way we approach young people.

It's also about a changed relationship with parents and it's about a changed relationship with youth too. What are the things that we have to do to create a strength-based relationship? How can we look at parents and families as partners? Rather as extensions of their children. When you work with youth, sometimes you're really focused on what the kids are doing, but we know that kids don't grow up in a vacuum. They grow up in families. So how can we have a strength-based relationship with parents?

Then the point here is that this framework, the strengthening families protective factors framework, was really looked at within birth through age eight. It's aligned with what's going on developmentally with children birth through age eight.

You're going to see in a second the youth thrive framework is complementary in the sense that it focuses on older youth. Again, these things work together. We have a nice graphic here in a couple slides that will show that.

So I just want to show you one more thing about the strengthening families framework. So you mention, you can see here over on ... I'm circling it with my mouse. What we're looking for when this framework is in place, the outcomes that we're looking for are strengthened families, optimal child development and a reduced likelihood of child abuse and neglect. We're going to get there because families are going to have these five ingredients in this recipe for strong families, these five ingredients, these protective factors.

How do families build those protective factors? Well we create environments either through our programs or the actions that individual workers take that create environments where parents can build these five protective factors. Then we also know that there are outside forces on our programs and our workers that create either a conducive environment for families to build these protective factors or make it a little bit more difficult. So you can see that some of these core functions are related to sort of bigger pieces. What are the community? How does the community view families? How do policies and practices for example from the state help to support building protective factors in families?

So I wanted to show you this logic model because it does kind of put everything in a nutshell. So I've been saying that these are complementary frameworks and in fact they are. This graphic is wonderful to show just how complementary they are. You'll see that blue arrow that's going around the top is the strengthening families protective factors framework, but the thing is we know that as children get older and become young adolescents and become young adults, they take on a greater role in their own development.

So it's important for us to address not only parents who are a child's first and most influential teacher but then we also have to recognize that kids are making decisions, that youth are making decisions about their end development. So the Center for the Study of Social Policy said, "What are the things that keep young people strong and safe?" Remember, the strengthening families protective factors were about what are the pieces in families that keep families strong and children safe.

Now youth thrive is saying, "What are the ingredients in the recipe for safe healthy resilient youth?" So these two frameworks work together. I said a little bit ago that youth did not develop in a vacuum. Their parents are important too. Now many of you are working in youth development programs, in afterschool programs and there's a lot of focus on the youth that you're working with and rightly so. You also might have some initiatives and some focus on supporting the parents that are a part of your program as well.

One of the interesting places and for how many of you that this might apply to so I won't focus on it a lot today, but one of the interesting things to think about with

youth thrive and the strengthening families protective factors framework are teen parents. Teen parents are dealing with a lot of competing demand. They're learning how to be a parent. They're learning who they are as a person. They're going through their own personal development as they are working to be a good parent too. So this can be kind of an interesting two frameworks to look at that intersection for teen parents.

What I will say about youth thrive and I'm going to go ahead and go on to the next slide here, is that youth thrive like the strengthening families protective factors framework sort of started with a focus. So for strengthening families, the focus was on what will keep families safe, thinking about a child abuse and neglect perspective. For Youth Thrive, that focus was on child welfare. Now the thing about these frameworks is they've expanded and grown. We know that those five protective factors for families and the five protective factors for youth are important for any family or any young person to have. This research did start in working with children that were involved in child welfare.

So some ideas behind Youth Thrive, some foundational ideas. So we've been talking about a strength-based perspective starting with the video that we had and also just thinking about how we can work from a strength-based perspective with parents and with youth. The idea for Youth Thrive is that all youth possess strengths. They all have the ability to use their strengths and these strengths help them to deal with adversity and stress, which is the next point.

A lot of the ideas surrounding Youth Thrive are focused on the biology of stress. How does stress affect young people? How do they learn how to deal with it? Many of you have probably heard about three types of stress. There's positive stress so those are the things like for example running for school office. That can be a stressful situation but it's something that we can learn from. It might be that you step outside of your box a bit. I did this when I was in high school. I ran for school secretary and that was definitely stepping outside of my box. That was a positive stress for me. I learned from it.

There's also tolerable stress which is there's a biological and emotional response to it, but it's something that you can get through. An example of this might be when you lose a loved one. That can be a very stressful time. It can be a negative thing, but it's again something that can be learned from and you can tolerate it. It's tolerable stress. Then there's toxic stress which many of you have probably been to webinars about trauma and toxic stress. This is a stress that gets too difficult for us to handle and for young people to handle. We want to look at how does the stress affect a young person and how can we support them through it.

The next point about resilience theory relates exactly to that. The idea of resilience ... the most important thing to remember about resilience is it's not innate. In the very early stages of resilience research, folks really thought that you were either resilient or you weren't. What we know now is that learning to be resilient, learning how to handle stress, how to deal with adversity in a positive

way, we know that that's something that can be learned. We know that's something that develops over time. It's a process. This Youth Thrive framework is based in the idea that youth can develop resilience.

Positive youth development perspective. Many of you have probably heard about several of the approaches that the Youth Thrive framework pulls from. They include the five C's approach if you're familiar with that. That's the confidence, connection, character, caring and compassion and contribution. The six C. There's also the 40 developmental assets approach which many people are familiar with. That looks on from the search Institute, that looks at the internal and external developmental assets that are building blocks for healthy youth development.

Then there's also the circle of courage which is grown out of the cultural wisdom of Native American and First Nations people. The idea that is to be emotionally healthy. That youth need a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. So Youth Thrive has borrowed from these frameworks as they've developed the five protective factors that they feel are important for youth.

A big piece here also that is a part of positive youth development is that although we often focus on "at risk youth" and that there are real risks associated with some youths and the environments that they live in, that these protective factors, these ingredients are the recipe for a healthy young person regardless of what their situation is in life. It applies to all youth. In terms of the strengthening families protective factors, it applies to all families.

So we're going to go ahead and ... I did talk about these other two a little bit, but let me just touch on them quickly. So we talked about risk protective and promotive factors already. Another thing to think about is this framework really focuses on well-being. Traditionally in child welfare and I mentioned earlier that this approach is rooted in child welfare. Traditionally, child welfare services have placed a lot of emphasis on safety and permanency but the three pieces of child welfare are safety, permanency and well-being. So one of the focus of the people who were developing Youth Thrive was to make sure that well-being was an important aspect of it. It focuses on healthy adolescent development and well-being for all youth with a particular attention on youth that might be receiving services.

So we're going to get into it here. The first thing we're going to look at are the five protective factors. So you can see there are five ... each of the frameworks has five protective factors with the strengthening families ones on the left, the Youth Thrive ones on the right. Now you might mention these look a lot like and they are. When they were looking at research, when the Center for Social Policy was looking at research, they were surprised and excited to see that some of the ingredients for health and adolescence were similar to the health and families and in parents.

Now you'll notice though that although they're very similar, what they look like, how they represent themselves in the folks you're serving and how we can create environments where parents and families can build these protective factors, could differ slightly based on the fact that we're talking about adults and families in the strengthening families approach and we're talking about young people in the youth thrive part.

So we're going to take a look at each of the protective factors. The first question I have for you and I'd like you to answer in the question box, how would you describe resilience? So while we're waiting for some questions to go in, I just want to point out the way the rest of the presentation is going to work. You're going to notice that we're going to talk about each protective factor. We're going to talk about it from a strengthening families perspective, then we're going to talk about it from a Youth Thrive perspective and then we're going to talk about ways that we might build this protective factor, the way we create an environment where families or youth can build this protective factor.

So we're going to start here with resilience. I'm looking to see if we have any answers coming in about how you would describe resilience. So I see one here. Keep bettering oneself despite the obstacles. That's a great way to describe resilience. Overcoming difficult situations, the ability to bounce back from challenges, the ability to adjust. Great! These are good answers. So those are all really great ways to describe resilience. I love that, the willingness to pursue your dreams at all costs.

So let's look a little bit more at resilience and what this means for families and what it means for youth. So really, resilience is about managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma. In fact, one researcher, Dr. Mark Katz summarized resilience as strength in the face of adversity and that's a good easy way to remember what resilience is. A few of you said bouncing back which is a great way to describe resilience, but it's also about bouncing forward. It's about taking the lessons that you learn from difficult situations and applying them to the next difficult situation that happens in your life.

So for parents, we think about resilience in two ways. We think about resilience to general life stress. So what does that look like? Well that looks like hope and optimism, self-confidence, having and using problem solving skills, knowing how to take care of yourself and being willing to ask for help. Not all of us are great at that. Part of being resilient is knowing what your limits are and being willing to ask for help. Being able to manage a negative emotion and then there's this other aspect of resilience when it comes to parents which is a resilience to parenting stress.

So I'm sure many of you on the webinar today are parents and as you know parenting can be a stressful job. One of the ways the parents show resilience is to not allow stress to interfere with their nurturing. So when things get tough for a parent or a family, the parents are still able to buffer their children from the toxic

stress that could come from that situation. The other thing is that you're positive about being a parent. This might not be every day or 24/7 but knowing how wonderful and the joy that comes with being parent and having a child is really important.

So why we talk about parental resilience? I mentioned earlier about that this is a child abuse and neglect prevention strategy. Well the thing is here's what we know. We know that increased stress can, not always, but can lead to an increased likelihood of child maltreatment. So one of the things that's important for parents to learn in terms of resilience is how can they be patient, how can they learn how to deal with stressful situations, what are the coping mechanisms that they can have. We know that more resilient parents are more patient parents and more patient parents are less likely to engage in behaviors that might be harmful to their child.

So now we looked at resilience in terms of parents and families. So let's take a look at what this means for young people. The most important thing here is that first bullet. How youth respond to stressors is much more important than the stressors themselves and determining positive outcomes. I'm sure all of you have worked with some children who have experienced some very difficult situations. Sometimes regardless of this difficult situations, those kiddos are able to have a positive outlook to move through things, to learn from it, to move through with grace, that's resilience. Being able to do that is resilience.

So we know that when youth have resilience, they're able to face challenges competently. They can make productive decisions. They're not making snap judgments although we'll learn a little bit later that taking risks is part of being a young person. They're also able to think about their actions and be held accountable for them. They can influence their development and well-being in a positive direction so they're making good decisions that are helping them develop in a positive way.

So some of the things that can foster youth resilience are things like developing a relationship with a kind, caring, consistent adult. When a young person sees an adult being resilient, they learn the skills that help them to be resilient. Other things that help to build resilience are giving youth the opportunity to have voice and choice in programming, because one of the pieces of resilience and we talk about this with parents too is that people who have a voice and what's happening, who have a say in what's happening feel that their opinion and what they do is valued. If you feel valued, you're more likely to have confidence. You're more likely to build resilience.

So I want to take you to the next slide here and talk about some of the ways that we can build resilience. Now these blocks on the screen, I really love them and I do want to make sure that I give credit to the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds for coming up with this graphic because I just adore it. These we call the building blocks of resilience. Now the thing about these building blocks is that they aren't all the same for everyone. You might use ... in

a situation where you have to be resilient, you might use some of these building blocks. You might not use any of them. You might use different ones. A certain situation might bring out your communication skills for example more so than your belief system.

The point is that when we help families and children build these building blocks, they're more likely to be resilient. Does anyone have any questions about resilience or these resilience blocks? I don't see any questions right now so we're going to go ahead and move on since we have a little less time since our technical difficulties.

So we're moving on to our next protective factor. So I want you to close your eyes for a second. Take a minute and picture some of your closest connections. Picture their faces in your mind. Think about the kinds of support that they give you and think about how each contributes to your well-being. Now I'm not going to ask you to share that with us but I just want you to keep that in mind and we're going to refer back to it in a little bit. So again, what kind of support do they give you and how does each contribute to your well-being?

Now that you've had some time to think about that, keep those folks in mind. We'll talk about social connections related to parents. So the bottom line here is that everyone including parents needs friends. Everyone needs a network of friends, colleagues, family and professionals who provide a wide variety of support and companionship along the way to being a great parent. It's important that these relationships are positive and that there are for example multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others.

So for a parent, this might look like having friends whose children are around the same age or having someone that you can drop your children off with so you can take a night off. Another thing about social connections is that within these connections that the parents feel respected and appreciated. Also there's an element of being able to accept help from others and give help to others. So parents build social connections when they're able to ask for help when they need it but also when they're able to give back to their communities.

Then finally, having social connections means developing skills that they can establish and maintain positive connections, because again, it's not necessarily about the quantity of social connections in your life, it's more about the quality. So keep remembering the social connections that you pictured.

So what about social connections for youth? The bottom line is that young people need to feel connected. People in institutions help youth increase their knowledge and develop their skills and have a sense of belonging and to find meaning in their lives. So when they feel connected, they feel loved, wanted and valued and they have people who care about them as individuals right now as well as care about what happens to them in the future. It is really important that young people have peer relationships and adult relationships. As kids get older, their parents don't become less important, but they might take on a different role.

It may be important for young people to have relationships with other adults that are positive.

It is incredibly important again to think about quality. Now any of you who has worked with young people and I always use the example of my niece who is now 19. When she was younger, a lot of for her was how many connections she had on Facebook, how big her friend circle was, and we would have a lot of conversations about who are those people to you really, what kind of support are they giving you. Sometimes it's better to have a few really close friends and a few people who you can rely on than having a lot of friends. That's something that's probably going to come up and has come up in your work with young people.

So when we think about social connections and here's where I want you to think back to those people you have in mind. The kind of support that social connections give us, there are multiple kinds of support. So for example, there's emotional support and these connections are ones that affirm good problem-solving skills. People are empathetic. This is the friend that you can cry on their shoulder and get some support when you're having a difficult time.

Then there's informational support who can provide guidance. So for a young person, this might be someone who gives guidance about the changes that are going on in their bodies or in their emotional development. It could also be something like, how do I apply for college? How do I get financial aid? For a parent, informational support might be "I need information my child's going through potty training and I need that help." or in your case it might be sharing some information about the developmental stage of the children that are in your program. So for example, if you work with middle schoolers, it would be really great to give parents some developmental information about the stages that their child is going through as a middle schooler.

Instrumental support on the other hand is this is stuff. This is like providing access. So things ... we use often need transportation. That's an instrumental support. I mentioned earlier that sometimes for parents it's really great to have someone that they can drop their kids off and have a night out. That's an instrumental support.

It's also important for young people and adults to have spiritual support. This can look like a lot of things. It could just be someone that you talk to about the wonders of the world or it might be something formal like a church or synagogue or mosque but it's important for young people as they're developing their sense of self as well as for adults who might be going through difficult times to have that to fall back on.

So a few minutes ago you thought of different connections. Now I want you to think about them again. Again, this isn't something you have to say. I just want you to think it. Do the people that you think of, do they fulfill these four different types of supports? If they do, that's great. You've got some well-rounded connections, but one of the things if you couldn't think of someone who provides

informational or instrumental support, that might be a piece of your relationships that you can develop just like you could help parents or the young people you work with develop those connections as well.

Moving on to our next section and this one I would like you to type into the question box. We're moving onto the knowledge protective factor. So tell me a little bit, what are things that parents in your program want to know or need to know? What do the youth in your program want to know or need to know? So you can go ahead and type those into the question box. I'll probably read off a few and then I'm going to refer back to them when we get to our slide about building knowledge.

So I see some items are coming in here. One is about what type of programs are being offered. Absolutely. I have a colleague in my hometown who always says we perish for lack of knowledge of what's going on in our communities and that is very true. Also parents might want to know how to help their children succeed in life, how the parents are able to better help their children and youth want to know if they're doing okay. That's a really great observation. I think kids want to know are they on track with their peers, what is happening right now, how do they fit in. We're going to talk about that just a second when we talk about knowledge of youth development.

Parents want to know what's being offered at the program. Absolutely. How to keep students more deeply engaged in schools so maybe academically as well as in extracurricular activities. Absolutely. Families want to know about how to deal with difficult behaviors that their children might be having. That's an interesting one because it crosses protective factors. So a parent that wants to know about skills that they can use to work on behaviors with their child, that's a piece about knowledge and parenting skills but it's also potentially a concrete support. So perhaps they could go to a class. It could also be a social connection. If they can talk to other parents that have been through something similar, they can gain something from it.

So delving a little deeper into this idea of knowledge. So in terms of parents, this knowledge is about parenting and about child development. The thing to remember here is that ... and we can describe knowledge is that it's understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. Now the parent does have knowledge about parenting and their child's development. They're going to exhibit some things and those things are on the screen here. You'll notice that parents are able to nurture their children. That they have appropriate developmental expectation. This is a big thing. So this is really easy to see in young children.

So for example, I always use the example of my brother and his wife have two little boys and they're .wonderful I talk a lot about [Adler and Elis 00:38:42]. Adler and Elis really wanted to go see a movie. They were little little like Elis was a little over a year. Adler is a little over three. Their parents took them to a movie

theater. Now you can imagine how this probably ended. Because they weren't ready to sit through a whole movie, now thankfully their parents recognize that and they were able to take the bow before they became a little too disruptive in the theater. That was an example of, "You know what? Maybe they're probably not ready."

That wasn't an appropriate developmental expectation. In terms of older youth, this goes right into the idea of young people ... part of adolescent development is risk taking and parents need to understand that that's an appropriate developmental task to take risks as an adolescent. So if there's a lot of friction in the home because an adolescent is taking risk, one of the things that can help is helping parents understand that that's a natural part of being a teenager, of growing up, of being an adolescent.

So to do that, you might create a developmentally supportive environment for your child. Following that example, that might be a time to have a conversation with the young person about what are safe risks and what are risks that can be really dangerous. Then when the child does take the risk, having some positive discipline techniques and being able to effectively manage that behavior. I'm using that example just to kind of go through this, but you can obviously use other examples as well.

The other thing is being able to recognize and respond to your child's specific needs. For those of you who have more than one child, you know that every child is different. So again, I'll use my example with Adler and Elis. Adler took a very, very long time to talk and he's the older of the brothers. When Elis came around, Elis started talking really early. It was really interesting for us to talk about how different Elis was than Adler. It wasn't that Adler was behind developmentally, he just took his time to talk. He was on par otherwise in terms of his development, but Elis on the other hand started talking early and hasn't stopped yet. So he's just a different kid and that's important to know. Important for you all who are working with young people to recognize as well because the same strategies that work with some kiddos are not going to work with others.

So let's move on and talk a little bit about knowledge as it applies to young people. Okay, so here we go. Knowledge of adolescent development. So it's very important just like it's important for parents to have accurate information about their child's development, it's important for young people and their parents to have accurate knowledge of adolescent development. We know that brain development in young people is uneven. We know that the emotional side of the brain, things like fear anger and pleasure, that part of the brain develops earlier. The problem-solving skills section, things about thinking ahead, balancing risk and rewards that still evolving well into early adulthood. So we know that this uneven brain development is going to affect the way young people behave. So it important for the young people to know that and it's also important for parents to know that.

It's also really important for young people to understand what's going on with their bodies, the physical changes that are happening. How to develop interpersonal relationship skills, so young people as they move into middle school and high school especially are practicing relationship skills and it's important for them to know how to navigate those worlds. It's also important to know how abstract thinking skills are being developed. We talked a little bit about spiritual and value development, how that's an important piece of developing who you are as a person.

One of the most important things for us to think about in terms of being able to work with young people is that we have to create those safe spaces for children to learn about their development. We have to create those spaces where the children feel comfortable talking about some of these things that are happening as well as giving them opportunities to learn more and practice skills.

So moving on. Thinking about how we build knowledge and we do seem to have a little delay with our slides here. So I apologize for that. How we think about development. So there are three things about knowledge that interact. Those three things are knowledge, skills and confidence. So you can see in this graphic here ... now we went one too far. Okay, I think we're back. All right. So our knowledge, our skills and our confidence interact with one another. When we have knowledge and the opportunity to practice skills that are based on that knowledge, we're more likely to be confident. We're more likely to move through life more confidently. We're more likely to be confident in our appearance thing. We're more confident as a young person in our ability to grow to a healthy adult.

So some of the things that might be activities and opportunities to build skills might be guest speakers on developmental topics. So for parents that might be about different development stages. It might be about behavior. For youth, it might be about puberty or it could be about other developmental topics. So for young people, you might also want to have workshops for youth that are grouped by agents. So depending on what age or what stage a young person is going through at the time, that might determine the topics that you cover. So you might cover topics such as peer pressure, friendships, physical development and puberty, safe dating, domestic violence or sexual health. All of those things might be presented to young people in groups based on ages.

So again, some opportunities to build skills. We talked about higher level thinking. Things like STEM activities or drama and theater. Activities that develop abstract thinking, creative writing. There a lot of different activities that can help to build some of the skills that we've been talking about. So some of your responses that you had at the beginning, a lot of it had to do with what I would call instrumental information which is related to our social connections, but definitely the kind of things that are offered.

So one of the things you might want to consider is, are the activities that you're offering for young people and the activities you're offering for families are they related to the things that the parents want to know? Are they related to the

developmental tasks that are happening for young people at that time? Okay. So we're you go ahead and move to the next one.

So this is a polling question. So I'd like you to choose your answer here. Concrete supports include access to material supports like housing and food, access to services like financial planning and afterschool care, access to health care including mental health services or D all of the above. So I believe the polling question should be popping up. There we go. Okay, great. Most of you have voted here and almost everyone shows all of the above. That's absolutely right. When we think about concrete supports, we don't just think about those things that are concrete like knock on the table concrete, but we also think about things that support development in other ways like access to services or access to healthcare.

So let's think about concrete supports in terms of families. The bottom line about families and concrete support is that healthy and successful families are families that have their needs met. Those needs and characteristics might include things like economic security, housing, healthcare, education and skills, but the big thing here is that when families have this protective factor ... here we go. They are willing to seek and receive support when needed and they know what services are available.

Now you've been mentioning that one of the things that parents and youth want to know is what's available. That's a huge portion of this protective factor that parents know what's available to them, that they have adequate financial security, that their basic needs are met. I don't think this is an interesting one persistence. One piece about having this protective factor is knowing that sometimes to get what you need, you have to try and try and then try again. Persistence is a really important aspect of this protective factor.

Another aspect that I'm going to go ahead and move on to the youth slide because this is also on that slide is that parents and young people need to learn how to advocate for themselves. So for a parent that might be advocating for their child. For a young person, that's fostering a sense of self-advocacy. How can you advocate for the things that you need? So if you need to learn more about financial aid or you need to learn more about sexual health resources, how can you advocate to get these things?

So another idea to think about with young people is that really everyone needs help sometimes just like all parents need help sometimes, but all of us might be uncomfortable asking for help. We may have some discomfort seeking services but for young people, this might be a specific and poignant piece. They might be embarrassed or concerned about stigma. They might feel that they don't have the right to seek help. They might be very nervous about being seen as childish. They want to be able to assert their role as a young person. This is another interesting intersection for teen parents. Sometimes teen parents have a hard time asking for help in part because they want to assert their role as a caregiver for their child so they might feel uncomfortable seeking services.

So one of the things that we can do is offer several types of support to young people. So we talked a little bit about those opportunities for skill building already, but also that you're there when something difficult happens and that you can provide things like psychoeducational assistance. So again, this might be assessment services. It could be just learning and awareness about mental health or it might be more formal academic, behavioral and cognitive assessments.

So as we move here to the next slide family support professionals and folks who are ... we went one too far. There we go. I apologize for the fly delay. So as people who work with children and families, we can become gateways to support. You probably already are a gateway to a lot of supports for young people and families. Some of the things that you see in this image are the kind of support we might be up to provide and we as an agency, your organization that's doing the programming might not be able to meet every one of these needs, but you can probably connect a family or young person with these needs when necessary. So you might not have all the answers when it comes to for example domestic violence or substance abuse, but hopefully you can connect a family or a young person with that resource.

So one of the important things about connecting families is in all times possible you want to try to make this a warm hand off. So if you for example are referring a family or a young person to a substance abuse program, they're going to be more likely to follow up on that program if you've made a connection with someone there. So for example, if you know someone at the substance abuse program, you can say give them a call, say, "Hey, Johnny is going to be coming over to receive services. I want you to know [inaudible 00:51:58] from my program. Can you please welcome him?" Then you might follow up with Johnny and say, "Hey, how did it go?" Sometimes it might even be going with a young person or a parent for that first connection. So anyway, we can make that handoff a little bit warmer is really important.

The other pieces that these supports can be formal and informal so sometimes this might be of an actual referral somewhere. Sometimes it might just be connecting them with someone else who's gone through it. One of the pieces that's important we said about concrete supports in the very beginning that part of this is helping people to be able to give back to their communities. So parents, other parents and other young people can be great concrete supports, great people to refer another parent or a young person to services. So often parents will know about things because they have used that service or their child has used that service. A young person might have good insight on where they can find additional things like food or shelter or even education supports because they've gone through it already.

So moving on to our last protective factor. We have a polling question here that's going to come up. I want you to answer true or false. Social and emotional skills are learned in early childhood only? So go ahead and let me know if you think that is true or false. Okay, so it looks like most people have voted. In fact,

everyone has voted the same way. That this is in fact false. Most of you know this already that really social and emotional skills are things that are developed throughout the lifetime. There's a lot of social and emotional development that happens in early childhood, but then there's also a huge amount of development that happened in the adolescent years as well. So we'll go ahead and move on to the next slide here and talk a little bit about how parents are learning about social and emotional competence.

So a parent's role for social and emotional competence is that families and their children interact. That helps the child develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and maintain and establish relationships. So social and emotional competence is really the foundation of every child's development. Again, it's those ongoing interactions that help a child develop it. So when we're thinking about it from a parent's perspective, there's two aspects. From the parent side, this means that they're warm and consistent in their responses so that they can foster a strong and secure attachment with their child. That they're encouraging, reinforcing and I would add modeling social skills as well as setting limits for their children.

So again, these are things that you can support parents in doing for their children or give them some information about how to do so. Now what does this look like in a child? Well a child who's socially and emotionally competent, they had some self-regulation that's age-appropriate. So the example that I used earlier about going to the movies when you're really little, it was okay that they weren't necessarily self-regulating themselves at that time, because they weren't ready. So age-appropriate self-regulation. Children who are socially and emotionally confident can form and maintain relationships. They've learned how to share. They're able to interact in a positive way. They have effective communication.

So in terms of young people ... so you'll see that this says cognitive and social and emotional confidence in youth because again, I mentioned that there's a large amount of development happening in the adolescent years. There are some essential developmental tasks that are happening during this time. Some of them are related to social and emotional confidence and others are actually related to cognitive skills. So again. I want to point out that it's very important for those of us who are serving youth to create safe spaces where children are learning about the skills and they're practicing these skills.

So to think about that a little bit more broadly. In a family setting, the family, the parents need to understand some of the importance and the developmental aspects, the tasks that are happening during adolescence like risk-taking or asserting independence. A school might need to create spaces through extracurricular activities and lessons in the classroom that encourage the development of these skills. In the community, those community-based programs, how does a community support youth development? Thinking about those things.

Now I'm not going to go through all of these components of cognitive and social and emotional competence because to be honest each of these could probably have its own webinar. These are the kind of things that young people are developing during their adolescence. Executive functioning skills, those are the big things. Those are like future orientation and planning the cognitive pieces. Then self-awareness, self-concept, self-esteem. You've heard a lot of these terms already, but this is ... how are young people becoming self-aware? How are they developing a sense of self?

So I wanted to ask you here in the next. What kind of activities do you provide to parents and youth to help build cognitive, social and emotional skills? What are some of the things that you do already with the young people that you work with or with the families that you work with to help them build these skills? Are you doing things already? So we'll just go ahead and wait for a few to come in.

So some examples of this might be we were talking a little bit back under knowledge I believe so some of the skills that are related to abstract thinking are some of the similar cognitive skills so things like STEM that that require abstract thinking are activities that can help develop those skills, where you have to plan to build something. That's an executive functioning skill.

Social skills, all of the interactive things that you're doing with young people are helping them build social skills. Then some of the emotional skills, things like drama, arts, creative writing, those are really great in developing emotional skills. So I see some parent engagement meetings. Those are good places where you could talk about some of these things. Have student's journal academics as well as issues they are experiencing. That's great. So thinking things out, writing them, processing that's going to help build these skills. Game nights and field trips, there are probably some field trips that would ... if you go to a science museum, that's really interactive, you're probably building some cognitive skills. Reassuring youth that it's okay to feel their emotions. That's a really great example. That's part of creating those safe spaces we were talking about.

So just really what this comes down to. The bottom line of both of these approaches is that the foundation is relationships whether it be relationships with the parents that you're working with or the young people that you're working with, it's important that those relationships are built on mutual respect and partnership. That you're engaging in honest communication and that you're willing to let trust build over time, because it does take time to build trust with families and young people.

That's really at the heart of these approaches. That you're creating a relationship that's based on strengths. That's providing these opportunities that parents, families, children can build some the skills that we've been talking about and that you're really creating environments where parents and young people are building protective factors for themselves. You will hear me say that over and over and over again. We do not give protective or preventive factors to families and young

people, but we can create environments where those families and young people can build them for themselves.

So before we get off the webinar today, I want to just go over a couple of resources. So you'll see these resources that are on the screen. I just want to give you a quick rundown, because I want to look at the handouts too. If you go to the Center for the Study of Social Policy, they have developed these two frameworks. There's some wonderful tools related to strengthening families, some worksheets that you can use with parents. There's also some great things on there about Youth Thrive.

The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds has an online training about the strengthening families protective factors framework which is free that you can take there. There are also some great resources on there for child abuse and neglect prevention.

Finally, I just want to point you to the Pennsylvania Strengthening Families page. We have a lot of great resources on that page as well as a portal that you can access and contact us if you're interested in more professional development around either the strengthening families protective factors framework or the Youth Thrive protective and preventive framework for young people.

So the next slide here is and I think Mike's going to bring up the handouts. I do have some handouts available for you. We'll look at them in just a second here. While Mike is bringing this up, start thinking, if you have any questions, go ahead and type them into the chat box so I can answer them as soon as we look at some of these handouts. So feel free to look at those, type any questions in that you might have.

Okay, so here we go. These handouts ... let me see if I can just scroll through. Wonderful. Okay. So this first one, this a resource list. This has lots of excellent resources about strengthening families and youth thrive. Then there are some specific things for here it says family support practitioners but anyone who's working with youth and families might find some of these resources helpful. There are also some great resources listed here for parents that you might want to pass on. Then we're going to move on ... we've gone past. Sorry about that.

So the one that has the logic model and I just want to get back up here for a second. I don't want to make everyone sea sick. You saw the logic model on one of the slides but this one that's coming down I guess, not up, but coming down here is everyday actions. Here's some everyday actions and things that you can do to create environments that help parents build these protective factors. So I urge you to take a look at this because the way for example demonstrate multiple ways that parents are valued, the way that looks in every program might be different but it's a good place for you to start.

Then the next two handouts and actually we can go ahead and close this because we're having real trouble scrolling. The next two handouts are core

meanings of the strengthening families protective factors framework and core meanings of the youth thrive protective factors. If you're looking for ways to describe these protective factors or some definitions, that's a great place to look. They're right there in this core meaning sheet.

Then the last handout and Mike if we can go back to the slides for a second, I can actually show this in the slide. The last ... this is perfect. It was right there. The last handout is this how to remember the five protective factors that make your family strong. This is a wonderful way and kind of silly I'm to remember the protective factors, but it goes by your hand. You'll see that the first one is your thumb and that's social and emotional confidence of children because that's one of the first ways that we learn how to communicate our emotions. Thumbs up off that means okay.

Your index finger is knowledge of parenting and child development because parents are child's first and most important teacher. The social connections one we all know that we shouldn't put that middle finger up by itself and that also reminds us that we should never stand alone and we all need to have a positive social network. The parental resilience finger is your ring finger because part of being resilient whether you're a young person or an adult is making a commitment to yourself first. Sometimes you need to take care of you and learn how to deal with stress yourself before you take care of other people. Then finally your little fingers is concrete supports in time of need, because it's the littlest one that reminds us that we all need help sometimes.

So that is all that I have for today, but we have about a minute left. I'll just see if any questions came. I have lost my little ... I can't see my question box. Doesn't look like we've had any questions come in, but if you do have a question, you certainly can ask it now or you can contact me which I believe is the next slide. Has my contact information on it. I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have or provide additional resources about the two frameworks to you if you'd like. So I do appreciate your time today. I'll hand it back over to Amy.

Amy Moritz:

Thank you so much Rijelle that was a great webinar and you ended just perfectly on time which is amazing. Again, to all of you out there we really apologize for the technical difficulties. We will be looking into that before our next webinar to make sure that runs a little bit more smoothly. Again, the archive recording will be on the website. We'll put the video on there too that a few folks weren't able to see. If you guys couldn't see it today, please go back and watch it because it really is great. You can probably use it for other trainings as well. You will, again, as a reminder receive the electronic evaluation. We do read all of those comments so please take the time to provide some feedback. We just want to thank you for joining us today. Our next webinar is going to be on February 15th. The announcement will be coming out shortly. So please look for that. This concludes today's webinar. Thank you and have a great day.