

# Recognizing and Responding to Signs of Family Stress



## Participant Handout





## RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF FAMILY STRESS

### AGENDA

Responding to signs of child abuse and neglect is crucial – but research allows us to start even earlier in keeping children safe and families strong. By recognizing and responding to early signs of stress, child welfare staff can help families get the kind of support that help prevent abuse and neglect. This training will help participants get in touch with their own stress and help them recognize early signs of family stress

#### Learning objectives:

- Describe your own personal stressors and how they might relate to your work with children and families
- Understand the relationship between stress and potentially harmful parenting behaviors.
- Identify signs of stress in children and families
- Utilize techniques to support families and help them manage the everyday stress and strain of life.
- Understanding the importance of linking families to concrete support in times of need as a strategy to help families get the kind of support they need.

Activity	Learning Objectives / Purpose
<b>Welcome &amp; Intro Activity</b>	Welcome, Introductions Taking Care of Me
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN?
<b>Strengthening Families Logic Model</b>	Review of Model and identify which Protective Factor assist families in managing their stress.
<b>Defining Stress and Stress Continuum</b>	Define what is Stress and explore its relationship to child abuse and neglect
<b>Where is my stress level?</b>	Utilize the SOCIAL READJUSTMENT RATING SCALE to assess our own personal stress level.
<b>Stress Awareness and Stress management</b>	Focus on identifying Stressors



Activity	Learning Objectives / Purpose
Recognizing Stress in children and parents	Explore how stress shows up in children and in parents
Stress Management Techniques	Orientation to Brainstorming, Time Management, Mindfulness, Strength Tree and Keeping yourself healthy
Activities to do with children	Strategies to assist children in dealing with stress
Benefit of building relationships with parents	Explore how relationships with parents allow us to connect them to concrete support in times of need and potentially other parents who have had shared experiences.
Mindful Reflection	What will I do differently?
Evaluation / Certificates	



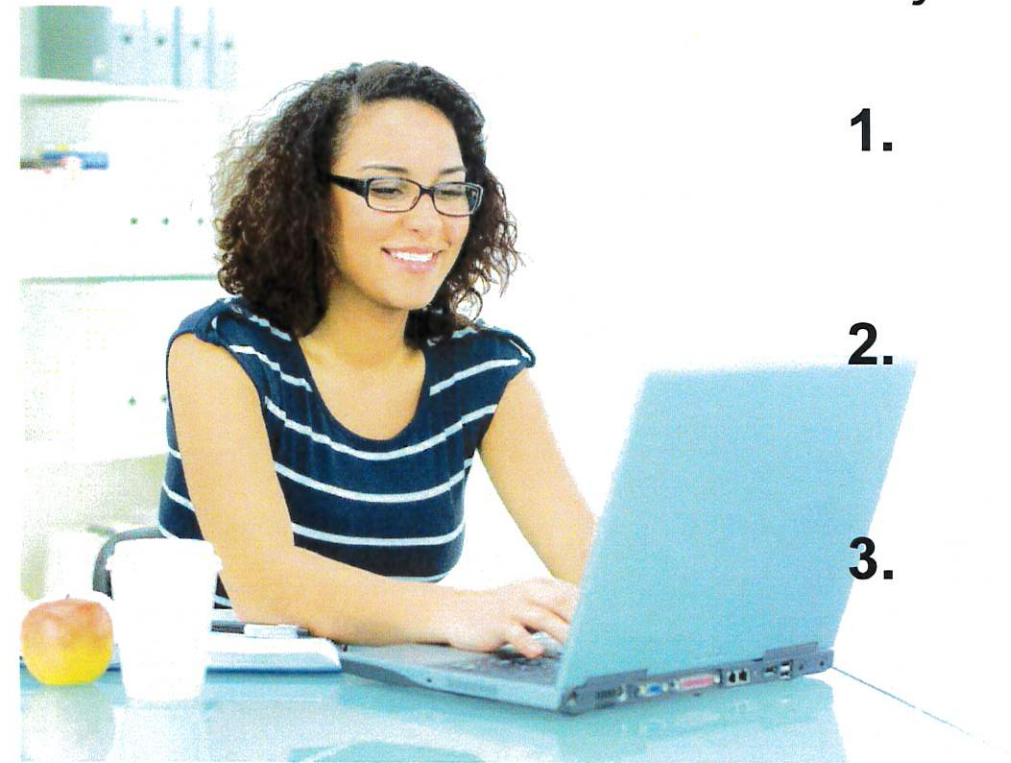
## Recognizing and Responding to Signs of Family Stress

What do you want to learn?

1.

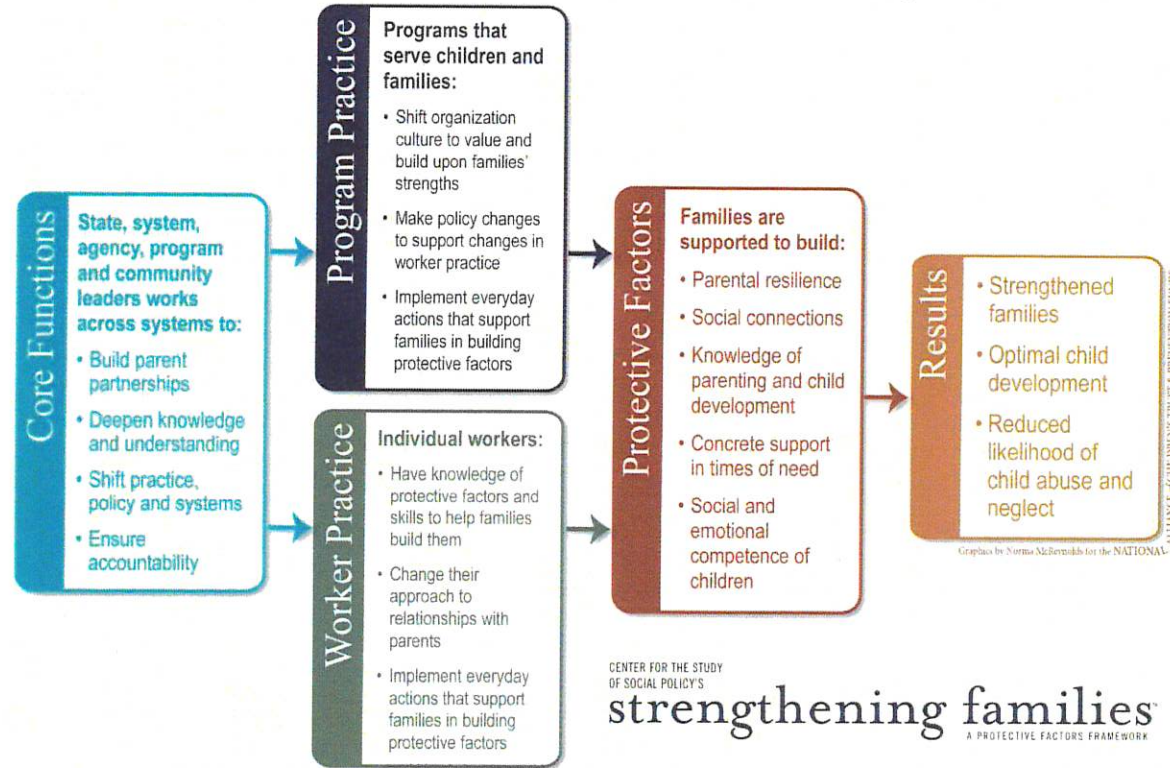
2.

3.



# Recognizing and Responding to Signs of Family Stress

Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework Logic Model



**The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory**  
**The Social Readjustment Rating Scale**

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark down the point value of each of these life events that has happened to you during the previous year. Total these associated points.

Life Event	Mean Value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual Difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (i.e.. birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc)	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state (i.e.. a lot worse or better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments w/spouse (i.e.. either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc..)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.)	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, attending college, joined mil.)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living condition (new home, remodeling, deterioration of neighborhood or home etc.)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress manners, associations, quitting smoking)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major changes in working hours or conditions	20
32. Changes in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activity (i.e.. a lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (clubs, movies, visiting, etc.)	18
37. Taking on a loan (car, tv, freezer, etc)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less than usual)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers ("")	15
40. Major change in eating habits (a lot more or less food intake, or very different meal hours or surroundings)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Major holidays	12
43. Minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc)	11

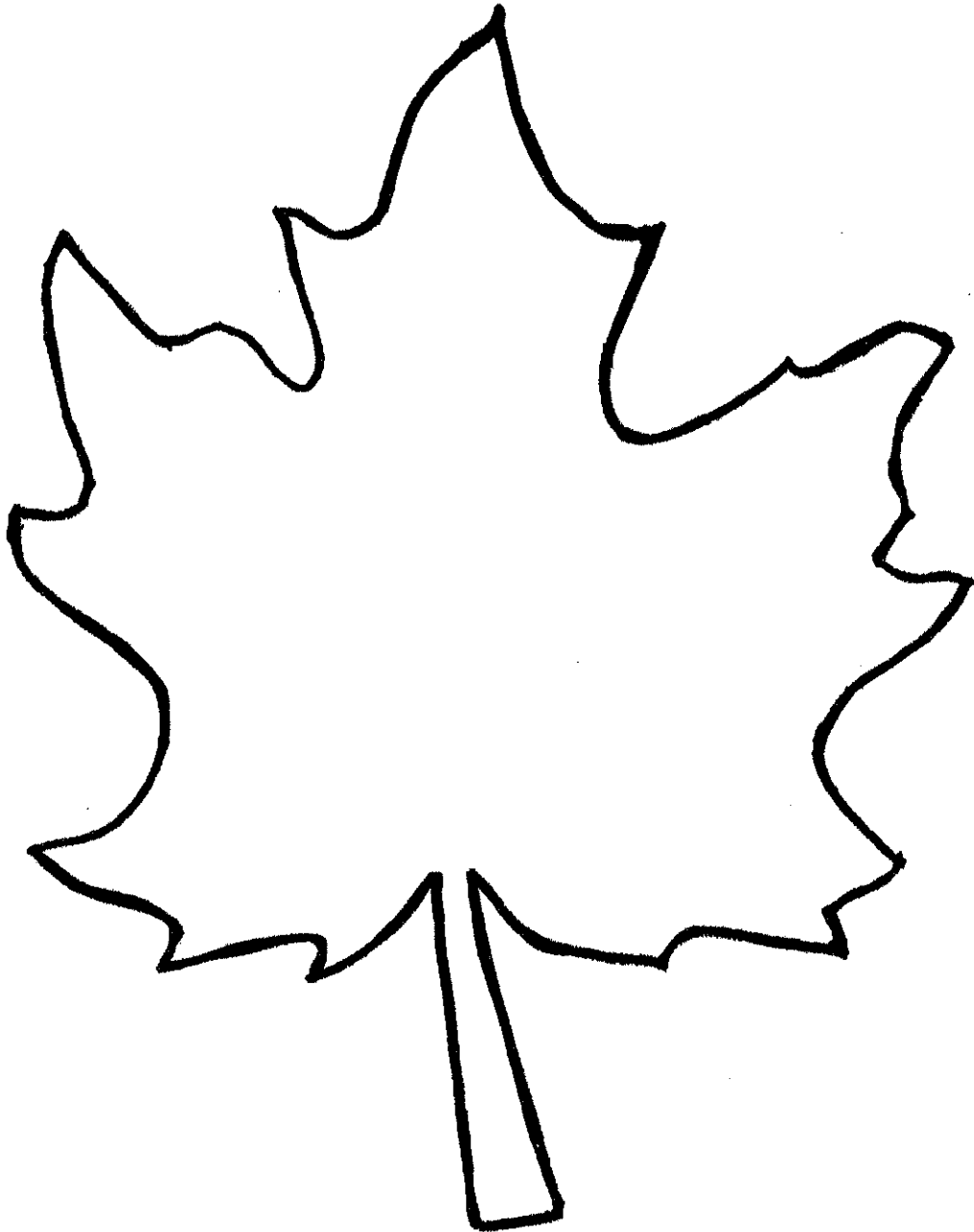
**Now, add up all the points you have to find your score.**

**150pts or less** means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.

**150 to 300 pts** implies about a 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.

**300pts or more** raises the odds to about 80%, according to the Holmes-Rahe statistical prediction model.

STRENGTH LEAF





## MY MAKING TIME CALENDAR

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....	FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....	FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....	FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....	FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....	FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....	FOR MYSELF: I will find time to.....
TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....	WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....	WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....	WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....	WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....	WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....	WITH MY CHILD I will find time to.....
TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:	TIME:



RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF FAMILY STRESS

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO WITH CHILDREN

1.	Use Art. Have children draw to express their feelings.
2.	Encourage reflection on inner strengths.
3.	Create songs, poetry, short stories and books about their experiences, feelings and thoughts.
4.	Do deep breathing, relaxation and visualization exercises.
5.	Find books about how to deal with stress
6.	Give lots of hugs and kisses
7.	Play with intention. Card games, board games
8.	Physical activities, sports, games, etc.
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	





## RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF FAMILY STRESS

### Helping Our Children in Difficult Times

What can we say to children when public tragedies and upsetting events occur? Should we shield them from the news? How can we reassure them and help them feel safe?

Here is some advice from early childhood experts that may be helpful.

#### **1. Listen and talk to your child.**

- There is no need to tell young children about disastrous world events. However, children often pick up information at preschool, on TV news, or from adult conversations. You may want to find out what your child has heard by asking: Did you hear anything about ...?
- Respect your child's attempts to make sense of what happened. You want your child to feel comfortable talking with you about confusing things.
- Children often express thoughts and worries through their play. Listen and watch. You may want to gently join in and help your child work through the scary parts.
- Answer questions honestly but briefly. Use simple words.

#### **2. Help your children feel safe.**

- The most important thing for children to know is that they are safe and that you will take care of them.
- Children may be aware that you are worried and upset. This can make them feel scared. Talk about your feelings. Acknowledge that a bad thing has happened, but try to be reassuring and optimistic.
- Enjoy lots of family togetherness, talking and cuddling.
- Keep daily routines as normal as possible. It helps children feel comfortable.
- Do chores, read stories, and watch favorite TV shows together.
- Avoid adult conversations about disasters in front of young children.
- Protect young children from seeing violent images on TV news.

#### **3. Become a helper.**

- Help your child notice the many things caring people in your family, community, and the world are doing to help others.
- As your family reaches out to others, try to find ways your child can also participate. For example, children can donate outgrown toys to family shelters, do simple chores for elderly neighbors, or participate in a community park clean-up or walk for hunger.
- Violent events remind us how important it is to find ways to solve our problems peacefully. Help your child learn to respect others, appreciate diversity, and find healthy ways to resolve daily conflicts.

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# **Mindful Reflection**

**A pearl of wisdom that I gleaned is...**

**How will I take care of myself during times of stress?**

**How will I work with parents and children to help reduce their stress?**