

Healthy Families – Family Health Action Team Weekly Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 28, 2022

Present: Kenneth Fowlkes, Kareem Lovelace-Crump, Mary O’Dowd, John Nardi,
Theresa Daniels, Kathryn Corpuz
Next meeting: Monday, April 4, 2022

1. Summary

- **Goals & Underlying Strategies Presentation/Discussion**
 - From our last meeting (3/28/2022), we had a better idea of what our goals are and what we wanted to focus on. To capture the inputs from our last discussion, Mary put together a slide deck that details the draft goals on mitigating violence within families and increasing access to family friendly policies, along with their underlying strategies. These slides were shared during this meeting, and we had a discussion on additions/edits to the goals and underlying strategies.
 - Edits discussed for the goal about mitigation of violence within families
 - The group agreed that “mitigate” would be good word to describe this goal instead of “reduce” family violence.
 - The group also agreed to add that violence would be mitigated through “increased awareness, interventions and preventions...”
 - Edits discussed for the goal on family friendly policies
 - The group agreed that we keep the reference to UNICEF’s recognition of family friendly policies. The broad themes included in this goal’s description were based off UNICEF’s work on family friendly workplaces.
 - Edits/additions to the underlying strategies
 - Aside from the broad strategies currently listed, we agreed to add community-based organizations and other government systems. We also agreed to include employer organizations.
 - For the government systems, we pictured this as covering law enforcement and judiciary. It would be important to understand how police and courts are responding to incidences of family violence.
 - For the employer organizations, this will address the family friendly policies-related goal.
 - We also agreed to include a point that these systems can be leveraged to create change through policy, with the understanding that this could be through updating existing policies or creating new ones.

- **Discussion: Objectives for the Goal on Mitigating Violence within Families**
 - When we talk about family violence, what type of policies, programs, systems exist to mitigate these situations? Do we need to develop something new, or should we think about this more as improving/strengthening what exists?
 - There is at least one sexual violence program per county. There are also DCP&P offices per county.
 - While there are systems in place, there are barriers to accessing these systems, especially among underserved or minority communities.
 - It is also important to consider gender-related barriers. For example, persons who view themselves as gender nonconforming may not feel comfortable or they perceive that they are not welcomed for certain programs. It will be important to also create programs that are inclusive of these groups.
 - Another barrier is getting buy-in to procedures and policies. In the context of family violence/domestic violence, sometimes these policies/procedures are not sympathetic to the victims and understanding what is actually happening to have led to this situation. The approach may be to get in and immediately resolve the situation, rather than taking the time to discuss steps on what can be done to improve it and provide recommendations.
 - While recommendations on the improvement of domestic violence are made to state and community agencies, these are not always fully implemented. There are difficulties enforcing it, because again, these are recommendations.
 - There needs to be awareness on how to approach the situation. An example provided was a scenario in which law enforcement may be visiting the same family multiple times. As opposed to assessing what the actual problem might be and working together to address it, they might have a sentiment like we are back here again.
 - Location is also a barrier to resources or groups. For instance, NJ has six battered men's programs. People may decide not to seek help knowing the distance they have to travel for these services/programs.
 - Discussion about restraining orders – Some communities do not see this as a productive measure. However, it is important to note this is for the safety of women, children, and other vulnerable members of the community.
- **Discussion: Who are our targets for the strategies we are proposing?**
 - Law enforcement and reports, along with other professionals in the system
 - There is a need for professional development related to addressing/mitigating these types of issues.
 - We also need to consider the general community too.
 - There is a need for education/awareness type of programs (e.g., can be done through the school system).
 - Overall, we need to consider shifting perspectives about domestic/family violence.
 - At times, communities may perceive domestic violence only as physical harm. There should be awareness raising/education that violence can also have emotional, financial, etc. – related impacts as well. Having exposure to

violence at such a young age normalizes it and it can progress to teen violence and violence into adulthood.

- What are some programs, policies, organizations, institutions, etc. that can be leveraged to address this?
 - Potential collaboration with Department of Education
 - Consider college campuses, schools (primary and secondary)
 - Also consider how factors can impact instances of domestic/family violence and shape perspectives. Examples for consideration:
 - Education during isolation due to the pandemic – leading to limited engagement with others
 - Argumentative or aggressive interactions with young boys and girls (e.g., pushing, bullying) – how does frequent exposure affect behaviors later in life?
 - Understanding individual level factors and the cultural climate about these issues (updater vs. bystander approaches)
 - Consider intimidation and harassment related laws/policies
 - Training harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) coordinators at the district level
 - While children are taught about the harms of bullying, domestic/family violence is not really addressed. There is a need for raising awareness/education for children, teens, and adults.
 - Need for educational tools, accountability for the children and parents, presence of a competent adult (e.g., parent or if the parent is not present, this can be a teacher or coach)
 - DCF Office of Resilience conducts community trainings on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
 - Rutgers/RWJMS Project ECHO – can be considered as a model for adaptation
 - Battered men’s program – another programmatic option to potentially leverage
 - Legislation on making this program statewide? – Research about this more.
 - Private entities (e.g., churches)
 - Example – DOW provides training of trainers (TOT) program for church leaders on mitigating these issues. DOW also works with coalitions to do these trainings in the community.
 - Mentioned a clergy manual on domestic violence (from the Clergy Partnership on Domestic Violence) – Additional research to be done on this. Is this still an existing organization? What information can we pull from this manual? Is this something that can be published again and made available online for communities? How do we disseminate this manual to clergy so it can be disseminated among their core groups?
 - **Potential approach for raising awareness
 - Other community partners such as business organizations

- **Additional questions and comments pulled from the meeting chat for consideration**
 - Is there a virtual education option for the target groups mentioned?
 - Are there public awareness campaigns that the DOW could lead that have tools that can be used in various organizations and environments? Are these tools and resources available online? Again, is there virtual education involved?
 - Possibly a need to create a tool for all local organizations on how to deal with these issues.

2. Next Steps

- For next week’s meeting (4/4/2022), our goal is to start narrowing these strategies down and deciding on our focus.
- Action items:

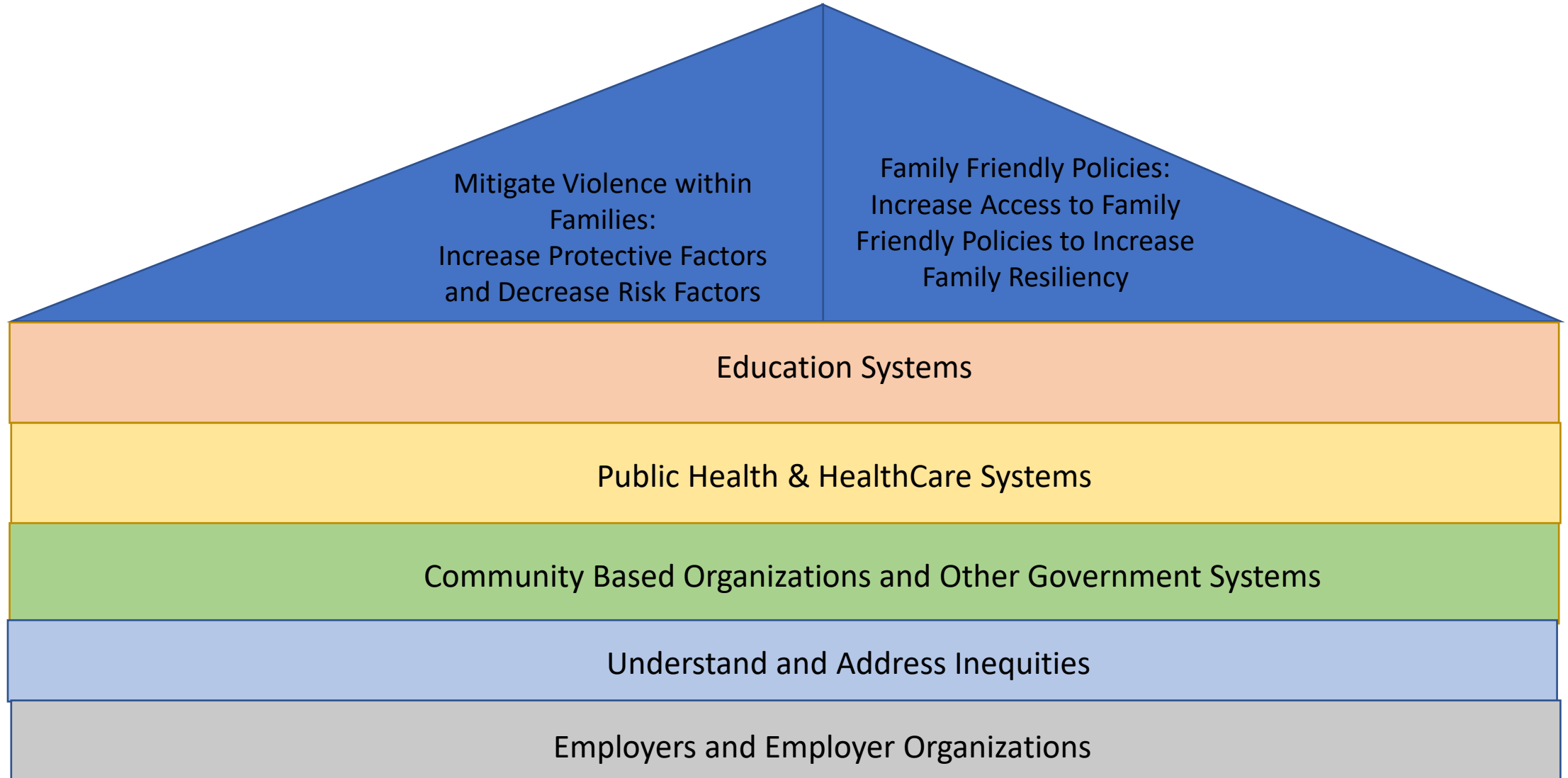
Action Item	Responsible	Timeline
Prepare notes from the meeting on 3/28/22	Mary O’Dowd, Kathryn Corpuz	To be shared by 4/1/22
Share notes from the meeting on 3/28/22 with the team	Tim Woody	To be shared by 4/1/22
Send updated goals presentation slide deck	Mary O’Dowd (*will send to Maria Baron and copy Ken Fowlkes)	To be shared by 4/4/22
Review of legislation about making the battered programs statewide and check on funding related to this.	Theresa Daniels	By next meeting on 4/4/22
Research on the clergy manual on domestic violence and the group who developed the manual	Theresa Daniels	By next meeting on 4/4/22
Research what is being done at the elementary school level about raising awareness about family violence	Ken Fowlkes	By next meeting on 4/4/22

Family Health Committee

Healthy New Jersey 2030

March 28, 2022

Visual of Goals



Goals for Family Health Committee

- Mitigate violence within families through increased awareness, interventions and preventions by increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors through individual, family, community and system level actions.
- Increase access to family friendly policies recognized by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to improve family resiliency, implemented by businesses and governments within the categories of: flexible work arrangements; paid parental and sick leave; breastfeeding and childcare support; child benefits; and fair wages.

Underlying Strategies

- Utilize the systems of public education, public health a healthcare, and community-based organizations and other government systems and employers and employer organizations to reduce disparities in access to services, programs, and care.
- Specifically, these systems can be leveraged as trusted community partners and assets to:
 - Disseminate information and inform communities
 - Connect individuals with resources
 - Collect information
 - Increase understanding of access barriers
 - Create change through policy