

# Strengthening Families for the Future

Facilitator Training Workshop  
August 28, 2019

# INTRODUCTIONS

- Training Team
  - Suzanne Wit-Foley/Stacey Schell
- Warm-up activity
- Participant Introductions

# AGENDA

- Orientation
- Information about the SFP model
- Format and Learning Models
- Orientation to the Program Manual
- Program Demonstrations
- Session Assignments, Preparation and Demonstrations
- Facilitation Guidelines
- Questions
- Wrap-up

# PARTICIPANT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Be familiar with the SFF model
- Understand the key concepts and how the program supports resiliency
- Be familiar with some key activities
- Be familiar with the 14 week landscape
- Be familiar with manuals and delivery materials
- Be familiar with implementation challenges
- Have increased confidence in delivering the SFF program

# Group Guidelines

PUTTING SWIMMING IN THE SAME BEAT

WHEN DRIVING → "I can't drive when you fight,"  
It's unsafe! (Full over)

SHARING TOYS → "Can you share the 1990, or  
should I put it away?"

SPECIAL RIGHTS → "This is a house of peace-  
if you want to fight, go  
outside"

DINNER → "Can you figure it out  
Should I go?" (Pick up  
plate & go somewhere)

BE CONSISTENT



Class Guidelines

1. Child pass the activity
2. Adults try not to ask questions or make suggestions
3. Adults comment on what the child is doing and what they might be thinking or feeling



# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM

- Developed in 1983 specifically to increase resiliency among children of alcohol and drug-abusing parents by Dr. Karol Kumpfer, University of Utah
- Results demonstrated that combining the parenting, children's skills training and family relationship enhancement program strengthened many factors against drug-abuse and increased mental health
- Cited as one of the best interventions of its kind and best practice program

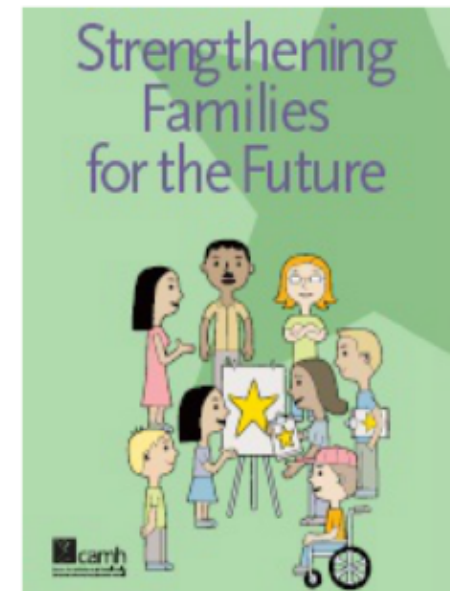
# History in Muskoka

A close-up photograph of a man and a young girl. The man, on the right, is wearing a camouflage baseball cap and a grey jacket, leaning his head against the girl's. The girl, on the left, has long brown hair and is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

- Strengthening Families for the Future has a long history in Muskoka
- SFF began 18 years ago
- The early years were difficult

# Strengthening Families for the Future

<b>Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds individual resiliency and life skills</li><li>• Enhances family protective factors</li><li>• Reduces other behavior problems violence, delinquency</li></ul>
<b>Substance Use</b>	Reduces children's or adolescents' intention to use alcohol and/or other drug
<b>Healthy Eating</b>	The shared meal provides an opportunity to learn about healthy eating, partner with community organizations (e.g. access to fruits and vegetables)
<b>Physical Activity</b>	Opportunity to incorporate physical activity in program planning (e.g. community gardening)





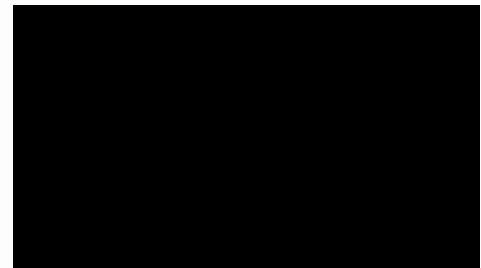
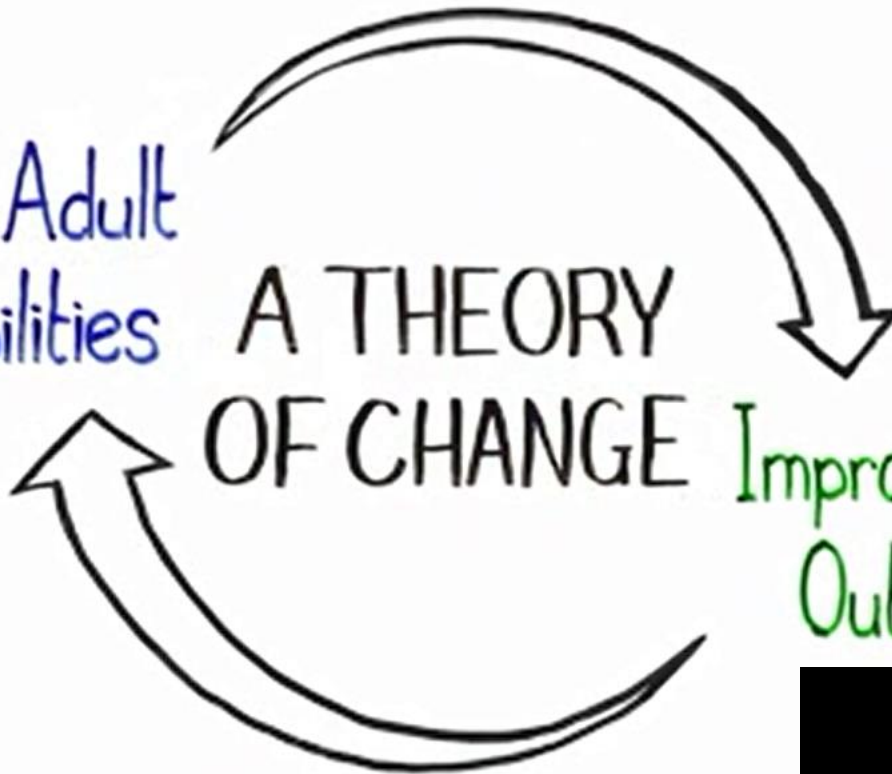
# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM

- Goal:
  - Improved parenting skills, child/youth social competencies and parent-child relationships and family functioning
- Process:
  - Skills training, coaching and practice, strength-based, family centred and group participation
- Outcomes:
  - Reduced family risk factors among children/youth
  - Increased personal resilience among children/youth and reduced involvement in high risk behaviours

Build Adult  
Capabilities

A THEORY  
OF CHANGE

Improve Child  
Outcomes

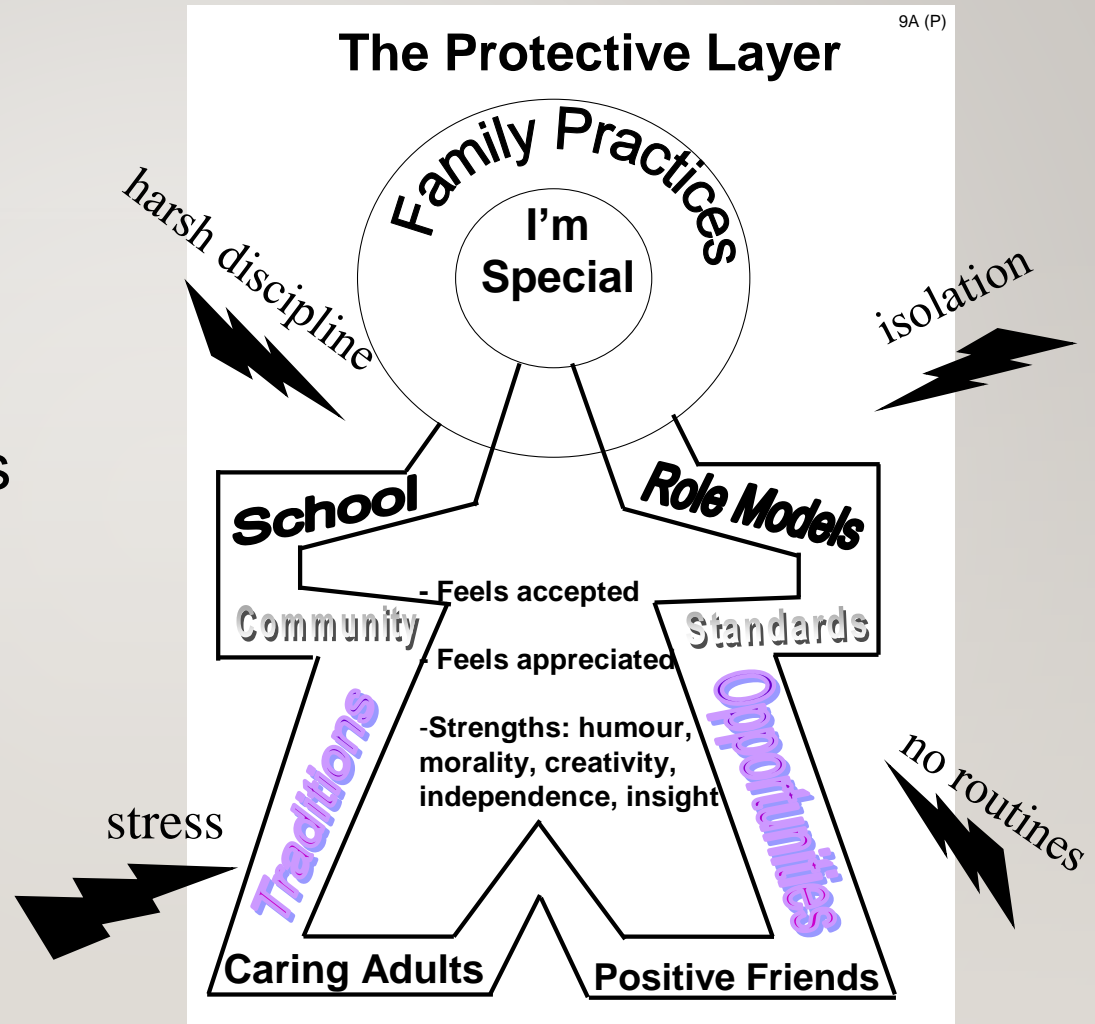


# Strengthening Families Goal

9A (P)

Build resiliency by:

- ↑ • protective factors
- ↓ • risk factors



# THE SFF APPROACH TO RESILIENCY

- Builds family and community-related protective factors
- Builds child resiliency via parent responses such as increased praise, building parent-child empathy, age-appropriate responsibilities & decision-making
- Significant where parents are overwhelmed by personal issues and child's behaviour
- Significant where families are affected by environmental risk factors

# GROWTH MINDSET

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# SFF PROGRAM FORMAT

- Family and Communal Dinner
- Separate sessions for parents and children
- Childcare provided
- Family Session
- Provide a safe, supportive and empowering learning environment

# SFF LEARNING MODEL - PARENTS

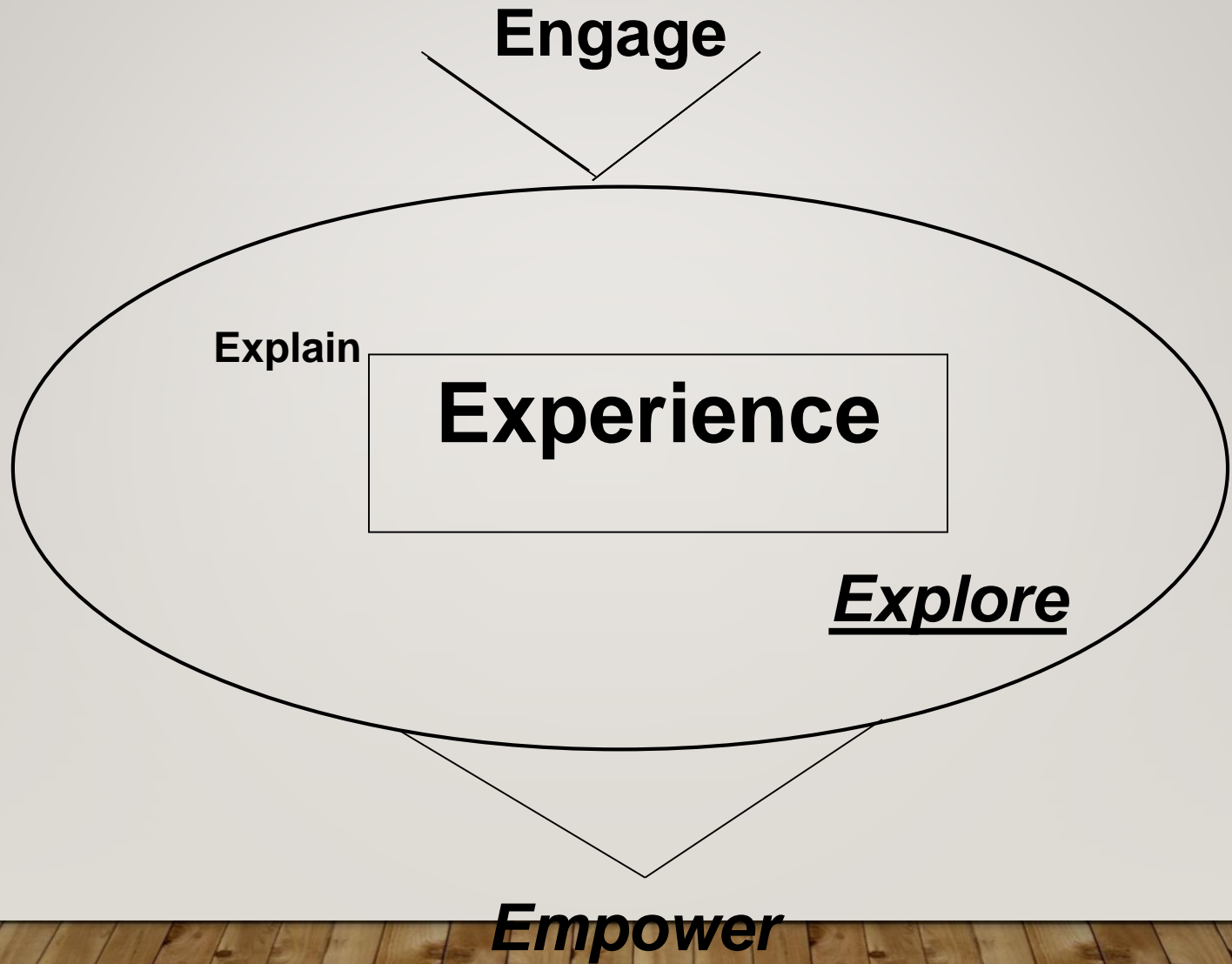
- Skills-building: tell, show, do (emphasis on skills application in each session)
- Acknowledge and build on parents' strengths -- what is working
- Have parents consider new strategies
  - to add to the parent “tool box”
  - to replace what isn't working
- Apply new tools and check how they work
- Home Activity/Take home task

# PARENT FOCUS

- Gain better understanding of their child
- Adopt a strengths-based approach to encouraging their child
- Take ownership of making changes in the parent-child relationship
- Gain specific skills – and practise and evaluate them



# SFF CHILD INVOLVEMENT MODEL

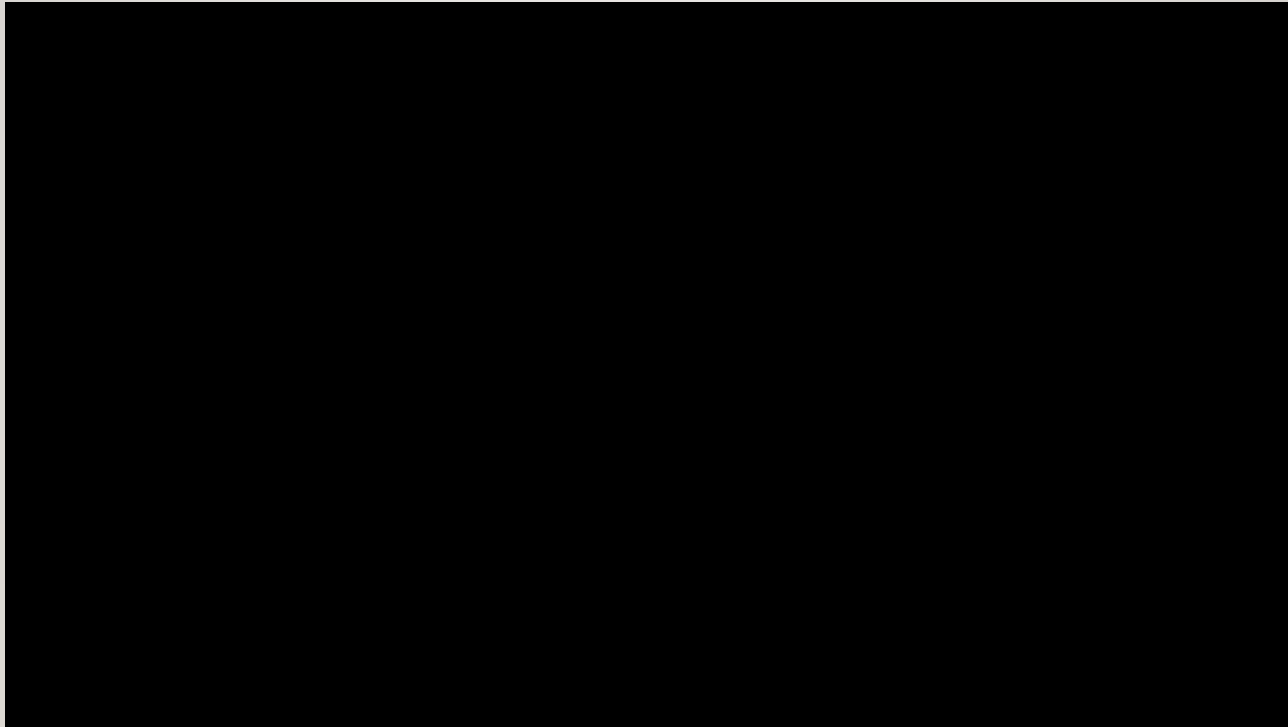


# TRANSITIONS

- Mindfulness practice
- Story Time
- Reporting Back-parents & children

# KIDS MEDITATION – LIGHT AS A FEATHER

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# FAMILY SESSION

- Warm up activity – model enthusiasm and inclusiveness
- Family activities – skills focused
  - Positive parent-child interaction (Child's Game)
  - Identifying feelings and managing anger
  - Communication
  - Developing empathy
  - Supporting goals and dreams
  - Identifying family values and traditions; increasing family pride
- Closing Circle

# SFF FAMILY SESSION MODEL

- Family meetings
- Exchange of “power” (e.g. child's game/obstacle course)
- Empower children (e.g. reporting back , praise, I feel statements)

# FAMILY MEETINGS

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# PURPOSE OF CHILDS GAME

- To increase amount of one on one time with child – “quality time”
- To practice giving positive attention and ignoring minor negative behaviour
- To create a positive, attentive interaction without negative judgement or direction

# CHILD'S GAME RULES!

- **Basic Guidelines:**
- Parent focuses on their child and the activity the child is involved in.
- Parent provides positive attention and praise for Child's behaviour during the activity,
- Parent **DOES NOT** criticize or direct child or correct child's behaviour during this time.
- **Practice:**
- Parent and child participate together in an activity that is of the child's choosing.
- Parent and child participate in 10 -15 minutes of activity following the Child's Game Guidelines once or more each week.



# STILL FACE EXPERIMENT

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# PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Program staffing: facilitators, coordination, child care and volunteers
- Logistics: facility, participant numbers, meals, transportation
- Retention: incentives, reminders, overcoming barriers
- Cultural sensitivity and diversity: incorporate families' cultural traditions if possible, respect for cultural practices, understanding of culture and acknowledgement of differences

# Building a Partnership/Collaborative

- Barriers included program cost, staffing, investment of time required, shift in focus
- In early years, it was hard to get partners to collaborate – full commitment developed over time as partners began to see results, built trust with one another, felt ownership

# Funding

- In the beginning funding from Focus Community, Healthy Communities Fund, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
  - Currently, United Way Funding, Donations
- Significant funding now also comes from community partners. Contribution of staffing in kind, financial support, in kind support such as photocopying, incentives, etc.



# Outreach & Recruiting

A photograph of a community room where a group of people, including women and children, are seated at round tables. They appear to be engaged in a social gathering or a meeting. A woman in a red skirt is standing and talking to a group of people. The room has large windows with vertical blinds and fluorescent lighting on the ceiling.

- Promote and provide mini-presentations
- Distribute promotional flyers through any/all existing networks, school newsletters, posted in rec centres, laundromats, websites
- Radio, newspaper promotion ( not just advertisements but interviews, articles)
- Promote the success of the program
- Use the power of testimonials



## DINNER'S READY!

The crowd eagerly digs into a healthy meal. The group is noisy, with everyone catching up on what's been going on since last week. It looks like a regular gathering of close friends. But in this gathering, the meal is doing more than just feeding the body. It is nourishing relationships between parents and children. It is also feeding a sense of belonging and connectedness to other families – all factors that are known to increase youth resilience.

The meal is just the first part of each Strengthening Families session. The program involves the entire family in exercises to learn new skills. Youth between the ages of 12 – 16 participate in the program; however the entire family is invited to attend. In the 9 week free program, families learn to solve problems together and to communicate better. The goal is to improve family relationships and build child resilience. For more information or to register please call Mary Shirley-Thompson at 705-645-4426 or 1-800-680-4426.



# Enjoy dinner while strengthening the family

Parents in Muskoka looking for a little extra support with the challenging job of raising a family have a helping hand to guide them.

Strengthening Families for the Future is a 14-week evening program running in Bracebridge starting Feb. 24.

"The crowd eagerly digs into a healthy meal. The group is noisy, with everyone catching up on what's been going on since last week. It looks like a regular gathering of close friends," says Suzanne Witt-Foley of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health who is one of the program co-ordinators. "But in this gathering, the meal is doing more than just feeding the body. It is nourishing relationships between parents and children. It is also feeding a sense of belonging and connectedness to other families – all factors that are known to increase youth resilience."

The meal is the first part of each session. After everyone eats, the children go off to their group and parents gather in a separate room to learn new skills. Family members will come together again for the last hour where together they will practice what they have been learning.

Strengthening Families is an evidence-based program supported by



Photo: Meghan Murray

**Mom Tracy spends time with her boys Hayden and Bradley at the Strengthening Families program where they have time to play and learn.**

Healthy Communities funding in partnership with Family Youth and Child Services of Muskoka, Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, Community Living South Muskoka and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

The Muskoka program recently

received \$21,000 funding to ensure the program's viability for the next two years after applying to the Healthy Communities Grant Fund of the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport. With the loss of local funding in March 2010, the future of this valuable program was uncertain after nine years of

operation and assisting more than 70 families. Muskoka was one of the first communities in the province to offer the Strengthening Families Program.

The program is offered at Community Living South Muskoka, which has room for a large family dinner plus space for program rooms and child-care. The next program begins Thursday, Feb. 24. Parents must have at least one child between the ages of 7 to 11 years of age, be in need of additional parenting support and able to attend sessions once per week for 14 weeks. The program is free and free transportation is also available.

"Strengthening Families is an effective program because it allows opportunities for a parent and his or her child to come together and create new memories and rituals which are really critical in mending and strengthening family bonds," says long-time program facilitator Susan Biehn-Smith. "Evidence shows this can reduce children or adults' intention to use alcohol or other drugs, reduce behaviour problems and improve family communication."

Families will benefit from Strengthening Families through an increased in parenting skills, increase in children's life skills and improvement in family relations.

# Key Concepts/Take Away

- Active skill building vs Providing information
- Necessary to have environment of relationships within family and outside – INVESTED

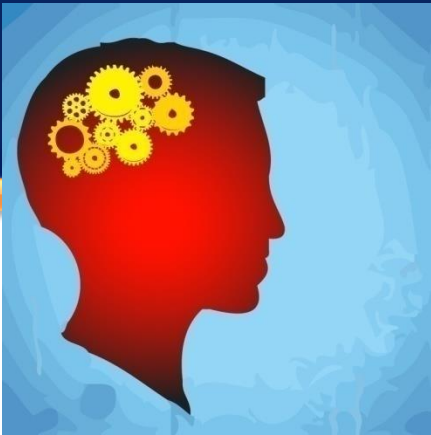




# KEY CHALLENGES SPECIFIC TO A PARENT-CHILD PROGRAM

- Engaging parents to take a positive perspective on their children when they are often struggling with behaviour and attitudes.
- Engaging parents to consider new strategies in parenting without diminishing their parenting abilities
- Engaging children (and sometimes parents) in a family program with one another
- Gaining commitment from parents and children

# Mental Models



- Are internal pictures of how the world works
- Exist below awareness
- Are theories-in-use, often unexamined
- Determine how we act
- Can help or interfere with learning

**For a dialogue to occur, we must suspend our mental models.**

Source: *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (1994) by Peter Senge.

# Mental Model of Middle Class

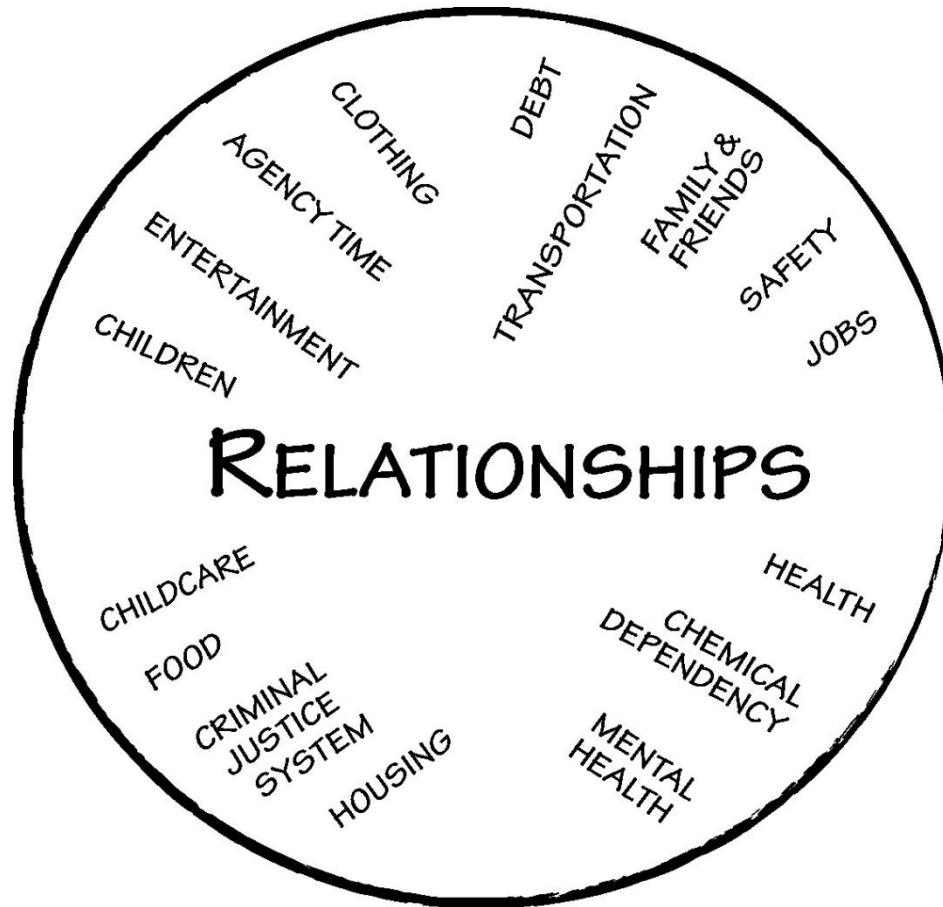
Middle Class Is an Achievement-Based World



Developed by Phil DeVol (2006)

# Mental Model for Poverty

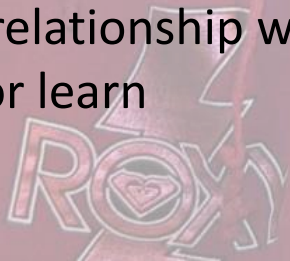
## What It's Like Now



Developed by Phil DeVol (2006)

# In SFF – We shifted our focus from Achievement to Relationship

- Building trust and safety...leads to “ownership”
- Engage people through genuine caring and creation of relationship and building relationship within their family, not what they are going to achieve or learn



# Tyranny of the Moment

The incredible time and energy spent on *surviving* this moment, or this day!

People solving concrete, immediate problems, all day!

# Laughing Man – Mirror Neurons



# Let's not forget the little things...



Welcoming presence, Meals, Cookbook Birthdays,  
Personal touch – photo frames, “hand holding”,  
Embracing the gifts participants have to give, Drum Circle



# Drum circle



# ORIENTATION TO THE SFF MANUAL

- Parent Session – 70 minute outline
  - Skill Practice and Take Home Task
- Child Session – 70 minute outline
  - Application of the 5 E Model
- Family Session (50 minute outline)
  - Maintain timing/optional additions if time allows

# DEMONSTRATIONS

- **SFF**
- Parent Session - Collaborative problem solving, emotional regulation.
- Child Session - addictions/bubblegum Session 8

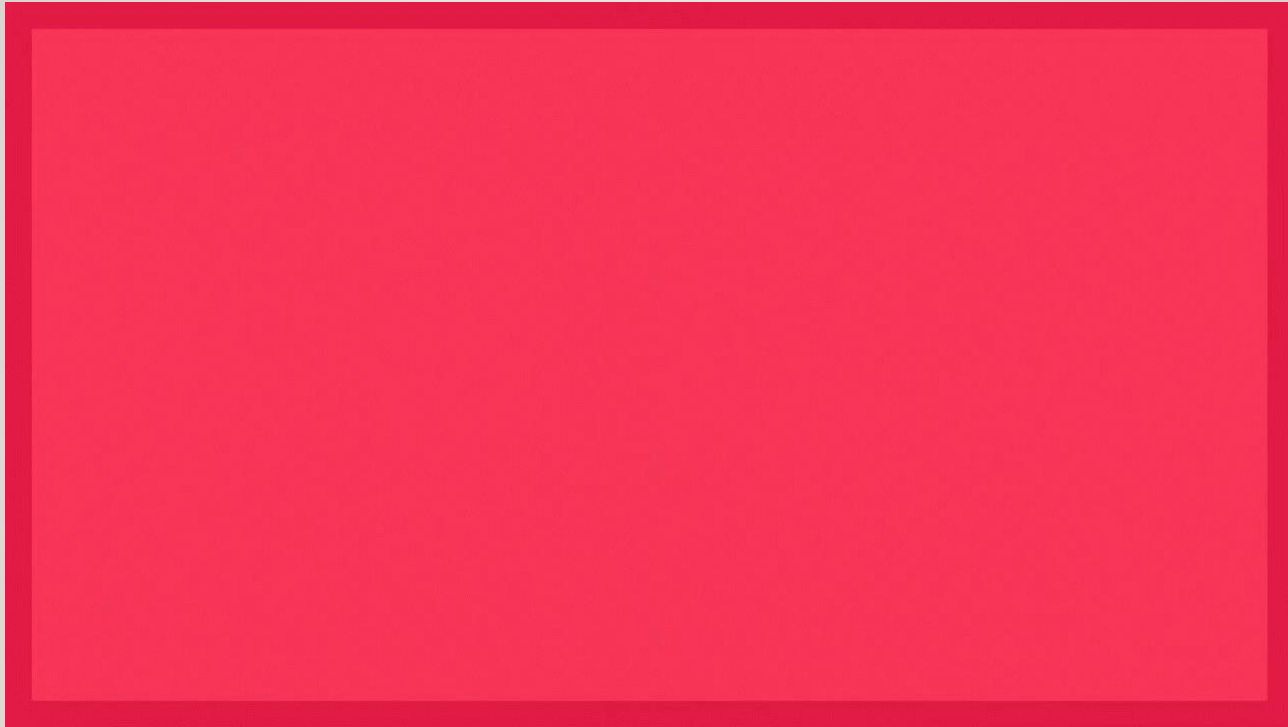
# EMPATHY VS. SYMPATHY

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# EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT ADDICTION IS WRONG

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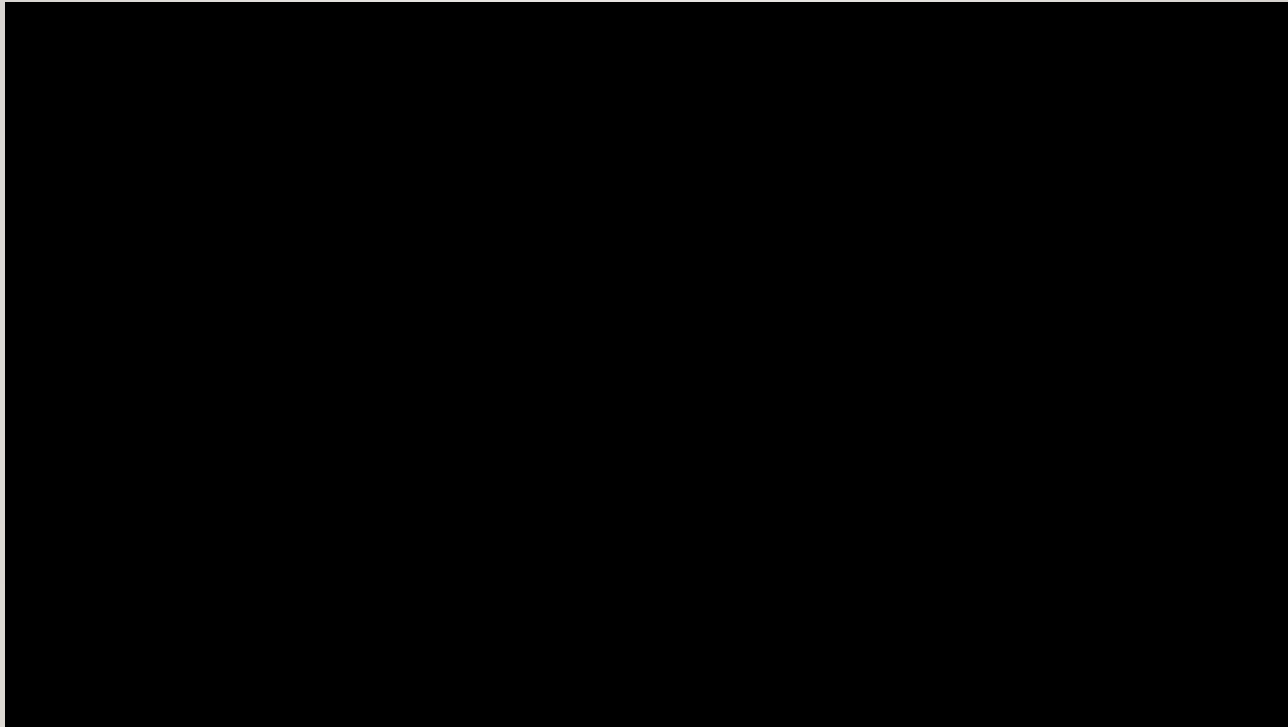


# SESSION ASSIGNMENTS

- Parent Session – Session 5-Feelings 2c
- Family Session - Session 10 – Clear directions and Parent’s game (3b popsicle stick activity or blindfold)
- Child Session – Session 5 – feelings-where do you feel it (2 a,b,c) Session 6 – cooperation and contribution – I am a star. (3 a,b,c)

# JUST BREATHE – ANGER & MEDITATION

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# FACILITATION NOTES

- Prepare for the delivery of each session (review, know the activities, division of presentation with your co-facilitator, have materials and flip charts prepared with timing)
- Debrief with your team after each session to problem solve and improve the delivery



# IN GENERAL:

- Appreciate the diversity among your group
- Acknowledge possible family/child discomfort as they begin the program
- Focus on family strengths
- Concentrate on skill acquisition and practice (particularly for parents)
- Invite parents to try new methods

# IN CONCLUSION

- Note the balance between confidentiality and the need to report disclosures
- Plan for unexpected events – they will happen!
- Remember the focus is on skill development and practice and not treatment
- Cannot resolve issues of child/teen problem behaviour but can improve the interaction
- Referring families for follow up treatment is an important and often necessary outcome of the program [Booster session helps with this]
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# EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance Chart
- Satisfaction Surveys
  - Adult
  - Child
  - Process Evaluation Form
  - To be completed by coordinator and facilitators

# WRAP UP

- Remaining questions, issues
- Closure

# IKEA – THE OTHER LETTER

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# CHEERIO EFFECT

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# CIRCLE OF SECURITY

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# PARENTS ARE THE ANTIDOTE

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