Background

- Secure attachment in infancy has lifelong consequences for a person’s ability to engage in relationships with others, to maintain commitments to school or work and to raise healthy, happy children of their own.

- Although insecure attachment in early childhood can set the stage for further risk factors, its consequences can be overcome by later positive attachments.
Background

- The Mental Health Services are currently being under utilized as reflected by the low Latino penetration rate for Merced County.
- Merced County has 11 unincorporated Communities that are being unserved/underserved (Ballico/Cressey, Delhi, Hilmar, Le Grand, Planada, Santa Nella, Snelling, South Dos Palos, Stevinson, and Winton)

Background

- Mental Health information is not getting to all of the communities in Merced County
- Information needs to be accessible
- Some members of the community are ineligible for services
Identified Barriers

- Lack of transportation
- Ineligible for services
- Mental Health Services are not in the Community setting
- Lack of funds/resources
- Lack of Early screenings

WELCOME TO THE MERCED COUNTY STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM

- To improve access to services
- To increase the quality of services for better quality outcomes.
Purpose

- Increase mental health presence in the community
- Develop resources that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Improve the mental health of the community

Purpose

- Address the issues of individuals ineligible for other services
- Increase awareness of the community resources
- Provide training in early screenings to identify developmental milestones
- Operate in a culturally responsive manner
Currently Serving the Communities of

EL NIDO
SOUTH DOS PALOS
PLANADA
DOS PALOS
LE GRAND

Priority Population

- Families in Merced Community
- Children born into stressed families
- At risk youth
- Trauma exposed youth
Vision of the Strengthening Families Program

The Strengthening Families Program was developed to decrease risk factors by intervening early and building upon resiliency factors and cultural strengths and wisdom.

- To enhance protective factors
  - Nurturing and attachment
  - Knowledge of parenting and or child, youth and adolescent development
  - Parental resilience
  - Social connections
  - Concrete supports for parent

- Increasing mental health presence in the community
- Developing resources that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Improve the mental health of our communities
- Address the issue of individuals ineligible for other service
- Increase awareness of the community resources
- Train the community in providing early screenings
- Identify developmental milestones and life transitions
- Operate in a culturally responsive manner
Grand Strategy

We are in community each time we find a place we belong—Peter F. Brock.
Building the Mental Health Workforce

“Caring Adult Approach”
Community Driven
Building on Cultural Wisdom

Engagement Strategies
- To build the Mental Health workforce from the Community
- By hiring Caring Adults living in the community areas
- Functioning as Community and Development Partners

We are in community each time we find a place we belong-Peter F. Brock
We are in community each time we find a place we belong—Peter F. Brock

Engagement Strategies

- Proactive, go to the communities and reach people of all ages and socioeconomic status rather than wait for them to come into clinics or other mental health settings.

Learning Goal

- Test out the benefits of recruiting family and community development partners as “Community Educators” focused on prevention and early intervention.
We need to make sure that no boy or girl in America is growing up without having in his or her life the presence of a responsible, caring adult. Where else does a child learn how to behave? Where else does a child learn the experiences of the past, the totems and traditions of the past? Where else does a child look for the proper examples except from responsible, caring, loving adults in his or her life?”

General Colin L. Powell—America’s Promise Founding Chairman

Caring Adult Description

Caring Adult is a member of the family or extended family who has a desire to learn and develop competencies to improve overall family mental health to promote and support well being to reduce family stressors contributing to challenging life circumstances.
What is a Caring Relationship?
- Being there
- Models caring
- Showing interest in
- Getting to know compassion
- Listening/Dialogue
- Patience
- Basic trust/safe

Community Development Partner Description
- The Community Development Partner will serve as the educator and link for the Strengthening Families Project.
- The Development Partner must be a “Caring Adult” residing in the community.
What are the Qualities of a Community and Development Partner?

- Good mentor
- Trusted counselor or guide
- Wise, loyal advisor or coach
- Invested in the health of the community
- Assist in identifying developmental milestones and life transitions
- Collaborative partner in relationships with families in the community
- Dedicated to training others to establish a healthier community
- Increased knowledge by training others
- Culturally responsive community liaison
- Assist in the development of a community consortium to help families and the community

Core Competencies:

- Attachments-making relationships
- Self Regulation-Containing impulses
- Affiliation-Being part of a group
- Attunement-Being Aware of others
- Tolerance-Accept differences
- Respect-Finding value in differences
We are in community each time we find a place we belong—Peter F. Brock

Strategies

- Positive Community
- Cross Cultural Learning
- Sustainable Resources

Community Resources Developed

- One to One family support
- One to one individual support
- Community Education
- Linkage to community resources
Community Resources Developed

- Linkage to services at the Mental Health Department
- Linkage to other community programs
- Partnering with the schools
- Providing Circles of Support in the community
- Home visits-engaging families in their home
- Providing grief support and intervention
- School intervention
- Partnering with community programs
- Outreach to older adults
- Partnering with faith based organizations

Community Resources Developed

- Home visits-engaging families in their home
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We are in community each time we find a place we belong—Peter F. Brock

Outcomes

- Improve the lack of diversity in mental health professions
- Increase the diversity of the mental health workforce
- Improve diversity in higher paying professions with greater education requirements
- Infusing in the system culturally specific programs.

Outcomes

- Improving self worth building on cultural wisdom, identity and support.
- Implementing programs to support life transitions for all ages.
- Utilizing life skills building as engagement tools.
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Closing

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

Albert Schweitwer