

Discovering Your Family's Strengths: A Five-Part Webinar Series



PART 1

Strengths to Make It Through

How Families Can Grow Together Through Everyday Challenges . . . and Big Stuff



Discovering Your Family's Strengths

A ParentFurther webinar series from Search Institute

Based on *The American Family Assets Study*

THE AMERICAN Family Assets STUDY

- 1,511 families
 - One parenting adult
 - One 10 – 15 year old
- Diverse (quotas)
- Oversampled
 - African Americans
 - Latino/Latina
 - Asian Americans
- Weighed to U. S. Census



OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS:

- www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-assets
- disneydiscoverttogether.com



Syvertsen, A. K., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Scales, P. C. (2012). *The American family assets study*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

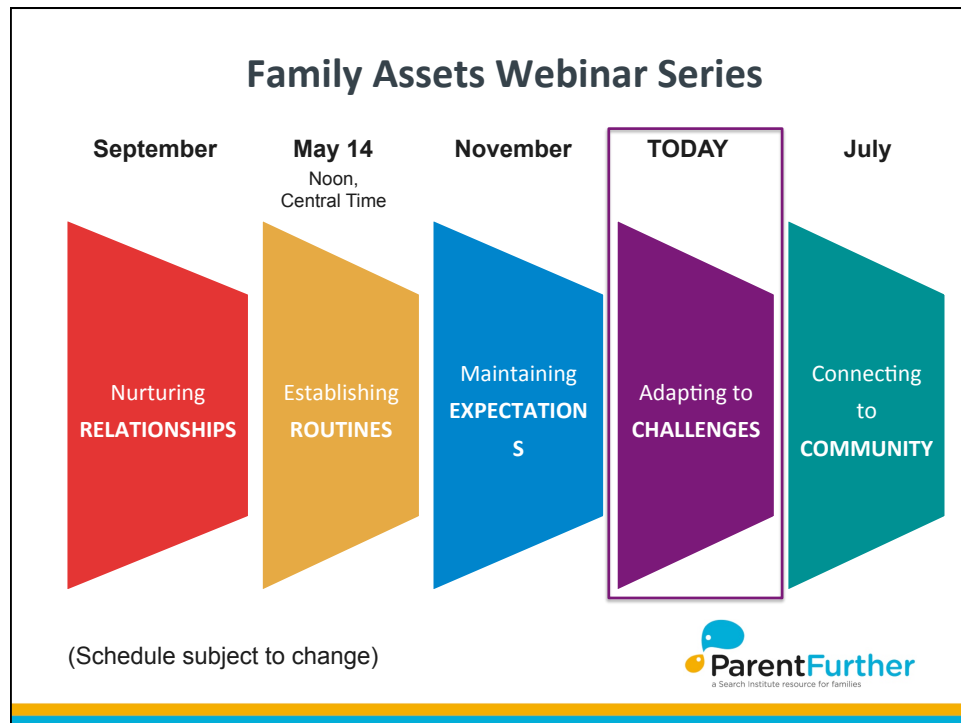


Family Assets Framework




www.parentfurther.com/familyassets







Session Overview



- Challenges families face
- Resilience
- Adapting to Challenges
- Strategies for parents
- Strategies for those who work with families





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What Experience Do You Bring?

What are some experiences you've had or families you've worked with that are on your mind as we begin this conversation?

- What challenges have you/do they face?
- How have those experiences shaped you or them?

You may keep these thoughts private, or you may share them with us by typing them in the chat section.



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POLL

Which of the following is your primary interest in participating in this webinar?

1. Help my own family deal with everyday stresses
2. Help my own family deal with a major challenge
3. Support families I work with in dealing with everyday stresses
4. Support families I work with in overcoming major challenges

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Underlying Themes

- The power of family strengths to . . .
 - Manage everyday challenges
 - Cope with crises
 - Recover from trauma
- The power of everyday actions, practices
- The central role of relationships

} Family Resilience



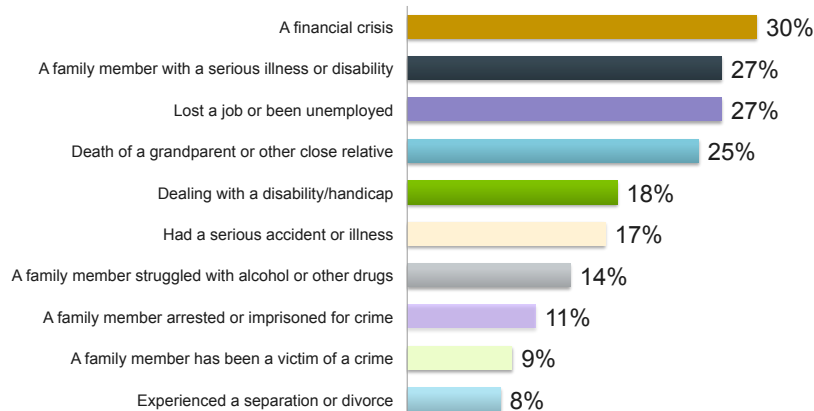
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Challenges Families Face

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Challenges in Past 2 Years (2011)



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- 12% reported 0 out of 75 possible
- 50% reported 6 or lower (out of 75 possible)
- Mean = 9 out of 75

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The Current Focus on Childhood Trauma

Potential

- Current interest in childhood trauma
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)*
- Invest in those facing greatest challenges

Risk

- Re-enforce perceptions of families, youth as dysfunctional
- A sense of inevitability
- Identify “determinants,” rather than “factors”

* Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: <http://acestudy.org/>

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The Negative Effect of Risk Focus

“Most studies . . . tended to dismiss the family as hopelessly dysfunctional and to seek positive extrafamilial resources to counter the negative impact. Thus, families were seen to contribute to risk, but not to resilience.”

— Froma Walsh



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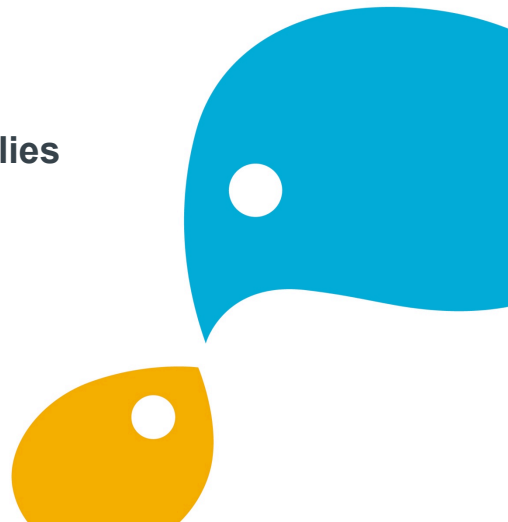
Walsh, F. (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity* (3rd ed., pp. 3-26). New York: Guilford.

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Resilience in Families



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Resilience: The capacity to withstand traumatic and stressful experiences.

“People who are resilient draw on strengths in **themselves**, their **relationships**, and their **communities** to help them **overcome adversity**.”

— This Emotional Life (PBS, 2010)
www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/resilience



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“Ordinary Magic”



“Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities.”

— Ann Masten, 1991

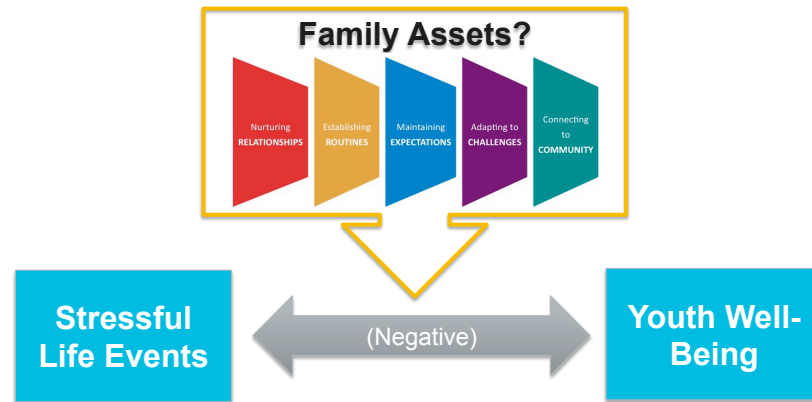


Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227–238.
 doi:10.1037//0003-066X.56.3.227



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Family Assets as Resilience Factors



Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2013). *Families and communities together: Strength and resilience during early adolescence* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



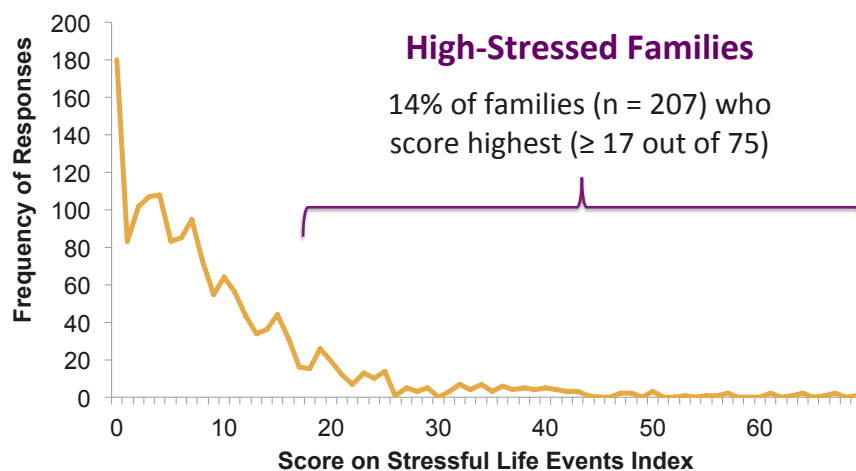
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13 Stressful Life Events

Parent Experienced	Family Experienced	Youth Experienced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation or divorce • Job loss/unemployment • Serious accident or illness • Disability • Military deployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim of a crime • Arrested or imprisoned for a crime • Struggled with abuse or alcohol or drugs • Natural disaster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death of parent/caregiver • Death of sibling • Death of grandparent/close relative • Death of a friend
Weighted for recency and intensity		



Stressful Life Events



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Family Assets & Resilience


If youth in high-stressed families experience **high** levels of family assets, they are . . .

9 times	more likely to exhibit	Personal responsibility
7 times		Self-regulation
7 times		School engagement
5 times		Caring

. . . than youth in high-stressed families who experience **low** levels of family assets.


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Adaptability in Families

Strengths to Thrive Amid
Everyday Challenges





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Adapting to CHALLENGES



Nurturing RELATIONSHIPS	Establishing ROUTINES	Maintaining EXPECTATIONS	Adapting to CHALLENGES	Connecting to COMMUNITY
14. Management of Daily Commitments 15. Adaptability			16. Problem Solving 17. Democratic Decision Making	



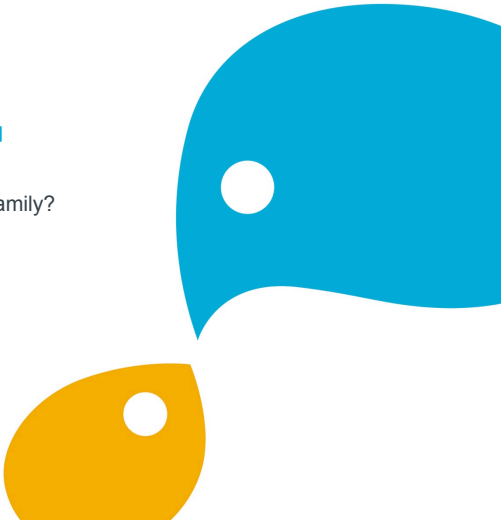


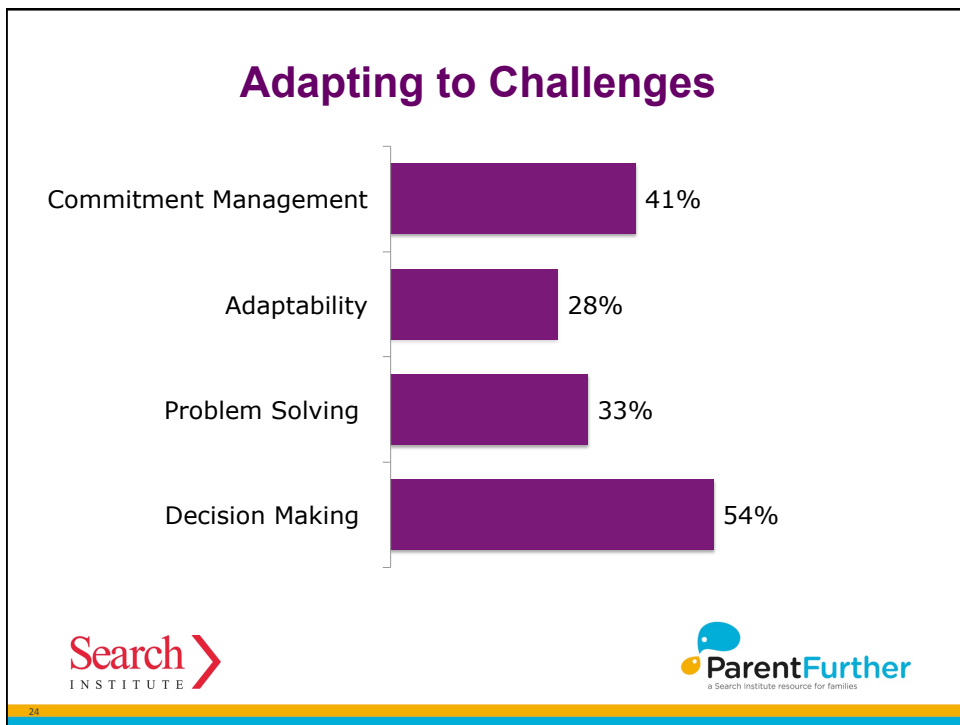
POLL

Which of these is hardest for your family?

- A. Managing daily commitments
- B. Being adaptable
- C. Solving problems together
- D. Making decisions together

If there's something else, jot it in the comments section.





Managing Daily Commitments: Different Issues for Different Families

- Multiple jobs to make ends meet
- Care-giving for a relative
- Juggling work and school expectations along with community participation, other activities
- These can squeeze out or interrupt . . .
 - Family fun and time together
 - Couple time
- Where does technology help and hurt?



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Management of Daily Commitments

When families work together to . . .

- Manage multiple commitments
- Make choices in light of shared, sometimes-competing interests
- Provide mutual support
- Take time to do things they enjoy

Then . . .

They . . .

- Reduce stress
- Increase personal and family satisfaction
- Develop negotiation
- Clarify role expectations and role balance.



Voydanoff, P. (2002). Linkages between the work-family interface and work, family, and individual outcomes: An integrative model. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23(1), 138-164. doi:10.1177/0192513X02023001007



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Adaptability

- Important in order to . . .
 - Adjust to new realities (internal or external)
 - Navigate relationships with each other
- Adjust to changing parent-child relationships
 - Changing roles and responsibilities
 - Increased autonomy
 - New capacities, interests
- Interacts with appropriate structure, routine



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Problem Solving: Two Elements

Practical Strategies

- Tackling issues (instead of putting them off)
- Working together to solve the problems
- Accepting responsibility (not just blaming others)
- Focus on maintaining relationships throughout

Meaning Making

How the family makes sense of the adversity while trying to adapt to new realities:

- Tap religious or spiritual resources
- Story telling
- Investing in a cause, person
- Maintaining hope

Walsh, F. (2006). *Strengthening family resilience* (2nd edition). New York: Guilford.



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Democratic Decision Making

- Democratic or shared decision making develops in young people:
 - Capacity to negotiate and compromise
 - Ability to make decision on their own when they need to
- Less about the “decisional authority”; more about the interactions around decision making
- How parenting adults and children engage each other in decision making and problem solving
- Authority shifts as young people mature

Levels of Shared Decision Making

Low Collaboration	Medium Collaboration	High Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent lets child decide on her/his own • Parent decides on their own with little or no input from the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent gives child options to choose from • Parent explains the reasons for her or his decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and child talk about pros and cons of different options • Parent suggests ideas and opinions • Look for mutually acceptable choices

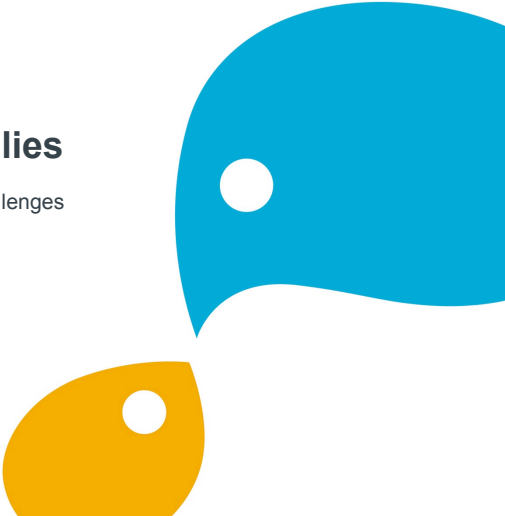
Miller, V. A. (2009). Parent-child collaborative decision making for the management of chronic illness: A qualitative analysis. *Families, Systems, and Health*, 27(3), 249–266. doi:10.1037/a0017308.



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Strategies for Families

Growing Together Through the Challenges



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10 Strategies for Growing Together (1)

1. Build a foundation of strengths through smaller challenges to help with the bigger ones
2. Be intentional about spending time together
3. Avoid blaming or shaming
4. Solve problems and make decisions together
5. Maintain routines, rituals that make life a bit more predictable

10 Strategies for Growing Together (2)

6. Ask for support and help from caring people
7. Pay attention to transitions and milestones
8. Be intentional about meaning making
9. Put relationships first
10. Be patient with yourself and with others



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Strategies for People Who Seek to Support Families

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Reframing the Emphasis

- When families are under stress and facing challenges, shift from . . .
 - Focusing primarily on their problems and the services they need
- To recognize, tap, and strengthen
 - Their internal resources and capacities
 - Their web of relationships
 - Their capacity to might contribute
- All of which are key to growing amid challenges



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10 Strategies for Supporters (1)

1. Reinforce, don't replace, family's strengths
 - Reinforce their capacity and self-efficacy
 - Maintain a sense of agency or autonomy
2. Give them time to talk things through (when ready)
3. Be proactive (not pesky) in offering support
4. Help family connect with people they trust
5. Walk alongside (more than giving advice)



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10 Strategies for Supporters (2)

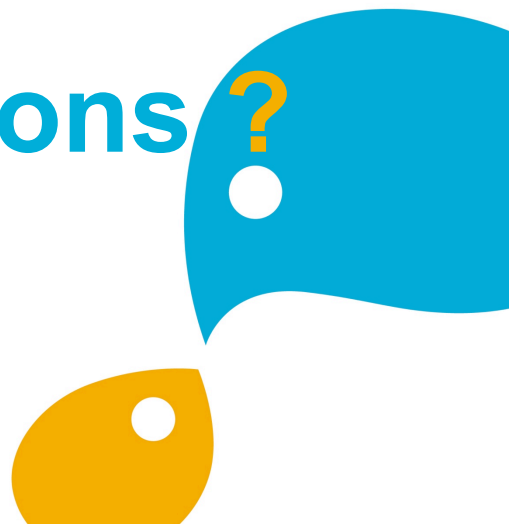
6. Offer practical, specific support
7. Connect family to networks, resources
8. Advocate on the family's behalf, when needed
9. Encourage them to take breaks (and make it possible)
10. Let families make meaning in ways that work for them (not necessarily for you)



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Questions?



Parenting Resources



Available at:
www.searchinstitute.org



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NEW Search Institute Workshops

Discovering Your Family's Strengths

A workshop for parenting adults

Engaging the New American Family

Relationship-based strategies for nurturing families' strengths

More Info on these and other workshops:

CALL: *Mary Shrader*: (800) 888-7828 ex. 526

VISIT: www.search-institute.org/presentations-workshops



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Next Webinar: May 14



Routines Don't Have to Be Ruts

Meaningful Routines for Today's Complicated Families



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Thank you for joining us!

VISIT AND COMMENT:

www.parentfurther.com