

# Mandatory Supporters



**MANDATORY REPORTING  
OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**WYChildren's**  
TRUST FUND

Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect



**Prevent Child Abuse**  
Wyoming™



Center for the  
Study of Social Policy  
Ideas into Action

# AGENDA

- Wyoming Reporting Law
- Definitions of Abuse and Neglect
- When to Report & When to Refer (or both)
- National and Wyoming Data and Trends
- Protective Factors

CHILDREN'S  
TRUST FUND  
**Alliance**<sup>™</sup>

Together, we can prevent child abuse, America...  
*Because childhood lasts a lifetime.*



## Sara Serelson & Nicole Neider





In the United States, 18 states **require** any person who suspects child abuse or neglect to report, regardless of profession.



WELCOME TO

WYOMING

FOREVER WEST

## Wyoming state law (statutes 14-3-205)

Everyone must report suspected abuse or neglect of a child if there is reasonable cause to believe it may be occurring.



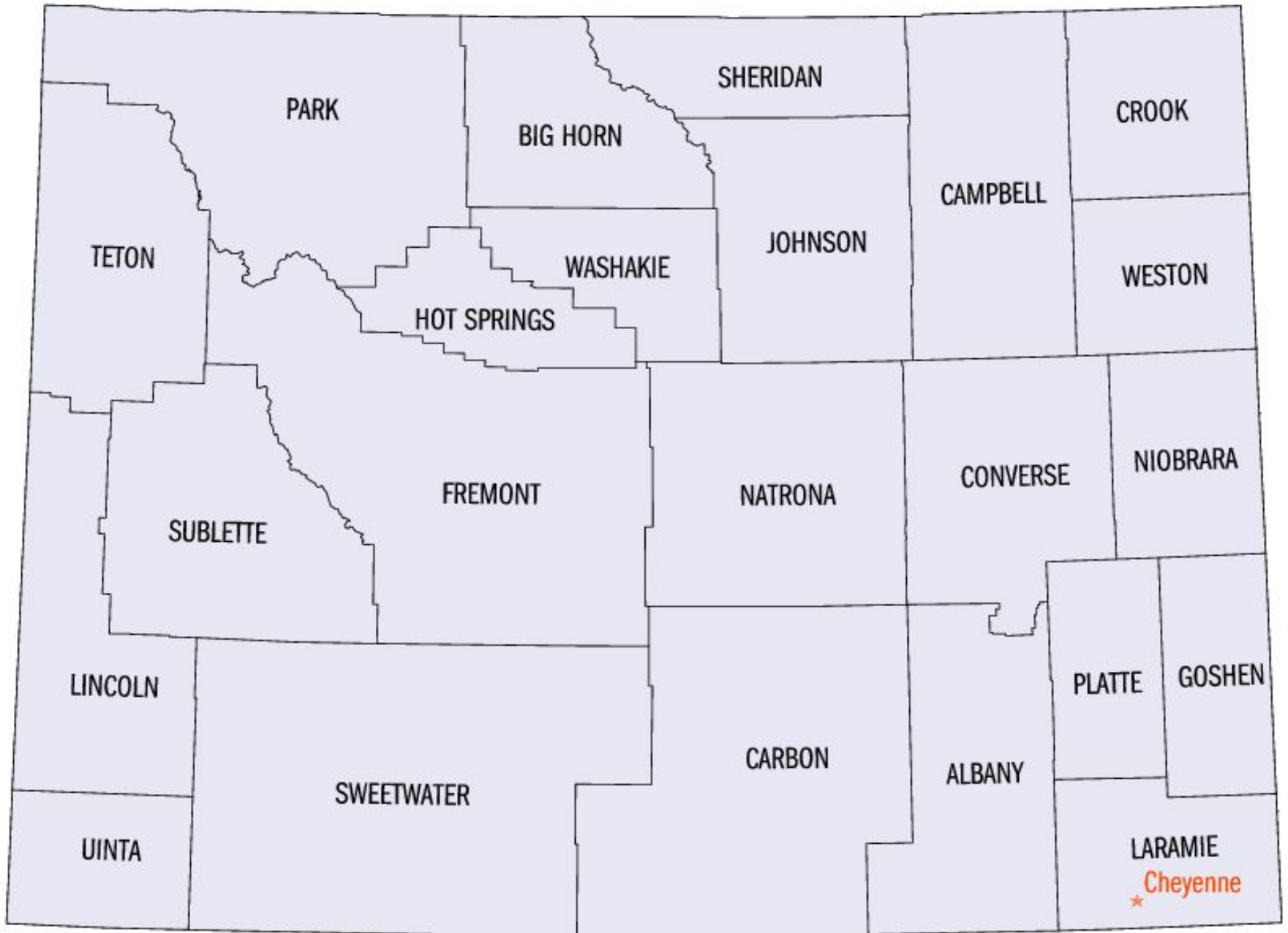


Any employer, public or private, who discharges, suspends, disciplines or penalizes an employee solely for making a report of neglect or abuse under W.S. 14-3-201 through 14-3-215 is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, a fine of not more than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00), or both.

**Any person who knowingly and intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or neglect, or who encourages or coerces another person to make a false report of child abuse or neglect, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, a fine of not more than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00), or both.**







LARAMIE  
★ Cheyenne

# child abuse and neglect

noun

1. Any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent, caregiver, or another person in custodial role that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.
2. A preventable act.



# Content Warning



# Definition of Child Abuse

Inflicting or causing physical or mental injury, harm or imminent danger to the physical or mental health or welfare of a child other than by accidental means, including abandonment, unless the abandonment is a relinquishment substantially in accordance with W.S. 14-11-101 through 14-11-109, excessive or unreasonable corporal punishment, malnutrition or substantial risk thereof by reason of intentional or unintentional neglect, and the commission or allowing the commission of a sexual offense against a child as defined by law.

{W.S. 14-3-202}

# Imminent Danger

“Threatened harm and means a statement, overt act, condition or status which represents an immediate and substantial risk of sexual abuse or physical or mental injury”.

{W.S. 14-3-202}

# Definition of Child Neglect

“with respect to a child means a failure or refusal by those responsible for the child’s welfare to provide adequate care, food, clothing, safe shelter, maintenance, supervision, guidance, education, medical care, surgery, or any other care necessary for a child’s well-being.”

(14-3-202 (a)(ii)(D)(vii))

# Definition of Physical Abuse

Non-accidental traumas which are deliberate physical injuries or physical injuries resulting from indifference, negligence or improper supervision.

# Possible Signs and Symptoms– Physical Abuse

- Injuries that do not make sense or match the explanation given
- Recurrence of physical marks or injuries
- Bruises, welts or adult-size bite marks
- Several injuries in several stages of healing
- Multiple bruises
- Burns (Flame, Scald, Contact, Electrical, Chemical, Sun)
  - Marks from cigars or cigarettes
  - Resemble an object
  - Immersion or Splash marks from scalding
  - Rope/friction burn markings
  - Burns Head injuries
- Broken bones
- Lacerations or abrasions to mouth, lips, gums, eyes, external genitalia, limbs or torso
- Injuries to both sides of the face
- Grab marks on the arms and shoulders
- Internal injuries





# Definition of Sexual Abuse

"The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children."

(Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, 42 U.S.C.A. § 5106g(2) (2003).)

# Possible Signs and Symptoms – Sexual Abuse

- **Difficulty walking or sitting**
- **Pain, itching, bleeding or bruising in genital area**
- **Torn, stained or bloody underclothing**
- **Sudden onset of wetting or soiling of pants or bed**
- **Sexualized play indicating knowledge beyond what is normal for the child's age**
- **Sexually transmitted diseases**
- **Pregnancy, especially in early adolescence**
- **Inappropriate sexual expression with trusted adults**
- **Age inappropriate sexual knowledge or aggressive sexual behavior that appears adult-like**
- **Statements suggestive of sexual abuse**
- **Fears and/or extreme avoidance of specific persons, places or things**



# On Sexual Abuse...



- **Children frequently don't talk about it.**
  - Abusers commonly use threats to keep victims quiet
  - Some abusers bribe their victims or tell them that no one will believe them if they tell
  - In incest cases, abusers may scare the child into believing they will both go to jail or the child will be placed in foster care, if the child talks
  - The child may feel embarrassed or ashamed
- **Sexual abuse can occur and physical evidence may disappear quickly or not exist.**

# When to Report?

- Suspected abuse or neglect has occurred
  - Refer to Definitions
- Imminent Danger of a Child
  - There is reason to believe that abuse or neglect is going to occur.
  - Refer to Definitions
- Child is suicidal
  - Contact law enforcement or 911 for life threatening situations.

# What information should I gather?

**Name of household members** (Parents, Children)

**Other household members;**

**Address and phone number(s), Places of employment;**

**Allegations;** Collect as much specific information from the reporter, including, what, where and when the incident occurred.

**Household factors:**

Domestic violence in the home;

Family member's drug/alcohol use;

Physical and/or mental health issues; and

Special needs for any family members.

**The strengths of the family and the family's culture;** and

**Safety factors** (i.e. guns, knives, or other weapons in the home; violent and/or threatening behaviors; manufacturing or use of methamphetamine or other drugs; and/or safety threats).



**If a child has a serious illness or injury requiring immediate attention;  
If a crime has been or is about to be committed;  
If a child has just caused or is about to cause serious harm to self or others.**



# Common Myth About Child Abuse and Neglect

- Reporting child abuse means children leave their families.

**NO**

- In most child abuse cases, children remain with their parents and there is a plan to improve the internal workings of the family.



# Common Myth About Child Abuse and Neglect

DFS takes children into custody.

**NO**

- Wyoming law places authority for children being removed from their parent's custody to law enforcement, specific medical personal, and the court. Wyoming DFS does not have legal authority to remove children from the home.



WYOMING DEPARTMENT  
OF FAMILY SERVICES

**The majority of Wyoming children placed in foster care return to their parent(s).**

**In 2019, 72.2% of children leaving foster care were reunified with family.**

# HIPAA and Reporting

The HIPAA privacy rule allows covered entities to disclose protected health information to law enforcement officials where child abuse and neglect victims are concerned through provisions stating:

“Child abuse or neglect may be reported to any law enforcement official authorized by law to receive such reports and the agreement of the individual is not required (45 CFR 164.512(b)(1)(ii)).”





**DATA**

A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds in the United States.

Statistics taken from: <https://www.childhelp.org/child-abuse-statistics/#pneglect> and National Children's Alliance



CLASSROOM  
BUILDING



# ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

# NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

# HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse



# Wyoming Child Abuse

**Reports made to DFS in Wyoming**

**7,792**

(January to December 2022)

**Screened In reports**

**52.6%**

(January to December 2022)

# Wyoming Data

Reports that involved an allegation and was investigated

**649**

(January to December 2022)

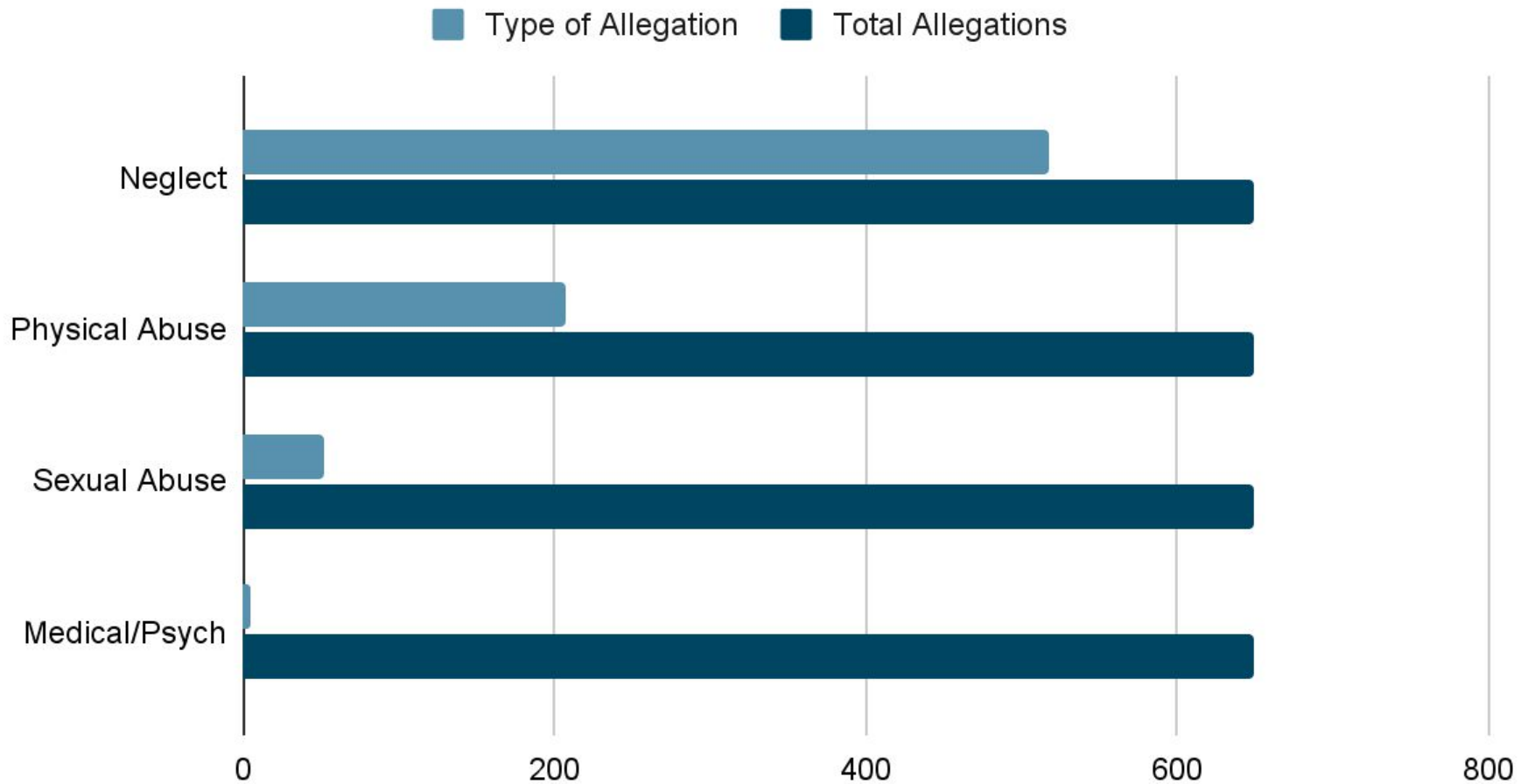
**Substantiated for abuse or neglect**

**425**

(January to December 2022)

# A few more WY statistics....

## 2022 Maltreatment Allegations in WY



# The Code of the West

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Live each day with courage

Take pride in your work

Always finish what you start

Do what has to be done

Be tough, but fair

When you make a promise, keep it

Ride for the brand

Talk less and say more

Remember some things aren't for sale

Know where to draw the line





L I F E C L A S S

# When to Refer?

- Does the family need assistance in meeting basic needs?
  - Food
  - Shelter
  - Clothing
  - Transportation
  - Other basic needs
- Does the family need assistance in functioning or life skills?
  - Mental Health support
  - Educational support
- Are you unsure if there are available services to help the family?



# Unmet Family Needs

If your concerns include an unmet family need, you can and should provide the family with information about local resources.

You may respond in a number of ways depending on your knowledge of and relationships with family members.

Talk to the family about your concerns and discuss options for support, including referrals to appropriate support services.

You may also provide information regarding services and resources directly to the family.



**Call 211 with the family (a warm referral) or refer to the family to 211 (cold referral)**

# Which children are at higher risk?

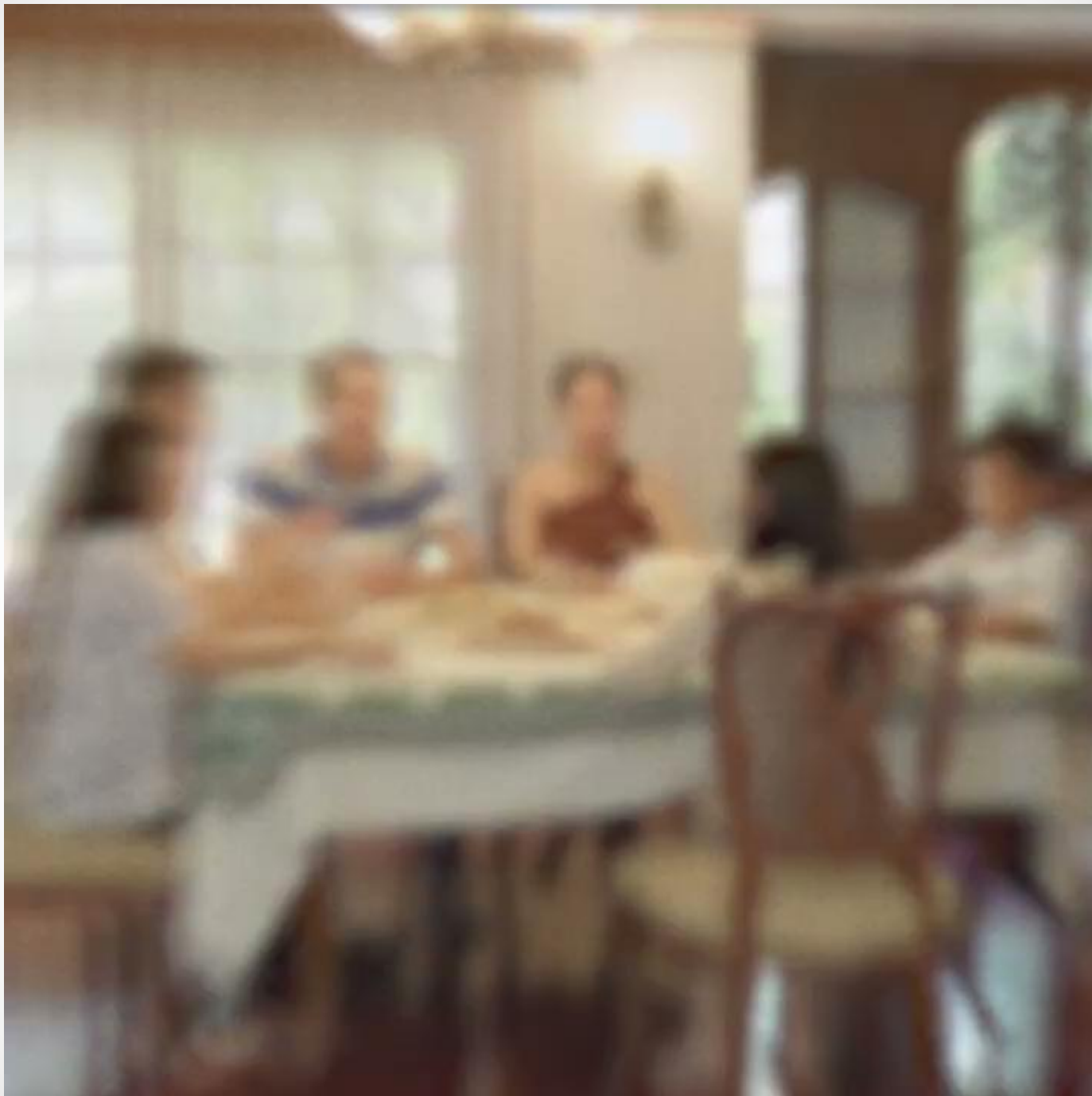
- Chronic or frequent illness
- Hyperactivity or ADHD
- Low grades
- Bladder or bowel control problems
- Disabilities or special needs
- Impulsive, aggressive, depressed or defiant temperament, since these qualities are more difficult for adults to handle.





**Risk factors**  
are not  
**predictive factors**  
because of  
**protective factors**

Dr. Carl Bell, University  
of Illinois



# Family Protective Factors

CENTER FOR THE STUDY  
OF SOCIAL POLICY'S

strengthening families™  
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Parental  
resilience

Social  
connections

Knowledge of  
parenting and  
child  
development

Concrete  
support in  
times of need

Social and  
emotional  
competence  
of children

What we know:  
Families gain what they  
need to be successful  
when  
**key protective  
factors**  
are robust in their lives  
and communities

# Resiliency



## Hard Things & Stressors:

- Not able to pay bills
- Not enough food to eat
- Violence
- Health problems
- Housing that does not feel safe

## Good Things & Resources:

- People that you can count on
- Dependable transportation
- Safe housing
- A doctor you trust
- Having enough money

## Things about You:

- Genetics and DNA
- Resiliency/ACE score
- Life story
- Personality

**Resiliency is when the scale tips toward the good even when there are stressors and hard things.**



# School and Family Connections in Adolescence Linked to Positive Health Outcomes in Adulthood

## YOUTH EXPERIENCE RISKS

**17%** of students considered attempting suicide

**19%** have been bullied at school

**14%** misuse prescription pain medicine



## SCHOOL & FAMILY CONNECTIONS HELP PROTECT YOUTH

Adults who experienced strong connections as youth were

**48%-66% LESS LIKELY TO:**

Have mental health issues

Experience violence

Engage in risky sexual behavior

Use substances

## SCHOOLS, FAMILIES, & PROVIDERS CAN HELP



**SCHOOLS** can implement positive youth development programs



**PARENTS** can have frequent & open conversations



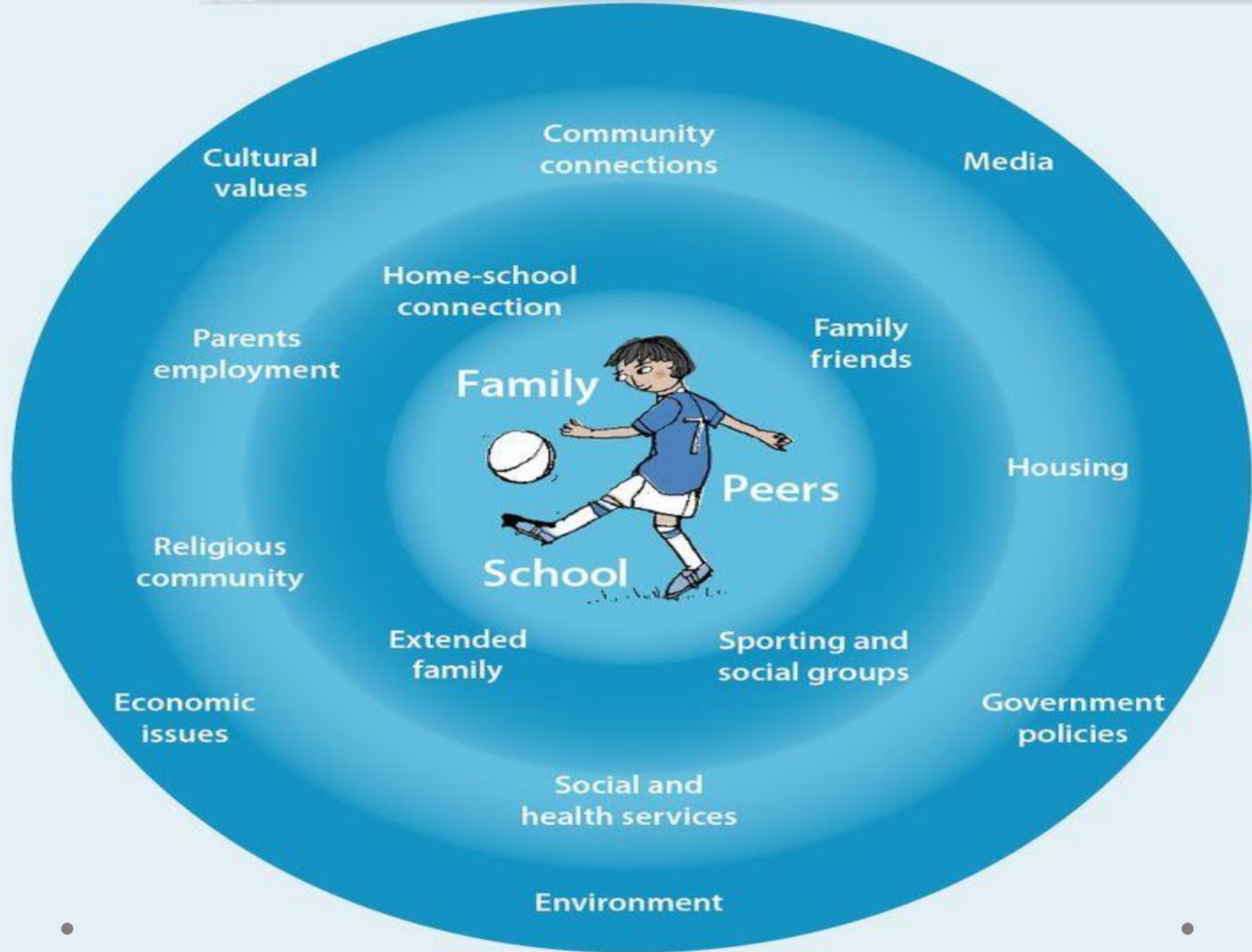
**PROVIDERS** can discuss relationships & school experiences

SOURCE: Steiner RJ, et al. Adolescent Connectedness and Adult Outcomes. Pediatrics. 2019;144(1):e20183766

<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3766>

CS 306049-A

[www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth)





# The Importance of Culture

**What is Culture?** Culture is an umbrella term that encompasses the collective social behavior, institutions, and norms found in human societies, which include the collective knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.

As we consider each protective factor, ask yourself these three questions:

- How does culture impact families as they seek to build protective factors?
- How does your own culture shape how you feel, think and behave?
- How do differences in culture impact helping others build protective factors?

## The Cultural Iceberg

Food   Flags   Festivals   Fashion   Holidays  
Music   Performances   Dances   Games  
Arts and Crafts   Literature   Language

Surface Culture

Deep Culture

**Communications Styles and Rules:**  
Facial Expressions   Gestures   Eye Contact  
Personal Space   Touching   Body Language  
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations  
Handling and Displaying of Emotion  
Tone of Voice

**Notions of:**  
Courtesy and Manners  
Friendship   Leadership  
Cleanliness   Modesty  
Beauty

**Concepts of:**  
Self   Time   Past and Future  
Fairness and Justice  
Roles related to Age, Sex,  
Class Family, etc.

**Attitudes toward:**  
Elders   Adolescents   Dependents  
Rule   Expectations   Work   Authority  
Cooperation vs. Competition  
Relationships with Animals  
Age   Sin   Death

**Approaches to:**  
Religion   Courtship   Marriage  
Raising Children   Decision-Making  
Problem Solving



# Cultural Safety and Families

Cultural Awareness

Understanding there are differences between yourself and people from other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values.



Cultural Sensitivity

Awareness and acceptance of cultural differences and withholding judgment of cross-cultural practices, and that you work effectively with these differences.



Cultural Humility

Commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique. Recognizing power dynamics and imbalances, with a desire to fix those power imbalances by developing partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others.



**CULTURAL SAFETY**

An environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for people. A space where there is no denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience of learning together.





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WYChildren's  
TRUST FUND

Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect



**Prevent Child Abuse**

Wyoming™

• Thank you for joining us today •



**STRANGERS**

**IN A**

**BALL PIT**

I don't know how you changed your life