Healthy Families – Family Health Action Team Weekly Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 21, 2022

Present: Kenneth Fowlkes, Kareem Lovelace-Crump, Mary O'Dowd, Elizabeth Coulter,
                    Kathryna Corpuz
Next meeting: Monday, March 28, 2022

1. **Summary**

- From our last meeting (3/14/2022), we have decided upon two main goals to address: (1) Family violence and (2) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) family friendly policies.

- Discussion: Reduction or mitigation of family violence
    - Reports that there has been a spike in domestic violence during COVID-19 pandemic.
    - It would be beneficial for us to understand and analyze the causes, stressors, and resources to improve this issue.
    - Questions for consideration:
        - What are the stressors leading to domestic/family violence?
        - What are the current resources available?
        - What is the long-term effect of domestic violence on families?
    - Risk and protective factors – risk mitigation
        - Recommendation to review how the CDC is addressing domestic violence – Reduce the risk factors and increase protective factors for families using the socioeconomic model as the guide.
            - We can organize our thoughts based on this and review and assess what strategies are ongoing at the national level and in other states.
    - Recommendations on the data we can review:
        - Police statistics on domestic violence
        - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS): https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.html
        - Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS): https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm

- Discussion: UNICEF family friendly policies
    - One of the challenges is that there is a significant amount of inequity and disparate utilization across families based on race and ethnicity.
    - Our goal can be to increase family friendly policies – both government oriented and in workplaces. How could we do this?
        - We can focus on improving utilization of benefits.
        - We can also talk about this in terms of access and consider questions like:
            - What family friendly policies exist? What are people not using?
            - Are they accessible?

- How do we increase access and utilization? (*consideration of different strategies)
- Is there a report card or other assessment available that shows us where we stand with this?
- What are barriers for utilization? (e.g., for paid parental and sick leave, not everyone is aware of their rights) It would be beneficial for us to better to understand the role of factors like lack of knowledge, social barriers, location, etc.
    - We can also consider the family friendly policies as a protective factor to our earlier discussion about the goal of mitigating family violence.
    - Equity needs to be part of the discussion too.
  - o Other examples used during this discussion included utilization of the child tax credit and free health insurance. There is a need to provide people with basic and relevant information on these policies and have tailored messaging/conversations for specific populations.

- Additional considerations: Expanding upon our two goals
  - o When we address our goals of mitigating family violence and increasing access to family friendly policies, we are going to touch upon other issues that other action teams/committees are addressing too. For example, we cannot talk about family violence without addressing issues related to behavioral health and addiction, maternal health, STIs, adverse child experiences, etc.
  - o What other areas should we consider as we define our goals? (*thinking about this as an underpinning goal)
    - Leverage/utilize the education and healthcare systems to reduce disparities in access to services, programs, and care (including dissemination of information and resources through these public systems)
      - Considerations for the education system piece: student learning standards; improved public education; social emotional health as part of the health curriculum; ensuring access to services and where to get help when needed; information on parental behavior
      - Considerations for the healthcare system piece: leveraging healthcare systems to increase awareness and connection with other social programs (e.g., violence prevention initiatives)
    - Additional questions for consideration:
      - How does this goal health curricula/student learning standards that are being rolled out this year?
      - What information and data do we have? What information and data do we need?
      - What other systems exist that should be included in this goal?

- More questions and topics for consideration in the discussion of these two goals:
  - o What is the role of fathers in the home?
  - o Incarceration among males
  - o Messages directed to fathers and messages between fathers and children

2. **Next Steps**
   - For next week's meeting (3/28/2022), our focus will be on the objectives/steps to achieve these goals. Here is the agreed agenda:
     - ○ Provide a recap on the goals based on ongoing discussions and determine focus areas per goal. (15 minutes)
     - ○ Brainstorm on the objectives/steps to achieve each goal (45 minutes)

   - Action items:

Action Item	Responsible	Timeline
Prepare notes from the meeting on 3/21/22	Mary O'Dowd, Kathryna Corpuz	To be shared by 3/25/22
Share notes from the meeting on 3/21/22 with the team	Tim Woody	To be shared by 3/25/22
Discuss how to better describe the health system/education component of the goals	Elizabeth Coulter and Mary O'Dowd	Week of 3/21/22
Prepare short slide deck on the draft goals	Mary O'Dowd	To be shared by 3/25/22 (with the meeting notes)

Family Health Committee

Healthy New Jersey 2030
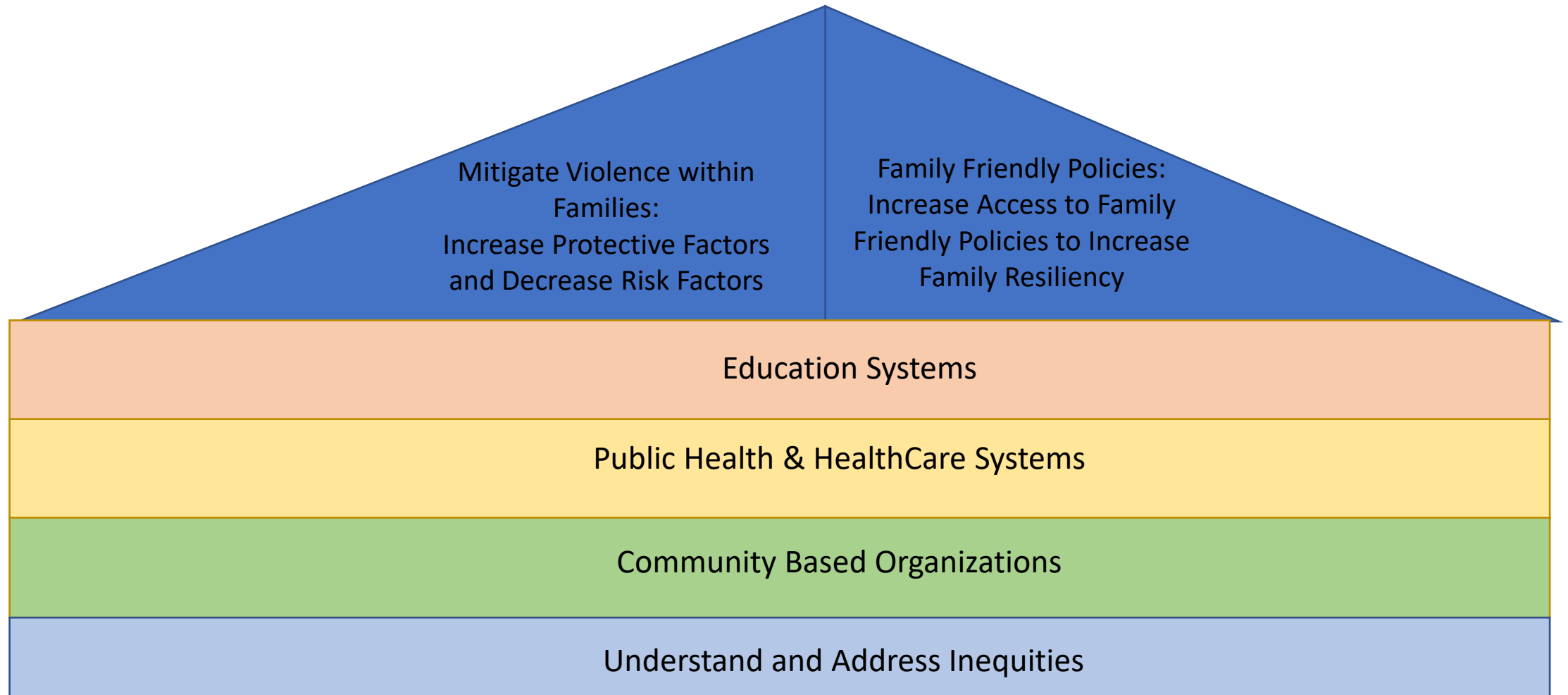
Draft Goals for Review and to Finalize

- *Mitigate** violence within families through 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.

*For discussion: based on our conversation there was a lack of clarity on these particular points and it would be helpful to discuss in our next meeting

Underlying Strategies

- Utilize the systems of public education, public health a healthcare, and community-based 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