

Community Café Themes

Professionals

Q1: In an ideal world, what would your vision be for supporting children and families and preventing child abuse and neglect? How would you know it when you saw it?

SUMMARY: In an ideal world, professionals wanted more resources, changed attitudes/beliefs, more education and social connections, increased awareness of CAN, mentally and physically healthy families, more funding, and a change in policy/politics.

Specifically, community resources would be more in number, low cost/free, and easy to access. There wouldn't be any fear or stigma surrounding parents asking for help and the community would adapt an "it takes a village", proactive-not-reactive mindset. There would be more parenting classes and training for professionals, as well as more public/parent knowledge of CAN in general. Agencies would collaborate with each other and people would connect with each other. Families would have their basic needs met, be stable, be free of substance abuse, and actively involved in the child's life. Programs would see an increase in funding and there would be less poverty. There would be no more child abuse or neglect.

Resources (91)

- More resources, general (42)
 - More mental health/substance abuse services – 7
 - Reinstated programs that were previously cut – 2
 - More in-home/home-based services – 3
 - More job training
 - Available public transportation – 4
 - Available everywhere – 4
 - Especially in rural areas – 2
 - More homeless resources – 2
 - More rent assistance
 - More child care – 3
 - More resources for families with disabilities – 2
 - More respite available
- Resources would be free/low-cost (11)
 - Affordable child care – 2
 - Affordable transportation – 7
 - Free/low-cost family activities in community
- Easier access/no barriers to resources (22)
 - No waiting lists – 2
 - Equal opportunity for all families – 14
 - Fewer qualifications/restrictions – 4
 - Non-traditional hours
- Resources would be combined/collaborative (5)
 - "Mental health at child care centers, schools, etc."
- More awareness of available resources (9)
 - Increased professional awareness
 - Use of one-stop-shop method – 2
- Resources would be improved (2)
 - Reliable transportation
 - Expanse of PAT

Attitude/Beliefs (45)

- No fear/stigma of asking for help (21)
 - Especially fear of DHS – 1
- Parents active in child's life (7)
- Parental accountability, responsibility (1)
- Value in education (1)
- Value in prevention (1)
- Foster empowerment (3)
- More village/family-focus, less self (5)
- More trust (2)
- Children as priority (1)
- More open-mindedness (1)
- Willingness to see help (2)

Education, general (37)

- More parenting classes/educated parents (26)
 - Including peer education
 - More parental engagement – 2
 - Variety of topics: drugs, finances, pregnancy, trauma, conflict resolution – 2
 - Starting before birth – 3
- More training for professionals (4)
 - On diverse needs of kids (disabilities, etc.)
 - On trauma
- Less absenteeism in school (1)
- Fewer behavior problems in school (1)
- Increased graduation rates (2)
- Home economics classes (1)
- Sex education (1)
- Educate children on negative emotions (1)

Social and Agency Connections (34)

- More interpersonal community connections/less isolation (11)
 - More support groups/systems – 5
- More professional connections (1)
 - Including from non-traditional sectors
- Interagency collaboration (17)
 - Use of multidisciplinary teams (mental health specialists, nurses, case managers, child development specialists all working together, etc.) – 2
 - Use of local organizations (schools, churches, etc.) – 3
- More community involvement (5)

Prevention Strategies (23)

- System-based services (1)
- Focus on early childhood/start young (3)
- Proactive, not reactive (11)
 - Involve families before crisis
- Use of data/measures (1)

- Easier way to identify families in need (2)
- Use of best practices (1)
- Holistic approaches (1)
- Break generational cycles (3)
 - Especially cycles of CAN

Awareness/Education of CAN (22)

- More public service announcements (1)
- More public/parent knowledge of CAN (15)
 - More education on appropriate discipline (2)
- Universal definition of CAN (3)
- More trainings on CAN (3)
 - More variety and more frequent

Health (20)

- No substance abuse (4)
- Mentally and physically healthy (9)
 - Lower stress
 - Fewer children on medication – 2
- Basic needs are met (7)

Culture/Community (20)

- Less violence/crime (3)
- Family cohesiveness and stability (4)
 - Including extended family – 2
- Less screen time/use of technology (4)
- More jobs (3)
 - Well-staffed agencies
- Fewer homeless (1)
- Fewer teen pregnancies (2)
- Safe places for children to go/play (3)

Money (17)

- Increased funding of CAN programs/no budget cuts (9)
- Better budget prioritization/use of funds (1)
- Less poverty (7)
 - Especially generational poverty

Measures (13)

- No CAN (6)
- Reduced calls to hotline (1)
- Fewer people accessing services (1)
- No jobs in CAN field (3)
- First in nation for CAN prevention (1)
- Fewer kids in foster system (1)

Policy/Politics (7)

- Fewer restrictions on interagency communication (2)
- Family assistance for parents going back to work after child (1)
- Labor laws supporting families (2)
- Legislators/leaders who value of CAN prevention (1)
- Stop parents from having more children if their previous children have been taken away (1)

Q2: Why doesn't it look this way today? What is stopping this vision from becoming today's reality?

SUMMARY: Professionals believed primary barriers included attitudes/beliefs, unavailable resources, problems with funding, lack of value from legislators, parental/familial isolation, and unhealthy families.

Specifically, clients are isolated, unwilling or unsure of how to change, fear reprimand or stigma of asking for help, and are experiencing multiple stressors and trauma. Lack of resources and difficulty accessing available resources are also barriers, as well as lack of funding, political hindrance and understaffed, overworked agencies.

Attitude/Beliefs (75)

- No village mindset/culture of self (6)
- Children aren't priority/not family-centered (4)
- Reactive, not proactive (4)
- Unwillingness to get involved (5)
- Unwillingness/unsure how to change (16)
- Overwhelmed by problem (2)
- Fear/stigma (15)
- Distrust of professionals/services (7)
- Lack of client follow through (1)
- Families not empowered (3)
- Victim blaming (1)
- Lack of compassion (3)
- Lack holistic approach (1)
- Lack value of mental health (2)
- Family belief systems (5)
 - lack appropriate boundaries
 - lack values
 - lack accountability/responsibility
 - zero sum thinking
 - denial

Resources (45)

- Lack of resources, general (21)
 - Transportation – 2
 - Variety – 2
 - Mental health services – 3
 - Bilingual services – 2
 - Safe places for children
- Lack of affordable resources (3)
 - Affordable housing
- Too many barriers/difficult access – (12)

- No equal access for all families – 2
 - Location
- Lack of awareness (8)
- Lack understanding of resource benefits (1)

Money (43)

- Lack of funding/budget cuts (29)
- Budget prioritizations/distribution (3)
- Silos (2)
- Poverty/unsubstantial minimum wage (7)
- Money mismanagement (2)

Culture/Community (36)

- Too much screen time (5)
- Generational cycles of problems (4)
- Overworked, understaffed agencies (12)
 - Lack quality, dedicated professionals – 9
- Having children too quickly/unintended pregnancies (2)
- Socioeconomic/cultural barriers (3)

Policy/Politics (27)

- Legislators don't care/no buy-in (24)
 - Lack CAN awareness/knowledge – 3
- High incarceration (1)
- Low voter turnout/voter education (2)

Social and Agency Connections (19)

- Families are isolated/lack support systems (13)
- Lack interagency collaboration (3)
- Lack community involvement (3)

Health (18)

- Substance abuse (4)
- Multiple stressors/in crisis/trauma (13)
- Intimate partner violence (1)

Education, general (12)

- Lack of training for professionals (3)
- Parent education doesn't start early/young enough (1)
- Lack of teachers/support for teachers (2)
- Community lacks education, general (5)
 - Especially of mental health – 2
- Over reliance on internet for information (1)

Awareness/Education of CAN (9)

- Lack understanding of appropriate discipline methods (1)
- Lack of CAN knowledge (8)

Prevention Strategies (6)

- Outdated strategies/formats (3)
- Too much time/effort to find families in need and gain trust (1)
- Short-term, crisis-oriented but nothing beyond (2)

Q3: How can we address these challenges or barriers to make this reality? What can be done right away to make it so?

SUMMARY: Professionals believed potential solutions included increasing social and agency connections, changing policies and educating legislators, increasing availability of resources, changing community mindsets, increasing education, and increasing funding.

Specifically, the following would be beneficial: more interagency collaboration; more resource availability and accessibility; resource collaboration; education of legislators and/or electing new legislators; and more parental education.

Social and Agency Connections (33)

- More interagency collaboration (22)
 - Professional collaboration
 - Partner with local organizations – 2
- More community involvement (8)
- Prioritize interpersonal connections (3)
 - Parental support groups

Policy/Politics (32)

- More advocacy (3)
- Fewer restrictions for child care licensing (1)
- Educate legislators/elect those valuing children and families (17)
- Educate voters (5)
- Stop payments to families whose kids were taken away (1)
- Paid maternity/family leave (2)
- Use of teen court (youth making decisions on other youth) (1)
- Criminal justice reform (2)

Resources (31)

- More resources (9)
 - Transportation
 - Home-based – 2
 - Mental health/substance abuse services – 2
 - Help parents meet basic needs
 - Food resources
- Improve resources (3)
 - Make transportation reliable

- Consistently accurate information
 - Create local, specialized resources by zip code
- Affordable resources (1)
 - Child care
- Fewer barriers/easier access (7)
 - Reduce waiting lists – 3
 - Fewer qualifications/restrictions
 - Equal access for all families
 - Use non-traditional hours
- Resource collaboration/combination (6)
 - Merge non-profits doing same thing
- Increase use of services (1)
- Increase awareness of resources (4)
 - Uniform resource list
 - Train professionals on available resources

Attitude/Beliefs (26)

- Foster the village mindset/family-centered (5)
- Foster trust in professionals/services (3)
- Empower families (4)
- Reduce fear/stigma of asking for help (4)
- Value education (1)
- Value prevention (6)
- Value mental health (1)
- Focus on quality instead of quantity (2)

Education, general (18)

- Educate the perpetrators (1)
- Educate parents (9)
 - On child development, discipline
 - More parenting classes – 3
- More training for professionals (4)
- Start education young/early (3)
- Increase high school graduation rate (1)

Money (17)

- Increase funding (8)
- Better budget prioritization/spending (5)
- Fewer silos (1)
- Reduce poverty/increase wages (2)
- More flexibility in spending (1)

Culture/Community (13)

- Build up middle class (1)
- Less screen time (3)
- Break generational cycles (3)

- More dedicated, quality professionals (5)
- Lower teen pregnancy rate (1)

Prevention Strategies (7)

- Model programs from other countries (1)
- Focus on root cause, not symptoms or outcome (2)
- Less paper work (2)
- Use data to measure/demonstrate progress (2)
- Create different strategies for different communities (1)

Awareness/Education of CAN (6)

- Increase CAN education/awareness (6)

Health (3)

- Reduce IPV (1)
- Reduce smoking rates (1)
- Prevent/reduce ACEs (1)

TOP* OVERALL THEMES:

** = 10+ responses total*

1. Availability of resources (72)
2. Funding (46)
3. Interagency collaboration (42)
4. Legislators/politics (41)
5. Universal ease of access/barriers to resources (41)
6. Fear/stigma of asking for help (40)
7. Parent education (35)
8. Mental and physical health of families (31)
9. Knowledge of CAN (28)
10. Family isolation (27)
11. Awareness of resources (21)
12. Motivation to change (18)
13. Quality and availability of professionals (17)
14. Village mindset (16)
15. Poverty (16)
16. Community involvement (16)
17. Proactive, not reactive (15)
18. Affordable resources (15)
19. Training for professionals (14)
20. Trust in professionals/services (12)
21. Technology/screen time (12)
22. Combine resources (11)
23. Empowerment (11)
24. Parental involvement/family stability (11)