

## OUR FOCUS

### The Community Campaign will.....

- build broad community awareness about ACEs and toxic stress,
- help parents to heal and support them with concrete skills and strategies to help their children build a healthy stress response, and
- mitigate the damaging effects of toxic stress through the six protective factors: healthy relationships, healthy sleep, good nutrition, sufficient exercise, good mental health and mindfulness.



## THE CHALLENGE WE ADDRESS

### Toxic stress is harmful to children.

Toxic stress occurs when children experience ACEs but do not receive buffering support from a caring adult. Toxic stress can negatively affect children's growth and behavior, and lead to long-term health problems.

**Parents and caregivers are in a unique position to help. They too may need support to heal.**

Many parents and caregivers are also dealing with their own ACEs and trauma. They may need to heal as they play a buffering role for their children.

## OUR STRATEGY

Work in partnership with community organizations and community members to

- bring information and strategies to parents and caregivers where they already are, and
- link parents and caregivers with the necessary supports to heal.

## OUR TACTICS

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### Direct training of parents and caregivers:

Train parents and caregivers about the physical and emotional impact of ACEs and toxic stress, and how to counter their impact

### Peer-to-peer outreach:

Train parent ambassadors to lead workshops and other educational sessions in their community

### Trusted messenger:

Train trusted messengers (e.g. doctors, educators, faith leaders) to deliver succinct messages and simple strategies during their usual interactions with parents

### Unusual suspects:

Train messengers who are not typically considered to be connected to the campaign (e.g. barbers, local business owners) to deliver succinct messages and simple strategies during their usual interactions with parents

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

### Parents and caregivers in BVHP will be able to...

- practice self-care
- help their children build a healthy stress response
- share their new knowledge and skills with other parents and caregivers

### Parents and caregivers in BVHP will know...

- the foundational science behind ACEs and toxic stress and are able to connect it to their own lives
- that they can be a protective buffer for their children
- that they may need to address their own ACEs and trauma as well

### Parents and caregivers in BVHP will think/feel...

- that it is okay to reach out and get help
- empowered to get through difficult situations
- that every little action counts
- that they can break negative generational cycles and start new family traditions

A happy, healthy, home!



## *Our Focus*

The Stress Health community campaign in the Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP) community has the twin goals of (i) building broad community awareness about ACEs and toxic stress (the 'air game'), and (ii) helping parents to heal and supporting them with concrete skills and strategies to help their children build a healthy stress response (the 'ground game'). The skills and strategies revolve around six protective factors that mitigate the damaging effects of toxic stress: healthy relationships, healthy sleep, good nutrition, sufficient exercise, good mental health and mindfulness.

## *The Challenge We Address*

### **Toxic stress is harmful to children.**

Toxic stress occurs when children experience severe and often repeated adversity such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and household instability, but do not receive support from a caring and trusted adult. If not addressed, the flood of stress hormones released by children's bodies in response to these adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) negatively affects their growth, learning, behavior and immunity and leads to long-term physical and mental health problems.

### **Parents and caregivers are in a unique position to help. They may need to heal, too.**

Addressing ACEs and toxic stress in childhood is an urgent priority. One of the most effective ways of helping children who are exposed to ACEs is through the support and care of a trusted adult, who buffers them from the negative effects of toxic stress. Parents and caregivers have an especially important role to play, because the earlier in life affected children get help, the better their long-term health outcomes. However, many parents and caregivers are also dealing with their own ACEs and trauma. They may need to heal as they play a buffering role for their children.

## *Our Strategy*

To reach as many parents and caregivers in the BVHP community as possible, the Stress Health community campaign will work in collaboration with community organizations and community members to bring information and strategies to parents and caregivers where they already are. Community organizations and community members who are already in frequent contact with parents and can serve as advocates and messengers for Stress Health. Moreover, bringing the issues of ACEs and toxic stress to the fore in community conversations will help to destigmatize them, and help parents and caregivers feel more comfortable seeking the support they need.

Parents and caregivers will also need access to a variety of supports for them to heal. Therefore, the Stress Health community campaign will develop partnerships with organizations that specialize in providing these supports.

## *Our Tactics*

### **The Stress Health community campaign will offer a variety of experiences for parents and caregivers. Our tactics include:**

#### **Direct training of parents and caregivers**

This tactic involves providing in-depth training to parents and caregivers. Direct training ensures that messaging stays consistent from trainer to parent without the risk of the message changing with an intermediary. Additionally, this strategy often uses a group setting, offering parents an opportunity to connect and learn with other parents. This strategy can be an important first step when training parent ambassadors (see Peer-to-peer strategy below).

#### **Peer-to-peer**

This tactic involves training parent ambassadors to lead workshops and other educational sessions in their community. Peer-to-peer messengers often have reputational authority in their community, and are often involved in local schools, community groups and faith-based communities. Like direct training, this strategy is often employed in a group setting.

#### **Trusted messenger**

This tactic involves training of trusted messengers (doctors, educators, faith leaders) to deliver succinct messages that are incorporated into their usual interactions with parents and caregivers, often in a one-on-one or small group setting. This strategy is effective because the messages come from someone who knows the family and is seen as an expert in the community. Family members can be more open to hearing and acting on the messages received from trusted messengers.

#### **Unusual suspects**

This tactic involves engaging messengers who are not typically considered to be connected to the campaign, but who have direct contact with parents and caregivers. These "unusual suspects" can include barbers and beauticians, local business owners, and others in the community who don't necessarily work in childcare or healthcare settings. This model is often used for "hard to reach" populations who may not be regularly engaged in settings more commonly associated with parents' education initiatives. This model is effective at giving brief messages in a setting that fosters confidentiality and camaraderie.

## *Desired Experiences for Parents and Caregivers*

### **Throughout the Stress Health community campaign in BVHP, parents and caregivers will...**

- receive multiple reinforcing messages and information about ACEs and toxic stress (from the media, through direct training or through intermediaries).
- have opportunities to reflect and heal in emotionally safe spaces.
- have opportunities to learn and practice new skills to help themselves and their children.
- experience a sense of community and support.
- celebrate their successes and find moments of balance in their lives.

## *Desired Outcome: Mindsets and Attitudes*

### **Parents and caregivers in BVHP will think/feel...**

- that it is okay to reach out and get help; it is not an indictment on their parenting skills.
- that it is okay to take time out to take care of themselves, so that they can take care of their families better.
- empowered to get through difficult situations, even if they are not able to eliminate all the stress and trauma in their own lives.
- that change takes time, and that it's okay to make mistakes along the way that incremental change for individuals can lead to larger, systemic change, and that every little action counts.
- that they can break negative generational cycles and start new family traditions for themselves and their children.
- that they and their families can be positive forces in their community.

## *Desired Outcome: Knowledge*

### **Parents and caregivers in BVHP will know...**

- the foundational science behind ACEs and toxic stress, and are able to connect it to their own lives.
- that they can help their children build a healthy stress response by being a protective buffer for them.
- that they may need to address their own ACEs and toxic stress as they play a buffering role for their children.
- where to go to get help in healing.
- how ACEs and toxic stress affect neighborhoods and communities.
- how to use a systems lens to understand ACEs and toxic stress.

## *Desired Outcome: Skills and Behaviors*

### **Parents and caregivers in BVHP will be able to...**

- access the help and resources they need.
- practice self-care.
- self-regulate and express their stress/frustration in healthy ways.
- help their children self-regulate and build a healthy stress response using household routines based on the six protective factors.
- advocate more successfully for their children and families.
- build and maintain supportive networks in the community.
- share their new knowledge and skills with other parents and caregivers.
- share with other parents and caregivers the successes they are seeing, and the impact Stress Health has had on their lives.

