



National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

The Director's Corner

Greetings,

February is [National Heart Health Awareness Month](#).

When we think about heart health we often think about diet and exercise. Stress is another factor that can negatively affect our heart health. We all have some stress in our lives, but families experiencing high-conflict relationships may be exposed to unhealthy levels of stress. In addition to affecting heart health, unhealthy levels of stress can lead to chronic fatigue, depression or over-use of substances such as alcohol.

Recognizing the signs of unhealthy conflict in a relationship allows couples and families to address concerns and work together to improve relationship skills as a strategy for reducing stress. Wonder how well you manage conflict? Visit our Virtual Training Center and take the ***Conflict Management Course***, part of our [Core Marriage and Healthy Relationship Skills \(4-part series\)](#) and find out. Healthy communication and conflict management are part of a healthy lifestyle just like eating right and regular physical activity. Take advantage of the tips and resources below to assist you and the families you serve in strengthening relationships and getting heart healthy.

Best regards,

Robyn Cenizal, Project Director



Tip of the Month

Your monthly tip to strengthen the relationships of those you serve. *Share it - Post it - Pass it on!*

Research shows that improved emotional, social, physical, and spiritual health leads to better outcomes for couples and families. Couples can support each other in improving their health by doing activities together or encourage each other to do activities alone or with friends. Here are several tips to keep yourself and your relationship healthy:

- Practice deep breathing and other stress management techniques, which are available in many communities at no or low cost through community centers and health centers.

- Focus on relationship maintenance strategies such as eliminating distractions (TV, phone) during meals.
- Spend time together in the community; volunteer to serve meals once a month at a homeless shelter, for example.
- Go for a walk together after dinner, and/or limit fast food intake to once a month.

For more tips to support healthy relationships, see the Resource Center tip sheet, "[Why good health matters in relationships](#)."



Featured Resources

The Resource Center's [Virtual Library](#) has collected more than 800 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

Select the links below to view our featured February resources:

- [Goals for Better Health \(Library Resource\)](#)
This tool can be used by service providers to work with individuals, couples, and families to identify goals for better health. Users will identify healthy choices they are already making that contribute to their health, and identify new healthy behaviors they will put into practice.
- [Take Care of Yourself \(Library Resource\)](#)
This tool can be used by service providers to work with individuals, couples, and families to help clients become more aware of healthy activities they do and/or can do to make themselves feel better.
- [Why good health matters in relationships \(Tip Sheet\)](#)
This tip sheet provides suggestions to help safety-net service providers raise consciousness and help couples start off on the path to improving their health and wellbeing, benefitting individuals and promoting stability for couples and families.



Events

The Resource Center's [Events Calendar](#) offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest. Upcoming events include:

- [2015 National Child Support Enforcement Association \(NCSEA\) Policy Forum in Washington, D.C., February 12-14, 2015](#): This year, the Policy Forum will celebrate 40 years of the IV-D program...its past, present, and vision for the future. We will continue to focus on changing family demographics in America, as well as the significant societal issues that affect our program and the families we serve.
- [Young Fathers of Central Florida \(YFCF\) 3rd Annual National Teen and Young Fatherhood Conference in Orlando, FL, February 26-27, 2015](#): The National Teen and Young Fatherhood Conference addresses issues facing 14-24 year old young fathers. Powerful speakers and life-changing workshops focus on innovative teen fathers' programming, proven parenting techniques, unique obstacles teen fathers face in education, legal issues, mental health and identifying employment resources.

Feedback and Technical Assistance:

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. If you would like to request Technical Assistance, please submit a [Training and Technical Assistance Request Form](#) and our Technical Assistance Coordinator will contact you.

To learn more about the Resource Center visit us at www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports safety-net service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

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Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FH0002. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.