



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER *for*  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE *and* FAMILIES

# **Making It Work: How Relationship Skills Support Economic Self-Sufficiency**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance

**May 13, 2014**

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Why Relationship Education M...	377 KB
My Relationship Isn't Perfect_T	300 KB

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Q & A

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# Webinar Agenda

- Introductions
- Understanding the connection between healthy marriage and relationship skills and benefits to employers
- Promoting Healthy Relationship Skills for Employees: A Guide for Workforce Professionals
- Lessons From Toledo Area Ministries
- Lessons From PB&J Family Services
- Q&A

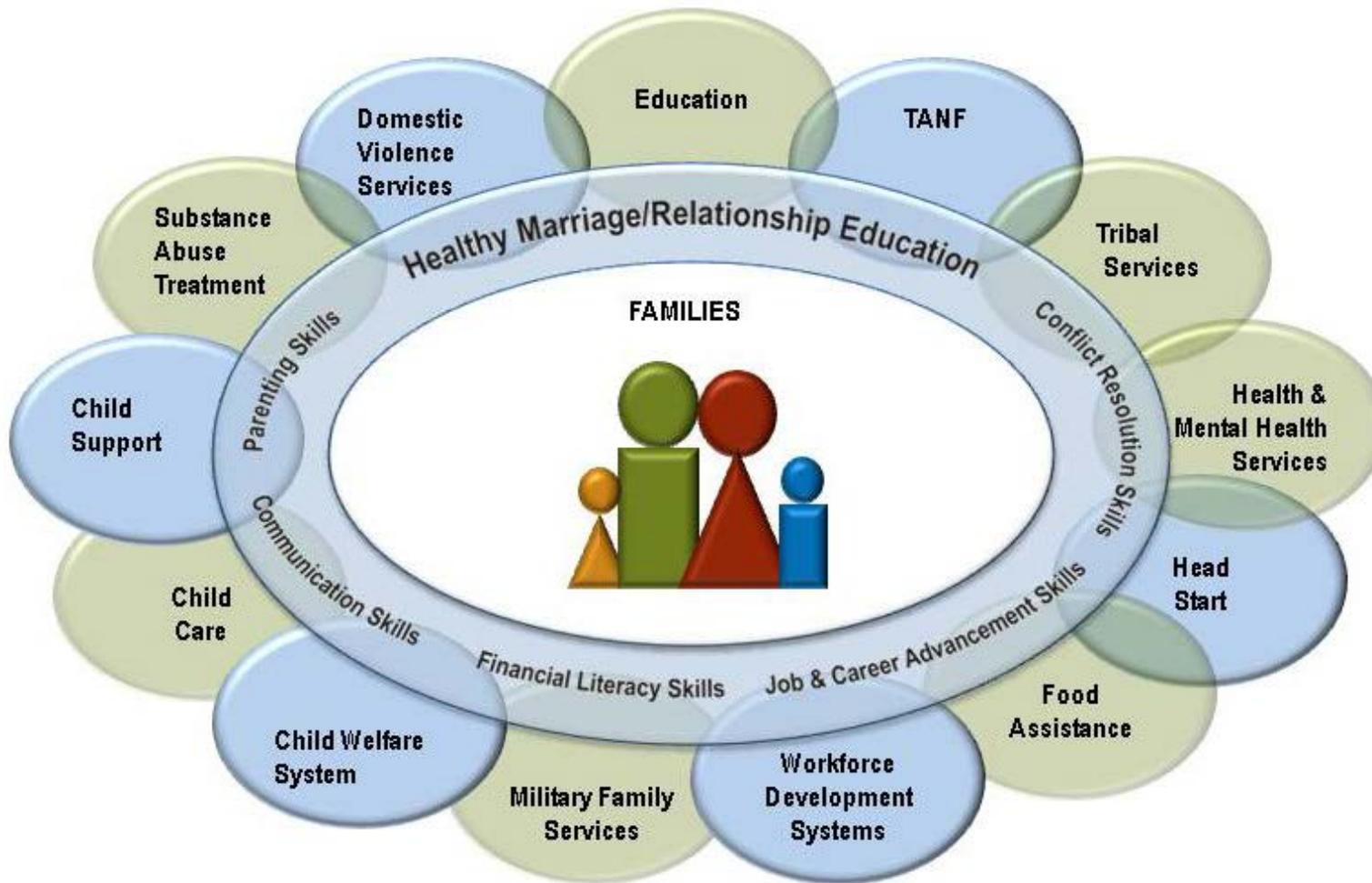


# National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

- **Mission:** Connecting healthy marriage education skills and safety-net services as an integrated approach to strengthening families



# Safety-Net Service Providers



# Presenters

- **John Wilcox**, co-author *Promoting Healthy Relationship Skills for Employees: A Guide for Workforce Professionals Toolkit*
- **Dorian Friedman**, co-author *Promoting Healthy Relationship Skills for Employees: A Guide for Workforce Professionals Toolkit*
- **Avis Files**, Director, *Keeping It Together*, Toledo Area Ministries
- **Dean Ma'ayan**, Director of Development & Strategic Initiatives, PB&J Family Services, Inc.

# ***Promoting Healthy Relationship Skills for Employees: A Guide for Workforce Professionals***



**John Wilcox**  
**Dorian Friedman**



# Background

- Corporate Voices for Working Families partnered with ICF and the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families to produce a user-friendly guide for practitioners, employers, and workforce professionals.
- The guide addresses the importance of promoting healthy family and marital relationships as an effective strategy to improve interpersonal relationships and productivity in the workplace.



# Background

- *Promoting Healthy Relationship Skills for Employees* focuses on specific steps employers can take to support employees, enhance their interpersonal skills, and reduce family stress.
- Employer-sponsored programs that strengthen key interpersonal skills such as **communication and conflict resolution**, and offer support for related skills such as **healthy parenting** and **financial management**, can strengthen families *and* improve business outcomes.



# Healthy Relationships ...

- Employee stress costs American businesses billions of dollars each year in health care costs, diminished productivity, absenteeism and turnover.
- An often overlooked source of stress comes from employees' relationships at home, including their marriages.



# ... and Success on the Job

- Research findings on healthy relationships suggest that **forward-thinking employers can play a positive role by making modest investments** in key relationship skills for their employees. Logical places to start:
  - Improving communication
  - Conflict resolution
  - Parenting
  - Financial literacy
- ... since these skills correlate with stability at home and on the job.



# Stress Costs Business

- **Stress** is a common part of the American workplace today
- Stress costs American business an estimated ***\$150 to \$300 billion per year***

(American Institute of Stress, 2013; related research)



# Stress Costs Business

- Increased stress drives employee turnover, diminishes productivity, and affects medical, legal, and insurance costs. Some studies have found 46% higher health care spending for stressed employees\*.
- Stress leads to higher workplace absenteeism than illness and injury, and has been linked to a range of health issues including depression and heart disease.
- The World Health Organization recently called stress “the health epidemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”

(\*Goetzal, Anderson, Whitmer, Ozminkowski, Dunn & Wasserman, 1998)



# Outside Stress Matters

- For many employees, a common source of stress from home is their relationship with their spouse or partner.
  - In one survey, 22 percent of employees said personal relationship issues were their biggest distraction at work
  - Another study estimated that American businesses lose \$6.8 billion a year due to work loss and decreased productivity linked to marital problems
- On an individual level, the divorce of one employee making \$20 an hour could cost his/her employer an estimated \$8,000



# Investing in Healthy Relationships Can Pay Real Dividends

- Research suggests that employees in healthy and stable relationships tend to be more productive, more committed to their employers, and healthier overall.
- And employees in healthy marriages can not only save employers in health care costs and other expenses, but may even increase company profits.
- When companies invest in the physical and emotional wellness of their workers, the “ROI” can range from \$1.50 to as much as \$6.85 for every dollar spent.



# Employer Best Practices

- Our resource guide profiles five companies – from diverse industries and with different workforce demographics – that have invested in healthy relationship initiatives for their employees.
  - **AOL**
  - **Bon Secours Health System**
  - **CVS Caremark**
  - **Ernst & Young**
  - **PNC Bank**
- Their experiences offers valuable lessons for other employers, both large and small, who are committed to adding or expanding healthy relationship education.

# AOL

# Aol.

- Through AOL's Employee Assistance Program, company staffers and their families can access an entire team of professionals to help with...
  - Marital and relationship problems
  - Troubled children and adolescents
  - Anxiety and depression
- **A "Parent Coach"** – a contract child psychologist – offers individualized counseling, parenting seminars, webinars and more



# AOL

# Aol.

- **Generous child care** is offered through on-site child care centers, while subsidies are available to any interested employee
- The company's popular **WellBaby program** supports expectant parents through seminars, lactation coaching, and even financial rewards for moms who meet program milestones along the way
- *"If our employees are not happy at home, they're not going to be happy and productive at work," says AOL's Stacey Gemmell. "So from a bottom-line standpoint, it completely makes sense."*



# Bon Secours Health System



- This \$3.3 billion network of hospitals and health care facilities is a national leader in employee health and wellness initiatives
- Popular programs include **parenting, financial support,** and **stress reduction** counseling, classes and workshops
  - “Hit the Pause Button” class
  - *StressFree Now*, an online program developed by experts at the Cleveland Clinic
- Special focus on the unique stressors weighing on nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals
- *“We recognize that stress impacts all areas of an employee’s life... and that can have a destructive effect on family and personal relationships,” says*

**Julie Burcham.**



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# CVS/Caremark



- The company's motto – "dedicated to helping people on their path to better health" – extends to CVS's diverse workforce of more than 200,000 associates nationwide.
- **WellRewards program** promotes healthy physical lifestyles through screenings, assessments, and financial incentives for healthy behavior
- In partnership with LifeScope, its EAP provider, CVS offers a wide range of supports and counseling

Stress and relationship conflicts are among the top reasons CVS employees seek support



# CVS/Caremark



- In partnership with BlueCross/ BlueShield, CVS developed and promotes its **StressAway toolkit** to help employees improve both physical and emotional wellness
- “If a colleague is healthy, that will likely have a positive impact on their family as well,” notes Kathy Harte.



# Ernst & Young

- The company boasts of a “people-first” culture, and its signature **EY Assist program** helps provide a central access point to resources that can help with family, personal and work challenges.
- A **national database of counselors** across the U.S. helps employees find a wide range of supports, including...
  - family or marriage therapists
  - child psychologists
  - conflict resolution workshops
  - help with stress, anxiety, depression
- **Parenting supports** include monthly workshops and support groups, a 24-hour hotline



- The **Parents' Network for Families of Children with Special Needs** offers a valuable support network for those facing shared challenges
- And a popular **Caregivers' Circle** provides peer support for employees caring for elderly parents, dependent spouses or other loved ones
- *"It's all about getting yourself on the right track so you can interact in a healthy way... at work and at home," says Christine Young.*



- PNC demonstrates its commitment to healthy employees through **PNC Living Well**, its signature initiative
- The program offers a range of valuable tools and resources related to **stress reduction, emotional health, and stable relationships**
- Employees can access supports confidentially through a vendor's website or by phone. So can employees' spouses and dependents.
- *"If employees have relationship issues at home, their work may be affected," says Liz Harrington. "We believe it's important to give them the tools they need to manage external stress."*



# Steps Employers Can Take

- **Understand** what services and supports your workplace may already provide to support healthy relationships.
- In addition to your own EAP services, **connect** with
  - Health insurance providers
  - Wellness consultants
  - Other community partners, many of whom offer free supports
- **Gauge your employees' interest** in healthy relationship supports with a simple survey, such as the one included in this toolkit.



# Bottom Line: Employee Wellness is Good for Business

- Across the U.S. business community, simple investments in employee health and wellness have become widely accepted thanks to a strong and compelling business case.
- Leading companies are now broadening their wellness offerings to encompass **emotional wellness**—often including supports that promote healthy and stable relationships



# Bottom Line: Employee Wellness is Good for Business

- While the bottom-line return for these investments can be hard to quantify, many employers believe they are realizing **cost savings** through **better productivity, lower absenteeism, and more engagement**.
- Increasingly, leading employers understand that **employees who enjoy healthy personal relationships at home**, who know how to resolve conflicts, and who know how to manage stress tend to be **more productive, more committed to their jobs, and healthier overall**



# Contact Information

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# Lessons from Toledo Area Ministries: Keeping It Together

**Avis Files**  
**Director, Keeping It Together**



# Who we are

- Toledo Area Ministries: Keeping It Together Program is a multi-faceted healthy marriage and relationship education program that focuses on three aspects of the family
- Youth (ages 16-19)
- Adults (age 20 and over)
- Couples: engaged, dating, living together, married and interested in learning more about marriage

# Program Components

## Youth age 16-19 and Singles

- Group Work on Healthy Relationships
- Group work on Economic Stability
- One on one parenting
- One on one financial literacy
- Case management and Supportive Services
- Subsidized Employment

## Couples

- Weekend Retreat Session –usually Friday and Saturday
- Communication Skills
- Conflict Management and Resolution
- Conflict Management Styles
- Personality Styles
- 3, 6 and 9 month Follow up



# How the program works

## Youth ( ages 16-19) and Adults

Home Visit Case Management Services

Tiered Incentives

Critical Work Supports:

Transportation subsidy and clothing assistance (interview & job)

Food in group sessions

Subsidized Employment

Pre-Employment to help secure employment

Family Focused Case management Services

Job Retention –Employment Support

## Couples

Group Work- which allows group dynamics to take place

Incentives for participation

Childcare

Food in group sessions

# Population we serve...

- 200% below the poverty level
- 85% are African American
- 80% have mental health issues/concerns
- Low to No work skills
- Re-entry population
- Families-youth, adults-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles

# Employment Training

- Soft place work skills
- Mock Interviewing Skills and Mock Interviews
- \*Mock Interviews by employers
- Answering the question for felons- model format
- Interview Clothing
- POCS Method

# SMSS Service Model Delivery

- Screening and Skill Set
- Matching
- Support System
- Subsidy

# Job Placement

- Over 15 employers who are invested in working with our participants
- Revolving Placements- Once someone holds the job for 90 days they are replaced with another participant
- Youth Placements – Contract with local McDonald's – placements suitable for youth and they are retained.

# Relationship Skills and Job Placement

- Transferable Relationship Skills into job skills
- Relationship Education includes
  - Conflict Management Style
  - Personality Test
  - Baggage Releasing
  - Blended Families
  - Recognizing Distractions and how to overcome them
  - How to Surrender

# Benefits to Participants

- Soft skills training
- Opportunity to work and gain experience and work history
- Opportunity to utilize skills obtained in training
- Open and honest communication with Case manager
- Obtain full time and permanent employment with pay increases and benefits
- Referral source –refer others to the program
- Give back- Come back to classes to speak with the new participants and encourage them
- Reference Letters

# Benefits to Employers

- FREE workers for 90 days
- Train and Observe potential future employees
- Give back to the community
- Help participants with a fresh start
- Gain someone with soft workplace skills
- Gain someone with problem solving skills
- Gain someone with a support system
- Gain someone who has the ability to handle personal issues and concerns before they occur

# Employer Feedback



This is a testimonial letter that is easy to write because it is not difficult to write about the very positive aspects of the Keeping It Together program. UMADAOP Lucas County enjoys and looks forward to a continuing collaboration with KIT. As Executive Director of UMADAOP Lucas County, I have personally observed that KIT provides high quality pre-employment training, screening and placement services for individuals seeking entry level or career changing job opportunities. Our organization has received several job placement trainees from KIT and with almost each referral, we have been provided a well screened prospect who interviewed impressively, was diligently seeking employment and was willing to learn and work hard. It is also important to note that KIT referred individuals that dressed and conducted themselves appropriately for the workplace while demonstrating an ability to get along with people. Another noteworthy quality of the Keeping It Together program is that it provides outstanding case management services by quickly responding to situations that could interfere with a trainee's workplace performance and job placement success.

Several trainees referred to our organization by KIT have demonstrated such outstanding job placement performance that three trainees have been retained as full-time employees with pay upgrades and benefits. UMADAOP Lucas County has found that working collaboratively with the Keeping It Together program has proven to be extremely beneficial for the KIT job placement trainees, our clients and the communities that we serve.

# Contact Information

## Avis Files

Director, Keeping It Together

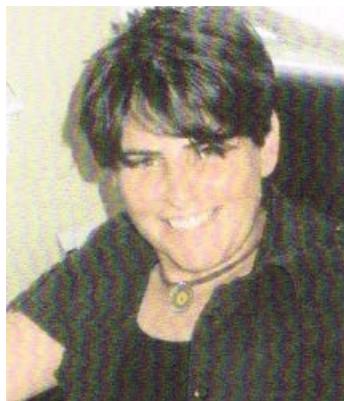
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# Lessons from PB&J Family Services



**Dean Ma'ayan, LMSW**

# Brief Background



## Population:

PB&J's Fatherhood Reentry program begins pre-release (Men's Prison & County Detention Center) connecting with families and providing workforce training and placement afterwards at Fathers Building Futures (7 ½ months: auto-detailing, mobile power washing & graffiti removal and woodworking)

([www.fathersbuildingfutures.org](http://www.fathersbuildingfutures.org))

## Goals:

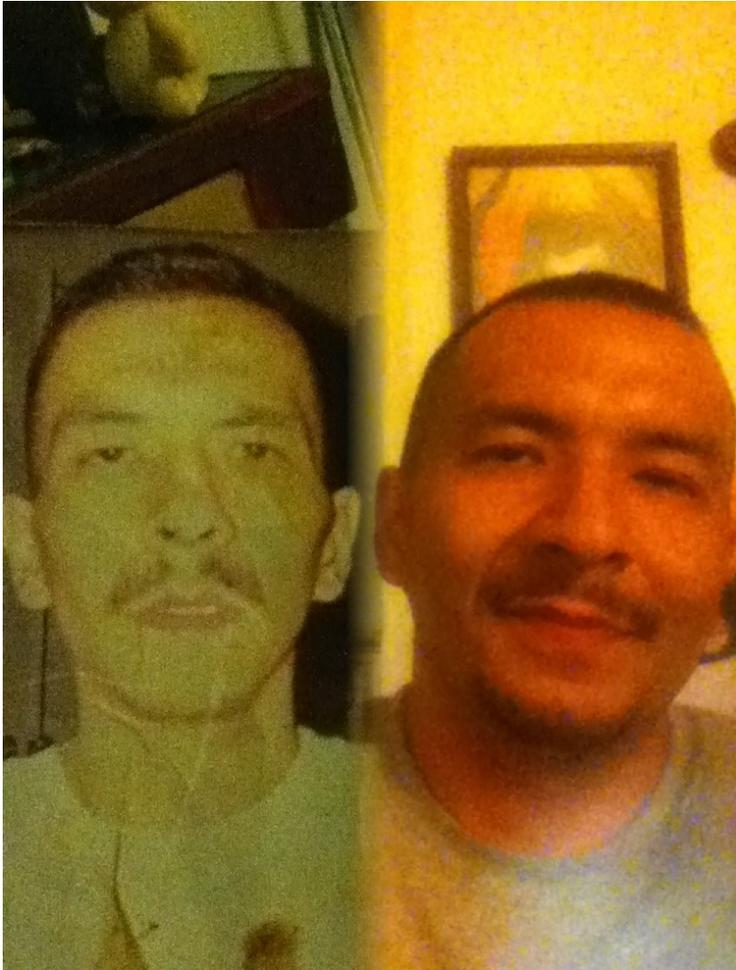
- Family reunification & stability
- Soft skills & employment training → placement with permanent employment
- Reduced recidivism & increased resp. fatherhood

# It's not about jobs, it's about relationships



- **Mission-Based / It's not about jobs, it's about your mission**
  - Child-Abuse Prevention / “keeping kids safe” “family –systems approach” “breaking multi-generational cycles of abuse, incarceration, addiction, violence,
- **Relationships are Everything and blossom over time and testing;**
  - Create avenues to evolve their relationship to your agency and ultimately to your clients:
    - “Donors to Employers” through inviting them to become advisors to the staff, one-to-one/small group mentors, mock interviews with real feedback. There are NO LISTS for hiring our men.
    - HR Trainings on Benefits of Hiring Felons.
    - Customer/vendor opportunity.
- **It's Their Story** *(more on this on the next slide)*
- **Outcomes** *(Use your outcomes to reinforce all of the above.)*
  - Story tell the relationships between employers & clients (video, articles, web, FB, & data)
  - Use business venues, civic groups, economic development offices
  - Remember the employer is a business, so marketing them in anyway is always appreciated

# Mission-Based / Their Story



Their Success (not  
the agency's)

Goal is that the  
Employer and  
Stakeholders see  
themselves in the  
story and in the  
success.

# Extra Items: PB&J's Employers Pre-Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

(note: Company Names will NOT be published. Survey is Confidential and company name is only used for internal purposes and not shared with the public)

Your position at the company (owner, HR manager, manager, etc)\_\_\_\_\_

**Does your company have a written policy of not hiring people with criminal background?**

- Yes, the company has a written policy.
- No, we do not have such a policy and seek to hire the best person for the job, regardless of their background.
- While our policy is not in writing, we tend NOT to hire people with a criminal background.
- The company does a criminal background check and our decision to hire depends upon the type of crime
- I do not know

**To your knowledge does your company currently have employees on staff with a criminal background?**

- Yes
- No
- I personally do not know because I'm not responsible for hiring.
- It is not something the company asks, so I wouldn't know.

**If someone fit the criteria for a job posting and interviewed well but has a felony background, would you likely to hire him/her?**

- No
- Not likely
- Possibly
- Most likely

# Contact Information

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# To Ask a Question

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# Contact Us

## National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

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