

Helping Families— Shifting the Emphasis

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Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria

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www.parentingwell.org



with Karen Albert, M.S., Kathleen Biebel, Ph.D., Bernice Gershenson, M.P.H., Beth R. Hinden, Ph.D., Valerie Williams, M.A., M.S., Brenda Warren, B.S., Chip Wilder, LICSW, Toni Wolf, B.A. & Katherine Woolsey, B.A.

Disclosures



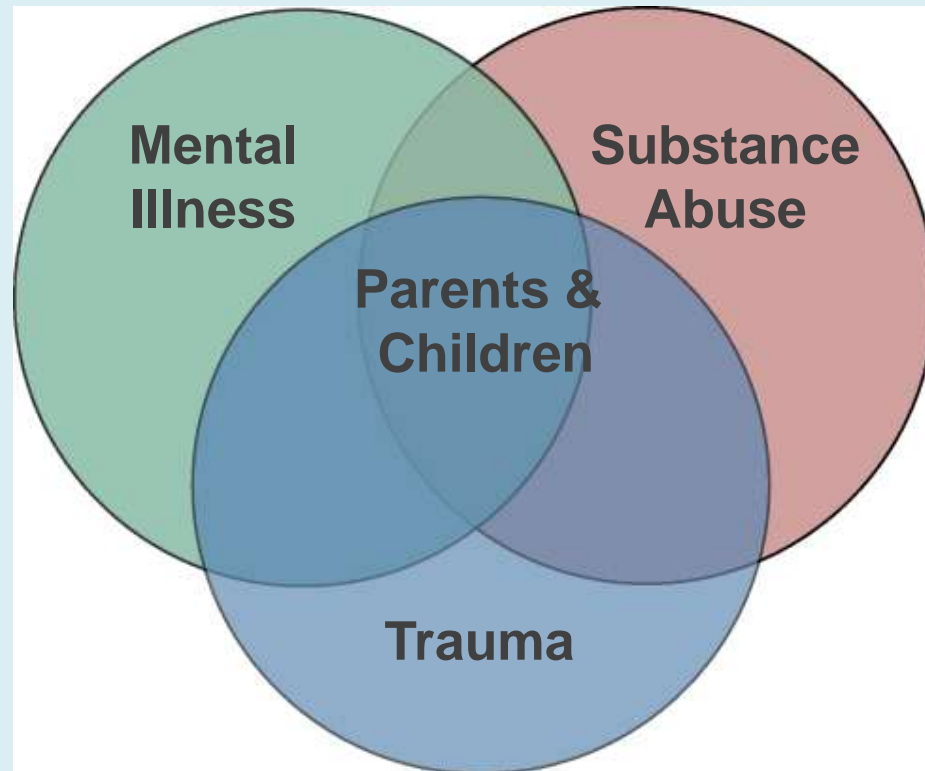
We have received support from state, federal, and foundation sources, and from AstraZeneca for non pharmaceutical research.

Today's Talking Points

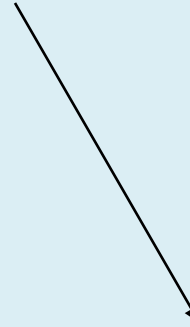
A man with glasses and a blue long-sleeved shirt is walking a light-colored dog on a leash. The background is a blurred outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

- Family members are likely to have multiple and overlapping needs & roles – individuals with mental illness and carers.
- There are many opportunities & strategies for intervention.
- The best care requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders.

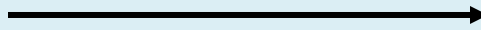
A Whole-of-Family Approach: Families are the focus of mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, treatment and rehabilitation



Intervention



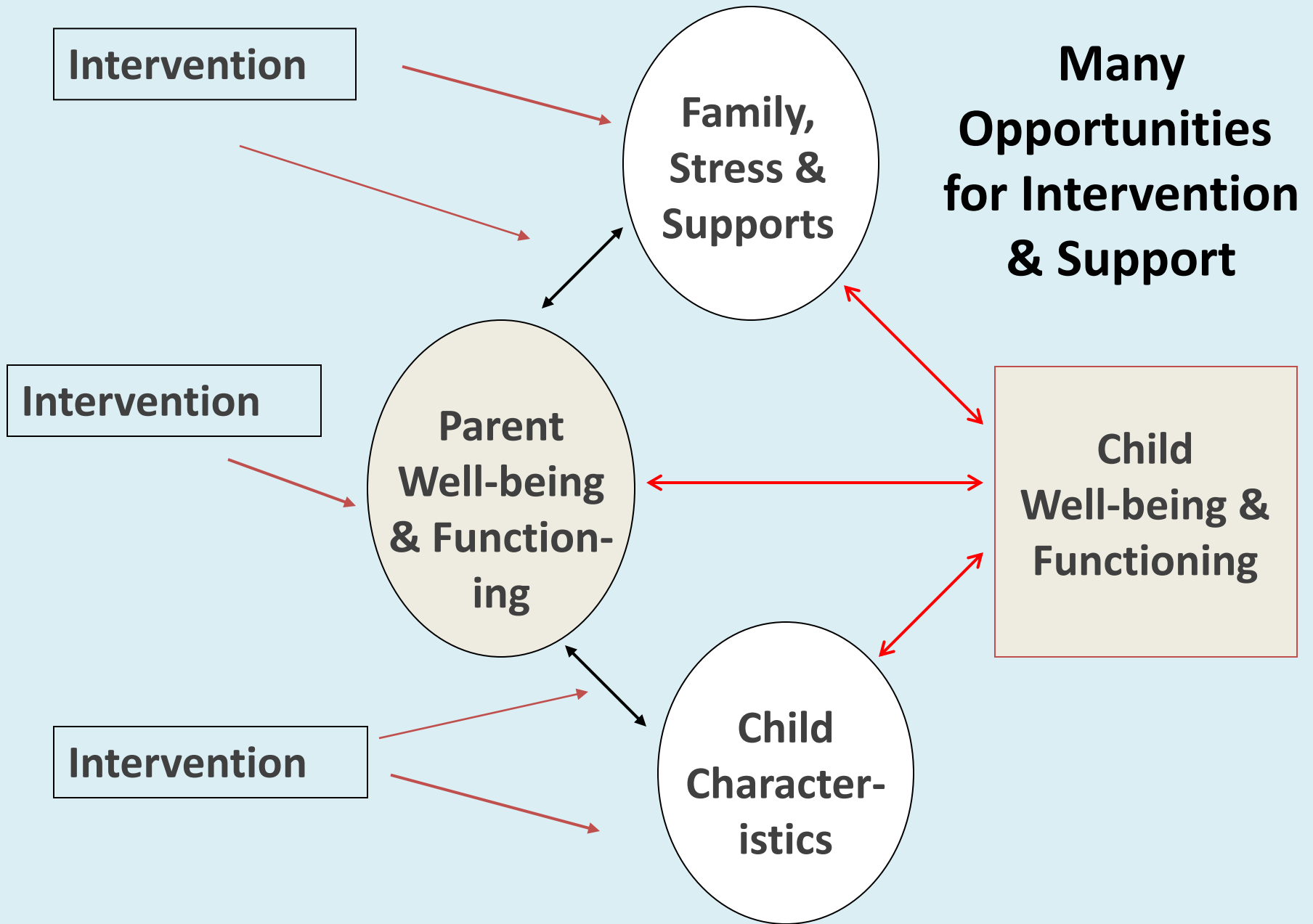
**Parent's
Well-being &
Functioning**



**Child
Outcomes**



“Old Thinking”



What does it mean to serve families?

What skills, resources & supports can be put into place to support the optimal functioning of parents & children, & promote positive relationships in times of stability & in anticipation of times of difficulty or crisis?

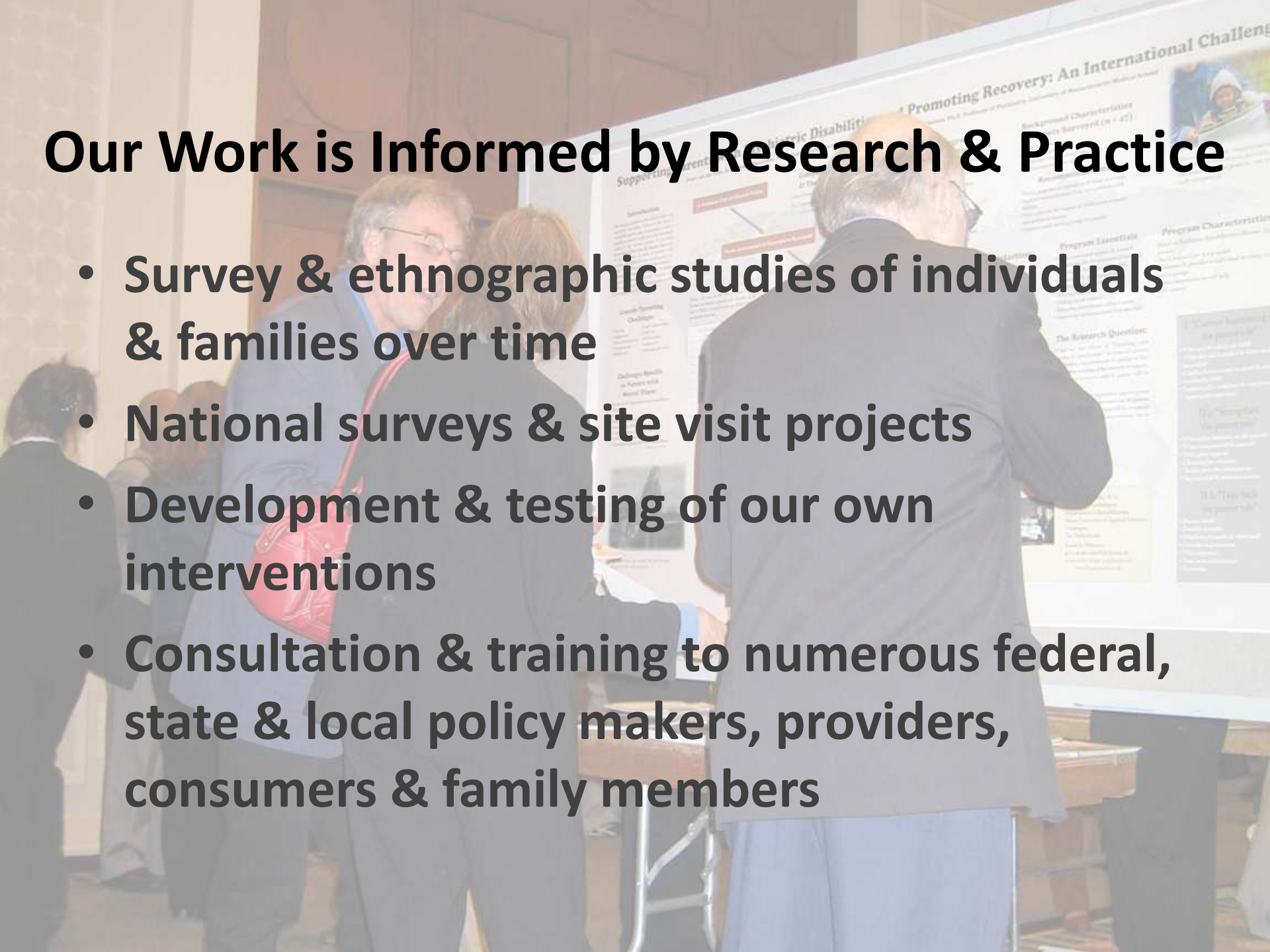
It takes a village...

- **Multigenerational & developmental approach**
- **Recovery in adults: achieving goals & reducing adverse outcomes**
- **Resilience in children: supporting strengths & addressing needs**

What does it take to create the village?
(& not be too overwhelmed...)

Our Work is Informed by Research & Practice

- **Survey & ethnographic studies of individuals & families over time**
- **National surveys & site visit projects**
- **Development & testing of our own interventions**
- **Consultation & training to numerous federal, state & local policy makers, providers, consumers & family members**



Key Ingredients for Success with Families when Parents have Mental Illnesses

- Family-centered
- Strengths-based
- Trauma-informed





Key Ingredient: Family-Centered

- **Integration of adult & child services**
- **Interagency collaboration**
- **Funding to meet needs identified by families**

A young child with light brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a grey turtleneck and blue denim overalls, stands in a bathroom. The floor is tiled, and there is a significant amount of crumpled white toilet paper scattered around the child. The child is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background shows a white toilet and a white door.

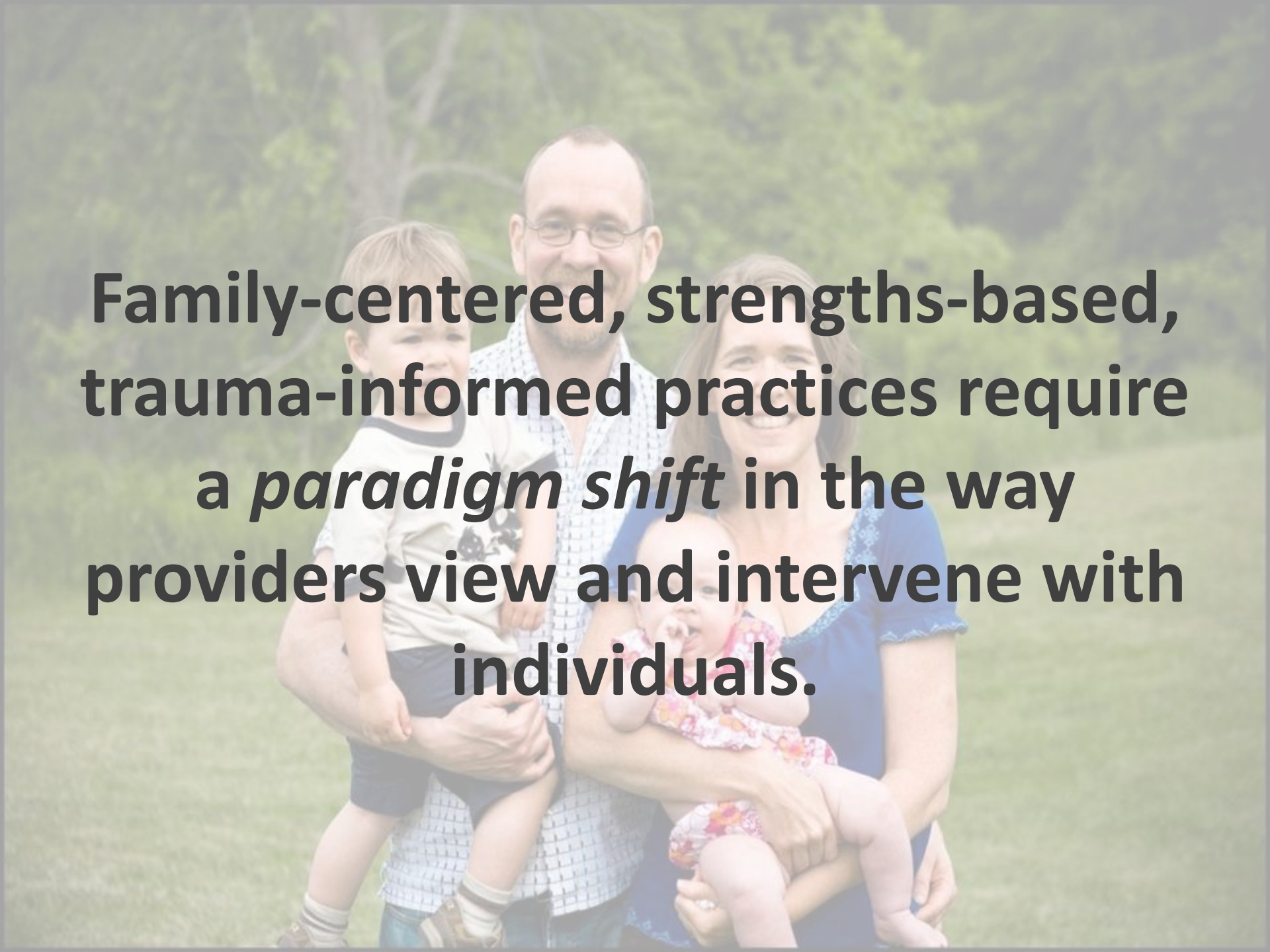
Key Ingredient: Strengths-Based

- **Non-judgmental approach**
- **Support of positive role models**

Key Ingredient: Trauma-Informed

- **Safe environment**
- **Trustworthy, dependable relationships**
- **Attend to issues of power & control**



A photograph of a family of four standing outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background. The father, wearing glasses and a patterned shirt, is holding a young child in a white t-shirt. The mother, wearing a blue top, is holding a baby in a floral dress. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black font.

Family-centered, strengths-based, trauma-informed practices require a *paradigm shift* in the way providers view and intervene with individuals.

Leveraging Partnerships to Create & Coordinate Services for Families

- Changing the business we do
- Changing the way we do business





Create New Strategies: Family Options

- **Recovery & resilience are family matters (family-centered, trauma-informed)**
- **Family goal planning based on strengths & needs assessment (strengths-based)**
- **Family Coaches, Program Director & Clinical Consultant (psych rehab)**
- **Family team of professional, natural & peer support providers (wraparound)**

The Family Options Implementation Study: The Research Question

What does it take to implement an intervention for families in an agency traditionally focused on providing psychiatric rehabilitation services to individual adults?



Implementation Study Themes:

Creating...

- **The workforce capacity**
- **The organizational capacity**
- **The community capacity**



The Workforce Capacity

- **Identify skill sets for working with families**
 - MH/Child welfare, adults and children, strengths-based, family focused services
- **Recruit staff with relevant experience**
 - Balance characteristics with credentials
- **Educate staff to intervention model**
 - Literature, researchers/consultant experts in parental mental illness, site visits
- **Develop targeted trainings to address challenges**
 - Psychosocial rehab specialists address goal planning with families

The Organizational Capacity

- **Develop tools & resources to identify family strengths & goals**
 - Family strengths assessment form
 - Family goal form
- **Operationalize protocols & procedures**
 - Maximize what exists, e.g., petty cash
 - Develop what doesn't exist, e.g., flex funds
- **Facilitate communication pathways among ALL components of agency**
 - Internal marketing
 - Resource sharing, information exchange

The Community Capacity

- **Locate sustainable resources for families**
 - Logistics meetings re: families' needs and strategies to access services
- **Nurture new relationships with community agencies**
 - Informational events, kick-off, trainings
- **Reinvigorate existing community relationships**
 - Reintroductions, face-to-face meetings
- **Leverage partnerships to coordinate services for families**
 - Team meetings with providers to coordinate and maximize services




Enhance Existing Strategies: provide *family-informed...*

- **Supported housing**
- **Supported employment**
- **Supported education**
- **Peer support**
- **Services for children & youth**



Some Final Suggestions:

- Integrate services, coordinate & collaborate.
- Educate colleagues in other disciplines & fields, e.g., primary care, child welfare.
- Engage key stakeholders, e.g., youth & adults, parents & family members, as partners to achieve their goals.



“My children give me strength, they give me hope, they give me the will to survive...”

a mother with mental illness

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