

# WHAT IS CONNECTED TOGETHER?

Connected Together uses the Communities That Care long-term evidence-based model that employs collaborative community prevention to improve Lebanon County.

We want to foster a community that provides opportunities and supports youth in developing their life-long success and resiliency.



## OKAY NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



### ANALYZE DATA

Our community board uses data such as the Pennsylvania Youth Survey and analyzes that information for Lebanon County specifically. They identify the top risk factors and issues faced by children and families and how to grow resiliency.



### CREATE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

We create a community action plan that assesses community resources that address priority risk and protective factors. It helps to identify gaps in existing resources. We do this by defining and tracking clear, measurable outcomes and assessment data.



### ENHANCE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Researchers have identified protective factors that increase the likelihood of health and success for children. We work to build up protective factors in Lebanon County. We want our youth to have the best possible outcomes.



### IDENTIFY RISK FACTORS

Risk factors include biological, psychological, family, community, and cultural characteristics associated with higher likelihood of dangerous outcomes. We use this local information to work as a community to reduce those risk factors."

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Communities That Care fosters the success and health of young people from before birth through every stage of development.
- Providing young people with opportunities, skills and recognition strengthens bonding with family, school and community. Strong bonds motivate young people to adopt healthy standards for behavior.
- This in turn leads to stronger, better communities, with lower rates of violence, substance use, and other risky behaviors

**For every dollar invested in CTC, \$11.14 is returned in the form of lower criminal justice system, crime victim, and health care costs, and increased earnings and tax revenues.**

# THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY:

Youth generally make decisions based on values learned from their community, family, or school, and shaped by their personality, experiences, and identity.

Giving youth opportunities for engagement, the ability to learn and use skills, and recognizing their actions will promote bonding to their community. When youth are bonded to a healthy community, they make healthy decisions and grow into healthy adults. However, if youth are disconnected from community or bonded to an unhealthy community or group, they will be more likely to develop unhealthy behaviors.

## EXAMPLES OF PROTECTIVE FACTORS

### INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

For example: positive self-perceptions. Self-perceptions refer to how children think about themselves, their skills and capabilities, and their sense of control. For instance, children who believe they are capable of doing certain tasks may be more optimistic, less anxious, and persevere more to accomplish a task. Positive self-perceptions can be nurtured by recognizing children's efforts, helping to set short term goals, and helping them learn from setbacks. Another example is self-regulation skills. These skills enable children to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors when they feel overwhelmed, anxious, or angry.

### HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Research suggests that the single most common factor in how children overcome adversity is the presence of at least one loving, consistent, and supportive adult. It is often a parent, but it can also be a grandparent, godparent, coach, teacher, or neighbor. Children benefit when we recognize and preserve the important connections that provide them with nurturing and security. In addition, parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and community find it easier to care for their children and themselves.

### CONCRETE SUPPORT

Families who can meet their own basic need for food, clothing, housing, and transportation – and who know how to access essential services such as childcare, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs are better able to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. In addition, children and families that are engaged in prosocial involvements in their schools and communities are more likely to thrive. Sense of community and support is a very important protective factor.

## TOP RISK FACTORS IN LEBANON COUNTY

### LOW COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Low commitment to community is a top risk factor for our children. Our data shows there is a prominent feeling of disconnection/dissatisfaction with our community, lack of social connectedness (in both school and community), and presence of bullying. Additionally, lack of access to a responsible trustworthy adult, and lack of accessible and low-cost positive activities play a big role in this.

### POOR FAMILY MANAGEMENT

Our data shows poor family management is one of the top risk factors for Lebanon County Youth. In this area our youth are facing the problems of poor family connections, the need for strengthened families, lack of clear expectations for children's behavior, failure of parents to monitor their children, family violence, and child abuse.

### MENTAL HEALTH

Poor mental health is seen as an issue all across the country, and our youth are not exempt. They are facing poor self-esteem and depressive symptoms. This risk factor also ties in bullying, the lack of access to a responsible trustworthy adult, and lack of accessible and low-cost positive activities.

## NOW WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Join our board

Become a Key-Leader

Advocate for Connected Together

Utilize our Community Action Plan

Enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors

Partner with us on a project

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Community Health Council Project



A United Way Agency