

## Overview of the Protective Factors Survey

Though there are numerous instruments designed to measure individual protective factors, there is not currently a single instrument that assesses *multiple protective factors* against child abuse and neglect. In 2004, The FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention began a project to develop a Protective Factors Survey (PFS) for its network of federally-funded Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. This project was initiated to help programs better assess changes in *family protective factors*, a major focus of prevention work.

The PFS is a product of the FRIENDS Network in collaboration with the University of Kansas Institute for Educational Research and Public Service. The instrument was developed with the advice and assistance of researchers, administrators, workers, and experts specializing in family support and maltreatment and psychological measurement. The survey has undergone three national field tests.

### Purpose and Use

The PFS is designed for use with caregivers receiving child maltreatment prevention services. The instrument measures protective factors in five areas: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development. Workers can administer the survey before, during, or after services.

The primary purpose of the Protective Factors Survey is to provide feedback to agencies for continuous improvement and evaluation purposes. The survey results are designed to provide agencies with the following information:

- A snapshot of the families they serve
- Changes in protective factors
- Areas where workers can focus on increasing individual family protective factors

The PFS is not intended for individual assessment, placement, or diagnostic purposes. Agencies should rely on other instruments for clinical use.

### Description

The Protective Factors Survey is a pencil and paper survey. The survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The instrument is divided into two sections, the first section to be completed by a program staff member and the second section to be completed by the program participant. The participant portion of the survey contains the core questions of the survey. In the demographic section, participants are asked to provide details about their family composition, income, and involvement in services. In the family protective factors section, participants are asked to respond to a series of statements about their family, using a seven-point frequency or agreement scale. The following table provides a brief summary of the multiple protective factors covered in the survey.

| Protective Factor   | Definition  |
|---|---|
| Family Functioning/<br>Resiliency<br>(5 items)            | Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis. Family's ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve, and manage problems. |
| Social Support<br>(3 items)                               | Perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs.  |
| Concrete Support<br>(3 items)                             | Perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.   |
| Child Development/<br>Knowledge of Parenting<br>(5 items) | Understanding and utilizing effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children's abilities.   |
| Nurturing and Attachment<br>(4 items)                     | The emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.  |