

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE: ONE PROTECTIVE FACTOR AT A TIME

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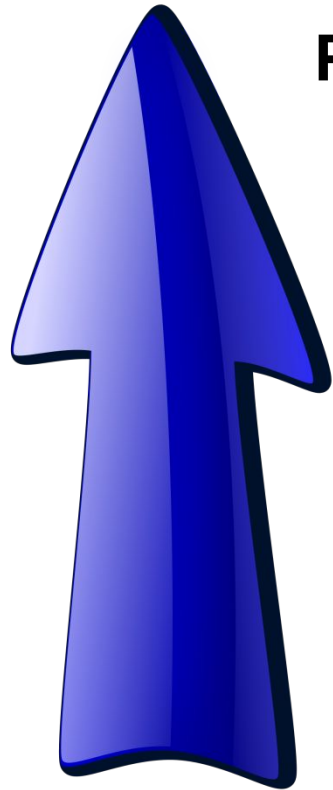
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# About Jennifer

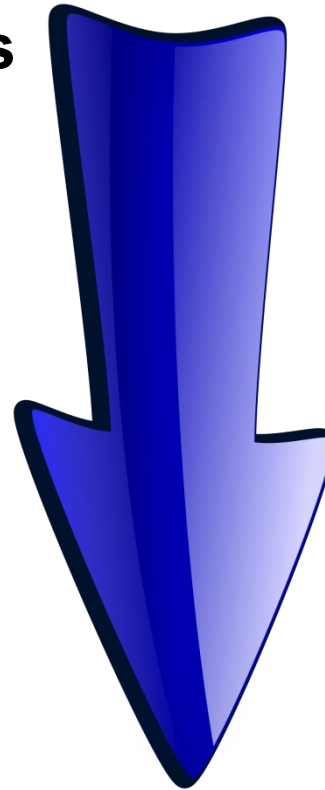
- ED at SSFS –3 years
- More than 40 years of experience with domestic violence
- Emphasis in the field is prevention and trauma informed practices
- What I like most about my job is inspiring others to see that change is possible
- Animals, nature, running, my kiddo, gardening, cosplay, sci-fi
- Delighted by the little things in life
- Not Perfect



# Violence Prevention: It's simple!



**Protective Factors**



**Risk Factors**

# Risk and Protective factors

- Risk factors place an individual at risk of violence (perpetration and victim)
  - More risk factors = greater risk
  - Age of exposure can impact development
- Protective factors that counter those risks
  - Reduces the risk itself
  - Provides for an alternative response

# Trauma as a Risk Factor

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
  - Emotional Abuse (swearing at, insults, put downs, humiliation)
  - Physical Abuse (push, grab, slap, throw things, left marks or injuries)
  - Sexual Abuse (touching, fondling, forced intercourse)
  - Felt that no one loved you or thought you were important or special
  - Neglected (not enough food, unclean clothes or living conditions, no protection, no medical care)
  - Lost biological parent through divorce or abandonment
  - Mother figure physically abused
  - Lived with alcoholic or drug addict
  - Household member depressed, mentally ill, attempted suicide
  - Household member went to prison



# Trauma as Risk Factor

- Car accidents
- Fire in home
- Natural disaster
- Loss of loved one through violent death
- Dog attacks
- Living in poverty
- Living with racism

# Humans of New York

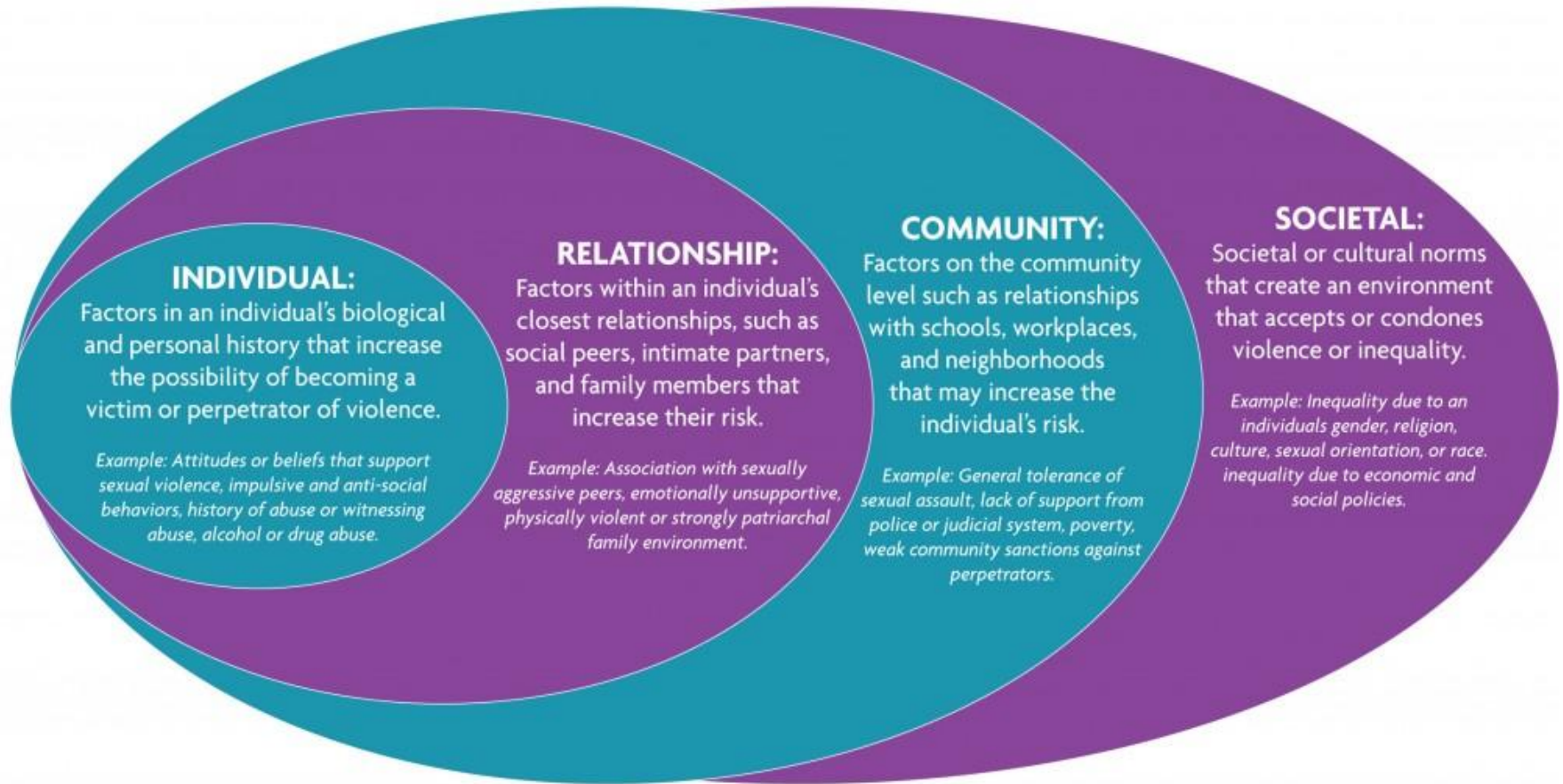
- “Things started getting really rough when I was about seven. One of my mother’s friends beat her up really bad one night. I mean really, really bad. So bad that she was trying to jump out the window just to get away. That’s how bad he was going in on her. I was screaming, and crying, and trying to get him to stop. And so many people heard. We lived on the second floor. Our window faced the street. It was summertime. So I know they heard. And nobody did a thing. We lived in a community. Everyone knew us. I thought people liked my mom. But nobody called the police. I had to call the ambulance myself. That’s when I learned that no matter how hard you cry, some people don’t care. Poverty creates a lot of sociopaths. I never became one-- but I can understand it. Because when nobody cares about your pain, it’s easy to ignore the pain of others.”



# Impacts of Trauma on Children

- Changes the way the brain develops
  - From the bottom up – impacts on self regulation, impulsive behavior (triggers), executive function
- Attachment impacted
  - Disorganized attachment
- Unsafe world
  - Impacts ability to explore and learn – no secure base
  - “over-reacts” or aggressive behavior – triggers – broken internal alarm
- Lack of stability/structure
  - Doesn't know what or who to depend on
  - Lacks possibilities for mastery - no agency

# SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL



# Risk Factors

Biological	Individual/Peer	Family	Community
Physical disabilities	Early aggressive behavior	Weak family bonds	Presence of gangs and drugs
Prenatal exposure to drugs/alcohol	Poor peer interaction skills	Exposure to of victim of DV	Lack of social/cultural orgs.
Prenatal/perinatal trauma	Low academic achievement	Poor parent supervision, harsh discipline	High levels of community disorganization
Head injury/head trauma	Antisocial behavior, non-compliance, rebelliousness	Frequent family conflict	Transiency
Changes in child's brain as result of exposure to violence	ADHD	Adult survivors in the family	Unemployment or lack of economic opportunity
	Delinquent peer group	High stress in family	Poverty

# RISK FACTORS ARE NOT PREDICTIVE BECAUSE OF PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Dr. Carl Bell

# Protective Factors

Individual	Family	School/Community
Even, resilient temperament; positive social orientation	Healthy parent-child bonding, investment in future, understanding of right vs. wrong	Sense of belonging; attachment or connection to community Caring neighbors
Negotiating, conflict resolution & anger management skills	Loving & supportive family life	Positive, sustained attachment with at least one adult family member, teacher or other adult
Think clearly about problems, generate solutions, recognize consequences	Positive parent/child communication; help seeking from parents	Schools provide caring, encouraging environment
Capacity for empathy & respect	Positive, sustained attachment with at least one adult family member, teacher or other adult	Parents involved in children's success at school
	Taught healthy beliefs & clear standards	Taught healthy beliefs & clear standards

# Community Protective Factors – YOU!

**Factors on the community level such as relationships with schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods.**

- Attachment or connection to the community, or a sense of belonging.
- Positive, sustained attachments with at least one adult family member, teacher or other adult.
- Schools that provide a caring, encouraging environment.
- Parent(s) that are involved in children's success at school.
- School, families and peer groups that teach children healthy beliefs and set clear standards.

# Attachment/Connection to the community

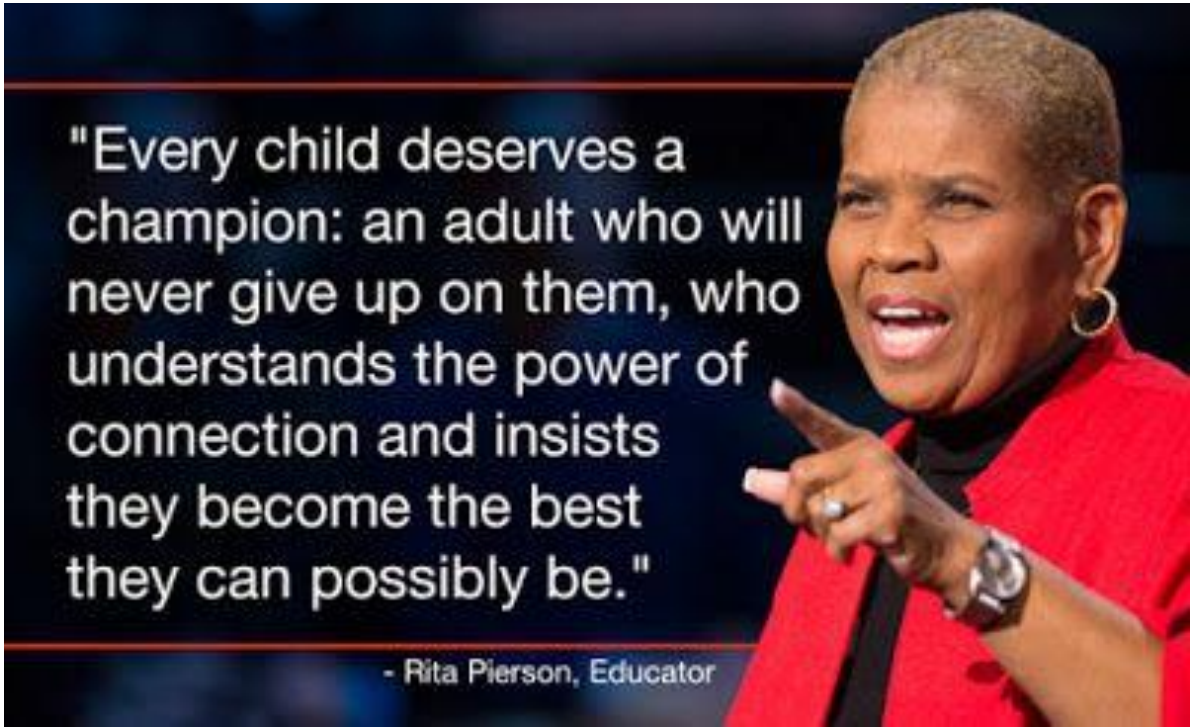
## Sense of belonging

- Human need
- Important in seeing value in life and in coping with intensely painful emotions
- Humans are social animals
- Inclusion
- Feel safe coming to school – they belong there
- Community gathering spaces that are safe
- Peer group
  - Shared interests and values



# Positive, sustained attachments with at least one adult

- **Number one protective factor**
- Children need an adult to believe in them
- Encouraging
- Secure base
- Nurturing



"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be."

- Rita Pierson, Educator

# Schools that provide a caring, encouraging environment

- Practice and model conflict resolution with students
  - Behavior discussion form
  - Take steps to correct prior to detention or other punitive methods
- Celebrate positive behavior
  - Parties for Dojo points
  - Duct tape Principal to the wall
- Adults show kindness to the students
  - Smiling
  - Calm voice
- Adults greet students and know their names
  - Adults attempt to get to know things children like and talk to them about – become more personable – children feel truly seen

# Parent(s) involved in children's success at school

- Parents reinforce learning at home
- Parents and teachers use same/similar approach to behaviors
- Parents support teachers actions and vice versa
- Open communication with teacher and parent as well as other key school personnel
- School is creative in finding ways to bring families into school environment
- Non-judgemental approach – meet them where they are
  - They could be experiencing trauma as well

# Teach children healthy beliefs and set clear standards

- School, families and peer groups ALL do this
- Consistency & Predictability
  - Same messages in varying settings
- Standards and boundaries help children feel safe
  - Trauma needs consistency and boundaries
- Helps children contain the overwhelm

# Social Determinants - Community

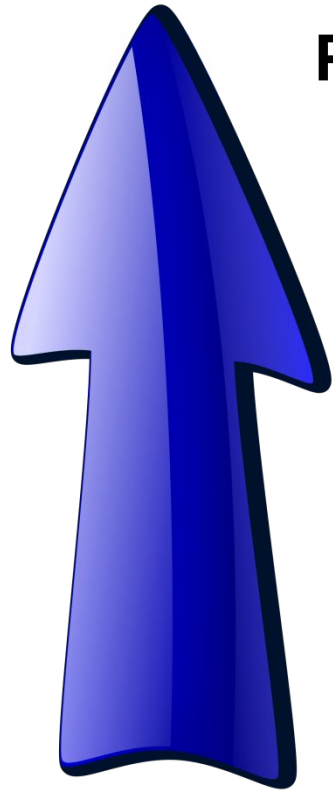
**Conditions in the environment in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age**

- Equitable access to educational, economic, and job opportunities
- Community Engagement
- Social Support and integration, support systems
- Built environment, such as buildings, sidewalks, bike lanes, and roads
- Physical barriers, especially for people with disabilities

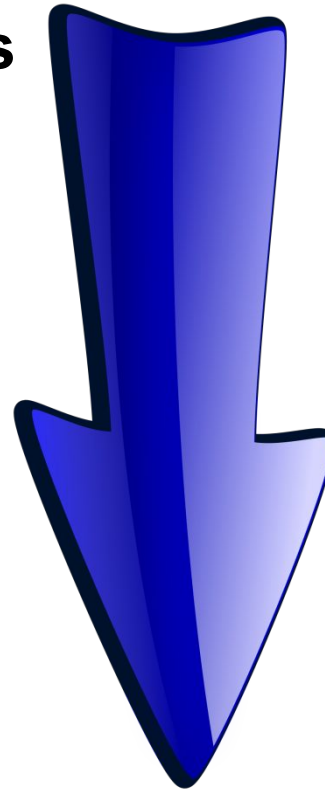
# Putting it All Together

Working in collaboration with communities around shared risk and protective factors can be an effective way to stretch limited funding, strengthen partnerships, and increase reach

# Violence Prevention: It's simple!



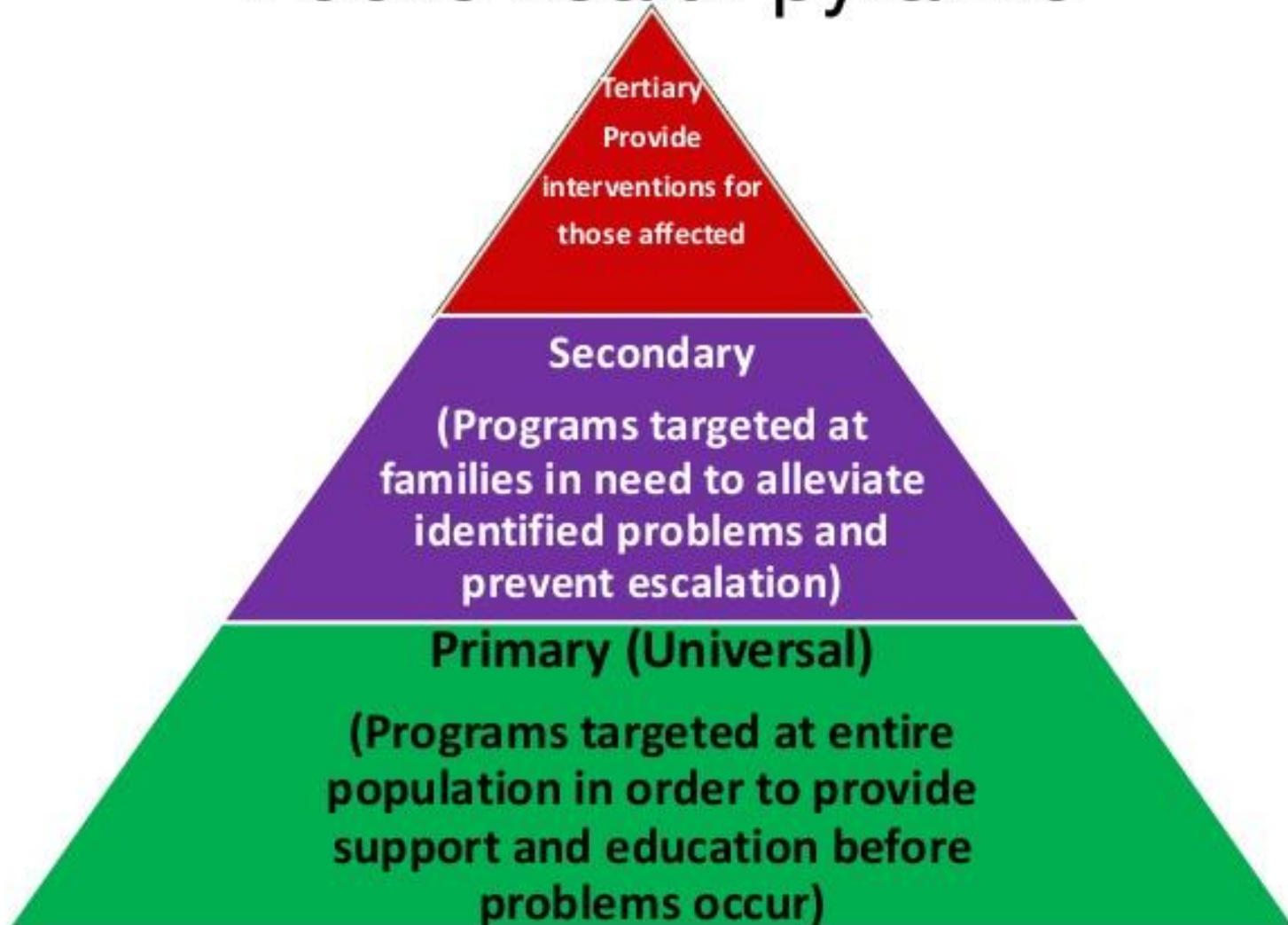
**Protective Factors**



**Risk Factors**



# Public health pyramid



# Primary Prevention at School

- Promote intolerance for violence
  - Does not mean zero tolerance
  - Promote conflict resolution and problem solving skills
  - Decrease punitive discipline strategies
- Teaching of social and emotional skills
- Safe and peaceable school and community environments
- Promotion of healthy relationships and community connectedness
- ECE and after school programs

# Secondary Prevention at School

- Family Strengthening programs
- Interventions for children/youth exposed to violence/trauma
- School based violence prevention programs
- Peer support and activism
- Mentoring
- Crisis intervention/violence interruption
- Neighborhood organizing and community development

# Trauma Sensitive Approach

- Recognizes trauma was experiences and has impacted the child's behavior
- Moves from “what's wrong with you” to “what happened to you”
- Promote open discussion
- Help to understand and cope with emotional response to the violence
- Reduce the symptoms
- Create a safe, stable, nurturing environment for the child

# Accommodations & Supports

- The school can take the lead in creating an environment where the student feels safe and can succeed
  - Additional time to make up school work
  - Submit assignments online (if available)
  - Assign a staff member to accompany student during vulnerable times in the schedule
  - Enforce court orders
  - In school support group
  - Access to social worker whenever needed

# Resilience

- Positive relationship with at least one parent
  - Parents can help children regulate
- Positive relationship with other adults
  - Healing happens in relationships
- At least one safe haven in the community
- **Little doses of healing**

