

After conducting research on possible programs and activities to support these solutions; we presented eight approaches to community at our Decide the Right Path Workshop, held 30th August 2017.

COMMUNITY GOAL: PEER TO PEER SUPPORT WITH PARENTING (SIMILAR TO PARENT CAFÉ IN A BOX) UNIVERSAL



The Parent Café in a Box concept was originally created by *Be Strong Families* in the United States. These gatherings, derived from the World Café model, bring community members together for a series of structured conversations that directly or indirectly address protective factors. Cafés are a method of facilitating meaningful, reflective conversations that promote leadership and collaboration and help to strengthen families.

The Cafés are characterised by:

- * An informal, safe and inviting atmosphere with small tables arranged to mimic a café
- * Very small groups (3 to 5 individuals) engaged in peer based conversations focused around specific questions
- * A structure that allows participants to move among café tables and converse with others through multiple rounds of conversations
- * A peer host who has participated in an earlier café series and has received training or orientation in creating an inclusive café conversation

They provide peer to peer support by addressing 5 protective factors for children:

- 1) Parental resilience
- 2) Social connections
- 3) Knowledge of parenting and child development
- 4) Concrete support in times of need
- 5) Social and emotional competence of children

The goal is to create an intimate environment where parents, caregivers and community members can share and support each other as a strategy for strengthening families. Cafés designed to build parent leadership have been held in a wide variety of settings. Early care and education centres, community centres, faith communities, family support centres, community action agencies and schools are typical hosts of cafés. Cafés may be open to the general public in a city or neighbourhood, or targeted to those who are affiliated with the hosting school, place of worship or community program.

Cafés may be used to strengthen existing relationships among members of a group, or to help community members form new relationships and cultivate a sense of community that may not already be in place. Cafés are generally offered in a series so that participants have a chance to get to know each other and explore issues in greater depth. (Café experts recommend holding a series of at least three connected cafés to have an effect on protective factors and parent leadership).

Parents and caregivers participate in cafés in a variety of ways. Many parents first participate in one café series, then seek support or training to start hosting or co-hosting another series – and eventually step into roles of organising cafés and/or training other parents. Café participation can be a gateway to greater leadership opportunities and the development of skills that parents then use in their communities, in their caregiving roles and in their paid work.

Community goals advanced with this approach:

- ✓ Child Health – protective factors
- ✓ Isolation – peer to peer support and group engagement – available to all
- ✓ Safety – protective factors
- ✓ Financial strain – low cost to trial and low to no cost to participate

Resources required:

- * Volunteer hosts
- * Venues
- * Parent Café in a Box questions (purchase price is \$50 – 40 cards with a total of 200 questions) or develop our own
- * Mentoring of hosts and support to get it started
- * Additional Boxes are available specifically for Dads' at the same price

Implementation scale:

1. Ready – Working Group co-design implementation
2. **Modification/training required**
3. Trial to inform funding/system change
4. Funding to conduct trial
5. System change to conduct trial