Parent Cafes: Research & Evidence

Overview, May 2019
Be Strong Families Parent Cafés are a research informed practice, drawing on the research base of the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors.

The effectiveness of Parent Cafés is supported by over a decade of experiential evidence in communities in the US and internationally, as well as by evaluation and research conducted by independent parties in communities in California, Maryland and Missouri which suggest that our proximal outcomes are moving in the right direction to lead to our intended long-term outcomes.

BSF launched a national Parent Café evaluation system in 2019 to collect a large sample of data to demonstrate the outcomes of Parent Cafés.

BSF is working with our partners to conduct studies needed to meet CEBC and CBCAP standards of evidence. (E.g., Dept. of Family and Children’s Services, County of Santa Clara, CA.)
How do we know BSF Parent Cafés work?

01. Continuous Quality Improvement
02. Research Base
03. Ongoing Evaluation
Continuous Quality Improvement

The BSF Parent Café Fidelity model is a clearly defined practice, articulated by:

• Parent Café Training Institute Participant’s Manual
• Our Theory of Change
• National Parent Café evaluation system, including peer-reviewed Participant Feedback Form

We continuously improve our Parent Café model based on:

• Experiential evidence—Over 10 years experience delivering Cafés in communities across the world
• Evaluation results and findings from our national Parent Café evaluation system and evaluations conducted by our Parent Café partners
• Research findings related to family strengthening, child abuse prevention, and mental health
# Parent Café
## Program Logic and Theory of Change

### Inputs
- **Be Strong Families Parent Café Model**
  - Based on:
    - Principles of Adult Learning
    - Principles of Family Support
    - Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework
    - BSF empowered engagement approach and a social justice / peace-building lens informed by:
      - Appreciative Inquiry
      - Art of Hosting
      - Insights from humanistic, transpersonal, and positive psychology
      - Life Coaching
  - **Dosage:** Varies depending on purpose. Most commonly once/month or intentional, time-limited series with more frequency (No more than once/week)
- **Materials:** Parent Café cards or questions (including Dads cards and A More Perfect Union cards), Agreement cards, Commitment cards
- **Café Host team,** including staff and parents as trained Table Hosts
- **Welcoming Ambiance:** For example, welcome sign, music, centerpieces, doodle supplies, refreshments.
- **Participants:** Parents, caregivers, agency staff, other adults involved in the lives of children

### Outputs
#### Activities
- **Parent Cafes hosted with Fidelity to the Model**
  - One on One & Table discussions
- **Presentation of Theme and Protective Factors**
- **Harvest**
  - One Word
  - Feedback Form (part of reflective process)
- **Participation**
  - Participants decide how much or how little to share
  - Parents share with and/or listen to peers during
  - Participants learn from others’ stories [G2]
  - Participants practice the Protective Factors: active listening and build social emotional competence

#### Short-term
- Participants feel safe sharing their truth, values, and lived experiences with others. [G1]
- Participants reflect on own strengths and challenges as parents. [G3]
- Participants identify areas of relationships/parenting that they want to improve.
- Participants learn a new way to handle stress. [G4]
- Participants see other café participants as potential social connections. [G5]
- Participants experience usefulness of Protective Factors in own lives, including navigating complex social and political situations. [G6]
- Participants learn positive way to deal with child. [G7]
- Participants experience emotional release by sharing in safe space.
- Participants learn that parenting challenges are common, expected part of parenting.
- Participants learn about and practice active listening. [G9]
- Participants feel heard, have strengths recognized and are treated with dignity.
- Participants experience themselves as leaders. [G11]
- Participants feel more comfortable using services and supports. [G8]
- Participants move beyond own biases to connect with diverse others.

#### Outcomes & Impact
- **Intermediate**
  - Participants reflect on parenting and relationships more often.
  - Participants change behavior within relationships/family. [G13]
  - Participants are energized and inspired, even when facing setbacks.
  - Participants build and maintain social connections. [G12]
  - Participants use concrete supports in times of need.
  - Participants take steps to leadership, role with cafés.
  - Participants know more about child development, parenting.
  - Participants see possibility for own healing in others’ stories.
  - Participants experience more self-acceptance.
  - Participants feel more connected to each other.
  - Participants share collective experience of positive energy, unconditional acceptance and support.
  - Community ties are strengthened through Cafes.

- **Long-Term**
  - Families experience increased well-being. [Promote Well-Being]
  - Children are safe and are raised by parents that respond to their developmental and emotional needs. [Nurture Spirit of Family, Prevent Violence]
  - Parents are leaders in family and community.
  - Parents have greater sense of efficacy, taking control of family’s well-being and mobilize resources for their family, working in equitable partnership with social services to keep their families strong.
  - Social service providers shift from “deficit model” to equitable, respectful relationships with participants who recognize them as capable agents of change. [Promote Well-Being, Prevent Violence]
  - Communities members have compassionate, respectful and equitable relationships with others who are different from themselves. [Prevent violence]
  - Move towards a more just, more equal, more free, more caring and more prosperous America.
BSF Parent Cafes use the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors as their base; Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors is a research-informed approach, based on the best existing evidence.

Research suggests that effective intervention services for vulnerable families should focus on reducing modifiable risk factors and promoting protective factors. ... By building on family strengths, families are better placed to cope with stress, which in turn can lead to a reduced incidence of child abuse and neglect. ... In a strengths-based intervention approach that focuses on building protective factors, parents themselves can identify and build on their own strengths to help enhance their parenting capacity. Promoting protective factors may also help professionals working with families to build more positive relationships with clients. (Lamont & Price-Robertson, 2013, para. 12)

Research on Parent Cafés

• Parent Café initiatives in communities across the US (CA, IL, MO, PA) have been evaluated to measure impact on participants and communities.

• BSF is currently conducting a systematic review of studies conducted over last 10 years.
Evaluation of Parent Cafés

• BSF launched a national Parent Café evaluation system in 2019 to collect a large sample of data to demonstrate the outcomes of Parent Cafes.

• BSF is working with our partners to conduct studies needed to meet California Evidence Base C and CBCAP standards of evidence. E.g., Dept. of Family and Children’s Services, County of Santa Clara, CA.

http://www.cebc4cw.org/ratings/scientific-rating-scale/
Questions?

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