

# BUILDING *the* FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS ACROSS MULTIPLE DOMAINS

*“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”*

Alexander Den Heijer

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS DEFINED

Protective factors are conditions and characteristics of individuals, interpersonal relationships, communities, and the larger society that eliminate or reduce the impact of risk factors AND promote healthy development and well-being.

See the Practice Tips series at <https://DVChildWelfare.org/resource-library/> for more information about protective factors.

What does it mean for child welfare staff, DV practitioners, educators, faith leaders, treatment providers, community residents and leaders, and others to build protective factors?

Building protective factors refers to *facilitating experiences and conditions that support adult and child survivors of domestic violence in ways that help them to increase their well-being.*

Actively and intentionally building protective factors must be a primary focus for those interested in helping adult and child survivors of domestic violence. Better outcomes for children, adults, and families will be achieved if protective factors are addressed in all human domains: societal, community, interpersonal, and individual.

## Examples of Building Protective Factors in the Societal Domain

1. Identify to policy-makers and leaders the impact of systemic barriers on adult and child survivors’ well-being (e.g., policies that create barriers for survivors trying to access safer housing, or discipline policies that result in a school-to-prison pipeline for students whose true need is trauma-responsive educational settings).
2. Collaborate with community stakeholders to improve availability and access to resources, support, and services for adult and child survivors of domestic violence.

## Examples of Building Protective Factors in the Community Domain

1. Engage a wide range of community collaborators to identify and act on ways that they can build or promote protective factors in the lives of children and families they work with.
2. Work with community collaborators to address the ways in which they may be impeding the promotion of protective factors in the lives of children and families in the community.

### Examples of Building Protective Factors in the Interpersonal Domain

1. Facilitate adult and child survivors' access to parent support groups, children's playgroups, legal representation, immigrants' rights organizations, DV support groups, housing, and other resources and supports that address their self-identified and unique needs.
2. Engage family members and friends of adult and child survivors in order to strengthen or create a strong, positive social network.

### Examples of Building Protective Factors in the Individual Domain

1. Foster a safe, sensitive, and empowering working relationship with survivors that values their voice and enables them to reclaim their autonomy.
2. Employ trauma-aware and trauma-competent practices with adult and child survivors.

See <https://dvchildwelfare.org/resources/issue-brief-on-the-protective-factors-for-survivors-of-domestic-violence/> for more information on protective factors.

## THE FIVE KEY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

