

CULTIVATING WELL-BEING WELL-BECOMING AND RESILIENCY



Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

The Office of Research and Child Well-Being's Equity-Centered Strength-Focused Approach

The Office of Research and Child Well-Being (ORCW) crafted a program theory for well-being, well-becoming, and resiliency. ORCW's unified theory is a pathway of how well-being, well-becoming, resiliency, and equity are all necessary components to the prosperity of a family, as well as how those concepts intersect. Well-being is fluid and varies across persons and time but is significant to well-becoming as well-becoming leads to a future state of well-being. Well-becoming requires those resources afforded to families which are often unattainable but could have so much impact when working with marginalized populations. Resiliency is the ability to adapt positively when facing adversity.

WELL-BEING, WELL-BECOMING AND RESILIENCY

Well-being refers to overall health, happiness, and prosperity, encompassing various aspects of an individual's life including physical health and safety; education and cognitive health; social, emotional, and mental health; economic security; and racial and ethnic equity.

- **Physical Health and Safety** is one's state of physical health and functioning, regardless of ability, including factors such as nutrition, sleep, stress, and safety. Safety includes an absence of abuse, neglect, and other risks of physical harm, including violence in their home and local community.
- **Education and Cognitive Health** is one's state of cognitive functioning and intellectual growth. Education includes all informal and formal means of learning. Cognitive functioning reflects a person's mental competencies, including their capacity to learn, current life skills, and employability skills (i.e., vocational aptitude, creativity, communication, problem-solving, and daily decision-making).
- **Social, Emotional, and Mental Health** is a combination of three interrelated aspects of health that reflect an individual's sense of agency, interpersonal skills, identity, values, and morals. This also includes the extent to which they have developed a resilient sense of self, including racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, sexuality, and spiritual identities. Social well-being is the extent to which they feel connected to and valued by others. Emotional well-being pertains to recognizing, understanding, and managing one's emotions. Mental health is a person's outlook, attitudes, ability to manage stress, freedom of anxiety and disabling symptoms, and the ability to cope with ordinary demands and stresses of life. It also includes making prosocial behavioral choices and mitigating risks.
- **Economic Security** is the ability of individuals and families to secure the means to meet their basic needs, including childcare, clothing, education, food, health care, housing, and utilities. It also includes their ability to absorb financial shocks.
- **Racial and Ethnic Equity** The extent to which one feels that regardless of their race or ethnicity, they are treated fairly and with respect, have access to equitable opportunities and resources, and are supported in developing a healthy racial and ethnic identity.

Well-becoming is the work individuals do to grow into a new state of well-being in the future. To experience growth and build well-becoming, people need opportunities, resources, support, and relationships which help them meet their basic needs.

Resiliency is individuals, families, communities, and systems ability to adapt, recover, and even thrive in the face of adversity.

THE COMMITTEE FOR WELL-BEING, WELL-BECOMING AND RESILIENCY

Included representatives from:

- Casey Family Programs
- Erikson Institute
- Juvenile Protection Agency
- Northwestern University
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- DCFS Office of Caregiver and Parent Support
- DCFS Office of Research and Child Well-Being
- Youth and Parents with Lived Experience
- DCFS Statewide Parent Advisory Council
- DCFS Youth Advisory Board

ORCW is committed to incorporating the voices and honoring the expertise uniquely held by individuals with lived experience in child welfare. We will be forever grateful for the lived experience expertise contributed to this project, it would not have been possible without them.

ORCW COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Given the ongoing inequities evident within child welfare against marginalized racial individuals, LGBTQIA individuals, and individuals impacted by poverty, ORCW is committed to a reflective, transparent, growth-and-equity-minded approach for all the design and implementation initiatives undertaken by this office. An equitable child welfare system promotes an environment of psychological safety, critical reflection, individual growth, and institutional transformation. To do so, the system will need to adopt restorative policies and procedures aimed at remedying injustices experienced by oppressed populations, especially communities of color.

ORCW'S PROGRAM THEORY AND UNIFIED FRAMEWORK FOR WELL-BEING, WELL-BECOMING AND RESILIENCY

ORCW's program theory is grounded in established theories (resiliency theory and self-determination theory) and reflective of the values and collaborative expertise of the committee. The central premise of this program theory are the strengths of the child, youth, and family and their well-being. When adversity occurs, the family draws on its strengths and resiliency to persist. The child welfare system strives to empower families and mitigate the effects of adversity on the family, providing them an opportunity to be healthy and grow. Unmitigated threats diminish well-becoming and feed oppression and weaken families' resiliency, sometimes resulting in imminent risk of harm to the child through abuse or neglect. In these cases, child protection addresses abuse and neglect, mitigating immediate risks to the children. Throughout this work, the child welfare system, including DCFS, continues to work with the families, building their strengths and providing resources and opportunities to restore their well-being and well-becoming and building their resiliency.



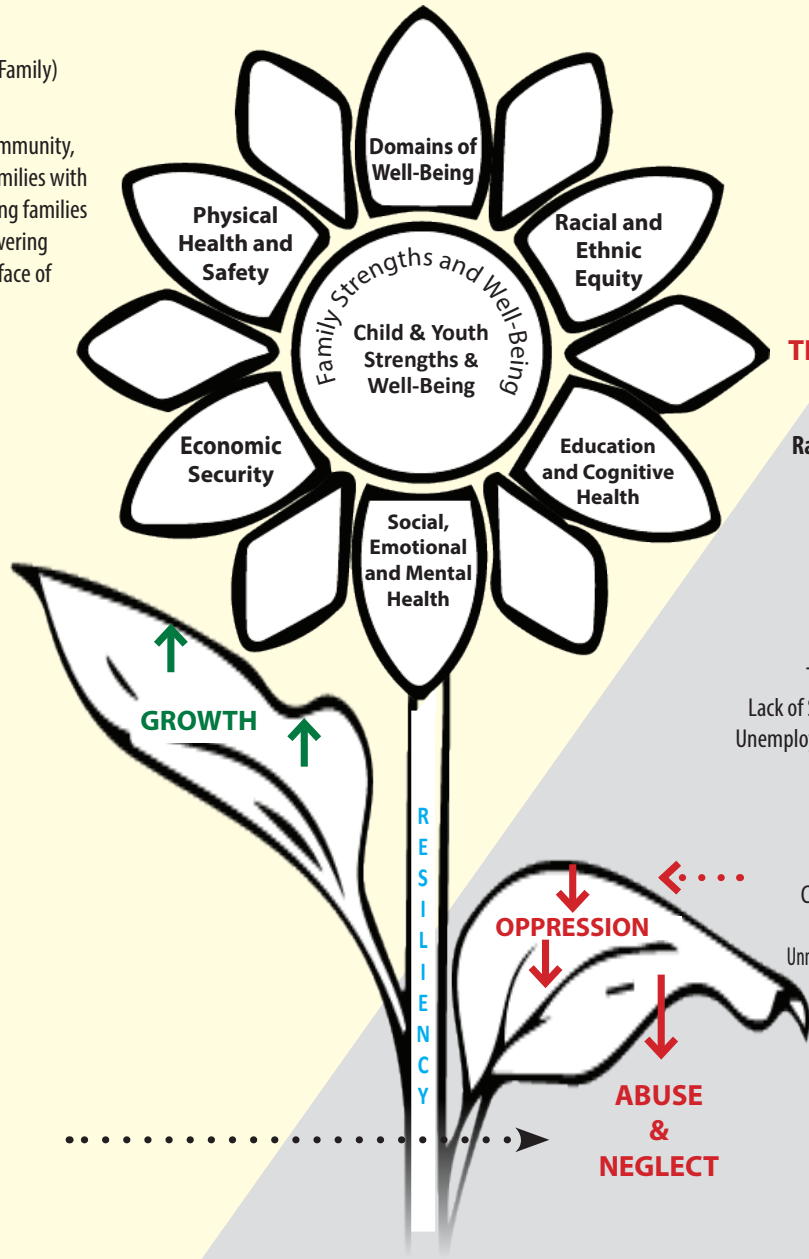
PROGRAM THEORY FOR WELL-BEING, WELL-BECOMING AND RESILIENCY

CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE ➔ **CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BECOMING** <.....

Includes (examples):

- Prevention Services
- Post-Permanency Supports (Youth and Family)
- Intact Services and KinCare

Reflects the collaborative cross-agency, community, and extended family support, providing families with resources and opportunities aimed at freeing families and their children from oppression, empowering them with the ability to be resilient in the face of adverse events and conditions.



THREATS TO FAMILY WELL-BEING

Racism and Racial Injustices

Examples:

- Racism and Racial Injustices
- Economic Inequities
- Homophobia
- Sexism
- Ableism
- Transphobia and Heterosexism
- Lack of Stable and Affordable Housing
- Unemployment and Underemployment
- Intergenerational Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Educational Inequities
- Community Violence and Crime
- Food Insecurity
- Unmet Physical and Mental Health Needs
- Religious Oppression
- Xenophobia

CHILD PROTECTION

Includes (examples):

- Abuse and Neglect Investigation
- Child Services and Supports
- Parent Services and Supports
- Caregiver Services and Supports

DCFS central mandate, focused on the reduction of both immediate and future threats to child safety, while building resilience through child welfare efforts.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

PROMOTIVE FACTORS

RISK FACTORS

NEXT STEPS

- Engage additional lived experiences experts in defining Well-Being, Well-becoming, and Resiliency Through Participatory Research.
- Utilize Lean Six Sigma (LSS) to build a set of measures for Well-being.



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