

Webinar 5: Creating Community

Protective Factors & Positive Childhood Experiences

Presenters:

Cammie Wolf Rice, Founder & CEO, CWC Alliance

Carter Holder, Director of Operations, CWC Alliance

Emily Sokol, Life Care Specialist, Emory University Saint Joseph's Hospital





Why We Do It

What We Do

Our Mission

Our mission is to prevent opioid addiction before it begins by rewriting the narrative surrounding opioid misuse, equipping communities with mental wellness tools, and providing a holistic approach to pain management for anyone experiencing a health crisis.

How We Do It

Who We Serve

The Life Care Specialist



Our Life Care Specialists (LCS) serve as an extra layer of support for patients and hospital staff by providing wellness skills and education to **prevent opioid misuse** before it begins.

An Integrated Member of The Healthcare Team Providing:

- **Opioid Safety Education**
- **Pain Management Techniques**
- **Mental Wellness Skills**

Learning Objectives

1. Identify protective factors that can reduce substance use risk
2. Explore the role of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) in building resilience
3. Recognize emerging research and trends
4. How to call your community to action



Reflection Question

Think about a time when you felt truly supported by your community.

→ What made that a meaningful experience?

→ How did it contribute to your sense of resilience?

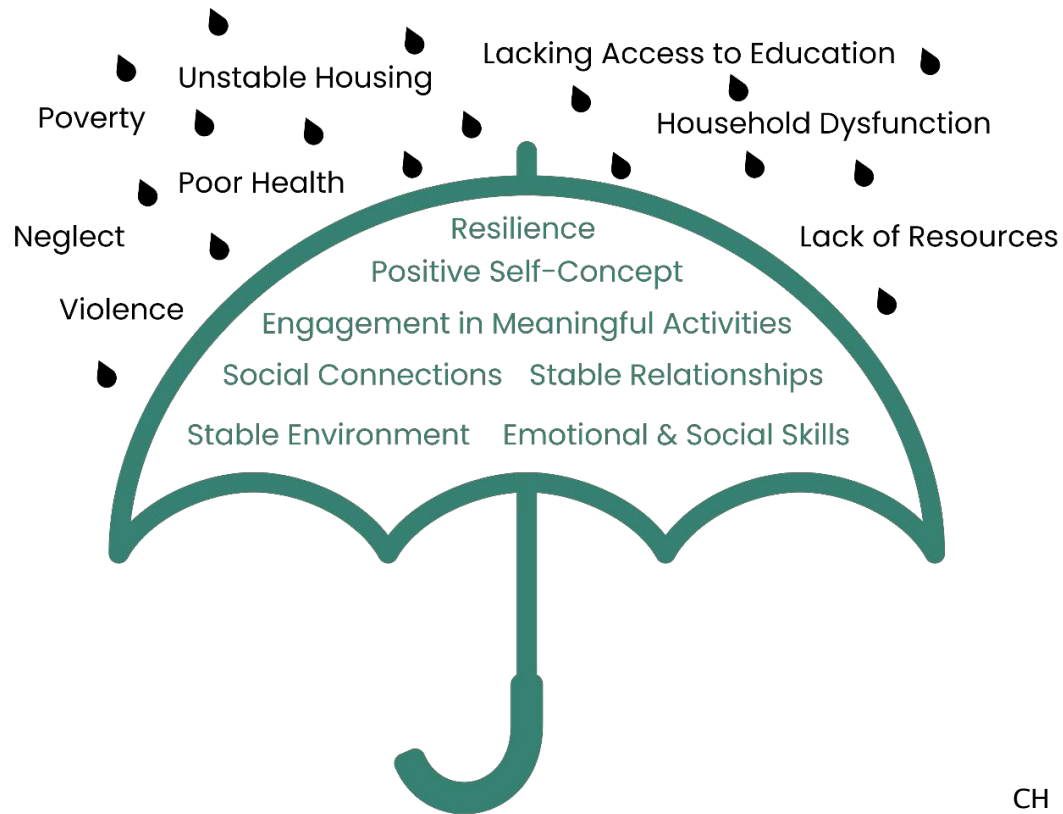
Key Terms

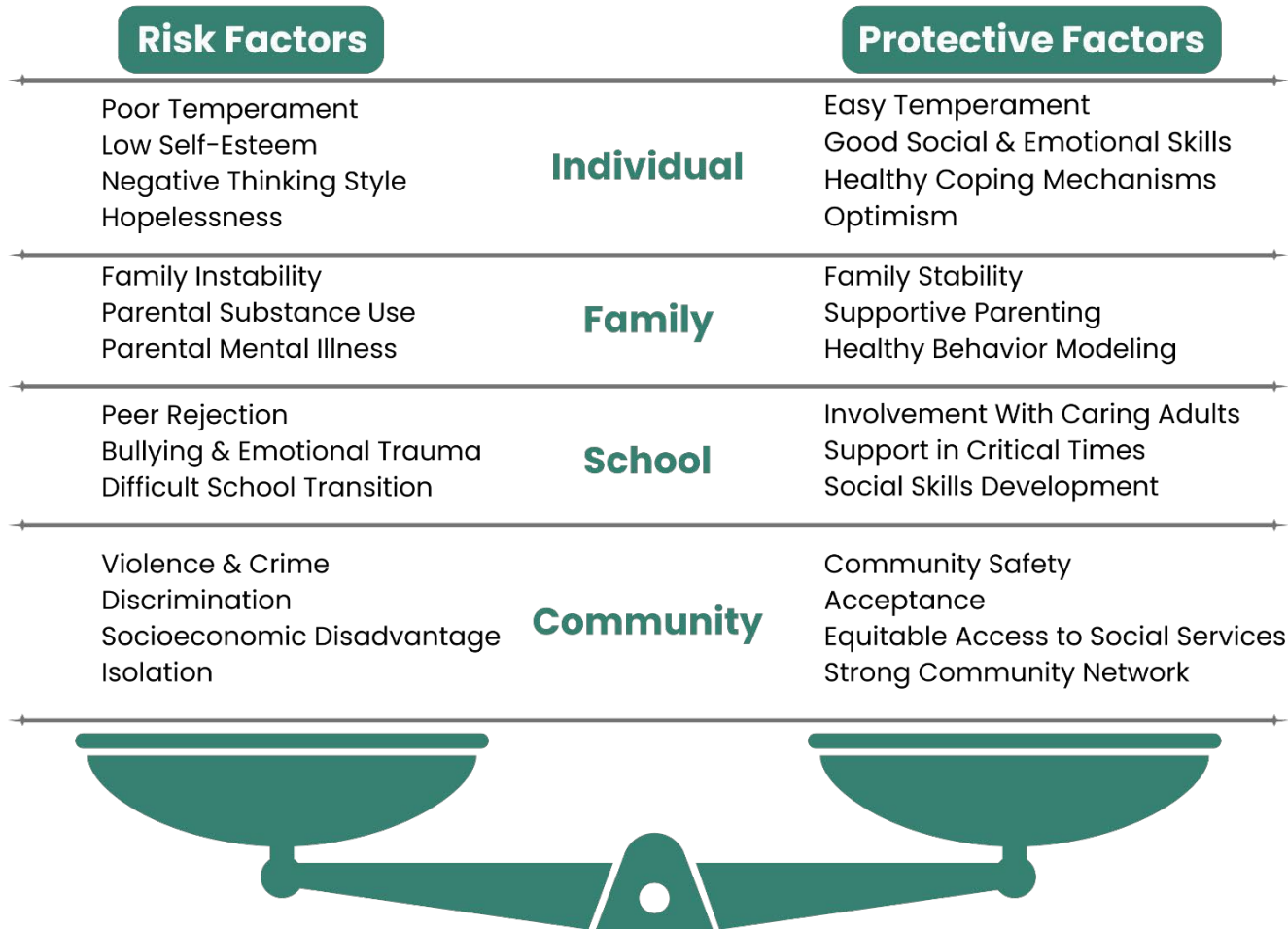
Risk Factors:

Conditions that increase likelihood of negative outcomes

Protective Factors:

Conditions that build resilience & reduce likelihood of negative outcomes





Social Belonging as a Protective Factor

The Power of Belonging

- Belonging meets a fundamental human need
- Reduces stress response and inflammation
- Counters isolation that often precedes substance use
- Creates natural accountability and support networks
- Provides alternative coping mechanisms



Fostering Social Belonging

Social belonging is fostered in inclusive spaces.

Characteristics of Inclusive Spaces:

- Physically and emotionally safe
- Culturally responsive & affirming
- Accessible to diverse community members
- Offers meaningful opportunities for participation & collaboration
- Provides resources & support

Inclusive Spaces



Relationships

Mentorship and Adult Relationships

The Impact of Mentoring:

- 46% less likely to use illicit drugs
- 27% less likely to begin alcohol use
- Better school attendance and performance
- Improved relationships with parents and peers
- Enhanced self-efficacy and future orientation

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

A response to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Bethell et al. (2019) JAMA Pediatrics.

- Study found PCEs independently predict mental health outcomes, even with high ACEs

Positive Childhood Experiences

The Seven Positive Childhood Experiences:

1. Ability to talk with family about feelings
2. Feeling that family is supportive during difficult times
3. Enjoying participation in community traditions
4. Feeling a sense of belonging in school
5. Feeling supported by friends
6. Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care
7. Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home

Study Findings:



Reduced Risk of Depression & Poor Mental Health:

- Adults with **6-7 PCEs** had a **72% lower chance** of depression or poor mental health than those with 0 to 2 PCEs (12.6% vs. 48.2%).
- Those with **3-5 PCEs** had a **50% lower risk** (25.1% vs. 48.2%).



Increased Social & Emotional Support:

- Adults with **6-7 PCEs** were **3.5x more likely** to report “always” receiving needed social and emotional support, compared to those with 0–2 PCEs.



Buffering Effect Against ACEs:

- PCEs were linked to **better adult mental health** across all ACE levels.
- This shows PCEs can **mitigate the harmful impacts** of ACEs.



Building positive experiences is as important as preventing adverse ones

PCEs research suggests a paradigm shift from deficit-focused to strength-based approaches

What We Know About PCEs



Decreased risk of
depression & poor
mental health



Increase
problem-solving
abilities and
emotional regulation



Build sense of
self-efficacy and
future orientation



Delay substance use
initiation

Connection: Mental health protection → reduced substance use risk

Protective Factors Specific to Substance Use Prevention

- Strong parent–child bonds
- Clear rules and monitoring
- Academic engagement and success
- Delayed substance use initiation
- Healthy peer relationships
- Community connection and involvement
- Access to mental health support

Delayed Substance Use Initiation

Nine of 10 people who meet the clinical criteria for substance use disorders involving nicotine, alcohol, or other drugs began smoking, drinking, or using other drugs before they turned 18.

Individuals who begin using any addictive substance (including nicotine, alcohol, or other drugs) before age 15 are **6.5 times as likely** to develop a substance use disorder as those who delay use until age 21 or older (28.1% vs. 4.3%).

Programs That Work



THE BOYCE L. ANSLEY SCHOOL

Beyond circumstance



BOYS CLUBS
OF AMERICA



CAMBODIAN
CHILDREN'S FUND

The Boyce L Ansley School Atlanta, GA



The Ansley School is a tuition-free, private school for children who have or are currently experiencing homelessness.

Their mission is to help break the cycle of generational poverty by providing collaborative family support and a complete academic program that empowers children and families to thrive beyond circumstance.



Usher's New Look Nationwide

Usher's New Look® (UNL) is a non-profit organization that transforms the lives of under-resourced youth through a comprehensive program which develops passion-driven, global leaders.

ushersnewlook.org



Transforming the lives of teens
for more than 20 years.



Cambodian Children's Fund

The Mission: Transforming the most impoverished children into tomorrow's leaders

cambodianchildrensfund.org





What you can do?

Build Coalitions

Spend Time
Volunteering
Within Your
Community

Promote Inclusive
Spaces

Mentor Youth in
Your Community

Promote Mental
Wellness Practices

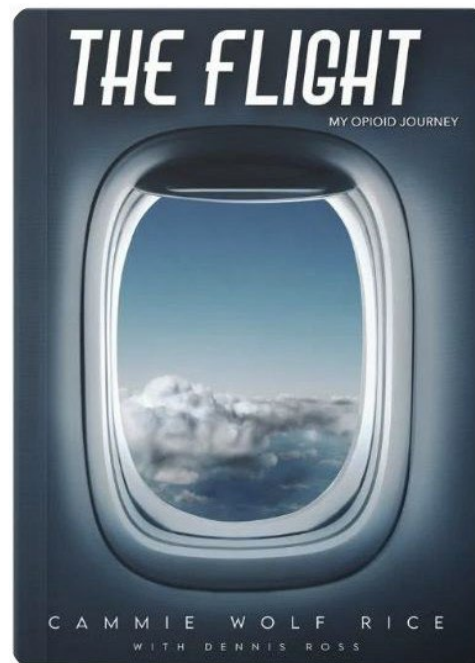
Support
Community and
Local Businesses

Join the Alliance!

@CWCAAlliance on all platforms!



Read the Flight
Available on Amazon





Questions?