

THE CLFC FAMILY REUNION NEWS

THE *CREATING LASTING FAMILY CONNECTIONS*®
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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“When love and skill work
together, expect a masterpiece.”
*John Ruskin – Art Critic and Social
Activist*

“Discover vocation and creation. And
joy will come like clairvoyance,
where blindness was before.”
Rumi – Sufi Poet

Family Strengthening Programming Impacts Economic Stability

Over the last 30 years, the *Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC)* curriculum series has repeatedly demonstrated in published research that personal and family-strengthening approaches can produce strong, positive impacts in the fields of violence, prison reentry, and substance abuse prevention, intervention and recovery (see [NREPP](#)). Family strengthening approaches are proving to be especially attractive and viable when support for personal and family economic stability is included. With the challenges the economy has presented to many families over the last several years, COPEs has begun to devote even more attention, resources and services to addressing economic stability issues in support of personal and family success.

Economic instability and insecurity are known risk factors with particular significance and a detrimental impact in low-income, undereducated and low-skilled populations. Conversely, economic *stability* and *security* are established protective factors that increase long-term personal and family resilience, satisfaction and well-being.

While the *Creating Lasting Family Connections® (CLFC) Curriculum Series* is proven to increase participant relationship skills that transfer from home to the workplace, services designed specifically to prepare individuals for career placement, retention and advancement are crucial to long-term personal and family recovery, health and success.

One of our federal funding sources, the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), has recognized the need for a more robust focus on economic stability services in their family-strengthening and fatherhood programming to improve the quality of life for children and families. COPEs, Inc. staff recently attended OFA’s *Healthy Marriage, Responsible Fatherhood, and Tribal TANF – Child Welfare Grantees Annual Meeting* in Washington, DC during the week of August 24 – 28, 2014. The theme of the conference was “Going the Distance, Charting New Horizons.” This theme connects directly to the mission of agencies in our *CLFC* Family all across the country who strive to support individuals and families to “go the distance” in personal, couple and family transformation.

At the conference, workshop presenters shared a new OFA conceptual framework for economic stability that we encourage all agencies to consider for enhancing their current *CLFC* programming and services. The model is organized, comprehensive and integrates substance abuse prevention (assessment, intervention and referral to treatment) into an overall design for long term personal and family success. We were impressed how the model matches up with OFA's ongoing effort to improve outcomes for children and families. The core tenets of the economic framework include:



Image taken from OFA Annual Grantee Meeting Materials

1. Intake/Baseline Assessment
2. Case management, Client Plan and Supportive Services
3. Capacity Building
4. Connecting to Job Openings
5. Work Retention and Career Advancement

COPES staff has already begun the initial process of revamping our economic stability service approach to align with this new model. We have hired an economic stability consultant to help re-design this critical component of our services. Further, we are reviewing current procedures, screening and assessment tools, our case management design, capacity building initiatives,

potential job development opportunities, and work retention and career advancement curriculums for possible future adaptation and implementation.

We encourage all agencies to consider a similar review of their own services related to economic stability and, if possible, to reflect on how adopting this new framework might enhance existing services for the betterment of individuals, families and their broader community.

For a more in-depth review of OFA's economic stability model, including links to related tools and resources, please visit: [Within Reach: Strategies for Improving Family Economic Stability](#).

If you have questions, comments or ideas/resources to share on the topic of economic stability, please contact Ted N. Strader at tstrader@sprynet.com. We would love to hear from you and possibly share your ideas with the rest of our CLFC Family.

6 Ways to Connect CLFC to Career and Income Advancement

At the core of each of the three programs in the *CLFC Curriculum Series* is the concept of “connect-immunity”. *CLFC* programming invites participants on a structured journey of self-reflection, self-assessment and self-transformation that helps develop deep and healthy connections to self, to others and to a higher vision, purpose and/or higher power. These deep, healthy connections serve as protective “shields” or “immunity” against negative social influences such as criminal behavior, violence and substance abuse.

The skills of connecting in healthy, effective ways to self and others in personal settings are just as effective in the workplace. Many participants in *CLFC* programs aspire to find well-paid positions in careers they enjoy, to retain those positions and to advance in their chosen profession or increase their income. *CLFC* program implementers are strongly encouraged to make connections between the skills, concepts and activities of *CLFC* and career readiness and advancement.

6 Easy Ways to Connect CLFC Content to Career Success:

1. *The overarching CLFC approach of influence versus control:* The *CLFC* approach of influence through building and maintaining healthy relationships and inviting and asking versus demanding and controlling can help *CLFC* program participants learn effective ways of influencing co-workers, motivating staff and developing a successful, long-term leadership style. The approach of influence reduces the likelihood of conflict and arguments while increasing the likelihood of inclusion, understanding and collaboration.
2. *Parent and Child Job Descriptions:* The “job descriptions” for parents and children in the Raising Resilient Youth (RRY) module help participants adopt different perspectives (parent and child). The skill of examining relationships and circumstances through multiple vantage points can help participants navigate often tricky workplace relationships, negotiate more effectively and develop empathy and understanding for co-workers, management and customers. The parent role of developing expectations and consequences is mirrored in the workplace, and involving employees in the development of expectations and consequences is as important as involving our children in the same practice at home.
3. *The Getting Real Response:* The calm, confident and sensitive communication skills coached and role-played in *Getting Real* are equally effective in personal and professional relationships. *CLFC*

participants can learn valuable leadership and communication skills that apply to both employee-to-employee and supervisor-to-employee relationships. Employees who are able to communicate effectively and productively (especially during disagreements) at all levels of the organization increase their value within the company and therefore are often more likely to be promoted.

4. *Developing Positive Parental Influences:* CLFC participants who relate to alcohol and drugs in healthy, effective ways often avoid many common workplace issues while demonstrating a level of responsibility and self-management that is often rewarded and appreciated by upper management.
5. *Managing Thoughts and Feelings:* CLCF participants who learn strategies to successfully process and manage their own thoughts and feelings can often avoid workplace conflict, more effectively manage conflict when it arises, make better decisions and demonstrate both resiliency and composure under pressure. These are skills often associated with successful employees and leaders.
6. *"I" Messages & Feedback:* CLFC participants can learn to effectively give and receive productive feedback in their personal and professional lives. This is a high-level skill often attributed to leaders. Therefore, demonstrating successful communication of feedback improves the odds of promotion and advancement.

These are just a few of the ways *CLFC* trainers can connect content from the *CLFC Curriculum Series* to career and income advancement. Making these connections can engage *CLFC* participants in the curriculum while inspiring them to adopt *CLFC* skills in both their personal and professional lives for holistic attitude and behavior change.

Do you have any other ways of connecting *CLFC* content to career success? Please let us know by contacting Ted N. Strader at tstrader@sprynet.com. We would love to hear from you and share your ideas with the rest of our *CLFC* Family.

Ted N. Strader



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