



Greetings to all and welcome to fall! *First and foremost, I hope all of you are well, both physical and mentally as we face these uncertain times.* With so many of our fellow citizens facing challenges in their daily lives we believe it's more important than ever that we continue to focus on support for families to stop abuse and neglect before it starts. We know that so many of you are working harder than ever to do just this AND collectively and cooperatively we can help families continue to cope in healthy ways and protect children while doing so.

One obstacle we often face in getting families the help they need is the fact that there is still tremendous stigma associated with asking for or even receiving help. Decreasing/eliminating the stigma around asking for help remains one of our main goals but we also have to be aware that there is still reluctance among some to offer assistance. This "offer" may take many forms but timeliness is a key to acceptance and knowing when to offer help and how to offer help is a big part of success in this regard. Below are some examples of how stigma is perpetuated and some tips for reducing it.

Examples of how stigma is perpetuated include:

- Media depictions where the villain is often a character with a mental illness.
- Harmful stereotypes of people with mental illness.
- Treating mental health issues as if they are something people can overcome if they just "try harder" or "snap out of it"

Seven Things You Can Do to Reduce Stigma

1. Know the facts. Educate yourself about mental illness including substance use disorders.
2. Be aware of your attitudes and behavior.

3. Choose your words carefully.
4. Educate others.
5. Focus on the positive.
6. Support people.
7. Include everyone.



With the beginning of the school year now we know our state's children are also facing their own personal challenges and their parents and caregivers need their **social connections** more than ever so our focus will continue to be on remaining physically distant but socially close. Thankfully we have technology and creative means to maintain these connections so we're encouraged by your innovation and dedication...keep going!

One way we hope to contribute to this effort is through our ongoing webinar series on the Protective Factors called **"Bringing the Protective Factors to Life."** The link to these webinars is on our home page at www.preventchildabusefl.org or you can click [here](#) to link directly to the series. Our latest installments, done in partnership with our friends at **Sunshine Health** (Compassion Fatigue) and **Brevard CARES** (Promotive Factors) speak directly to staff and everyone out there trying to make a difference so please check them out!

When Protective Factors are present in families, their protective capacities are improved. When protective capacities are increased, families are more stable and children are safer. Let's keep our focus on building support for families and pay attention to prevention!



Finally, October is here and it is National **Safe Sleep and SIDS Awareness** month! We know that every year, unsafe sleep is our state's leading cause of death for children under the age of one. Prevent Child Abuse Florida is proud to be a state leader in the promotion of Safe Sleep practices and we will have more announcements about our plans for next month in the coming days. For the time being, please download our Social Media Toolkit [here](#) and browse all our other Safe Sleep resources on this page as well.

Thank you all for everything you do for children and families, if we can be of any assistance to you, your agency or organization, please contact me at clolley@ounce.org or call my cell phone (850) 933-3271.

Chris Lolley

Executive Director

Prevent Child Abuse Florida