



Building Families' Concrete Support and other Protective Factors through Program Implementation



Strengthening Families
An initiative of CSSP

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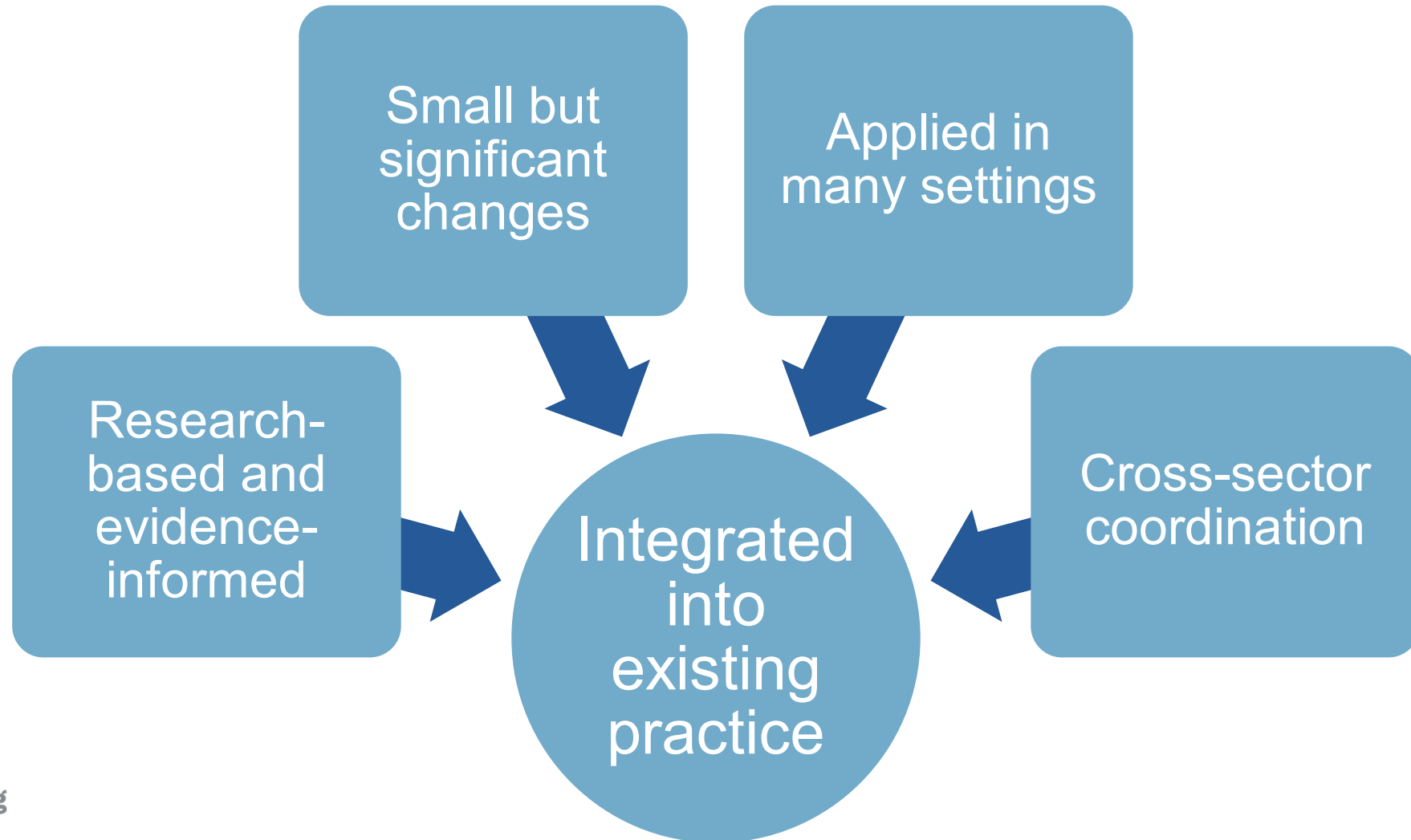
The Strengthening Families Approach

A set of core values that should guide service delivery and program practice designed to support families in building their protective factors.

The Protective Factors Framework

A research-informed set of interrelated attributes of individuals, families, and communities that both reduce the impact of risk factors and promote healthy development and well-being.

Strengthening Families is an approach, not a model





What does it look like when a community supports parents to build these protective factors?



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Families**
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policies

history

Community

Physical Health

Education and Care

Domestic Violence

Primary healthcare

Education

Safety planning

Health promotion activities

Screening

Shelter
Counseling

Targeted Special Needs Programs

Children's Mental Health

Families & Protective Factors

Screening and assessment
Early Intervention services

Mental health consultation
Counseling

Parent/child activities

Home visits

Support groups

Assessment

Group activities

Parent education

Safety planning

Substance abuse treatment

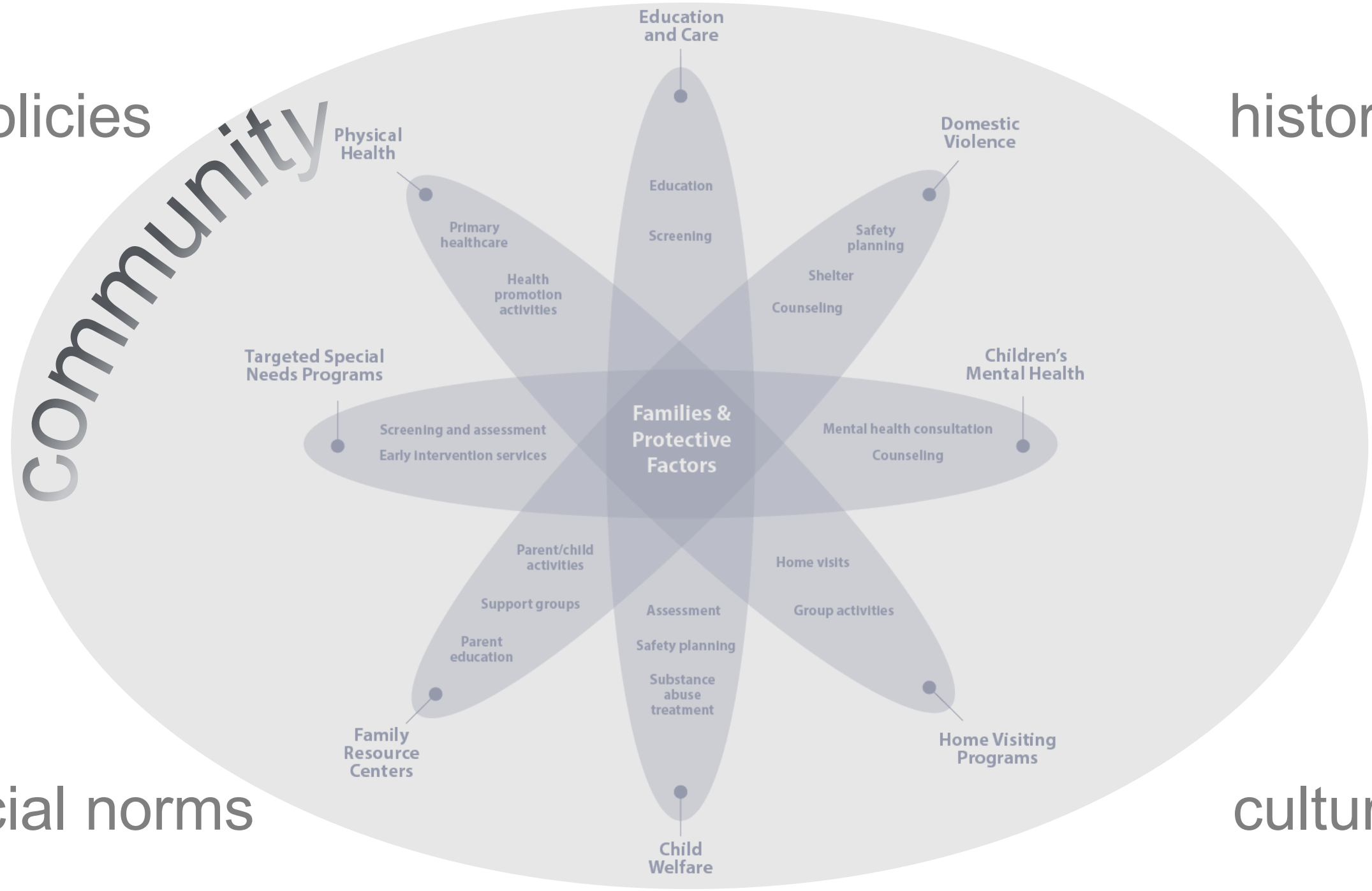
Family Resource Centers

Home Visiting Programs

social norms

culture

Child Welfare



A family support system: What does it look like?



Light touch family support in the settings families are in every day



Connections to and support from dedicated family support resources



Connections to more intensive services when needed

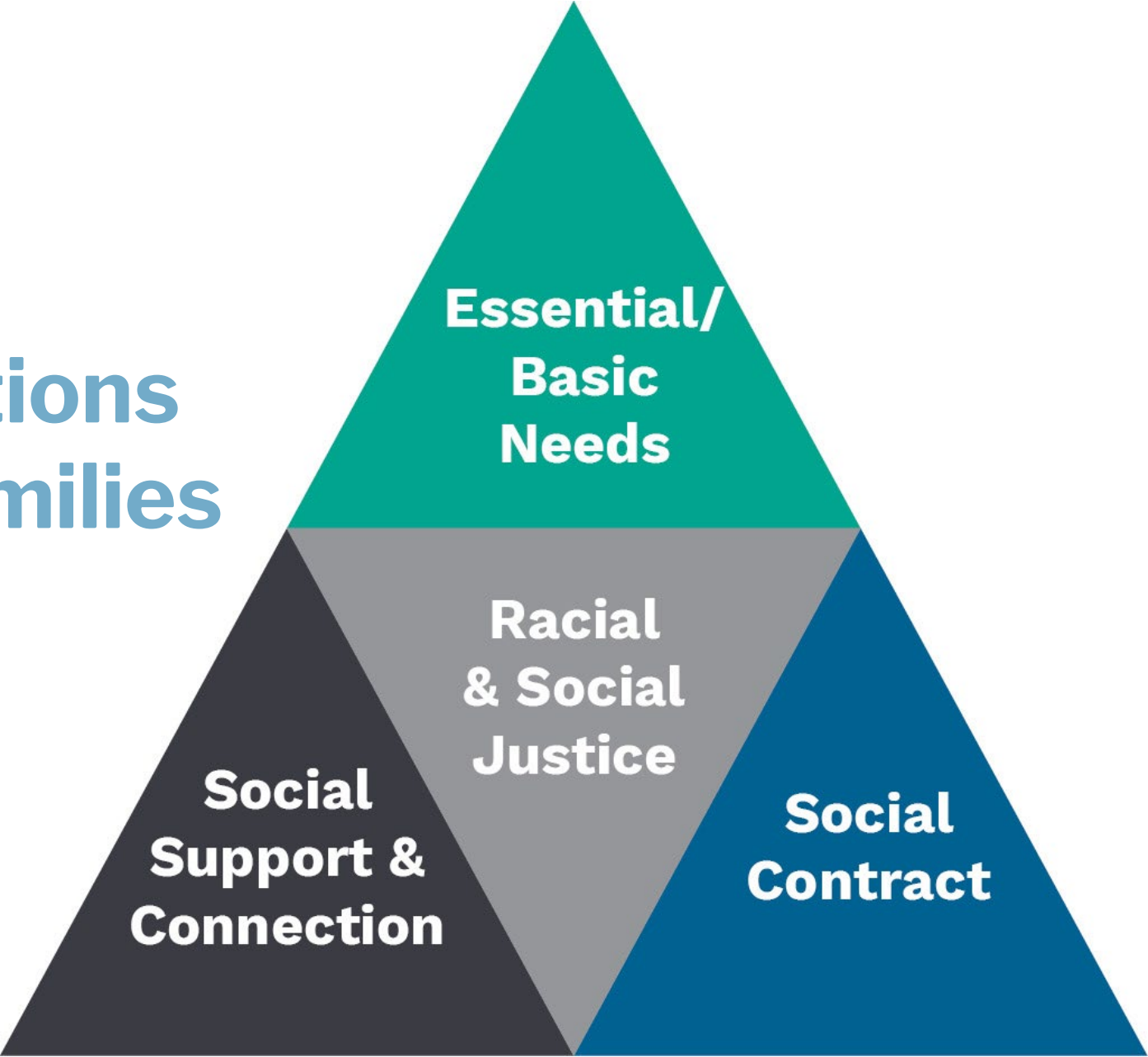


Navigation supports to help make the connections

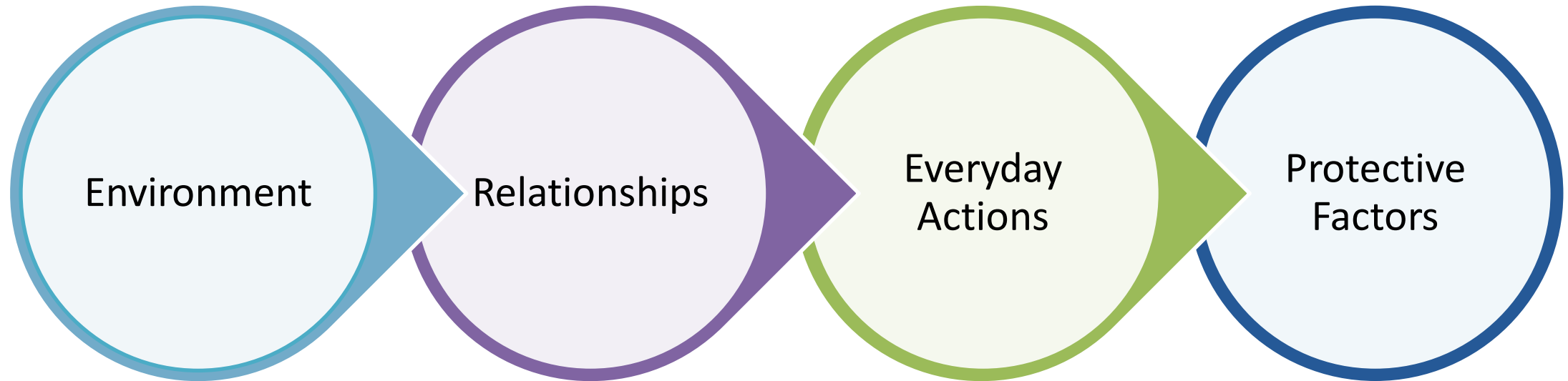
Common language and commitment to helping families build protective factors

Policies and community conditions that strengthen families

Community Conditions that Strengthen Families

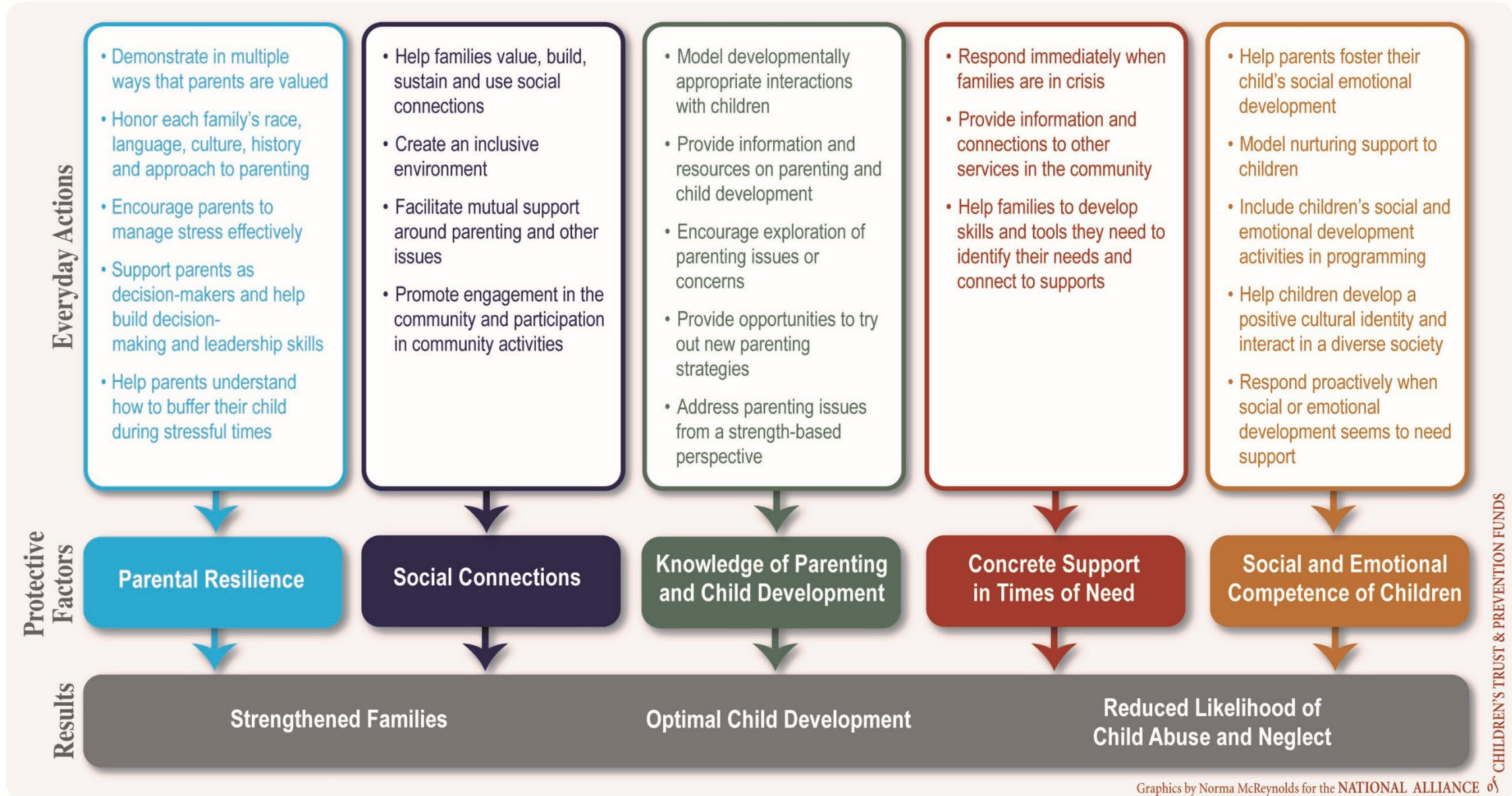


How do programs help families build protective factors?



The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

Everyday Actions That Help Build Protective Factors



Everyday Actions

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to other services in the community
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports

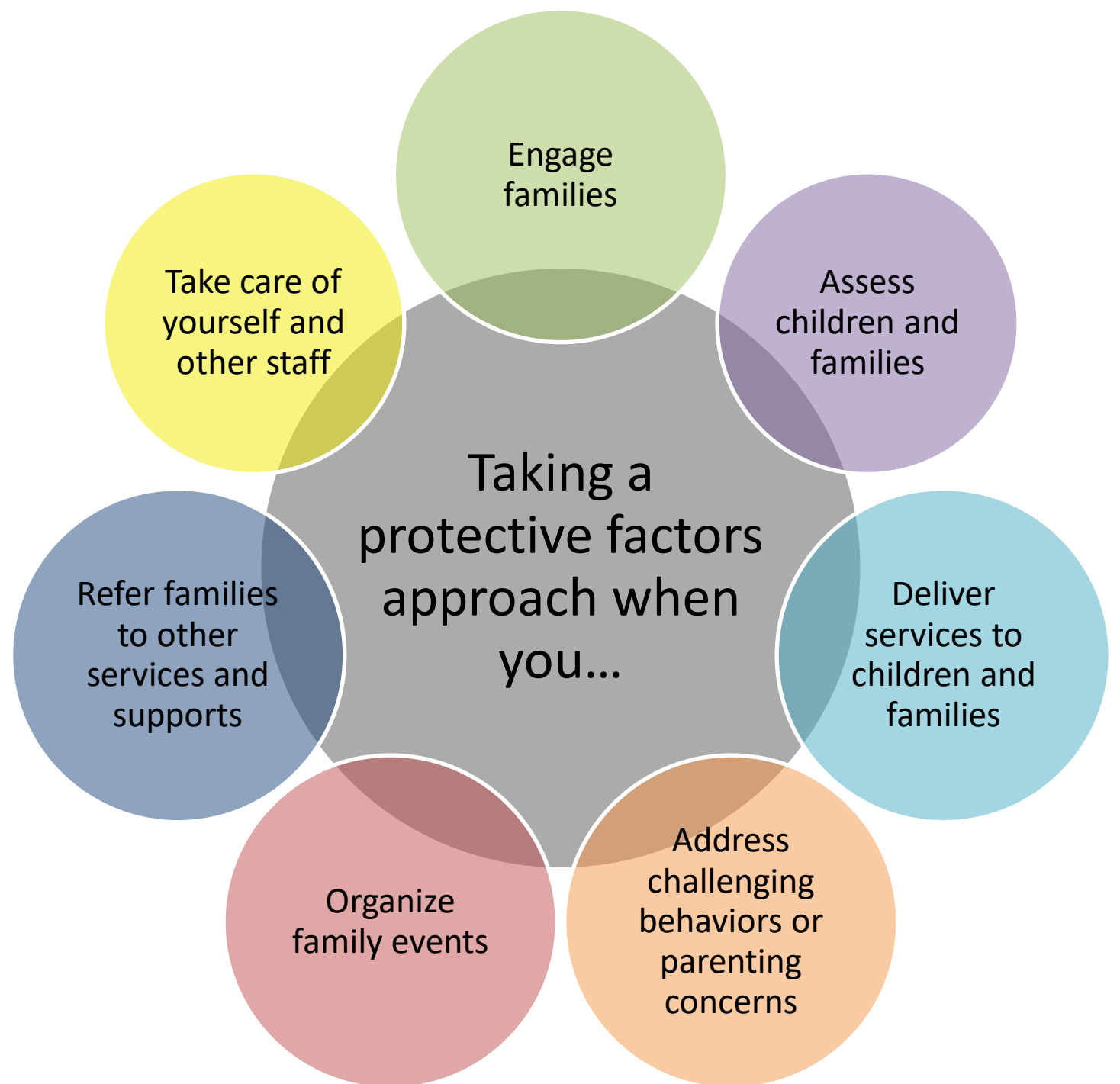
BUILD

Protective Factors

Families are supported to build:

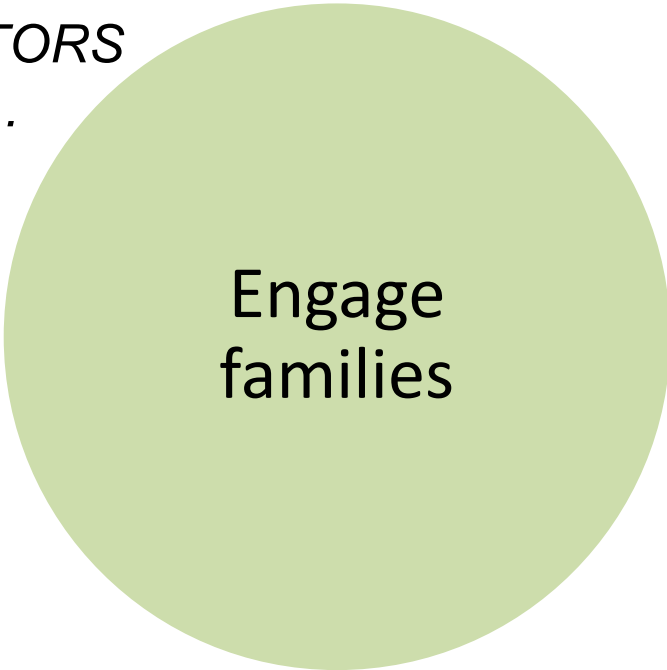
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Opportunities for everyday actions



*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*

- It's about how you are and how you structure your relationship with families
- Actively welcome and engage fathers, grandparents, and other important adults in children's lives
- Conduct targeted outreach to isolated families and underserved groups



Engage
families

**Every interaction is
an opportunity to engage**

*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*

- Include protective factors in formal and informal assessments
- Regularly ask questions and observe
- Share information with families

Assess
children and
families

**Focus on strengths
before concerns**

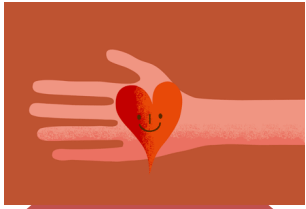
*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*

- Develop plans in partnership with parents
- Provide connections to other services as requested
- Create opportunities and coach on skills for social connections
- Consider the developmental needs of all children and adults in the household

Deliver
services to
children and
families

Follow the family's lead

*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*



Express
Empathy



Ask Good
Questions



Provide
Information
and
Perspective



Develop
Strategies



Coach,
Model and
Mentor



Lift up
Successes

Address
challenging
behaviors or
parenting
concerns

**Come from a
place of empathy and
joint problem-solving**



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Exercise:

Identify strengths and consider what services to offer based on a family scenario



Karin & Max: New to Infant Playgroup

Karin, a first-time, 19-year-old mother, has been participating in home visiting services since about halfway through her pregnancy with her son, Max, who is now almost 2 months old. One night earlier this week, Karin texted her home visitor and said Max would not stop crying and she was about to lose it herself.

Max does not yet sleep for more than a few hours at a time. He was born small but has gained weight well. Karin typically breastfeeds Max every 2-3 hours. She says that he has been crying a lot for the past week. Karin is exhausted because she generally takes care of her son by herself. She doesn't have a good relationship with her parents or with Max's dad, who comes to see the baby about once a week. Karin's sister has watched Max a few times but only for a couple hours at a time. Karin will need to find a job soon, but hasn't yet arranged any child care for Max.

Her home visitor encouraged Karin to ask the pediatrician about acid reflux and colic at Max's upcoming well child visit. In the meantime, she suggested some strategies for coping with the crying. She also gave Karin information about the parent-infant playgroup at the FRC, and sent you a note saying to expect Karin and Max at the Thursday playgroup.



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Small Groups:

What strengths do you see in this family?
What services and supports would you want to offer?
How would you approach Karin?



*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*

- Meet a family need and include some fun!
- Partner with parents to plan successful events
- Remove obstacles to participation
- Bring isolated families along

Organize
family events

Fun with a purpose

*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*

- Share lists of available services and resources
- Get to know other service providers
- Make “warm hand-offs”
- Follow up to be sure the need was met

Refer families
to other
services and
supports

**Build on relationships to ensure
that families’ needs are met**

*TAKING A PROTECTIVE FACTORS
APPROACH WHEN YOU...*

- Check in on your own protective factors
- Take time for self-care
- Encourage your staff and co-workers to do the same!

Take care of
yourself and
other staff

You can't pour from an empty cup



- How do you intend to shift your practice to help families build protective factors?



Center for the Study of Social Policy

Ideas into Action



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