



# Co-Creating Well-Being

Insights Report for Central  
and Western New York  
Executive Summary

MA...

ACTIVITY BOOK

ADULT JOURNAL

Identify family relationships

Got Married

Finances + a vehicle help get my kids to school

wants to make friends

Cute boys

Help + support from my family makes things possible.

Family time important

Safety of family member

Family

I found out I'm having twins

Kids' family time

Difficult + Crabby Kids

Estranged from birth family

Rewriting

Birth of great nephew

I am pregnant

Healthy baby being born

Baby born too early

LOVES THE KIDS THEY LOVE W/ B A SCHOOL

celebrates

Love from family

My boyfriend isn't there

for a while with feelings to support someone else

Mean Supportive attitude is well as positive

Welfare of the person

Ensure that mom will not be harassed

is mom of kids being abused

school

Transition

Can communicate feelings

need to write

urgency on support for budget but in need of support financially

engages compromise

and in the end

with my children's education

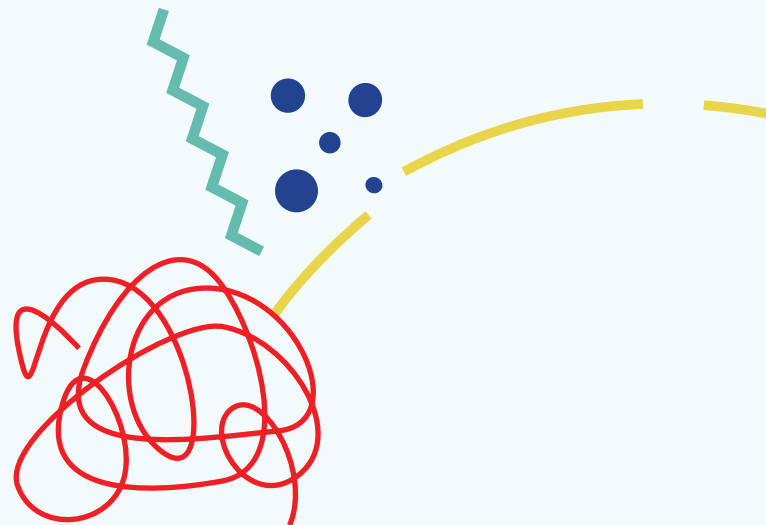
# Executive Summary

## Health Foundation for Western and Central New York

The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York is focused, in part, on assisting families in accessing the care, information, and tools they need so that children impacted by poverty are physically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally ready for school. In 2018, the Health Foundation launched the **Co-Creating Well-Being: Supporting Children and Families Through Trauma Initiative** in support of this goal.

Parents' and children's experiences of traumatic events and toxic stress can create a life-long risk of negative birth outcomes, impaired early childhood development, increased incidence of chronic conditions, maladaptive coping behaviors, lowered educational achievement, and can impede school readiness.

If we are to mitigate the effects of trauma, we must include the voice of community, co-design, and implement a series of strategies centered on universal prevention, targeted interventions/treatments, and adaptations of non-trauma interventions. These strategies will support the development of protective factors in our children and families and provide a pathway to well-being.



# Co-Creating Well-Being Initiative

The goal of the Co-Creating Well-Being Initiative (CCWB) is to support increased skills/technical support for providers, better community engagement and inclusion in service design and delivery, as well as availability and type of interventions/programs which address toxic stress, trauma, and well-being. While there are some existing programs and interventions that look to meet these aims and work hard toward these goals, the reported challenge is that some existing efforts face: limited variety/availability, low client uptake, gaps in service, unmet needs, and lack of coordination between services.

There are three integral components to the CCWB Initiative, including **human-centered design (HCD)**, **trauma-informed care and approaches (TIC)**, and **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)**.

The CCWB Initiative includes the following three phases:

## PHASE ONE

### Building Capacity

August 2018 – March 2019

**A spectrum of providers who work with families with children 5 and under as well as families from community-based organizations, early childhood centers and clinics will be provided an opportunity to participate in learning sessions to improve service delivery, and support children and families that have experienced trauma and toxic stress. Sessions include training and skill development on trauma, toxic stress, adverse childhood experiences, trauma-informed care, early childhood development, and human-centered design (HCD).**

## PHASE TWO

### Engaging Communities

May 2019 – November 2019

**Selected organizations will** gather information from children, families and early childhood providers; use human-centered design and tools; and use information/community feedback to develop programs/interventions based on insights from the community.

## PHASE THREE

### Action Through Grants

January 2020 – December 2022

**Eligible organizations will** develop program designs and apply for grants that will support a spectrum of interventions and services based on research and insights from community engagement to support children and families addressing and healing from trauma.

Participation in **PHASE ONE** HCD training is mandatory for eligibility for **PHASE THREE**.



# Methodology

## HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN

Human-centered design provides a toolkit for deeply understanding people’s needs and experiences, generating ideas to meet those needs, and then testing solutions with—and learning from—the people that will use the program or service. Design research and grounded theory provide the practical underpinnings of human-centered design. It is especially well-suited to developing clarity in complex or changing situations with many and varied stakeholders. We go to the literature after collecting data from people. This is different from deductive approaches that go to the literature and pre-select a topic before starting the research process.

## PHASE TWO LEARNING METHODOLOGY

Phase Two of CCWB built on Phase One by supporting organizations to continue to expand knowledge and expertise in human-centered design through Self-Study Resources. These resources include a series of HCD tools and resources such as blog posts, videos, and webinars to help service providers learn more about the needs of children, families, caregivers, and providers in the community. Further, several in-person workshops covering advanced human-centered design engagement as well as data interpretation took place in both central and western New York.

## ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Organizations in central and western New York collected stories to better understand life in the community using co-designed qualitative engagement tools. Light touch engagement tools included the Postcard, Empathy Map, and Emoji Wheel. In depth engagement tools included the Activity Book and Adult Journal. In addition to the engagement tools, a number of resources were available on the CCWB website, including the Engagement Guide, the Feedback Grid and tips for Starting Solo. Engagement tools provide insight that can be utilized later in the design process. They provide the view “in” before you can truly define the issue or co-design solutions.

## DATA COLLECTION

Organizations distributed engagement tools in a variety of locations and contexts—as part of one-to-one clinical sessions, support groups, staff meetings, community events, as well as in waiting rooms and other public areas where children, families, caregivers, and providers receive support. In total 1,353 engagement tools were submitted—approximately 70% of the tools were from western and 30% from central New York. All engagement tools were anonymous and completed voluntarily.

# How to Read this Report

This report includes a series of Insights and Themes that emerged through the data in central and western New York. For each Insight, we have included a short description, illustrative quotes, and “How Might We” questions. There are also five Personas—fictionalized accounts of people’s lives based on the engagement data—which are included for central and western New York, plus two Personas for children that are relevant to both geographic areas. Research data specific to central and western New York can be found in the **Detailed Research Summary** provided for both central and western New York.

## Insights Central New York

1. It can be hard growing up in central New York
2. I need to be reminded that I am important
3. I need you to know that I've lived a long and difficult life
4. I am doing all i can to hold it all together
5. Parenting is hard
6. Even though I have uncertainty, I am fine
7. This is my life as a refugee in central New York
8. I know what I need but don't have the resources to make it happen
9. I've experienced trauma, but I want to move on
10. It's hard to do right for myself and others

**"I like to smile and never give up"**

**"I have seven kids and I need help"**

## Insights Western New York

1. Using self-awareness to take ownership and action around mental health
2. Connectedness to opportunities for self-expression can be hindered by people's stereotype of me
3. Finding my healthy place
4. Voicing my needs is important to make my life more balanced
5. Systems problems and solutions
6. Meeting basic human needs and advancing social interactions
7. Adversity in the journey to well-being
8. Personal, professional, and relationship wellness

**"Stop judging me and actually help me"**

**"I focus too much on other people"**

## Reflections on the Process

Co-Creating Well-Being training opportunities not only helped participants/providers to learn new skills and processes related to human-centered design, but also had a transformative impact in a deeper sense. Reflective conversations with providers surfaced deep learning and powerful insights gleaned through the CCWB Initiative to date.

### Major learnings across central and western New York were:

- We need to listen to what people want in their own words and trust in their expertise
- We need to better understand all sides of a person because we are all complex
- We need to use positive language because it shapes everyday reality
- We need to work within an interconnected system where clarity of communication is key

## Next Steps: Leveraging Insights, Themes and Personas to Create Systems Change

1. Make sure the people we collected data from see themselves in the Insights and Themes
2. Engage stakeholders to help us define a specific problem to work on
3. Co-design new solutions with stakeholders to improve the lives of children, families, caregivers, and providers
4. Consider community, cultural, historical and systems context

### Remember to check-in

Even during implementation, continue to “check-in” on an ongoing basis to ensure solutions still work. Don’t be afraid to continually make changes and improvements to better meet the needs of the people you are designing for.



This report is a starting point. The Insights and Personas present opportunities to better understand and respond to the needs of our community. We cannot look at any of these Insights in isolation. Each individual change we make needs to align and contribute to the overall systems change.

By responding to the Insights in this report and co-designing solutions with children, families, caregivers, and other providers, the work currently underway and what we take on through Phase Three will create the impact and outcomes needed to evolve our systems for the better and support well-being.

