

FOCUSING ON ACTION: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES SELF-ASSESSMENT (SFSA) JANUARY 2024 UPDATES FOR THE SWAG FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER (SWAG FRC)

Haley Pegram and Angela Tenerelli



The SWAG SFSA Process

The purpose of the SFSA process was to evaluate the SWAG Family Resource Center's (SWAG FRC) practices, programs, and services based on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. The SWAG FRC's SFSA team consisted of 2 direct service staff members, 3 community collaborators from partner organizations, and 4 Community Ambassadors who utilized services and programs at the SWAG FRC. Team members individually completed a survey related to the implementation of each protective factor at the SWAG FRC. Team members came together for critical discussion to assess survey results and develop action items to address any gaps in programs, services, or Resource Center practices. SWAG FRC staff have been working hard to implement these action items with available resources and staff capacities. Updates and plans for implementing action items have been categorized into four key themes determined by the SWAG SFSA team and are summarized in this report. The key themes are:

- **Theme One:** Peer-to-Peer led trainings, a speaker series, and parent support nights.
- **Theme Two:** Increase awareness by utilizing key community members and improving messaging to the community.
- **Theme Three:** Increase engagement with SWAG FRC programs, local businesses, schools, fathers/males, diverse populations, patrons in the planning process for programs.
- **Theme Four:** Begin hosting social connection events, community events, and parent-only activities, once appropriate, considering safety and public health recommendations.

Since completing the initial SFSA process, SWAG FRC staff have focused on enhancing services and supports associated with all four themes. Action items were developed while discussing the team's Strengthening Families Self-Assessment tool results and are listed in this report with their associated protective factor, however, action items may overlap with another protective factor or theme. Updates are provided on a semi-annual basis and cover their respective six-month reporting period. This report covers the time from July 2023 through December 2023. While there are updates for all the SWAG FRC's action items, it is important to recognize that progression of action items may have slowed due to significant staff changes and funding restrictions at the SWAG FRC over the last 6 months. However, it is important to note that new SWAG FRC staff, community partners, and community ambassadors will continue to work collaboratively to make the best use of available resources to complete action items and improve services and programs at the SWAG FRC. Additionally, for action items related to the Social and Emotional Competence of Children protective factor, there are recommendations in lieu of action items as the team determined the SWAG FRC staff's recommendations would be better served in this area due to their experience.

Core Meanings of the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Protective Factors

1. Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.

2. Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, and spiritual support.

3. Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions, and establish and maintain relationships.

4. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.

5. Parental Resilience

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma.

1 Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2015). Core Meanings of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors. The contents of this project are funded by the Children's Bureau, under grant #90CA1868.

The contents of this project do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME ONE: DEVELOP PEER-TO-PEER LED TRAININGS, A SPEAKER SERIES, AND PARENT SUPPORT NIGHTS.

Overarching Action Item: Create a dynamic speaker series and/or programs to reach two audiences - parents and youth.

Action Item Update: In September 2023, the SWAG FRC introduced a sewing class from the North Florida Sewing Center where patrons learn to hem, mend, and create their own products. Staff report many children have joined with their family members. The SWAG FRC has also introduced a community garden that staff report multiple parent-child pairs have taken part in. The SWAG FRC will reintroduce their Dad's Group during their monthly Community Dinner in January 2024. The SWAG FRC will also reintroduce their Safe Space program for LGBTQ+ patrons in early 2024.

Social Connections Action Item: Explore opportunities for the development of parent support groups and mentoring opportunities that are parent centered. Consideration may be given to the implementation of a "parent support night" following discussions with parents and Community Ambassadors.

Action Item Update: The SWAG FRC previously implemented a Parent Power Workshop in 2023, which was put on hold over the last six months, due to lack of attendance from patrons. The SWAG FRC will revisit the Parent Power Workshop in 2024. The SWAG FRC is also exploring a partnership with Step Up for Students to recruit peer mentors within the community.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Explore means and mechanisms for Community Ambassadors to participate in training opportunities.

Action Item Update: In September 2023, the SWAG FRC hosted a Community CPR Class for patrons to receive their CPR certification. The SWAG FRC plans to host a Mental Health First Aid training given by Meridian Behavioral Healthcare in February of 2024 for patrons, staff, and volunteers.

Concrete Supports in Times of Need Action Item: Explore a peer-to-peer training program, created by and for community members, related to getting needed supports and resources and how to act in a collective manner to advocate for each other.

Action Item Update: Patrons in regular attendance to the SWAG FRC events often share their Resource Center knowledge with new patrons, encouraging them to access the SWAG FRC's services and supports. The SWAG FRC's weekly Community Cafe event allows patrons the opportunity to share ideas related to SWAG programming. While not an established program, the SWAG FRC Manager was able to connect two patrons to each other and the Alachua County Labor Coalition to advocate for better living conditions in an apartment complex in the community. The SWAG FRC also hosts a rent and utility workshop in which staff report that patrons in attendance share information and advice on shared issues.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME TWO: INCREASE AWARENESS BY UTILIZING KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND IMPROVING MESSAGING TO THE COMMUNITY.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Utilize community members to help raise awareness of the SWAG FRC.

Action Item Update: Community members at the SWAG FRC often raise awareness of the Resource Center via word-of-mouth and sharing the SWAG FRC's monthly calendar. Staff report that patrons who frequent the SWAG FRC are often quick to help new patrons and share their knowledge with them regarding the SWAG FRC's services and supports. During the monthly Farm Share Food Distribution, staff have noticed new patrons or community volunteers who have heard about the SWAG FRC from other community members.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Reevaluate the current engagement and outreach strategies to improve messaging to parents/families/households regarding the agency (SWAG FRC).

Action Item Update: Flyers for events and monthly calendars are always available for patrons and are often spread throughout the community. The SWAG FRC Manager sends out monthly emails to community partners, informing them of upcoming events and programs so they may share in their circles. One partner, Christ Community Church, plans to reintroduce their resource fair in 2024, in which the SWAG FRC will attend to discuss SWAG's programs and events.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Action Item: Explore the means and mechanisms by which the community can become more aware of parenting and child development supports available at the Resource Center.

Action Item Update: To explore the means and mechanisms to increase community awareness of parenting and child development supports, the SWAG FRC utilizes flyers for events and monthly calendars that are available at the center and distributed to those in the community. The SWAG FRC began their Baby SWAGgers program, a neighborhood baby shower held quarterly for expectant mothers in the community. The mothers are given newborn essentials and safety information, while being introduced to other neighborhood mothers to expand their support networks.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES

THEME TWO: INCREASE AWARENESS BY UTILIZING KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND IMPROVING MESSAGING TO THE COMMUNITY.



Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Recommendation: Help spread awareness of social and emotional programming by advertising the open-door policy on applications for children's programming. The open-door policy reflects consistent efforts of staff to communicate with parents that they are welcome to approach staff at any time with questions or concerns regarding their children, programming, and supports available for children at the FRC and in the community.

Recommendation Update: Language regarding the open-door policy was added to the homework help and summer camp applications beginning in January 2023. Moving forward, parents and caregivers will be required to attend an orientation for homework help and summer camp to ensure understanding of the policies and give caregivers a chance to ask questions of their own.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Formalize a communication channel between the SW Advocacy Group Board and the members of the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Team.

Action Item Update: No formalized communication channel has been created between the SW Advocacy Group Board and the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Team. With plans to revisit the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment process in 2024, there are hopes to then create a formalized channel of communication.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH SWAG FRC PROGRAMS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, FATHERS/MALES, DIVERSE POPULATIONS, AND PATRONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR PROGRAMS.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Increase engagement with local businesses and schools to promote the Resource Center.

Action Item Update: The SW Advocacy Group hosted a Back-to-School Block Party at SWAG FRC in August 2023, where three local elementary schools and one local middle school came to talk with families in the community. Local hairdressers and barbers attended to provide free haircuts, Gas South provided volunteers, and O2B Kids offered face painting. In October 2023, the SWAG FRC hosted a meeting with the Alachua County School Board in which neighborhood parents came to speak against rezoning children that attend a local elementary school. This opportunity allowed patrons to advocate for themselves and make a change in their local community. SWAG FRC staff were made aware of a local laundry mat that provides opportunities to do laundry for free, which they now recommend to those who need it.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Recruit more fathers to utilize the services and programs at the SWAG FRC.

Action Item Update: After a brief hiatus of the Dad's Group with Anthony Ray in late 2023, the SWAG FRC will resume this program during the monthly Community Dinner in January 2024. Staff continue to increase awareness and encourage more fathers to participate in the SWAG FRC's events and services. Staff report increased attendance by fathers to the Baby SWAGgers baby shower events for expectant mothers.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Strengthen partnerships with local organizations such as Meridian Behavioral Healthcare to provide mental health support for the community.

Action Item Update: Meridian Behavioral Healthcare continues to be onsite at the SWAG FRC once a week to spread awareness of their services and connect the community to mental health resources. Staff also refer patrons to the Equal Access Clinic for free healthcare, or Impower for virtual mental health services. The SWAG FRC would like to partner with Village Counseling Center to bring a children's therapist to the Resource Center once a week, with more plans to develop this in 2024.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH SWAG FRC PROGRAMS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, FATHERS/MALES, DIVERSE POPULATIONS, AND PATRONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR PROGRAMS.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Action Item: Ensure that value is placed on peer-to-peer programs and services that are most needed and wanted by parents in the community.

Action Item Update: Over the last six months, the SWAG FRC has started and developed Baby SWAGgers, a neighborhood baby shower held quarterly for expectant mothers in the community. Mothers and fathers are given newborn essentials and safety information, while also being introduced to other neighborhood mothers to expand their support networks and emphasize peer-to-peer support.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Recommendation: Enhance understanding and appreciation for individuals from different cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, languages, and cultural expressions; and include volunteers and interns in cultural competence trainings.

Recommendation Update: While no formal cultural competence trainings have been offered over the last six months by PSF leadership, the SWAG FRC staff utilize a warm and nonjudgmental approach to assisting and advocating for patrons. Several staff members speak at least two languages, including English, Spanish, and Farsi. The SWAG FRC continues to have “All Are Welcome” LGBTQIA+ stickers throughout the center. More diversity and cultural awareness trainings will be explored in 2024

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Recommendation: Enhance trainings to include competence of environmental and economic factors and how these factors come into play in social and emotional development.

Recommendation Update: The SWAG FRC team has plans to host a Mental Health First Aid training in early 2024. The SWAG FRC Manager is also still working to provide all new interns and volunteers the opportunity to tour Grace Marketplace, a low-barrier shelter in the area, to expose them to the environment and economic reality of many patrons we serve.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Create a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to advise the SWAG FRC.

Action Item Update: In 2023, the SWAG FRC staff re-introduced the idea of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to patrons and youth in the community, however staff report little to no interest from youth at this time. Efforts will be made to develop the YAC in 2024.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH SWAG FRC PROGRAMS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, FATHERS/MALES, DIVERSE POPULATIONS, AND PATRONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR PROGRAMS.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Host social connection events with themes catered towards fathers.

Action Item Update: In early 2023, the SWAG FRC partnered with Anthony Ray to host a Dad's Group focused on engaging with fathers once a month during Community Dinner, however, this group was put on hold in late 2023. There are plans to reintroduce the monthly Dad's Group in January 2024. The SWAG FRC staff also make sure to encourage fathers to come to the quarterly Baby SWAGgers baby shower event.

Social Connections Action Item: Explore the creation of a Community Advisory Council (CAC) with broad representation of community members who are motivated to serve the community and enhance supports for its members. Special attention should be paid to ensure the inclusion of fathers and grandfathers on this advisory committee.

Action Item Update: In 2023, the SWAG FRC staff re-introduced the idea of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) to patrons and community members, however staff report little to no interest from patrons at this time. Efforts will be made to develop the CAC in 2024.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Explore what the organizational framework would be in terms of engagement and program planning that involves patrons.

Action Item Update: The SWAG FRC Manager reports that program planning involves patrons informally, through reaching out for feedback or ideas on proposed programming while patrons are visiting SWAG FRC. Patrons may also leave feedback through anonymous patron surveys.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Create a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) or Community Advisory Council (CAC) to advise the SWAG FRC..

Action Item Update: In 2023, the SWAG FRC staff re-introduced the idea of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and Community Advisory Council (CAC) to patrons and community members, however staff report little to no interest from patrons at this time. Efforts will be made to develop the PAC and CAC in 2024.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME FOUR: BEGIN HOSTING SOCIAL CONNECTION EVENTS, COMMUNITY EVENTS, AND PARENT-ONLY ACTIVITIES, ONCE APPROPRIATE, CONSIDERING SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Host a community event to talk about gun violence that can serve to help connect the community with grief counselors.

Action Item Update: The SWAG FRC Manager is currently seeking support from community partners to host a gun violence awareness event in 2024.

Social Connections Action Item: The SWAG FRC needs to reinstate and expand social connection/community events once it is safe to do so, given current safety and public health concerns.

Action Item Update: All social connection and community events have been reinstated. Current community events and/or recurring services providing social connections include Community Café, Baby SWAGgers, and the monthly Community Dinner.

Social Connections Action Item: Ensure that patrons have supportive and responsive means and mechanism to openly communicate with and/or inform the staff about any knowledge or skill sets they believe staff should have to better serve the community.

Action Item Update: Patron satisfaction surveys have always been available at the SWAG FRC, and staff continue to ensure each patron is aware of the option to provide feedback and openly communicate with staff so that the community can be better served. Staff report patrons often provide feedback or ideas to staff, interns, and volunteers informally while they visit the FRC. The SWAG FRC has many community members and patrons that volunteer at the Resource Center, so other community members feel comfortable communicating their thoughts and opinions to individuals they recognize from the community.

THE SWAG FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

807 SW 64TH TERRACE, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32607 | 352-505-6823 | WWW.PFSF.ORG/RESOURCECENTERS/SWAGFRC/

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