

# WHY *are* PROTECTIVE FACTORS IMPORTANT for ADULT and CHILD SURVIVORS of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

*“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”*

Alexander Den Heijer

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS DEFINED

Protective factors are conditions and characteristics of individuals, interpersonal relationships, communities, and the larger society that eliminate or reduce the impact of risk factors AND promote healthy development and well-being.

See the Practice Tips series at <https://DVChildWelfare.org/resource-library/> for more information about protective factors.

### Safer and More Stable Conditions

- **Why it’s important:** Safer and more stable conditions help to reduce survivors’ risk of physical, sexual and emotional fear and harm, and increase survivors’ sense of control over their lives.
- **What child welfare staff, DV practitioners, and others can do to build safer and more stable conditions for survivors:** Provide resources and advocate to help adult and child survivors secure places to live, learn, work, and play that are predictably consistent, provide positive experiences, and meet their unique circumstances and needs. (At the same time, hold the person who is harming survivors accountable for their behavior and provide help for them to change.)

### Social, Cultural, and Spiritual Connections

- **Why it’s important:** Healthy social, cultural, and spiritual connections can help reduce isolation and other negative effects of domestic violence because these connections provide emotional support, help, guidance, and concrete resources. Strong, positive connections help adult and child survivors to have feelings of trust, hope, faith, and a belief that they matter.
- **What child welfare staff, DV practitioners, and others can do to build survivors’ social, cultural, and spiritual connections:** Foster adult and child survivors’ connections with caring and dependable family members, friends, neighbors, organizations, or faith communities so they can strengthen or build a healthy support network.

### Resilience and a Growth Mindset

- **Why it’s important:** Being resilient and having a growth mindset strengthens survivors’ optimism, self-compassion, and belief in their own ability to achieve what they want for themselves and their loved ones; and helps them to heal from the effects of domestic violence.
- **What child welfare staff, DV practitioners, and others can do to build survivors’ resilience and growth mindset:** Create conditions that help adult and child survivors call on their inner strength, improve their situations, and manage stressful events.

## Nurturing Parent-Child Interactions

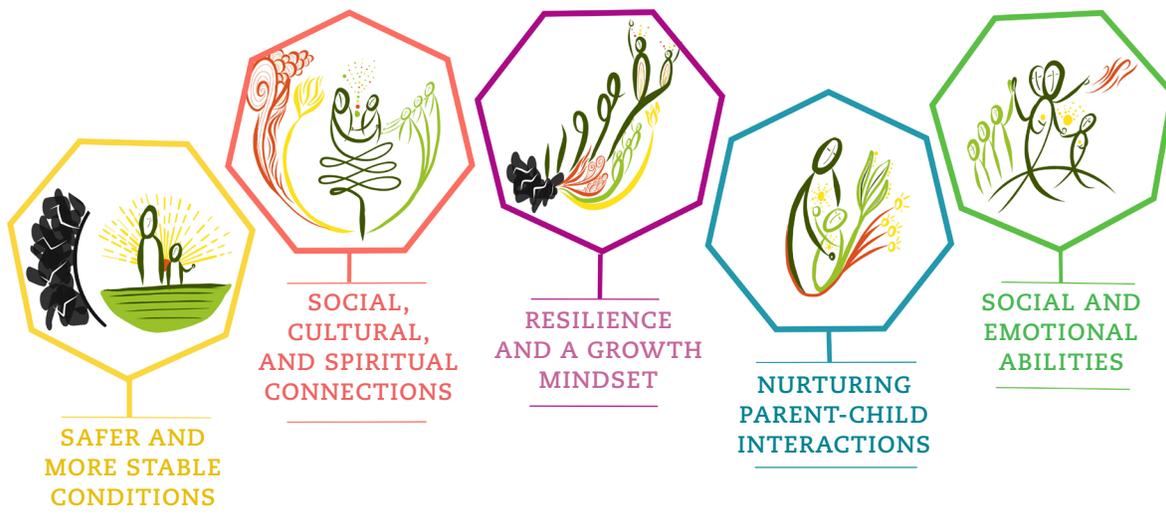
- **Why it's important:** Nurturing parent-child interactions are beneficial for both adult and child survivors of domestic violence because they create a mutual bond of trust, love, affection, and predictability. Warm, caring, and loving parent-child interactions promote a sense of security in children and strengthen parents' belief in their ability to take good care of their children.
- **What child welfare staff, DV practitioners, and others can do to build nurturing parent-child interactions:** Provide what adult survivors need to establish environments that sustain or strengthen their relationship and healthy interactions with their child.

## Social and Emotional Abilities

- **Why it's important:** Social and emotional abilities help adult and child survivors persist even when things are challenging, seek help when they need it, make responsible decisions, and achieve goals. These abilities are essential for success in school, employment, and interpersonal relationships.
- **What child welfare staff, DV practitioners, and others can do to build survivors' social and emotional abilities:** Facilitate experiences and conditions that help adult and child survivors to express and manage their emotions in constructive ways, regulate their own behaviors, make proactive plans, and solve problems.

See <https://dvchildwelfare.org/resources/issue-brief-on-the-protective-factors-for-survivors-of-domestic-violence/> for more information on protective factors.

## THE FIVE KEY PROTECTIVE FACTORS



**QIC** Domestic Violence  
in Child Welfare

Advancing an Adult & Child Survivor-Centered Approach

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