



# RAISE Families for Health

## Program Description



Health and well-being are shaped from a very early age. Factors such as stress, tobacco use, sleep, nutrition, and physical activity play a role in determining how children grow and develop, their health as adults, and even the health of future generations. The mission of the Behavioral Health & Wellness Program (BHWP) is to improve quality of life by facilitating evidence-based health behavior change for communities, organizations, and individuals. We developed our RAISE Families for Health Program to meet the pressing challenge of interrupting the intergenerational cycle of poor health and disease within the most vulnerable populations.

### Priority Populations

The five behavioral factors listed above impact the health of not only individuals, but families across generations. Poor health and chronic disease tend to run in families for several reasons, including factors such as genetic predispositions, engaging in similar behaviors that increase risk for developing chronic disease, and environmental factors such as availability of nutritious food and stress, which can change how genes are expressed.

Priority populations are especially likely to struggle with attaining healthy lifestyles. People living in poverty, those experiencing racial discrimination, and those struggling with behavioral health conditions are especially vulnerable when it comes to experiencing the burdens of tobacco use, managing stress, and maintaining healthy sleep, nutrition, and physical activity. These challenges place priority populations at greater risk for developing chronic diseases and other health problems.

### Program Overview

The RAISE Families for Health Program was developed by the Behavioral Health & Wellness Program at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, School of Medicine. It is intended to provide administrators, healthcare providers, and peer specialists the necessary knowledge and skills to help parents and caregivers envision a healthy lifestyle for their families and achieve their personal wellness goals. This innovative program provides training on strategies for coping with stress, maintaining tobacco-free families, healthy sleep, healthy eating, and physical activity as well as ways to promote positive behavior change through motivational engagement and behavior change strategies. In addition to the RAISE Families for Health Training Manual, program participants also receive the RAISE Families for Health Group Facilitator Manual, which provides all of the instructions, handouts, and resources to run the eight-week RAISE group designed for parents and caregivers. The role of the group is to build awareness about the importance of healthy lifestyles, create goals for behavior change, and to create a positive social network.



# RAISE Families for Health

## Program Description



## Training Modules

### Module 1: Well Body

**Coping with Stress.** While stress is a normal part of life, chronic stress and elevated cortisol can have costly consequences for health and well-being. This section covers the concept of stress and the biology of how the stress response system functions in the human body. We explore the physiological connections between chronic stress and chronic disease. We also describe how adversity experienced early in life impacts health and development across generations. Finally, we identify strategies to cope with stress and discuss how healthcare providers can mitigate impacts of early adversity within vulnerable populations.

**Healthy Sleep.** Researchers are learning more about how poor sleep quality and sleep deprivation affect risk for chronic disease, cognitive function, and mental, emotional, and behavioral health. Poor sleep is now being recognized as a public health crisis by some researchers and medical professionals. This section covers components and impacts of healthy sleep across the lifespan. We explore factors that contribute to healthy sleep, and we examine strategies to promote healthy sleep for both children and adults.

**Healthy Eating.** Most people understand that a balanced healthy diet is essential to overall family health and well-being. Whereas previously accepted models of obesity led to nutrition advice focused on caloric and fat restriction, more recent advances in our understanding of metabolic syndrome call for a different set of recommendations. In this section, we explain how nutritional choices and recent trends in the U.S. diet have led to a rise in metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance, and associated disease in both children and adults. We discuss nutritional strategies for families to improve health and well-being.

**Active Families.** Standard advice promotes physical activity as a means to lose weight, despite little evidence that exercise programs support long-term weight loss. Researchers now understand that the truly transformative benefits of physical activity extend to nearly every aspect of physical and mental health and disease prevention. This section covers the benefits of physical activity for adults and children, components of healthy activity, and strategies to support healthy activity in families.

### Module 2: Motivational Interviewing

Physical health and well-being within families can be improved through changes in behaviors related to the topics discussed above. However, making behavior changes can be difficult and simply having information about what to do does not necessarily lead to healthy change. The RAISE Families for Health Program incorporates Motivational Interviewing (MI) strategies to enhance motivation and support commitment to change. This section explores



# RAISE Families for Health

## Program Description



the MI heart set, processes, skills, and strategies. We allow time for trainees to practice engagement and evocation strategies in clinical conversations. Finally, we introduce the RAISE: Tobacco Free & Well Body Motivational Interventions to help individuals set their agenda and goals for behavior change as well as identify personal motivations, challenges, strengths, and resources.

### **Module 3: Tobacco Fundamentals, Nicotine Addiction, and Cessation Interventions**

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable morbidity and mortality in the United States. Although much progress has been made toward decreasing the number of individuals who use tobacco, 20% of U.S. adults still use some form of tobacco, and tobacco-related health disparities continuing to worsen within some at-risk populations. This section introduces trainees to the fundamentals of tobacco use: prevalence and patterns of use, tobacco products, health consequences, nicotine addiction, and cessation treatments. We also explore the unique challenges tobacco presents for people in vulnerable populations. Finally, we cover information about tobacco use that is particularly relevant for families: how nicotine addiction is transmitted within families, impacts of second and third-hand smoke on young children, and why early childhood adversity leads to increased risk for tobacco use, nicotine addiction, and difficulty quitting later in life.

### **Module 4: RAISE Families for Health Group Curriculum**

Module 4 introduces trainees to the RAISE Families for Health Group Curriculum and provides step-by-step instructions about how to run the groups at the trainee's organization. Through wellness education, group discussion, and activities, group facilitators teach participants strategies for goal setting and behavior change. Most importantly, the group provides participants a supportive environment to facilitate their journey of creating healthy families. RAISE Group sessions include:

**Session A: RAISE Families for Health.** The activities in this section are designed to help participants define for themselves what it means to raise a healthy family. They will explore what a RAISE family means to them, identify current RAISE activities, visualize their ideal healthy family, and create a RAISE vision board.

**Session B: My RAISE Journey.** The activities in this section are designed to help participants understand the concept of behavior change as a journey and what it takes to change their health behaviors. They will learn to how to set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART). Group members will explore how triggers, habits, and rewards shape their behaviors and learn how to identify new habits to replace old ones.



# RAISE Families for Health

## Program Description



**Session C: Coping with Stress.** The activities in this session are designed to help participants evaluate their stress levels and personal reserves, set their focus and RAISE goal in regard to coping with stress, identify their top 3 reasons to make this change, and consider potential challenges and strategies as well as recognize their strengths and resources for change.

**Session D: Tobacco-Free Families.** The activities in this session are designed to help participants understand the impact of tobacco on their family, consider both their personal and their family's tobacco-free journey, set their focus and RAISE goal in regards to tobacco-free families, identify their top 3 reasons for change, and consider potential challenges, strategies, strengths and resources for change.

**Session E: Healthy Sleep.** The activities in this session are designed to help participants understand the importance of sleep, increase their awareness of activities that support healthy, quality sleep for themselves and their families, set their focus and RAISE goal in regards to healthy sleep, identify their top 3 reasons for change, and consider potential challenges, strategies, strengths and resources for change.

**Session F: Healthy Eating.** The activities in this session are designed to help participants understand the importance of healthy eating, increase their awareness of facts and myths around healthy eating, set their focus and RAISE goal in regard to healthy eating, identify their top 3 reasons for change, and consider potential challenges, strategies, strengths and resources for change.

**Session G: Active Families.** The activities in this session are designed to help participants understand the importance of physical activity for families, explore their current physical activities as well as physical activities they want to try, set their focus and RAISE goal in regards to physical activity, identify their top 3 reasons for change, and consider potential challenges, strategies, strengths and resources for change.

**Session H: RAISE Up.** The activities in this session are designed to explore ways to support participants in their change process beyond their participation in the RAISE group. Group participants will reflect on their experiences and progress throughout the RAISE group, learn how to assess their resources and set healthy boundaries, identify healthy and fun family activities, continue to envision their RAISE family, and compose an encouraging letter to their future self.

**For more information on our training programs, please contact:**

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