



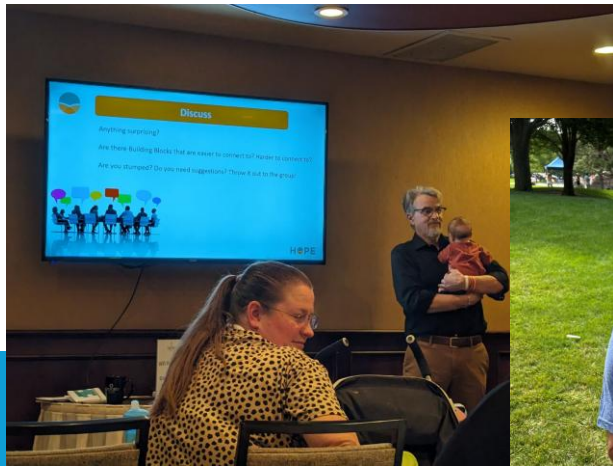
Report or Support?

And Resources to
Provide the Support



Who am I?

Who are we?



- Executive Director of the Idaho Children's Trust Fund for almost 19 years
- Have worked for statewide organizations for the past 35 years previously as a community organizer and lobbyist
- I am married and have 3 pretty much grown daughters who are doing great things
- ICTF is the state affiliate of Prevent Child Abuse America
- We provide training, organizational support, funding and connection for community-based organizations working upstream to strengthen families to prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs

Think of a time when YOU HELPED someone else.



Why did you help?



How did you feel after?

Think of a time when someone else HELPED YOU.



How did it feel to need help?



How did you feel after?

If you have made a
report to CPS how did
you feel after?

Key Finding: Educators are ready for mandated support.



"We need to make sure **our communities, our families** are not under so much pressure that they take it out on their children.

If we support our families, we support our children."

—Paraprofessional, Aloha, Ore.



Educators overwhelmingly endorse increased support for children and families.

Nearly all educators (91.1 percent) "strongly agree" or "agree" that their community should do more to support children and families facing child abuse and neglect. Just 1 in 4 educators (27.1 percent) said they "strongly agree" or "agree" that children and families in their community grappling with CAN receive adequate support.

Educators observe bias in the ways their school engages with CPS.

One in 3 educators (34.3 percent) "strongly agree" or "agree" that they notice **patterns in the types of families reported at their school**. One in 4 (26.5 percent) open-ended comments about "types" referenced class with terms like "**socioeconomic**," "**lower income**" and "**impoverished**." Fewer than 1 in 10 (8.1 percent) mentioned race or ethnicity.



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More than 1 in 4 educators mention an indicator of poverty when describing what prompted their most recent report to CPS.

Our Current Dilemma



WHEN ASKED HOW TO
PREVENT CHILD
MALTREATMENT, MANY PEOPLE
THINK THE ANSWER IS CALLING
CPS.



THE RESULT IS AN OVERRELIANCE
ON REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO
BOTH SUSPECTED ABUSE AND
SUSPECTED NEGLECT *DUE TO A
CHILD'S UNMET NEEDS.*

Why an Overreliance on Reporting Is Problematic

Families who need support often get investigated – not support

Families are reluctant to seek services for fear of being reported and possibly losing their children

Overwhelmed CPS system due to unwarranted reports relating to poverty.

Child Well-being is a SHARED Responsibility

The primary role of CPS is child protection: investigation of child abuse and neglect *after it is suspected to have already occurred*.

You are often the best messenger to connect families to supports that will *help prevent child abuse and neglect from happening*.

Responsible Parties When a Child Is:

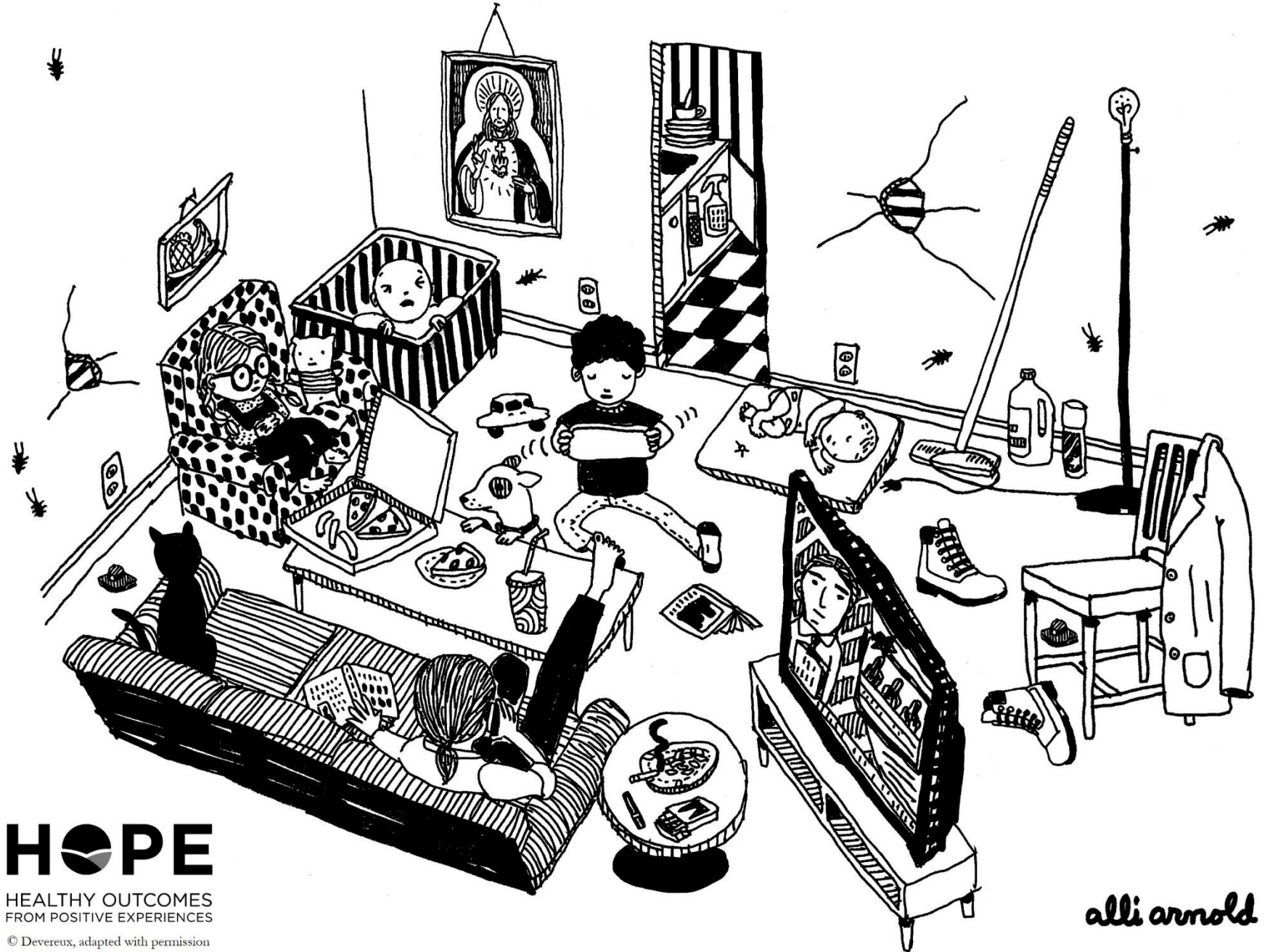


Coming to the Door



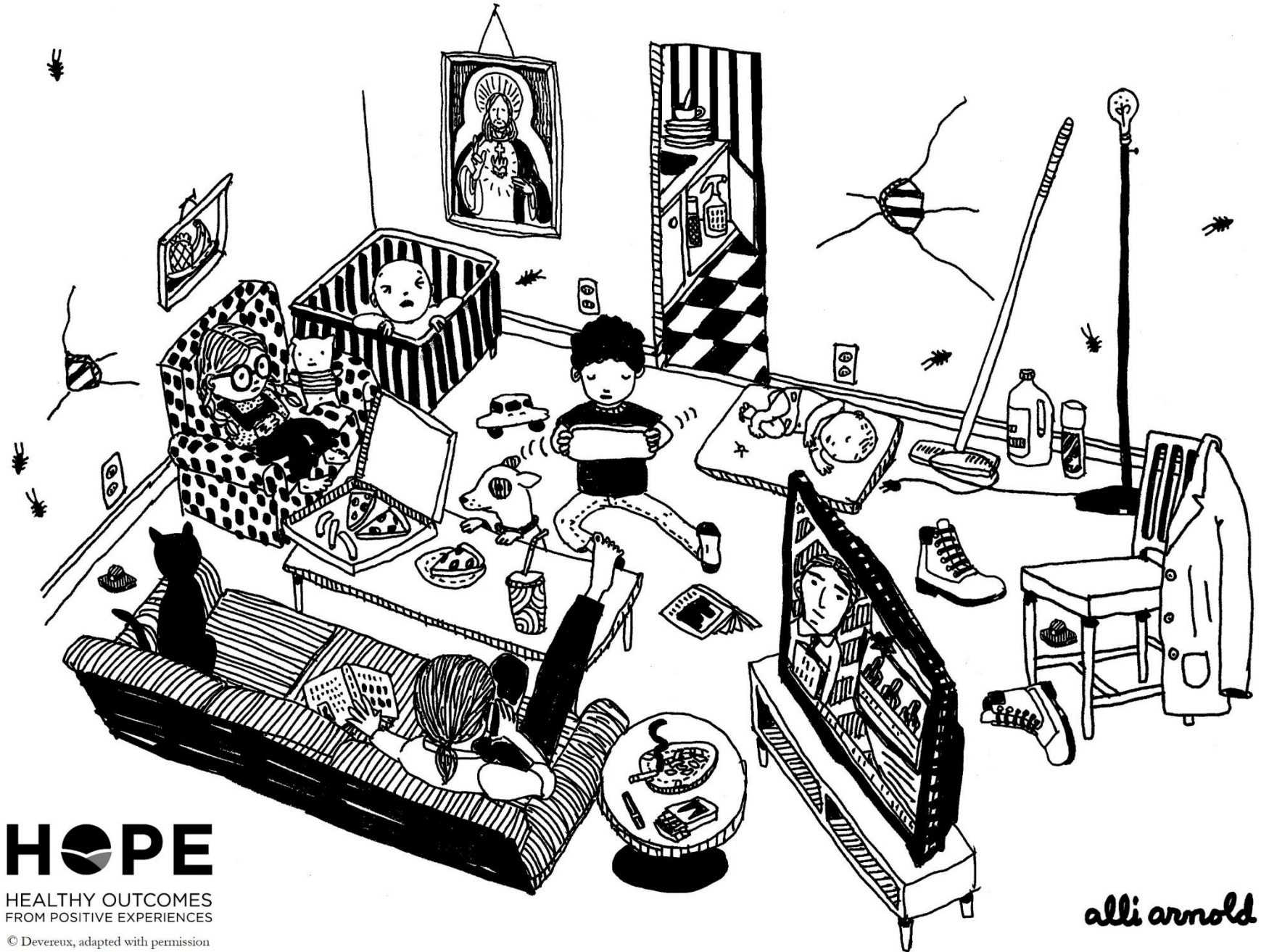


What stands
out to you in
this picture?
What do
you see?





Look again,
what
strengths or
protective
factors do
you see?





Poll

Was it easier to see risk or protective factors?

- A. Protective factors were easier to see
- B. Risk factors were easier to see
- C. They were about the same

CHILD ADLIFE



GUJ I D APLISF



SYSTEM 1

FAST



SUBCONSCIOUS



AUTOMATIC



EVERYDAY
DECISIONS



ERROR PRONE



SYSTEM 2

SLOW



CONSCIOUS



EFFORTFUL

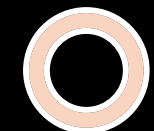


COMPLEX
DECISIONS



RELIABLE





Scenarios

Practice Scenario #1

A boy in your class often comes in complaining that he's hungry, and that 'Grandmom never has any food in the apartment.' You've started to bring in bananas for him to snack on when he says he's hungry, and he usually eats one or two per day. He also tends to wear the same shirt several days in a row, which can get rather dirty because he is very active at recess in playing with the other kids. He tells you his mom 'is always asleep when I get home because she goes to work at night.'

Practice Scenario Reflections

- Based on the previous scenario, what assumptions might you be making about the family?
- Can you identify strengths in the family?
- What resources or support do you think the family might benefit from?
- How would you choose to connect the family to support? (What would you say? What would you do?)

SCENARIO

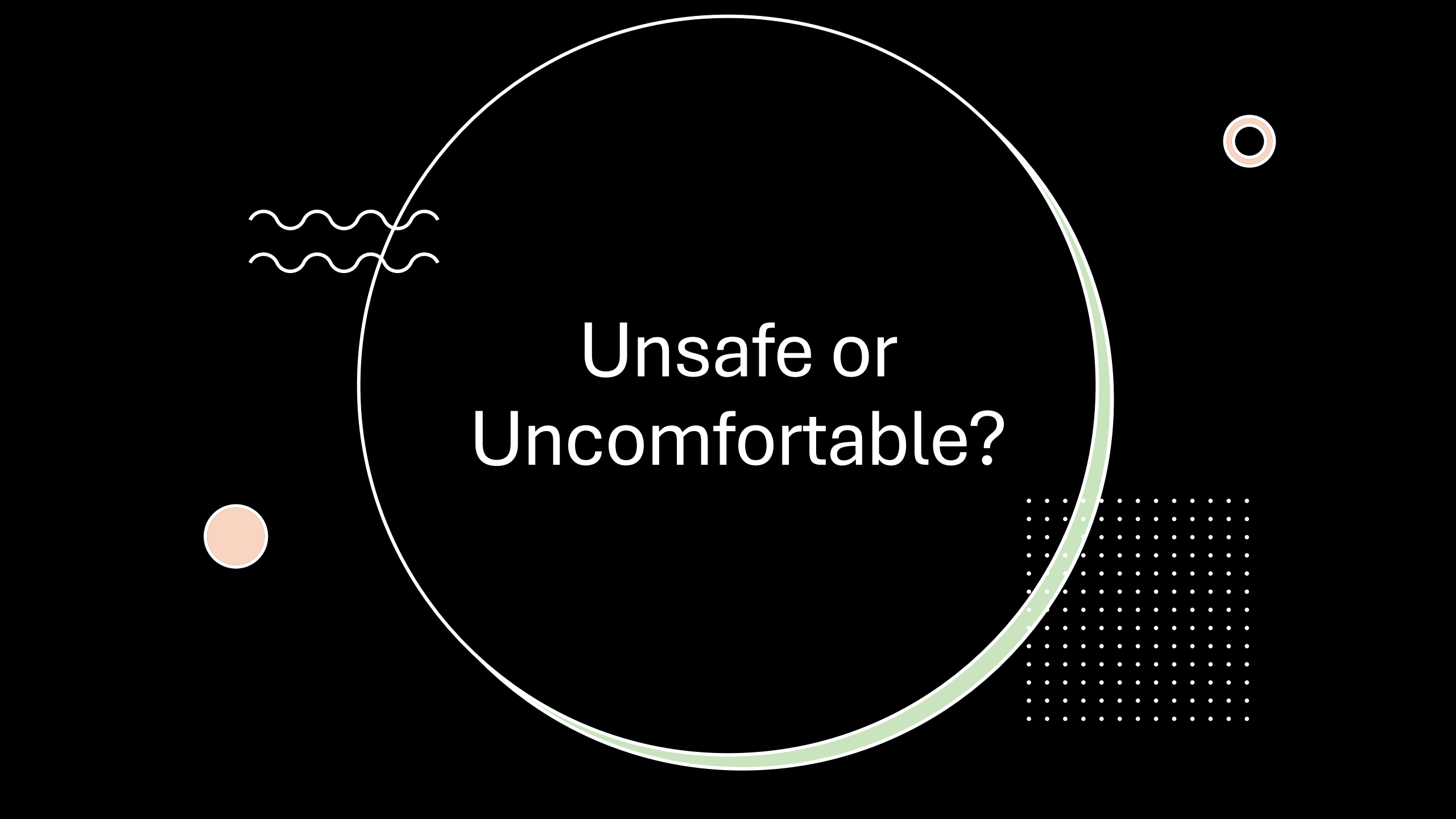
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SCENARIO

A child in your program comes in often smelling of cigarette smoke and sometimes cat urine. She is the oldest of 3 children (15, 10 and 8 years old) and sometimes watches her siblings after school while her mom is at work on second shift. Mom leaves meals prepared so she only has to heat them up. The children seem generally happy but do miss school sometimes and don't always have their homework done. You've been told that the children have been in foster care before and that mom completed the improvement plan and got the kids back.



Unsafe or
Uncomfortable?

The image features a large, thin white circle centered on a black background. A thick, light green line follows the inner edge of this circle. To the left of the circle, there are two white wavy lines. Below them is a solid light orange circle. To the right of the circle, there is a small double-lined light orange circle in the upper right and a rectangular grid of small white dots in the lower right.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

REPORT  NEGLECT		SUPPORT  POVERTY-RELATED NEEDS	
KNOW WHEN TO REPORT		KNOW HOW TO SUPPORT	
	EXAMPLES OF NEGLECT: Suspected neglect should always be reported.	EXAMPLES OF POVERTY-RELATED NEEDS:	HOW TO SUPPORT POVERTY-RELATED NEEDS:
 BASIC NEEDS FOOD & SHELTER	• Child consistently goes without food for long periods. • Unsafe or unsanitary living conditions that are life-threatening. • Intentional refusal to provide shelter.	• Family lacks money to buy sufficient food for the month. • Temporary homelessness due to job loss. • Inadequate housing caused by financial struggles.	• Connect family to food pantries, rental assistance programs, and housing resources.
 CLOTHING	• Child lacks appropriate clothing for severe weather (e.g., no winter coat during freezing conditions).	• Family cannot afford new clothes or shoes due to limited finances.	• Refer to community donation programs or clothing drives.
 MEDICAL CARE	• Caregiver refuses necessary medical care for a serious illness or injury. • Consistent failure to seek treatment for life-threatening conditions.	• Family cannot afford insurance or transportation to access medical care. • Missed appointments due to work schedule or childcare issues.	• Connect family to Medicaid, local clinics, or transportation assistance programs.
 SUPERVISION	• Young child left alone for extended periods without care. • Intentional lack of supervision placing the child in danger (e.g., near open flames or unsafe areas).	• Parent is working multiple jobs or lacks childcare support. • Child occasionally left alone briefly due to work constraints.	• Refer to affordable childcare resources or family support programs.



Testimonial

- “The advertisement [for the child abuse hotline], it just says abuse. If you being abused, this is the number you call, this is the only way you gonna get help. It doesn’t say if I’m in need of counseling, or if my children don’t have shoes, if I just can’t provide groceries even though I may have seven kids, but I only get a hundred something dollars in food stamps. And my work check only goes to bills. I can’t feed eight of us all off a hundred something dollar food stamps . . . I don’t want to lose my children, so I’m not going to call DCFS for help because I only see them take away children.”
-

Consider this:

Do you have enough information to reach the standard of “reason to believe”?

Am I reporting simply because I do not know what else to do, or because I fear the consequences of not reporting?

Would I report if the family looked like mine?

What individual and systemic biases may be at play in my decision?

Have I considered the relationship of this family to law enforcement, the child protection system, and/or other government agencies?

Have I considered the cultural and parenting norms of this family?

Have I considered alternatives to reporting?

Have I sought consultation or supervision from at least one person whose primary concern isn't liability?

Have I examined the possible role of poverty in this scenario?

Have I employed a decision-making model?



We all Carry a Lot of Ideas in Our Heads



Don't believe
everything you think!

This is from a very cool resource created by the Institute to Transform Child Protection

Responding v. Reporting

If you're working with children, we know you care about them and want to respond to any needs and challenges. Reporting is one possible response; there are many others.



Parenting is HARD.
Everyone needs help
sometimes.



**Times of
Need**



**Concrete
Supports**

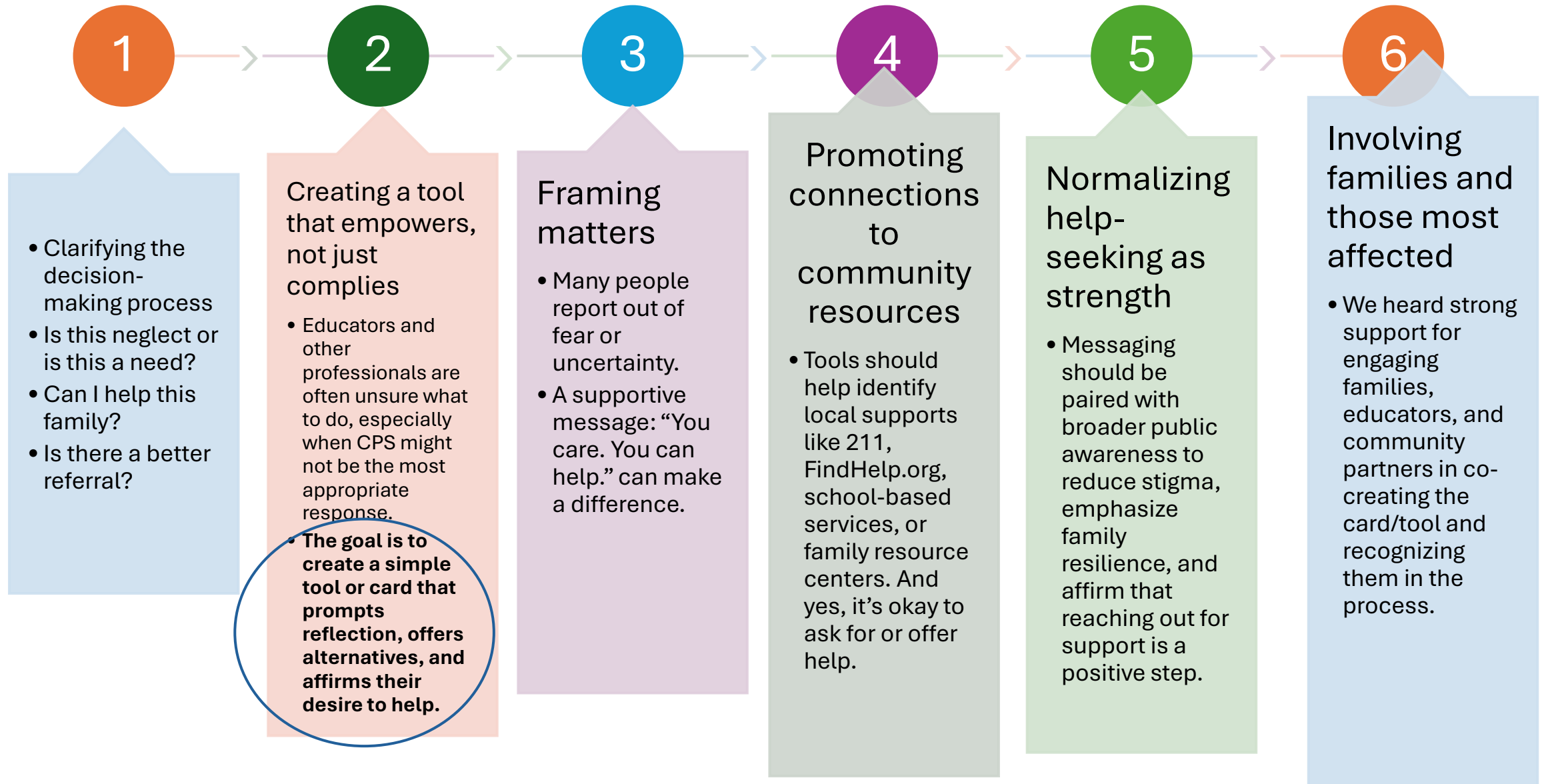


**Improved
Child Well-
Being**



**Reduced
Parental
Stress**

Developing an Approach for Neglect Response



Mandated Reporters - Empowered Supporters

Not every concern means a child is unsafe. Sometimes families are struggling with poverty, stress, or lack of resources — and that's where *you* can make a difference.

Use the 211 Idaho CareLine to connect families with local supports for food, housing, mental health, and more.

When you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, **you must report.**
When you see a family struggling, **you can support.**

MANDATED REPORTERS - EMPOWERED SUPPORTERS



NOT EVERY CONCERN MEANS A CHILD IS UNSAFE.

Sometimes families are struggling with poverty, stress, or lack of resources — that's where you can make a difference.

Use the **211 Idaho CareLine** to connect families with local nonprofits, charities, and faith-based organizations who can support with food, housing, mental health, and more.

When you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, **you must report.**

SUPPORT:

Local, regional, and statewide assistance is available.

Visit the **211 Idaho CareLine**.
Representatives available
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. MT.



Idaho CareLine • DHW



Call **211** or **800-926-2588**
Text **898211**

REPORT:

Report child abuse, neglect, or abandonment at:

- **855-552-KIDS** (5437)
- Local law enforcement
- Call **211** or **800-926-2588**

**LEARN
MORE
ABOUT
REPORTING**



Why focus on educators?

- Teachers are often first to notice a family may be struggling
- Teachers can develop relationships and trust with children and families and can connect them with resources without families feeling targeted or at risk
- Not every family in crisis needs a report, but every struggling family deserves a response



“So many teachers feel like we’re between a rock and a hard place—we obviously don’t want children and families to suffer, but filing seems to lead to removal or threatened removal instead of actual help for the family. I wish there was a better alternative in many cases.”

—Teacher, Boston



The resources:

Idaho Community Resource Network

Help is on the Way!



findhelpidaho.org



[findhelpidaho](https://findhelpidaho.org)



United Ways of Idaho

211 Idaho CareLine

- Get Connected. Get Answers. Dial 2-1-1 or 800-926-2588
- Considered the front door for DHW programs and services
- Can facilitate referral to statewide navigation services

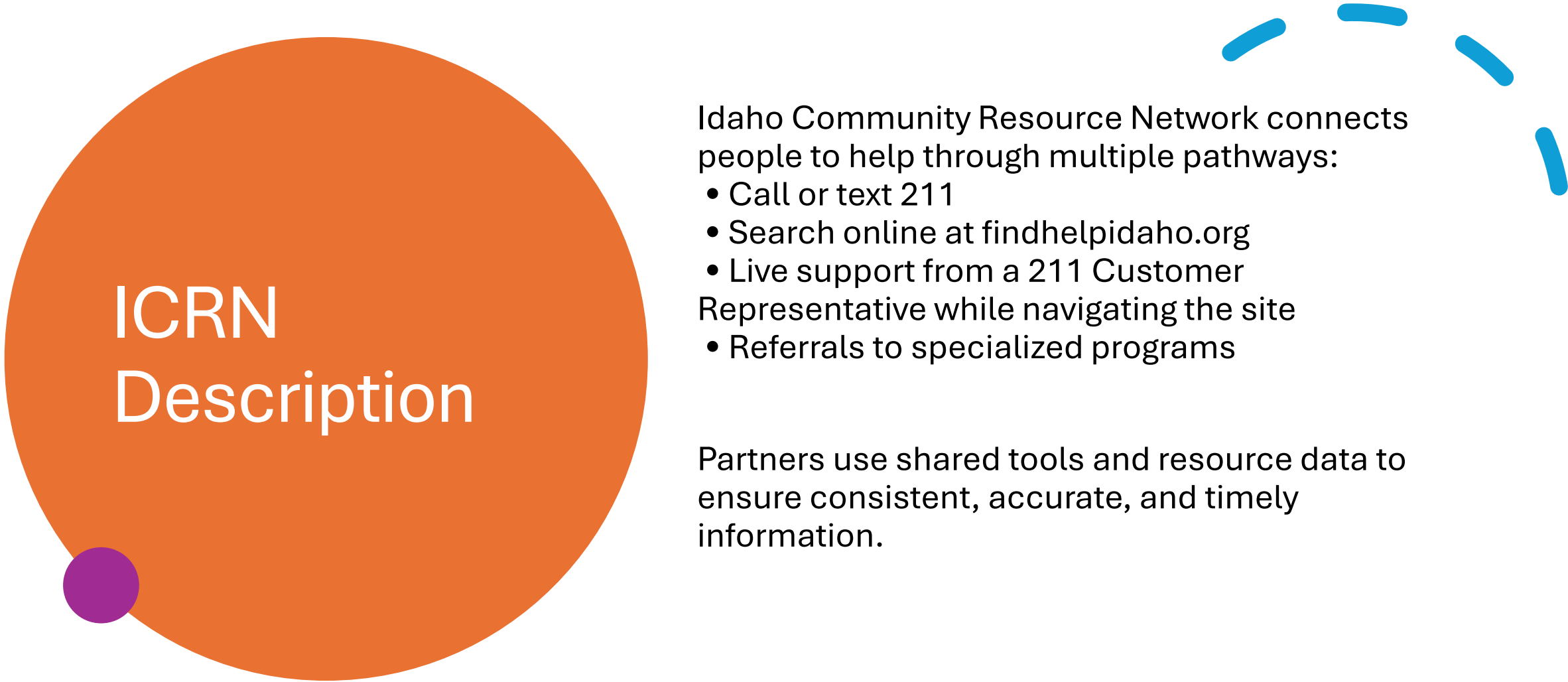


Get Connected. Get Help.™



Combined they are the Idaho Community Resource Network

Technology expands access. Human navigation
increases follow-through.



ICRN Description

Idaho Community Resource Network connects people to help through multiple pathways:

- Call or text 211
- Search online at findhelpidaho.org
- Live support from a 211 Customer Representative while navigating the site
- Referrals to specialized programs

Partners use shared tools and resource data to ensure consistent, accurate, and timely information.

Benefits of the Network



The Outreach Plan: Goals

1

Increase educator confidence in identifying appropriate responses to student and family needs

2

Increase appropriate referrals to 211 and findhelpidaho

3

Reduce unnecessary child welfare reports related solely to poverty

4

Strengthen school community partnerships across Idaho

OUTREACH: Idaho Conference and Convening Opportunities for 2026

Strengthening Families Training Institute – March 10-11, 2026

Idaho Coalition for Community Schools – potential for pilot project

Idaho Education Association Representative Assembly or Professional Learning Events – July 28-31, 2026 (Lewiston)
Direct access to educators and trusted professional learning channels.

Idaho Association of School Administrators Conference August 3-4, 2026 (Boise)
Strong venue to introduce implementation toolkits and district level rollout strategies.

Idaho School Counselor Association Annual Conference – September?

High value audience for triage tools focused on prevention, early intervention, and family engagement.

Idaho Association of School Psychologists Conference – September? w/ counselors
Supports alignment with mental health and trauma informed practices.

Idaho School Boards Association Annual Convention – November 4-6, 2026 (TBD)

Audience includes district leadership and decision makers. Ideal for policy alignment and bulk adoption conversations.

Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence Statewide Conference

Opportunity to clarify reporting thresholds and prevention focused supports.

Regional Education Service Cooperative Trainings

Cost effective, high reach option for rural districts and charter schools.

What we need from you:

Feedback on triage language

- Real-world scenarios that should be reflected
- Training recommendations
- Opportunities for pilot implementation

Thank You!

Roger Sherman

Executive Director

Idaho Children's Trust Fund/Prevent Child Abuse Idaho

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