



March 27, 2019

MAKING THE CONNECTION DURING CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Contact:

Jennifer S. Sexton
Jennifer.Sexton@flhealth.gov
941-624-7200 extension 7279

Port Charlotte, Fla. – April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Healthy Charlotte wants to connect with YOU to raise awareness of the impact and prevention of child maltreatment in Charlotte County. Healthy Charlotte is asking community members to join ACEs Connection (www.ACEsConnection.com) and stay connected with the great work that is being started right here in our own backyard to improve the lives of our families and children.

“ACEs Connection is a great resource for tracking the many efforts across the globe to reduce traumatic childhood experiences,” said Olivia Hilliard, Healthy Charlotte Coordinator. “Charlotte County is part of a much larger movement to heal our families, and in turn, heal our community.”

Child maltreatment includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18. Physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as physical and emotional neglect are 5 of the 10 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that Healthy Charlotte is working to reduce.

As of 2017 data Charlotte County had the 4th highest rate of children ages 5-11 experiencing child abuse in the State of Florida, with a total of 148 children having been a victim of at least one verified maltreatment. The peak was in 2015 with a total of 194 children experiencing abuse. And although a report of child abuse is made in our nation EVERY TEN SECONDS, there are likely many cases that have not yet been reported.

Healthy Charlotte looked at local child abuse data, among other health issues in Charlotte County, in the fall of 2018 and decided to do something about it. The community health improvement group chose to make an action plan to address this growing problem.

While the group’s task force has already begun working, the official Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) will be unveiled this month at the Healthy Charlotte Steering Committee meeting on April 23rd. The CHIP spells out the steps that Healthy Charlotte will take over the next two years to lay the groundwork for growing a resilient and

Our vision for a healthy Charlotte County is a safe, equitable and vibrant community in which people feel empowered to seek and obtain opportunities and services to achieve and maintain a high quality of life.



trauma-informed community, much like Tarpon Springs, Florida and others across the globe have done. Many times, child abuse can be prevented through parenting classes and increased family support. As the saying goes, it takes a village.

This is where ACEs Connection comes into play. ACEs Connection is a social network (kind of like a village) that supports communities such as Charlotte County, who want to grow resiliency and reduce the impact of ACEs. Healthy Charlotte can explore resources and access tools to help create resilient families and systems, and a resilient community. It is free to join, and members can choose communities they wish to follow to stay connected. Healthy Charlotte has its own community page (Healthy Charlotte County, FL ACEs Connection). Residents of Charlotte County are encouraged to join the online community and provide input on what the group is doing to better the lives of our children and families.

About Healthy Charlotte

Our vision for a healthy Charlotte County is a safe, equitable and vibrant community in which people feel empowered to seek and obtain opportunities and services to achieve and maintain a high quality of life.

Follow us on [Facebook](#). For more information about Healthy Charlotte or Adverse Childhood Experiences please visit www.HealthyCharlotteCounty.org.

Our vision for a healthy Charlotte County is a safe, equitable and vibrant community in which people feel empowered to seek and obtain opportunities and services to achieve and maintain a high quality of life.