

FREE DRAWING PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Art Exercise

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:



Nurturing
Parent-Child
Interactions



Social and
Emotional
Abilities



Safer and
More Stable
Conditions



Resilience
and a Growth
Mindset



Social
Connections

PURPOSE

This exercise is designed to introduce each protective factor to participants, and to make space for each person to connect with each protective factor in ways that personally resonate with them. This is also a great way to identify points of growth and further areas to explore, especially if certain protective factors are harder to come up with than others.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 25 MINS – 1 HOUR

5 minutes for instructions | 40 minutes for drawing | 15 minutes for reflection

MATERIALS

Paper or a journal

[Protective Factors Infographic](#) handout for each participant

Items to draw with, like markers, colored pencils, crayons, or a tablet or computer

Relaxing music (optional)

Notes for the facilitator

- Print out the “Protective Factors Infographic” sheet for each participant, or have the sheet visible for participants to read throughout the session.
- There are many guided versions of this activity online that can be helpful to watch before guiding a group on your own.
- Make this exercise your own by preceding it with a guided mindfulness exercise or by playing relaxing music in the background while drawing.

When using this activity with children:

- Consider age (recommended range: 5–18 years old)
- Adapt the language in ways that make sense for your child:
 - Substitute protective factors with simpler words like “safe,” “loved and cared for,” “confident and powerful,” and “a good friend or sibling.”
 - Ask kids to draw what makes them feel each of these things.



TALKING POINTS TO INTRODUCE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Protective factors are things and people in your life that help you even when you're being hurt, or have been hurt in the past.
- Everyone benefits from protective factors, but what they look like in each person's life is unique.
- Think about these questions to help define what the protective factors mean to you:
 - When you hear safety and stability, what does that look like for you?
 - Everyone needs help sometimes. What connections do you already have?
 - What does connecting with your child look like - what do you like to do together?
 - Survival is resilience. When you hear this, what feelings come up for you?
 - How can knowing and caring for yourself help you to develop stronger relationships?
- If you can do things to build one protective factor, even in small ways, you might start to experience other benefits. For example:
 - If you create routines that help you and your children know what's coming next, then you or they might feel more in control of your lives.
- If you intentionally think about and visualize what you want your future to look like, you might be more willing to ask your family members for specific kinds of support to help you get there. These five protective factors help **both** you and your children directly - not just you, or just them.

HOW TO FACILITATE THIS EXERCISE

- 1 Using the "Protective Factors Infographic," ask a participant to read one of the protective factors.
- 2 Ask each participant to draw whatever comes to mind after hearing the description - ask them to draw with no judgment, no intense thinking, and no erasing.
- 3 Repeat these steps for each of the five protective factors.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you feel while drawing?
- Did any thoughts come up for you?
- What protective factors were easiest to draw? Which factors were the hardest?
- Thinking about moving forward, which protective factor are you most excited to expand on?

Promising Futures



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