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Families, Family Strengths and the Changing World

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Families, Family Strengths and the Changing World:

Implications for this Issue of the Journal of Family Strengths

Today, the literal definition of “family” as a married mother and father with children is too exclusive to accurately capture the American family. A modern parent or parents may be biological, adoptive, same-sex or some other permutation. However, the basic impetus behind the American family remains the same: providing a loving, safe, and stable environment wherein children can grow and flourish.

The very basis for our country, our society, and for us as individuals is a family of some sort. Families are important; indeed, given that a nation cannot outlive its people, perhaps the most important resource we have. It can also be argued that in America today, the family is the most regulated institution there is, yet ironically, is also the one that receives the least help and guidance from the regulators.

A question business owners often ask themselves is: “How can we increase capacity?” This is an important query, because more capacity means more products or services, more employees, a bigger market presence, and hopefully, more profits. Perhaps, since without a high number functional families there will be fewer employees, a less robust economy, and less business, we as a people should be also asking how we can increase our families’ capacity.

Programs that help the families function together as a group, such as evidence-based parenting classes aimed at all new parents, stripped of stigma and oriented around communities, are a great place to start. Digging down a bit, it is clear that new immigrant parents might be especially in need of services designed to help their family function better in a country that is not yet familiar. Young parents in poverty also require more assistance, especially with problem solving. If we

can help families learn how to better solve problems on their own, we as a society will have fewer and smaller problems down the road.

Writ large, if we can increase the capacity of our families, the results will show a decrease in child neglect, an increase in community inclusion, reduced strain on our social services, and better outcomes for children. Each of the above concepts and many more are addressed in this issue of JFS; we hope that they inform and enlighten our readers.

In closing, we would like to extend the warmest of welcomes to Christopher Lloyd and William Flores who join Angelo Giardino and Robert Sanborn as Executive Editors. We are pleased to have such noted and exceptional academics as part of our publication. We also want to acknowledge our deepening relationship with the University of Houston—Downtown for the work of their faculty in this and future issues. We hope this partnership adds great substance and breadth to the body of work on families of all types, parents, and children.

We hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for supporting the *Journal of Family Strengths*.