

RESILIENCE AMONG WOMEN: WORKPLACE AS A CRITICAL RESOURCE

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A LITTLE ABOUT ME...

- Associate Professor at Lehigh University's College of Health
- Ph.D. in Public Health from UCLA; Postdoctoral fellowships at UW-Madison
- Maternal and child health and community health researcher – Focus on maternal resilience, stress, and women's mental health

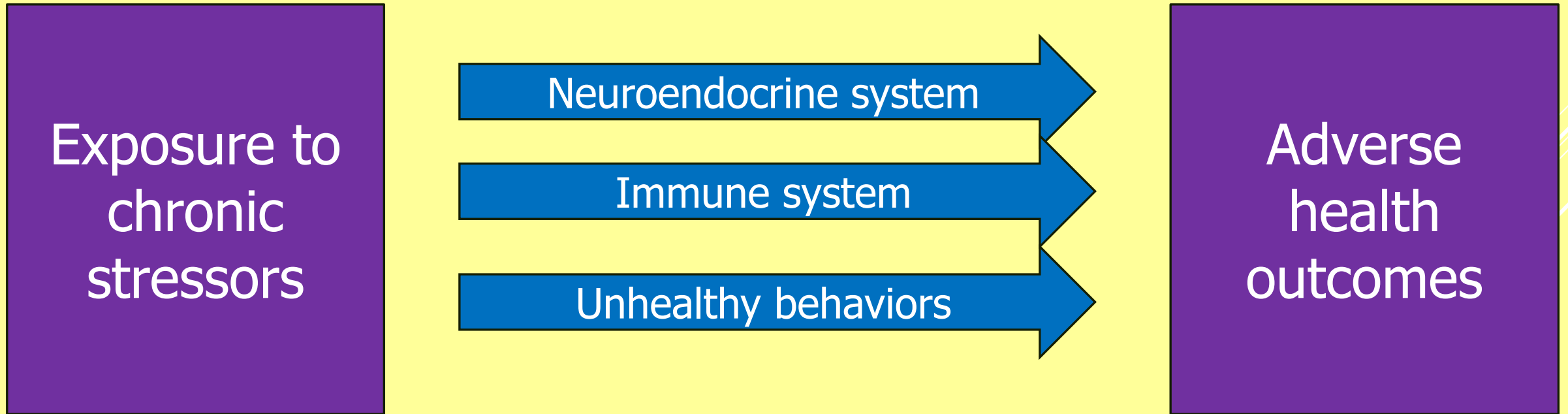
LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Describe how stress is a significant risk factor for adverse health outcomes among women.
2. Define resilience in the context of women and family health.
3. Discuss how the workplace can serve as a critical resilience resource for improving women and family health.



STRESS AND HEALTH

HOW DOES STRESS IMPACT HEALTH?



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MATERNAL STRESS?

Pregnancy complications

- Spontaneous abortion
- Preeclampsia
- Infection/illness

Obstetric outcomes

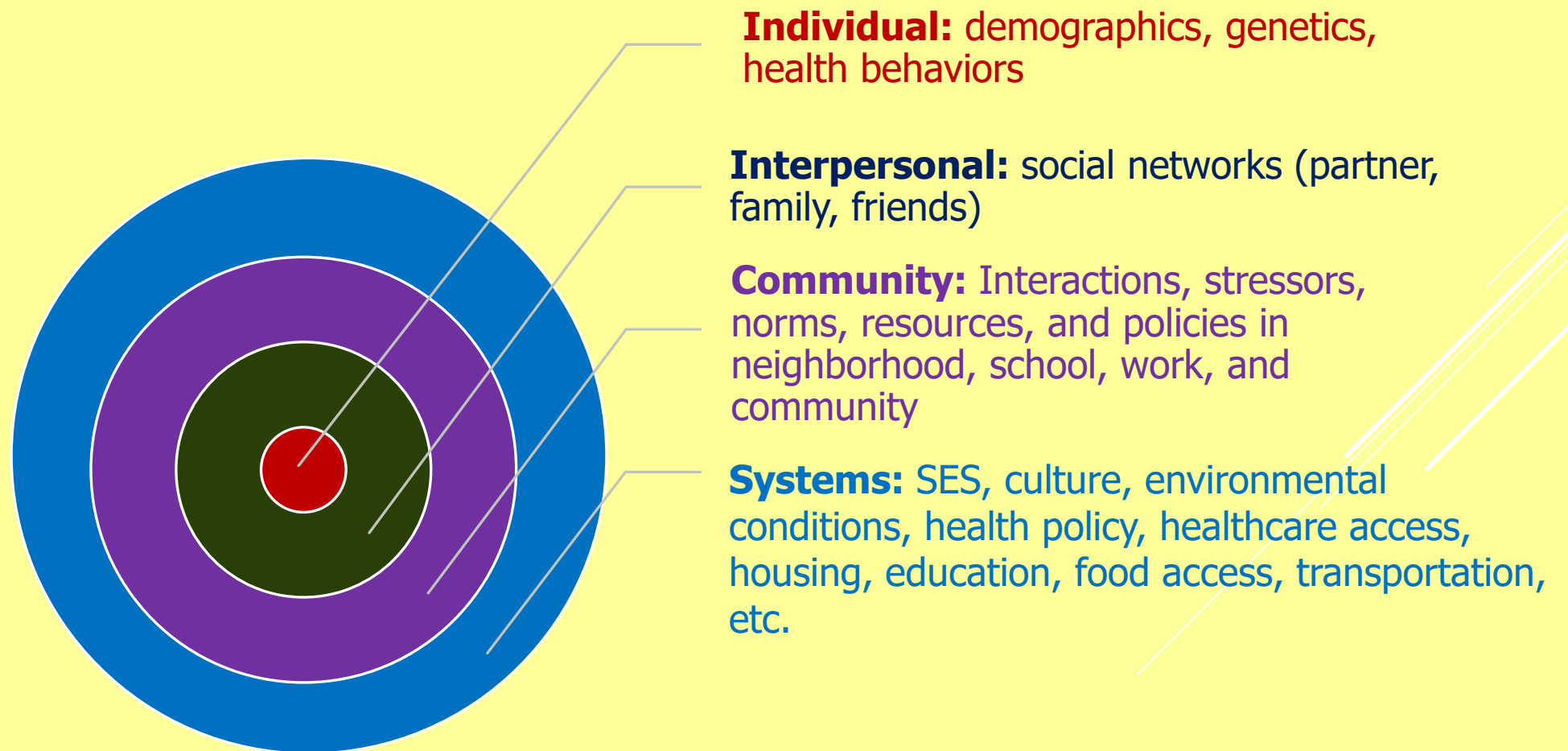
- Preterm delivery
- Low infant birthweight
- Intrauterine growth retardation (smaller head circumference)
- Neural tube defects

Child health outcomes

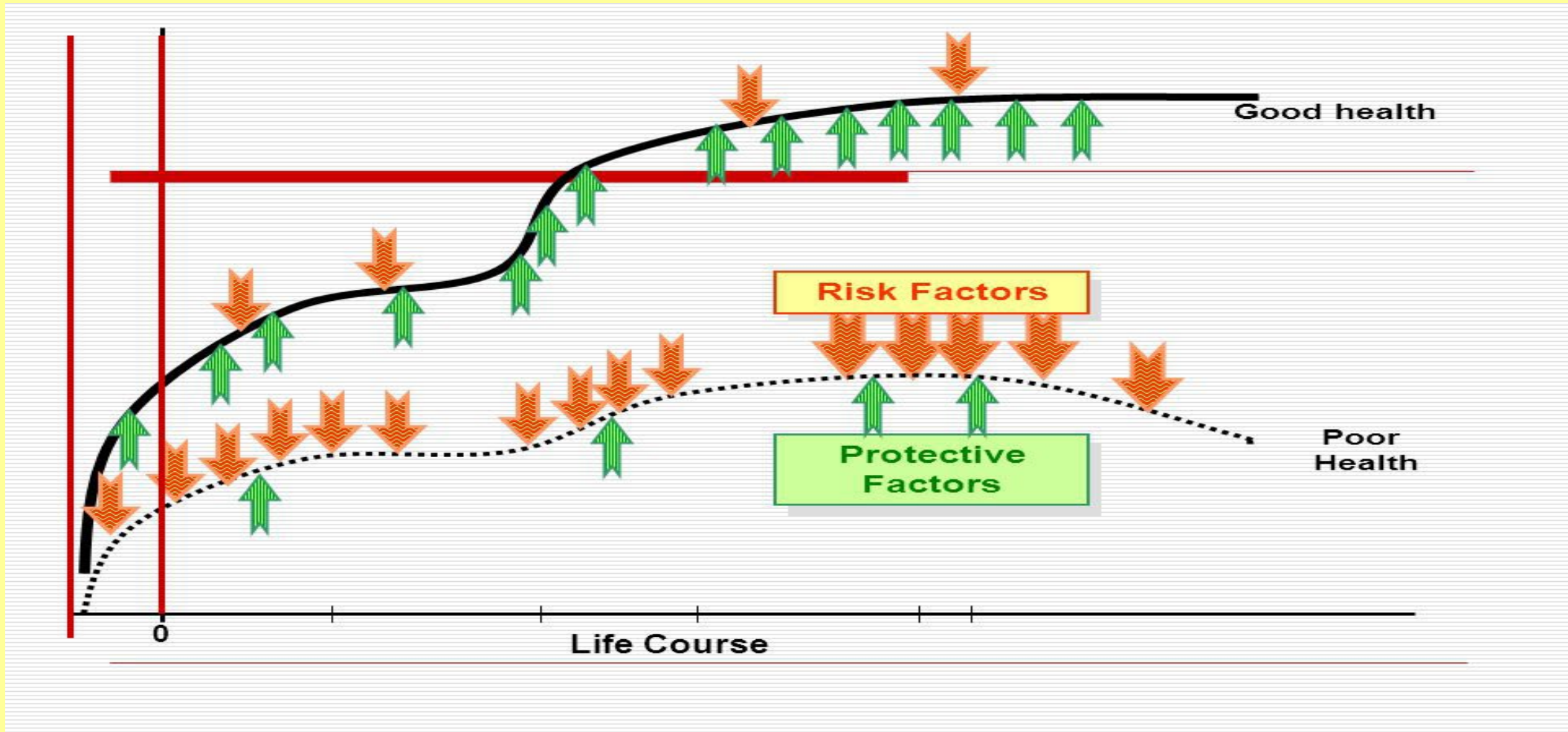
- Asthma
- Allergies
- Negative cognitive, behavioral, and mental health outcomes
- Chronic illnesses

RESILIENCE AMONG WOMEN

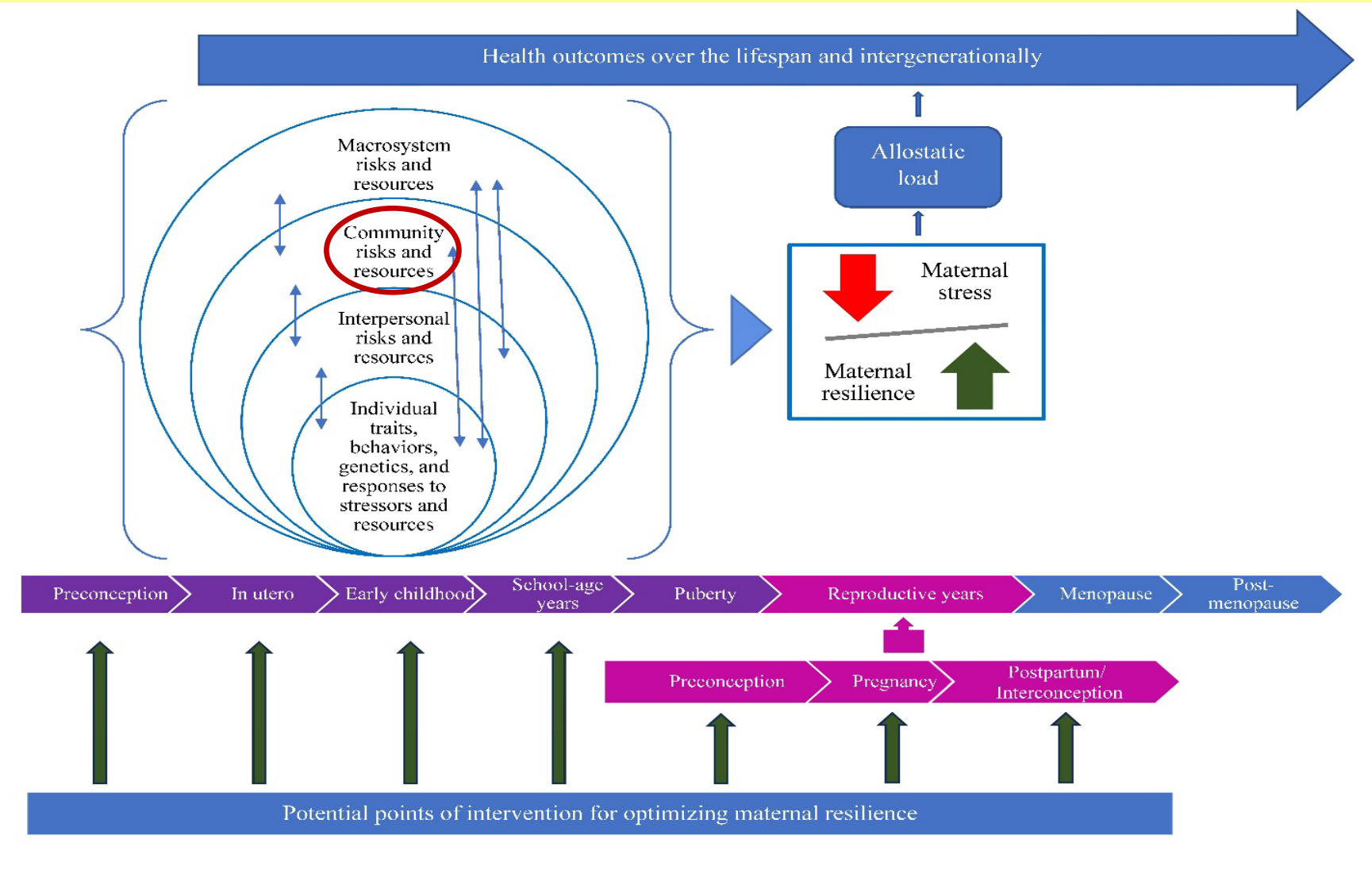
CONCEPTUALIZING MATERNAL RESILIENCE: SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK



CONCEPTUALIZING MATERNAL RESILIENCE: LIFECOURSE APPROACH



INTEGRATED MODEL FOR CONCEPTUALIZING MATERNAL RESILIENCE



THE WORKPLACE AS A STRESSOR

WORKPLACE STRESSORS THAT IMPACT WOMEN

More family/household responsibilities

Gender pay gap

Invisible labor

Lack of promotional opportunity

Sexism and racism

Inadequate maternity/paternity leave

THE WORKPLACE AS A RESILIENCE RESOURCE

WORKPLACE RESOURCES TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S HEALTH

Increased flexibility in work arrangements

- Offer flexible work arrangements such as flexible hours, telecommuting, and job sharing.

Pay equity/transparency

- Conduct regular pay equity audits and implement transparent salary structures and job evaluation systems that are free from bias.

Professional development/mentorship

- Offer professional and leadership development programs, mentorship opportunities, and networking events.

Anti-discrimination and harassment policies

- Implement and enforce anti-discrimination and harassment policies, provide training for employees and managers, and offer confidential reporting mechanisms.

WORKPLACE RESOURCES TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S HEALTH (CONT.)

Maternity and paternity leave

- Paid parental leave helps ensure parents have the necessary time to bond with their children and encourages fathers to take a more active role in childcare.

Childcare support

- Consider offering subsidies or discounts to employees who are using childcare. You can also provide subsidized onsite childcare or create a network of childcare providers.

Equal representation in leadership

- Ensure that your upper management team is diverse and that women have equal opportunities to take on leadership roles. Provide mentorship opportunities to help women develop leadership skills.

Worksite wellness initiatives

- Workplace wellness programs consist of activities such as screening actions to monitor health risks, preventive interventions to minimize health risks, health promotion to improve a healthy lifestyle, and disease management.

Policies and practices promoting inclusion and belonging

- Provide training on unconscious bias and promote a culture of diversity. Have formal and informal workplace activities that help build social connectedness. Encourage teamwork, promote open communication, and appreciate team members' contributions.

CONCLUSIONS

TO SUMMARIZE...

- Stress can substantially impact health outcomes through biological and behavioral pathways. Maternal stress has been shown to contribute to pregnancy complications, adverse obstetric outcomes, and poor child health outcomes.
- Maternal resilience can be conceptualized as a set of protective characteristics, conditions, and resources that women can draw upon across the lifecourse that help them address stress or reduce their exposure to stressors.
- Based on the Socio-ecological Framework and the Lifecourse Approach, maternal stress and resilience both exist at multiple socio-ecological levels and accumulate over the lifecourse to impact the health of women and their children.
- Though the workplace can be a source of multiple stressors, it can also serve as a critical key community-level maternal resilience resource.
- As members of the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare, you can play a key role in helping women in the workplace have the resources and conditions they need to achieve optimal long-term health outcomes.

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