

Supporting Parents Under Pressure: A Call to Action

In today's rapidly changing world, the role of parenting has become increasingly challenging. Nearly 70% of parents believe that raising children is more difficult now than it was two decades ago. This escalating difficulty is largely due to technological advancements, societal shifts, and heightened expectations for children's success. Recognizing these challenges, the U.S. Surgeon General has released "Parents Under Pressure," a comprehensive advisory to support families by addressing these modern complexities and offering actionable recommendations for providers working with children and families.

Key Challenges Facing Parents

Growing Stress: Parents today are confronted with a range of stressors, including financial burdens, lack of time, concerns for their children's safety, and cultural demands. These pressures are taking a toll on their mental health, with one in four parents experiencing mental health issues.

Disproportionate Impact: Certain groups, such as families with low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, and single parent households, face even greater challenges. These families are often caught in systemic issues like discrimination and economic instability, making their parenting journey even more difficult.

Community and Social Support: The advisory emphasizes the importance of supportive networks and open dialogue. Encouraging conversations about mental health and providing resources can significantly help reduce loneliness and stigma among parents.

Institutional Involvement: Schools and community organizations are crucial in creating social connections and support systems for parents. The advisory calls for government and employer policies that better prioritize mental health and community engagement.

Empowering Providers

Providers in the fields of child welfare and parental support are encouraged to explore the full advisory. Gaining a deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of parental stress is essential for developing effective practices and policies that acknowledge the evolving needs of families.

Addressing today's parenting challenges is crucial. Providers have a key role in reducing parental stress by understanding diverse family pressures and recognizing the unique struggles of marginalized groups. By strengthening community support, promoting mental health discussions, and advocating for supportive policies, providers can help create healthier environments for families. For detailed strategies, providers should refer to the full advisory report found here:

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/parents-under-pressure.pdf>.

Parental Mental Health: 23.9% of parents have a mental illness, and 5.7% had a serious mental illness. Additionally, 14% of parents of children with special needs reported "fair or poor mental health."

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