Portfolio 2.2 – Informed Decisions Affecting Quality of Life in Rural Areas:
KA 802 Human Development and Family Well Being

External Factors: Public policy impacts individuals and families. Stressors can impact individuals and families negatively knocking them off course (at least temporarily) for positive development. Poverty makes it difficult for individuals and families to thrive. Limited resources of individual agencies make it difficult to meet increasing needs.

Assumptions: Individuals and families can gain the knowledge and skills needed to enhance quality of life. The knowledge and skills needed to enhance quality of life are not innate, they must be learned. What impacts one family member impacts all members of the family system. The social and financial costs for not having healthy individuals and families is a major societal burden that can be prevented.

Short-term Outcomes:
- Increased knowledge among individuals & families about:
  - Healthy communication and relationships
  - Social & life skills necessary to make informed choices
  - Effective parenting practices to promote the growth & development of children
  - Self-care, accessing community resources, & care giving for children, elders, or people with disabilities
  - Supportive community services (parenting, child care etc.)
  - Policies & practices among employers to support work/ life balance, job satisfaction, & reduced stress, turnover & associated costs to workplace productivity
  - Use of supportive community services, reduced stress, & improved morale
- Improved family functioning, communication, social, & life skills

Medium Outcomes:
- Increased:
  - Skills to form & sustain healthy relationships
  - Enrollment in education & development opportunities
  - Demand for & availability within the community of high-quality child care
  - High-quality education & development opportunities
  - Policies & practices among employers to support work/ life balance, job satisfaction, & reduced stress, turnover & associated costs to workplace productivity
  - Use of supportive community services, reduced stress, & improved morale
  - Use of supportive community services, reduced stress, & improved morale
- Preparedness for stressful life events
  - Work place productivity, reduced costs, & profitability

Long-term Outcomes:
- Increasing:
  - Proportion of healthy, well functioning families
  - Number & proportion of healthy marriages
  - School readiness for children
  - Number of communities with critical mass of resources, supports, & positive parenting role models
- Decreasing:
  - Rates of family violence; divorce; child abuse; neglect
  - Number of children in foster care

In the U.S. today there are 76 million families with children under age 18—one half living in poverty. Growing diversity in American families has fostered an increasing emphasis on the need for targeted family strengthening across the lifespan, particularly in the areas of rural family life, parenting, child care, marital & couple relationships, caregiving, military family life, & balancing work & family life.

Research, education, & extension activities can provide families with the skills needed to make informed choices & enhance quality of life.