

# COMMON PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS

*These factors do not imply causality and should not be interpreted as such.  
These lists are not all-inclusive or exhaustive.*

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

### Child Protective Factors:

- Good health, history of adequate development
- Above-average intelligence
- Hobbies and interests
- Good peer relationships
- Personality factors
- Easy temperament
- Positive disposition
- Active coping style
- Positive self-esteem
- Good social skills
- Internal locus of control
- Balance between help seeking and autonomy

### Parental/Family Protective Factors:

- Secure attachment; positive and warm parent-child relationship
- Supportive family environment
- Household rules/structure; parental monitoring of child
- Stable relationship with parents and extended family
- Parents have a model of competence and good coping skills
- Family expectations of pro-social behavior
- High parental education

### Social/Environmental Protective Factors:

- Mid to high social-economic status (SES)
- Access to health care and social services
- Consistent parental employment
- Adequate housing
- Family religious faith participation / spirituality
- Good schools
- Supportive adults outside of family who serve as role models/mentors

MCWTS: From: Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota

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WBT Module 6 Chapter 1

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## RISK FACTORS

### Child Risk Factors:

- Premature birth, birth anomalies, low birth weight
  - Temperament: difficult or slow to warm up; other personality traits such as stubbornness, extreme energy, or easily distressed
- Physical/cognitive/emotional disability, chronic or serious illness
- Childhood trauma
- Anti-social peer group
- Age
- Child aggression, behavior problems, attention deficits

### Parental/Family Risk Factors:

- Personality factors; external locus of control; lacks self-esteem
- Poor impulse control; low tolerance for frustration
- Depression/anxiety; other mental health concerns
- Lack of trust; insecure attachment with own parents; fear of other people
- Childhood history of abuse
  - Parental conflict / domestic violence; may perceive violence as normal if raised with violence
  - Family structure – single parent with lack of support, multiple children; closed or chaotic boundary structures
- Social isolation, lack of support; separation/divorce, especially high-conflict divorce
- Substance abuse
- Age
- High general stress level; unresolved stress and crisis in the family unit
- Poor parent-child interaction, negative attitudes and attributions about behavior
  - Inaccurate child development knowledge; unrealistic expectations of child; lacks empathy and understanding of child's needs

### Social/Environmental Risk Factors:

- Low social-economic status (SES) – poverty
- Stressful life events; chaotic environments
- Lack of access to medical care, insurance, adequate child care, services
- Parental unemployment
- Social isolation/lack of support
- Exposure to racism/discrimination
- Poor schools
- Dangerous/violent neighborhood, community violence; domestic violence

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