

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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# **UCLA NATHANSON FAMILY RESILIENCE CENTER LAUNCHES *FOCUS ON FOSTER FAMILIES***

*Mobile application designed for foster/adoptive families and youth to provide support, build strengths, and overcome common challenges.*

LOS ANGELES- The UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center (NFRC), with support from the Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, is launching a second mobile application based on the FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress) Family Resilience Model. Designed for foster/adoptive families and youth, this free app aims to provide support for youth and those who care for them in the form of video interviews, skill-building games, and access to downloadable PDFs to help promote resilience in the face of challenges.

This groundbreaking app was developed by a UCLA team that specializes in using technology to provide information, skill training, and support for families contending with stressful change and a range of life challenges. With guidance from a large sample of foster/adoptive youth, parents, and service experts, *FOCUS on Foster Families* includes guidance, shared experiences, practical training, and interactive games, all designed to build individual and family strengths, resilience, and hope.

The app provides information and support in the form of candid interviews with current and past foster/adoptive youth, parents and grandparents, and experts on the foster/adoptive process. The app also includes scripted family training videos that provide practical instruction on helpful ways of dealing with common challenges, interactive games to help youth build skills in problem-solving and emotional regulation, and lists of resources and links organized by topic.

“Launching this newest app allows our center to meet foster/adoptive families where they are at and provide them with resources that can build on their current strengths and increase their resilience,” stated Patricia Lester, MD, Director, UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center. “We are especially excited about the opportunity to feature the stories of real foster youth and parents who can help guide our users through their experiences with common challenges.”

Members of the UCLA Guardian Scholars, a program which offers support to foster youth attending UCLA, provided consistent support for this project and are featured in a number of videos within the app’s resource section. The students candidly shared their experiences and helpful tips for parents and youth currently involved in foster care. The project also benefitted from advice and collaboration provided by a number of community-based organizations that work with foster youth and families.

"Sharing your experiences in foster care is difficult for anyone who's been through the system," said Annika Taber, UCLA Guardian Scholar, "but I think I can speak for everyone in saying, we did this because we were all there once and all any of us wanted to hear was that we weren't alone."

"There are many parallels between the trauma experienced by foster families and veteran families, so extending the work that Dr. Lester and her colleagues started with veterans to this population seems logical," stated Jeanne Pritzker. "We're thrilled with what they have developed – and look forward to seeing the app become a useful resource for foster families in Los Angeles and beyond."

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### **About Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)**

FOCUS Family Resilience Training is a brief, trauma-informed and strength-based program that is grounded in more than two decades of research and experience serving families dealing with stress and traumatic change. It is an evidence-based approach that provides therapeutic experiences and individual and family training in specific skills that enhance psychological and emotional health and resilience. Families learn to work together to manage difficult emotions, set goals, solve problems, communicate clearly and effectively, and develop customized strategies to deal with ongoing stress and change. FOCUS doesn't just help families cope with these challenges; it trains them to use skills that will strengthen them today and in the future.

To date, FOCUS has delivered services to more than 500,000 active-duty Military and Veteran community members, including Service Members, Veterans and their families, and thousands of children and families across Los Angeles County contending with trauma, loss, and adversities of all kinds. For more information about the FOCUS Program, visit [www.focusproject.org](http://www.focusproject.org).

### **About the UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center (NFRC)**

The UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center develops programs to help families adapt to and overcome challenges. As leaders in the field of family wellness, we bring expert science and quality care to families throughout Los Angeles and around the world. Through smart phone apps, video chat consultations and web-based family games, the UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center strives to use technology to bring programs and services to individuals and families where they live, work and play. For more information about the UCLA Nathanson Family Resilience Center, visit <http://nfrc.ucla.edu> or [www.facebook.com/UCLANFRC](https://www.facebook.com/UCLANFRC)

### **About the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation**

For more than a decade, the Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation has been investing in strengthening many of the unique institutions that define Los Angeles. The foundation aims to enrich our community, not just for the present but for generations to come, with a particular focus on medicine, higher education, the environment, the arts and foster care.