

# Family Engagement in Services: Being the Expert

Successful Engagement Strategies that Promote and Sustain  
Meaningful Community, Family, and Youth Partnerships



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# Youth and Family Partnerships

- Recognize and encourage youth and families to share their strengths, needs, and perspectives regarding their care planning and treatment Support Youth and Families in co-leading activities with other youth, families and their agency partners. You are the EXPERT on your family.
- Work together on public awareness activities to combat STIGMA
- Be a collective voice to impact and change policy and practice
- Become a Change Agent for Child Serving Systems, youth and families



# Youth and Family Partnerships (cont'd)

- Learn together! Provide WrapAround Training to all parties including Community Stakeholders and Natural Supports.
- Embrace the Values of Youth and Family Driven Care
- Learn the Philosophy and Values of System of Care



# Youth Guided Involvement

- ❖ Youth Guided means to value the youth as EXPERTS on their own lives.
- ❖ Youth should be treated as equal partners in their own planning, while respecting policy requirements.
- ❖ Youth should have representation as equal partners in creating system change at the individual, state and national level.
- ❖ Youth should be provided training opportunities in order to participate with an informed voice.

# Definition of Family Driven Care

Family-Driven Care means, families have a primary decision-making role in the care of their own children, as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community, state, tribe, territory, and nation.

This includes:

Choosing culturally and linguistically competent supports, services, and providers, Setting goals, Monitoring outcomes and Partnering in funding decisions.

# Guiding Principles of Family-Driven Care

- Families and Youth, providers, and administrators embrace the concept of sharing decision-making and responsibility for outcomes.
- Families and Youth are given accurate, understandable, and complete information necessary to set goals to make informed decisions and choices about the right services and supports for individual children and their families.
- All children, youth, and families have a biological, adoptive, foster, or surrogate family voice advocating on their behalf and may appoint them as substitute decision makers at any time.
- Families and family-run organizations engage in peer support activities to reduce isolation, gather and disseminate accurate information, and strengthen the family voice.
- Families and Family-Run Organizations provide direction for decisions that impact funding for services, treatments, supports, and they advocate for families and youth to have choices.

# Guiding Principles (Cont'd)

- Providers take the initiative to change policy and practice from provider-driven to family-driven
- Administrators allocate staff, training, support and resources to make family-driven practice work at the point where services and supports are delivered to children, youth, and families and where family and youth run organizations are funded and sustained.
- Community attitude change efforts focus on removing barriers and discrimination created by stigma.
- Communities and private agencies embrace, value, and celebrate the diverse cultures of their children, youth, and families and work to eliminate mental health disparities.
- Everyone who connects with children, youth, and families continually advances their own cultural and linguistic responsiveness as the population served changes so that the needs of the diverse populations are appropriately addressed.

# Youth Driven Care

- Youth Guided Planning means that programs and organizations ensure that youth serve as full partners in all service delivery as primary decision making role in their care.
- Youth should be involved in implementing activities, such as choosing culturally and linguistically competent supports, services and providers.
- Youth-centered programs strive to empower youth to ensure engagement, reassure them that change is possible, and to feel safe, cared for, valued, useful, and spiritually grounded.
- Programs and Organizations must engage, support, and ensure that youth and their families with lived experiences are directly involved in designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and services.
- In youth-guided and family-driven systems, youth and family members are provided needed training and support with accurate, understandable, and complete information necessary to set goals, make informed choices about services and partner in decision-making that impacts children and families.



# Involving Fathers in Planning

- Show appreciation for the father's vital role in his child health and emotional development
- Create an environment where fathers feel comfortable, welcomed, and valued
- Include fathers when making decisions about policy and programming for dads
- Recruit fathers as peers from every cultural group to ensure true representation
- Hold "men only" events, develop father/ child activities
- Celebrate dad successes; some may not have had the role model they needed as a child, rejoice in their learning

*My Hero Is  
My Dad*

# Wraparound

## 10 Guiding Principles

1. Family Voice and Choice - Planning is grounded in the family's perspective and the team strives to create choices that reflect their values and preferences, the staff strives to provide options and choices that reflect the family's input.
2. Team Based - The team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to them through informal, formal, and community support and relationships. The team can be fluid to meet the needs of the child and family.
3. Natural Supports - The team seeks members of the families' network and other community relationships to provide non-traditional support and interventions.
4. Collaboration - team works cooperatively and shares responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a single wraparound plan.

# Wraparound Principles (cont'd)

5. Community Based- The team implements services and supports that take place in the most inclusive, responsive, accessible, and least restrictive setting possible; and, that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life.
6. Culturally Competent- The Wraparound Process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of the child, youth and family; and their community.
7. Individualized- The team implements a customized set of strategies, supports, and services.
8. Strengths Based- The Wraparound Process and plan identify, build upon, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child and family, their community, and other team members.
9. Persistence- team continues to work toward the goals in the Wraparound plan until that goal is no longer required.
10. Outcome Based- The team ties the goals and strategies of the plan to observable and measurable indicators of success, monitors progress and revises the plan accordingly.

# System of Care Core Definition

A System of Care is:

A spectrum of effective, community based services and supports for children and youth with or are at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and addresses their cultural and linguistic needs in order to help them to function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

# Core Values of System of Care

- ✓ Family-Driven and Youth Guided, with the strengths and needs of the child and family determining the types and mix of services and supports provided.
- ✓ Community-Based, with the locus of services as well as system management resting within a supportive, adaptive infrastructure of structures, processes, and relationships at the community level.
- ✓ Culturally and linguistically competent, with agencies, programs, and services that reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences of the populations they serve to facilitate access to and utilization of appropriate services and supports and to eliminate disparities in care.

# RESPECT

- Listen
- Take time to learn about others & go to them
- Honor their experiences
- Everyone has value to bring to the table
- Build One to One Relationships
- Establish Guidelines TOGETHER
- Be Consistent and Committed
- Involve the parents, teachers, elders & community
- Utilize resources & reach out to greater community



# RESPONSIBILITY

- Accountability is Critical and Mutual
- Lead by example, there's always someone watching
- Be honest with yourself, families, youth and peers
- Know the youth and families' culture, language, hopes
- Promote meaningful involvement and open discussion
- Promote empowerment & develop leadership skills
- Be active and creative! Listen to ideas!
- Get communities, churches, parents, schools, leaders, mental health providers, police, judges, and county staff involved in the strategic planning of embracing youth and family peers

# Relationships

- Are demanding and require commitment
- The Building Block to authentic youth and family partnerships
- Maintain Open Communication (could be painful)
- Value the lived experience of youth and families
- Promote Connection to healthy support systems
- Demonstrate a vested interest and value in youth and family voices





# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ☞ Be Flexible
- ☞ Focus on Your Family
- ☞ Share the Power, providers are knowledgeable assets
- ☞ Develop working relationships with treatment team
- ☞ Value the Commitment of the team
- ☞ Take a lead in treatment, you are the EXPERT.
- ☞ *Treatment can work.*



# Achieving the Mission

- Serve as positive role models to our peers and future generations
- Teach and Educate the greater public about Mental Health issues and how services can be improved through Family and youth driven planning
- Advocate for the youth and family voices while reducing discrimination surrounding mental health
- Represent a link between Youth, their families, adults and the community
- Support each other on our Journey, as well as, research and systems change within children's mental health services

# The End, But Not Done

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"Coordinated Access to Resources Equals  
Success" (BCCC 2009)



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