Value of the Family Partner

Fostering Family Voice Through Engagement, Empowerment, and Supportive Advocacy

"I would describe my role as a Family Peer Partner as that connection, that support for a family. The person that they can call to be that support and encouragement that they need to bring their family back to a comfortable place."

Sharon Nyerere
Family Partner, AYN

Successes of the Family Partner Role

During a period of two years beginning in 2019, multiple PRTFs participated in North Carolina's Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services' Residential Redesign Project. These efforts centered around building capacity for implementing Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) best practices and Six Core Strategies© to facilitate the adoption of trauma-focused and family/youth voice strategies in clinical settings. A key focus included the implementation of the Family Partner role in these agencies. The information provided here represents key themes and successes identified fom participants at the conclusion of the pilot project.

1. The Family Partner provides an essential access point for family engagement in treatment beginning at the start of services and continuing through transition.
2. Family Partners build trust with families through authentic *shared lived experiences*, communication, support, and advocacy throughout the treatment
3. The Family Partner role is flexible and dynamic in serving children and families for improved outcomes. Many Family Partners use creative strategies to engage family members and empower caregivers to actively participate in their child's care.
4. Family Partners work with families and youth to collaboratively define success for each family, based on unique strengths, assets, and needs.

Family Partners Offer:

- Emotional support for children and families from a trusted source who has *lived experience* parenting a child with complex behavioral health needs and navigating the system
- Person-centered, strengths-based collaboration and partnership with families and community partners to promote self-determination, self-advocacy, and empowerment of family and youth voice
- Linkages to resources, services, and additional supports for families throughout course of treatment

Family Partner Services May Include:

- One-to-one confidential mentoring and support
- Parent/caregiver training and education to develop skills and strategies to effectively address child's needs
- Attending Child and Family Team/Treatment Team meetings and/or meetings within child-serving systems with caregivers
- Connecting families with needed resources or individualized supports across system(s), such as housing/ transportation needs
- Supporting families in planning for and identifying strategies to assist with child's transition from program
- Advocating and Modeling System of Care (SOC) values and principles for families and youth

The Build Up project currently works in partnership with the NC DHHS Division of Child and Family Well-Being; the BBI-Six Core Strategies Pilot was funded through the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse.

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