

A FAMILY CENTRED APPROACH ACROSS THE LIFESPAN QUICK REFERENCE:



IMPLEMENTING *FAMILIES AT THE CENTRE**

KEY ELEMENTS

VISION: Families in all their diversity are at the centre of service system cultures and responses

- * Increases the understanding of systems about the needs of individuals and families experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges and improves the support and services offered to them
- * Shifts the culture in approaches to policy & practice
- * Encourages cross-system collaboration
- * Sees people as individuals as well as vital members of families, networks, and communities
- * Complements an individualized (patient/client) focus
- * Focuses on the inherent strengths, capabilities, and interconnectedness of families, identifies their concerns and needs, and empowers them
- * Appreciates the resources that individuals, families, and professionals bring to the service relationship
- * Acknowledges that individuals and families are experts on themselves; are capable of making informed choices with the appropriate information, time, and support; and, are involved in relevant decisions, when possible
- * Recognizes the decision-making ability of individuals and families is influenced by developmental capacity, acuity of the individual's mental health &/or substance use challenge, and the roles negotiated for this purpose
- * Tailors services to families' needs, preferences, culture and traditions
- * Builds on informal support systems instead of relying solely on professional services

THE BENEFITS

Health and Well-being Benefits for Children, Youth, Adults and Families

- ◇ Decreased risk of secondary mental health and substance use problems for current and future family members
- ◇ Decreased family/caregiver stress and related problems
- ◇ Improved child/family management skills and function
- ◇ Hastened recovery from mental health and substance use challenges
- ◇ Increased family/caregiver employment
- ◇ Increased stability of living situation
- ◇ Greater educational attainment for children and youth
- ◇ Increased child, youth, adult, and family satisfaction
- ◇ Lowered risk of mortality from substance dependence and suicide
- ◇ Improved health, safety, and well-being of children, youth, adults, and families

Benefits Related to Systems and Services

- ◇ More timely access to quality improved services
- ◇ Increased professional satisfaction
- ◇ Improved cost effectiveness of services
- ◇ More effective use of health & social care resources
- ◇ Reduced out-of-home placement of children
- ◇ Reduced rate of re-hospitalization or relapse
- ◇ Reduction of stigma through opportunities for dialogue across systems and with families
- ◇ Reduced mental health and/or substance use problems

BE INVOLVED

- ✓ Become a champion of family-centred approaches
- ✓ Develop your knowledge of family-centred approaches
- ✓ Share ideas and gain support, including from management
- ✓ Use a tool, such as the *Family-Centred Practices Checklist* developed by Wilson & Dunst (2002), to gauge the extent to which current practices are using a family-centred approach
- ✓ Read *Families Matter: A Family Mental Health Framework for BC (F.O.R.C.E for Kids' Mental Health, 2012)* to learn more about what families need and want
- ✓ Engage families. E.g. Ask families how they would like to be engaged in the services they and/or their family member are receiving, or bring families together in a focus group or advisory committee or council to inform movement towards a family-centred orientation
- ✓ Determine priorities. Work collaboratively with other professionals and families to identify strategies with the most impact on families and are easiest to adapt

The *Spectrum of Family Engagement* on the next page illustrates various types of family engagement and involvement. The degree of family engagement is influenced by system capacity and laws on information sharing as well as the acuity of the individual's mental health needs and individual and family needs for safety. However, every degree of engagement along this spectrum (except the experience of 'exclusion') offers opportunities for individuals, families and systems to benefit.

Key Elements and Benefits adapted from:

MacKean, G., Spragins, W., L'Heureux, L., Popp, J., Wilkes, C., & Lipton, H. (2012). Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Community Support and Research Unit. (2004).

**Families at the Centre: A Planning Framework for Public Systems in BC* developed by the BC Family Mental Health and Substance Use Task Force with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Ministry of Health.

SPECTRUM OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

WHEN A FAMILY MEMBER IS EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH AND/OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGE



Exclude

Client-Focused

Families are not considered or engaged in efforts to work with individual clients.

Systems offer no promises to families regarding information, involvement or supports.

We are not informed about services offered to our affected family member, and receive no related services.

System Orientation

Family Engagement Goals

System Promise to Families

Family Perceptions

Inform

Person-Centred
Family-Aware

Provide families with information to assist them in understanding approaches and options.

We will keep you informed to the best extent possible regarding the plan of care, effectiveness of interventions and opportunities for family-based input.

Our affected family member(s) receives services and we are informed.

Involve

Family-Involved

Obtain feedback from families on options and decisions. Involve families to ensure their concerns and hopes are consistently understood and considered.

We will listen to you and acknowledge your concerns and hopes. We will let you know how your input has influenced our decisions.

Our family's advice influences the services provided as well as service planning.

Collaborate

Family-Focused

Build on individual and family strengths. Collaborate with families for advice on decision making at the service level.

We will look to you for advice and expertise and will incorporate your recommendations into our decisions to the best extent possible. We will equip our staff with the knowledge and skills to apply a family-centred approach.

The professionals focus on us and our affected family member. Our family is involved in service delivery, planning and action. We advocate for our own family.

Empower

Family-Centred

Strengthen family connectedness and resilience. Empower families to have a primary role in decision making at both the service and system levels.

We will ensure our staff are fluent in application of family-centred approaches. We will centre our services on family-based input and apply your recommendations.

Our family AND our affected family member receive the services we need. Our family partners with system representatives on service planning and policies for all families. We advocate with other families.



