

# *Family Partners in Community Leadership*

## ABC Leadership Academy

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# Building a Trusting Relationship Between Families and Professionals

## *Definition of Family-Driven Care*

- Family-driven 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.

# Trusting Relationships (continued)

## *Family-Driven Care Includes:*

- Choosing supports, services and providers
- Setting goals
- Designing and implementing programs
- Monitoring outcomes
- Partnering in funding decisions
- Determining the effectiveness of all efforts to promote the mental health and well being of children and youth

# Trusting Relationships (continued)

## *Guiding Principles of Family-Driven Care*

- Families and youth are given accurate, understandable and complete information, necessary to set goals and to make choices for improved planning for individual children and their families.
- Families and youth, providers and administrators embrace the concept of sharing decision-making and responsibility for outcomes with providers.

# Trusting Relationships (continued)

- Families and youth are organized to collectively use their knowledge and skills as a force for systems transformation.
- 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, treatment, and supports.

# Trusting Relationships (continued)


- Providers take the initiative to change practice from providers-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.
- Community attitude change-efforts focus on removing barriers and discrimination created by stigma.

# Trusting Relationships (continued)

- Communities embrace, value and celebrate the diverse cultures of their children, youth, and families.
- Everyone who connects with children, youth and families continually advance their own cultural and linguistic responsiveness as the population served changes.

# Trusting Relationships (continued)

## *Clear Communication:*

- Listen and ask questions
  - Value placed on openness and directness
  - Reframe challenge as interest based
  - Understand conflict and expose it as a force in the creative problem solving process
  - Build consensus
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# Trusting Relationships (continued)

## *Ethical practices*

- Values, Beliefs or Standards; Qualities, Intrinsic Worth & Guiding Principles
- Guides for how you behave or highly valued qualities that fit and support your way of life
- Interest-Based Collaboration
- A way to facilitate working together by reframing competing positions to positive, future oriented and common interests

# Trusting Relationships (continued)

## *Culture is:*

- An integrated pattern of human behavior which includes - thought, communication, languages, beliefs, values, practices, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relationships, and expected behaviors of a radical, ethnic, religious or social group
- The ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations

## Trusting Relationships (continued)


- Each person comes to the table with their personal truth, based on personal values and vision
- Deep listening, reflection and validation facilitate understanding
- Result in personal growth, trust, risking, resilience and new truth
- Through ethical practices, families and professionals demonstrate commitment, responsibility, trustworthiness, and accountability

# Barriers to Family Involvement

*Personal risk and fears include:*

- Embarrassment
  - Loss of respect
  - Criticism and/or dismissal
  - Loss of self-esteem
  - Loss of confidence
  - Loss of credibility
  - Loss of relationships
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## Barriers (continued)

- Personal sacrifice/burnout
  - Exaggerated sense of responsibility
  - Scapegoat
  - Temptation of martyrdom
  - Relying on charisma
  - Isolation
  - Overwhelming passion
  - De-energized by setbacks and failures
  - Loss of perspective
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## Barriers (continued)

- Aspects of assumptions
- Beliefs or ideas that we hold to be true, often with little or no evidence required
- Assumptions are the operating principles beyond self-fulfilling prophecies
- We make assumptions everyday of lives
- Some assumptions may have supporting evidence (warranted)

## Barriers (continued)

- Many assumptions have no supporting evidence (unwarranted)
- Limiting assumptions-when it blocks or interferes with our ability to think clearly about any particular issue
- Assumptions must be tested and evaluated as rigorously evidence
- We must weigh the relevance and the validity of all assumptions
- If we believe something to be true that is not tested or not true, we often act as if it is true

**We work toward  
convincing others**

**Reinforcing  
our belief  
that we must  
be more  
convincing**

**Which leads to others  
raising questions and  
withholding comments**

**Because we believe  
we must lead  
change by sharing  
our views**

**RESULT**

**ACTION**

**BELIEF**



# Empowering Families to Advocate for Themselves

- The family should know the importance advocacy plays in the change process
- Understand the group process in determining priorities for advocacy
- Understand the importance of teaching self-advocacy skills

## Advocating (continued)

- Advocacy is a word that is fairly common. What does it mean exactly? Advocacy comes from the Latin “to speak for” and that is the heart of the matter. An advocate speaks for people who cannot speak for themselves. It could be because they aren’t present, or they cannot be heard.

## Advocating (continued)

- Myth: One group of people cannot change “the system.”
- Fact: “The system” only changes because groups of dedicated, passionate people organize and fight for change.
- Myth: You must yell and be aggressive to make people in authority listen.
- Fact: An advocate uses a variety of techniques and skills to effect change. Aggression is not always the best way to achieve results.

## Advocating (continued)

- When we, as parents are in crisis with our loved ones we are very self focused.
- What we, as parents need is someone to listen and care; someone who gives us hope and someone who offers practical suggestions.
- This support can happen in groups, one to one, and over the phone.

## Advocating (continued)

- As we learn, we want to advocate for our own children and speak for our own families in a language that the people who work with us in this endeavor will understand.
- Now we begin to see the power of education and the ability of individuals to make changes.

# Advocating for Others

- There is another type of advocacy. This happens when we speak up for others.
- Suddenly we look at issues and realize decisions are made in a variety of places that have a great impact on all of our lives.
- At this point, advocacy outside of ourselves begins. We begin to discover that changes in the system are necessary to change our day to day lives.

## Advocating for Others (continued)

- Importance to the advocacy process is the teaching of self- advocacy skills to other family members including your children.
- While you are working to get services, obtain equity in services, or some other accommodation, you should work with your family on learning these advocacy skills.

## Advocating for Others (continued)

- It is important that you have an assertive, but not an aggressive, attitude.
- Stay on the issue
- When an impasse is reached, leave the meeting
- Monitor your behavior so it is professional, and is equal to how you would like to be treated.

# Advocating for Others (continued)

- In self advocacy you need to listen to what others are saying, to ask clarifying questions and to state the positions in an objective manner.
- Self-advocacy applies to any service, agency or professional.
- Teaching self-advocacy is necessary when families are solving their own problems as part of the community.

## Advocating for Others (continued)

*What do we need to be an effective advocate?*

- Remember the cause is larger than our own personal glory
- Know issues, and not personalities, are the heart of the matter
- Know exploding in anger may be a relief, but it will probably mean our goal doesn't get met
- Be a diplomat and a politician

## Advocating for Others (continued)

- Not be afraid of confrontation, but use it to our advantage
- Use our indignation and rage to make changes and not let our anger destroy us
- Learn who our audiences is and speak their language to communicate
- Make sure people see what is in it for them, so they will lend their support
- We must keep our focus and not loose our mission

# Advocating for Others (continued)

*Here are some symptoms of danger signs:*

- Becoming window dressing for numerous boards and committees
- It is very easy to become comfortable with decision-makers that we forget our prime mission
- It is far easy for decision-makers to pacify specific people rather than respond to the needs of the families that they represent.
- It is very flattering to have decisions-makers view you as a person of importance.

# The Impact of Families on Federal and State policies

- Power is the ability to influence the decision-makers to develop, plan, and promote strategies that will help achieve our goals.
- Decision-makers depend on our votes to keep them in office. So first consideration is paid to constituents whose numbers are large enough; whose cause is organized enough; whose message is strong enough that they can hurt or help those office holders.

## Federal and State (continued)

- Learn which policies have the most effect, both positive and negative, upon our children and families.
- What are the greatest needs?
- Do we have open communication with the people who make the changes?
- Do we want to concentrate on one particular area or on several areas?

# Federal and State (continued)



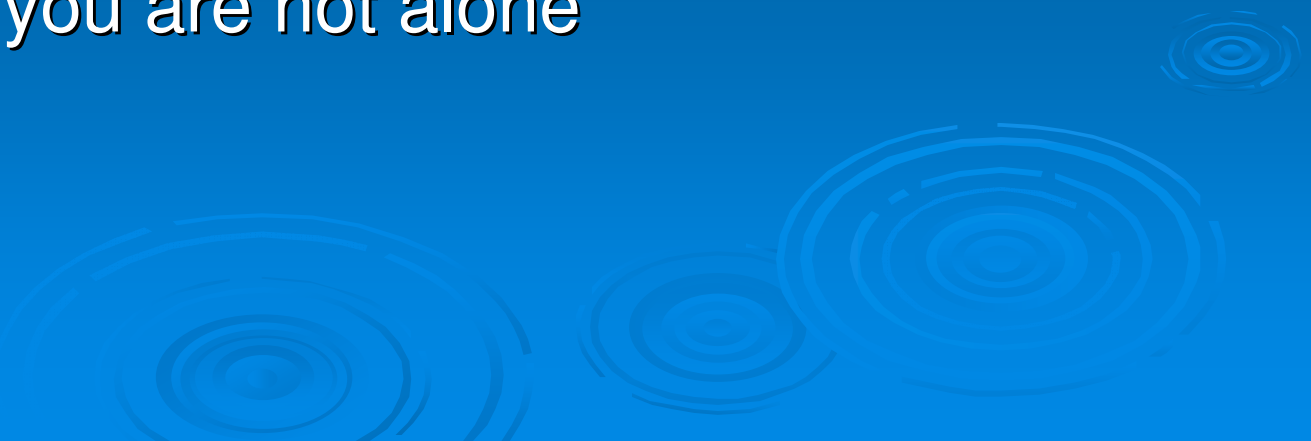
- How many people do we have willing to work and what are their time and energy constraints?

- You may think one personal story may be heart wrenching but it isn't enough, however, 100 families with the same type of story will make a big difference.



King family and the  
Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners

## Federal and State (continued)

- To be an effective advocate you need to:
  - Stay focused and assertive
  - See the issues as issues and not take them personally
  - Work for the common goal and acknowledge the contributions that others have made to the cause
  - Realize that you are not alone
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# Resources

Trina Orsher, Policy Director  
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
Mental Health Child, Adolescent and Family Branch

Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA)  
Children and Family Services

Communities Can: A National Coalition of Communities  
Leadership Academy  
Ellen Kagen, Project Director  
Vera Pina, Community Based Consultant

NAMI Greater Cleveland  
Terri Miller, Consumer & Family Support Coordinator

*Additional  
information:*

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