

Peer Parent Support: Evolution, Promises and Challenges of Implementation within a Wraparound Context

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Objectives

- Participants will review eras of peer parent support within the wraparound history
- Participants will list the five stages of the Parent Journey
- Participants will identify promises and challenges of implementing Peer Parent Support within a Wraparound context



4 Peer Support Applications



Parent Peer
Support

Children's
System



Youth Peer
Support and
Transition
Age Youth
Support

Children's/Adult
System



Adult Peer To
Peer Support

Adult System



Adult Family
Support

Adult System

Various Opportunities For Parents

Parent Peer Support

- **Lived Experience**
- Provides intentional Parent peer support with unrelenting focus on the parent/primary caregiver of the child
- Based on strategic self-disclosure related to parent experience
- Encourage and supports parents to achieve their own identified outcomes
- Communicates active acceptance in all interactions
- Partnered “with” rather than delivered to parents
- Suspends bias and blame
- Holds a relational stance of respect in all interactions with parent
- Links with others in collaborative problem solving

Parent Involvement

- **Lived Experience**
- Parents have access to the decision making process and actively participate at the practice and/or program level
- Parents and family members voice is listened to and heard, and are meaningful decision makers in their own Child & Family Teams
- Parents and family members have ownership of their plans and are committed to the outcome
- Parents and family members participate in program decisions
- Parents and family members as emerging leaders participate in meetings, committees and boards where decisions are made that influence mental health services at local and state level

Parent Leadership

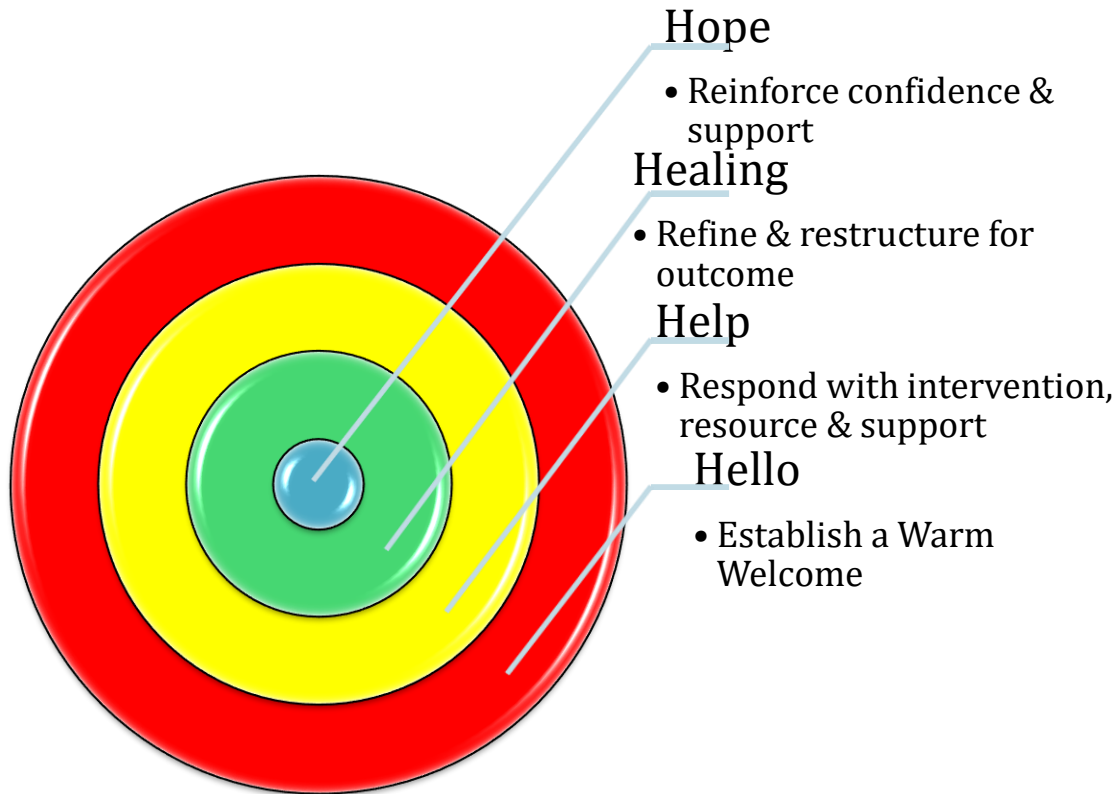
- **Lived Experience**
- Parents leverage their personal life story and expertise to influence decision making and example that induces a group to take action in accordance with the leader’s purpose
- This can occur at a practice/program, state, national and policy level, and is part of system transformation efforts
- Connected to the collective voice of other parents
- Parents and family members as leaders participate in meetings, committees and boards where decisions are made that influence mental health services at local and state level



What is Wraparound?

Wraparound is an ecologically based process and approach to care planning that builds on the collective action of a committed group of family, friends, community, professional, and cross-system supports mobilizing resources and talents from a variety of sources resulting in the creation of a plan of care that is the best fit between the family vision and story, team mission, strengths, needs, and strategies.

Stages of Wraparound From a Family's Experience



Enter Peer Parent Support



- **Core Components**
 - Connected compassion
 - Strategic self-disclosure
 - Connected disclosure reduces isolation, shame & self-blame
- **Unplanned integration**
 - Confusing Peer Parent Support with System of Care improvement
 - Confusing Peer Parent Support with Family Involvement
 - Confusing Peer Parent Support with Wraparound Implementation



History of Peer Support & Wraparound

- **1991/92 Integrated in one Wraparound Site**
 - As an afterthought in response to a resignation
 - One parent associated with the next one up to the 15 target parents
 - One lunch meeting
 - Approximately 10 hours per month of subcontracted time
- **1995-1999 Built into a System of Care Grant**
 - Parents hired and placed throughout the system
 - Migrated to Wraparound because it fit with world view & they could “get in the door”
 - Called Parent Partners focused on parents
- **2001 Statewide lawsuit requirement**
 - Included hiring parents & child & family team practice
 - Renamed as Family Support Partners
 - Focus on going to meetings & doing tasks
 - Heavy focus on youth care, peer parent support need is often lost
- **2010 Out from under the Wraparound umbrella**
 - Recognizing that peer parent support is different from Wraparound
 - Planting the field of care with more options
 - Support for support sake vs. maximizing WRAP participation
- **2014 Emergence of types of Peer Support**
 - Youth Peer Support & Peer Parent Support with specific targets
 - Recognize difference between peer parent support & Wraparound
 - Adult Family Support, Caregiver Support, Caregiver Peer Support



Peer Support for Parents

- Wraparound was designed to customize & blend intervention, support & community resource/access
- All family members are impacted by a child's behavioral health condition
- Parents raising children who are living with a diagnosis, have unique needs as they live with unusual stress
- Peer Parent Support is different than other things that may also be supportive



Current State of Peer Parent Support

Promising

- Multiple types & greater Acceptance
- Expanding funding opportunities targeted for peer parent support
- Growing recognition of intrinsic value of peer parent support
- Expanded workforce of parents with career ladders

Challenging

- Unique aspects about parents as secondary service participants
- Patchwork quilt of funding opportunities: loss of purpose
- Past implementation can limit independence
- Confusion about who: peer support vs family support

Unique Aspects of Peer Parent Support

Design

- Focused on the parent as person rather than parent as role
- Focused on the parent's experience rather than their child's story
- Communicates authentic acceptance even when you can't agree

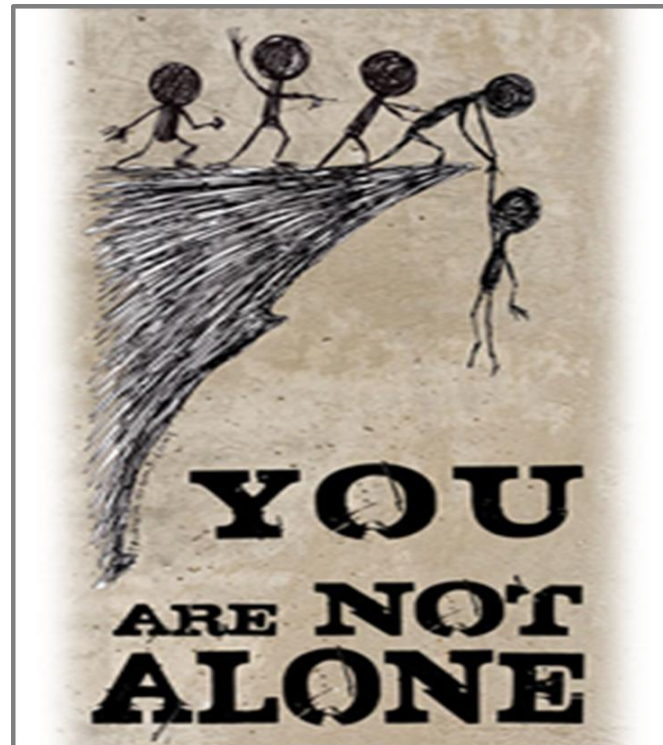
Challenge

- Housed in the children's system results in the parent being seen as caregiver rather than person
- Parent's experience is clouded or buried around concerns about the child
- Need to focus on getting the parent to behave a certain way rather than understanding their experience

Peer Support or Family Support ?

- Family support is everyone's business whether they are clinicians, parents, teachers, psychiatrists or any other type of helper
- Peer parent support is the work of parents with lived experience who are prepared to use their personal experience within their own family in helping other parents
- Everyone should be supportive of families but only those with lived experience who are prepared to use that lived experience as part of their job or career path can deliver peer parent support





Peer Parent Support & Wraparound

Some Challenges In Integration

- **Focus on family:** Parent perspective may get overlooked
- **Focus on support:** Service intervention may eclipse support need
- **Focus on result:** Time & push for outcome can cause parent to be asked to go along
- **Focus on integration:** Wraparound and Peer Parent Support are both complex; can get so busy that they forget to connect



A Way of Thinking About Peer Parent Support

- **Effective Peer Support for parents must be grounded in the parent's experience**
 - Focused on unique parent experience rather than a system framework
 - Recognize that a child's diagnosis has implications for a parent
- **Peer Parent Support can live anywhere in the system**
 - The point is to deliver support from a peer parent rather than being an extension of other models (wraparound, SOC, in-home etc.)
 - Working with a purpose rather than working harder
- **Peer Parent Support should have a purpose, process and point**
 - Know what you hope to accomplish
 - Know how to get there
 - Know why it will make a difference
- **Logic model is different than job requirements**
 - Each and every interaction should include presence of “meta-skill” versus discrete steps
 - Comprehensive skill acquisition: what, how, why



The Hero's Journey & Families

Families also follow the hero's journey

- Leave the ordinary world to enter services
- Finds a partner from the system who acts as a guide
- Endures life changing tests such as intake, assessment & other system processes
- Returns to a new normal with the insights necessary to live a meaningful life



The Parent Journey as the Hero's Voyage



Becoming
Defined by the
Situation



Recognize that
you're part of a
system



Growing
Realization that
you have to
advocate for
your family



Understanding
the meaning
behind your
experience



Commit to help
others through
your personal
experience



Patricia Miles

Some Ideas Behind The Parent Journey

- Focused solely on parent/caregiver experience as distinct from the young person
- Moves back and forth as circumstances come up
- Can be used as a way to think about the PPSP's lived experience
- Creates pathways understanding & delivering the right amount, type and activity of peer support to the parent
- Creates a space for other professionals to work as an ally to peer support partners



Parent Support & the Parent's Journey: Different Paths

- The parent is on their own journey regardless of the system intersection
- Wraparound has its own milestones and pathways
- Peer Parent Support runs the risk of getting caught up in either the parent or Wraparound journey





One Solution: The PEARLS Approach

- **Peer:** Establish *peer based relationships*
- **Encourage:** *Encourage* parents to grow as peers rather than as experts
- **Accept:** Able to communicate active *acceptance*
- **Respect:** Positively hold peers they are supporting with *respect*
- **Link:** *Link* with others in collaboration and problem solving
- **Suspend:** *Suspend* and interrupt bias and blame



The Parent Journey & PEARLS

Parent Journey

- Placeholder for understanding the parent's experience
 - Focus of peer parent support
 - Support for a peer based on the parent's experience right now
 - Builds a language for connection even as the PPSP and parent are in different places
- Placeholder for self-care
 - Unique needs of peers with lived experience in the workplace
 - Unique experience of parents who are living an experience rather than having "lived" an experience

PEARLS

- Focus on a simple frame for mindful delivery of peer parent support
- Allows peer parent support to stay focused regardless of tasks and requirements
- Creates a foundation for building understanding & connection in all settings
- Sets the stage for Peer Parent Support Partners to reliably incorporate the skills



Challenges in Peer Parent Support & Wraparound

- Building system wide knowledge & appreciation of both Wraparound & Peer Based support...especially for parents
- Get so busy doing Wraparound we overlook the power of Peer Parent Support
- Co-opting the role of support into other activities
- Turning Peer Parent Partners into the “parent whisperer”
- Getting caught up in the side trap: are you on Wraparound’s side or my side?
- Managing personal bias and disagreement is an ongoing feature



Benefits of Peer Parent Support & Wraparound

- Families who enter Wraparound are likely to have a large support need since the system has worked out so well in the past
- Increase parent insight, confidence, competence to empowerment
- Workforce options for Peer Parent Support Partners: they report finding a home in Wraparound
- Increases the capacity for parents & professionals to truly hear and understand each other
- Busting bias: Parents as part of Wraparound can associate with more appreciation about all parents



Next Steps & Design Questions for You

- **Are you prepared to unhitch Peer Parent Support from Wraparound?**
 - Can it be available without having to enter Wraparound?
 - Can it be available long after the Wraparound process is done?
- **How will you build a model of Peer Parent Support?**
 - Point, purpose and process
 - How will you fund it, who will it help, how will you train?
- **What types of training are you offering?**
 - To parents with lived experience who are expected to deliver peer support others (wraparound training is not enough)
 - To other Wraparound staff roles in order to build a strong understanding and strengthen alliance



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