

Wraparound Practice: Chapter 4b.1

The Application of the Ten Principles of the Wraparound Process to the Role of Family Partners on Wraparound Teams

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Fidelity to the wraparound process requires effort on the part of the team and its individual members to intentionally engage in activities that are consistent with all ten principles. This document briefly describes what the family partner does on wraparound teams to put each of the ten principles of the wraparound process into practice.

The family partner who is well grounded in the principles of wraparound will confidently perform his or her role and manage the tasks and unique situations that emerge on a daily basis. Family partners must receive wraparound training as well as training specific to their role.

The family partner is a formal member of the wraparound team whose role is to serve the family and help them engage and actively participate on the team and make informed decisions that drive the process. Family partners have a strong connection to the community and are very knowledgeable about resources, services, and supports for families. The family partner's personal experience is critical to earning the respect of families and establishing a trusting relationship that is valued by the family.

The family partner can be a mediator, facilitator, or bridge between families and agencies. Family partners ensure each family is heard and their individual needs are being addressed and met. The family partner should communicate and educate agency staff on wraparound principles, the importance of family voice and choice, and other key aspects of ensuring wraparound fidelity.

As the family moves through the stages of the wraparound process, it is anticipated that their sense of self-empowerment and their level of sophistication as advocates

will increase. Self-advocacy takes many forms along a continuum from getting one's own child and family services, to being a support to other families, to influencing the policies and procedures that govern the child-serving systems. The family partner is conscious of where each family is at any point in time. The family partner coaches and encourages families to find and develop their own voices and learn how to use it effectively in their own wraparound team and beyond.

Each family should have a choice of individuals to serve as their family partner—though this

is not the case in every community. As a general practice, the family partner should serve on the team only so long as the family needs their support to effectively speak for themselves. There may be some families who feel they do not need the support of a family partner once they have been introduced to the wraparound team or who may wish to facilitate their own team.

The rest of this document describes the family partner's role in supporting achievement of the ten principles of wraparound for the children, youth, and families with whom they work.-

Thanks to the people on the Family Partner Task Force of the National Wraparound Initiative for their hard work and dedication in helping to establish these ten principles.

Wraparound Principle	Family Partner's Role in Implementing the Principle
<p><i>1. Family voice and choice.</i> Family and youth/child perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences</p>	<p>Coaching, educating, supporting and encouraging family members to use their own voices to express their views clearly and to make informed choices are the very essence of the role of the family partner. The family partner actively ensures that the family's own voice drives the wraparound process and their wraparound plan. The family partner helps to create a safe environment in which families may express their needs and views or vent frustration. The family partner can help the family discover and learn ways to describe negative experiences and express their fears and anxieties to the team in ways that promote communication.</p> <p>The family partner makes a special effort to ensure the family's point of view—not the family partner's—is heard by the team. The family partner is sensitive to the fact that perspectives of individual family members may differ and that conflicts may need to be addressed by all parties to achieve the consensus necessary for the team process to move forward.</p> <p>The family partner has a responsibility to educate the other team members on the significance of family voice and choice and how their own practice and behavior can create an environment where families feel safe using their voices and expressing their choices.</p> <p>When a family member feels unwilling to talk about an issue, he or she may ask that the family partner (or someone else) act as a spokesperson. In such cases the family partner encourages the family member to find a way to express him- or herself before accepting responsibility of being a temporarily designated spokesperson. When acting as a spokesperson, the family partner invests as much time as is necessary to develop a complete understanding of the family's perspective. When family members specifically ask the family partner to speak on their behalf, the family partner always makes sure the family member is present and confirms what is communicated.</p>

Wraparound Principle	Family Partner’s Role in Implementing the Principle
<p>2. <i>Team based.</i> The wrap-around team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to them through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships</p>	<p>The family partner coaches the family through an ongoing process of discovery and inquiry about possible team members to make sure they are connecting with individuals or agencies who can meet their needs. As a result, the family is prepared to make informed choices about team membership and understands why some team members are mandated by systems working with the family.</p> <p>The family partner helps the family understand how to influence the building of their team. Family partners use their knowledge of the schools, communities, services, and neighborhoods to help the family identify friends, neighbors, relatives, providers, and others from their culture and community who could serve on their team. The family partner coaches the family through the process of deciding who they want to have on their wraparound team.</p> <p>The family partner helps the family understand why some team members are assigned by agencies without consulting them. The family partner helps the family recognize what each of these individuals could contribute as well as the advantages and possible challenges that might arise from their participation on the team.</p>

Wraparound Principle	Family Partner's Role in Implementing the Principle
<p>3. <i>Natural supports.</i> The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support.</p>	<p>The family partner helps families understand how natural supports can contribute to the overall success of their wraparound plan and helps the family identify natural supports they want to bring onto their team and incorporate into their wraparound plan. The family partner encourages the family to bring their natural supports to the wraparound process. However, they must also respect the family's choice to withhold information about natural supports if they so wish.</p> <p>The family partner helps the family to develop and discover natural supports already present in their lives, as well as opportunities to develop new supportive relationships in their community. The family partner describes the wealth of resources they have identified in the community (for example, sports teams, scouts, and religious groups) and helps the family see the possible benefits of involving some of these resources on the wraparound team, and the possible costs of not involving them.</p> <p>The family partner supports family members as a peer throughout the wraparound team process. The family partner gives them opportunities to become part of the larger circle of families where they can find support from other parents and caregivers with similar experiences who have faced similar challenges and overcome them.</p> <p>Family partners connect families to local family groups and organizations where, through participation in support groups, classes or other events, they have the opportunity to develop relationships with individuals who can serve as natural supports on a team or independently.</p> <p>Once the family has developed its own network of informal peer support they may feel they have the confidence to participate in the wraparound team without the support of a family partner. However, the family partner may remain a resource for the family because they are connected through the larger family network in the community and, at the family's request, could rejoin their team at any time.</p>

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<p>4. <i>Collaboration.</i> Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members’ perspectives, mandates, and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team member’s work towards meeting the team’s goals.</p>	<p>It is the family partner’s role to model, coach and encourage the process of collaboration. Having this sort of model will help families become empowered in the present and over time to work successfully with diverse individuals and providers.</p> <p>In addition, the family partner is a collaborative advocate, helping the family to understand the mandates and perspective of other members of the team. The family partner helps to make sure the individual family’s perspective is at the forefront of all team discussions by strategizing with the family members about how they can deliver their own messages clearly and with the desired impact.</p> <p>Seasoned family partners report that this is the principle that tests their skills most. There are two parts to this challenge. First, it requires keeping their own views in check, respecting the family’s culture, aligning themselves with the family, and using their own voice to support the family’s choices. Second, the family partner must also remain engaged in strategic and mutually respectful partnerships with the wraparound facilitator and other team members. The family partner helps ensure that family voice and choice is driving the wraparound team and plan as all team members work collaboratively.</p>

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<p>5. <i>Community-based.</i> The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible, and least restrictive settings possible; and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life</p>	<p>It is the family partner’s role to explain why the wraparound process focuses on community-based living and services for children and youth. The family partner helps the family understand the philosophy behind this principle and consider how it could be applied to their own situation. Regardless of their own views, family partners strive to understand the reasons behind the family’s placement preferences and helps the rest of the team understand what the family thinks is best for their child.</p> <p>The family partner informs the family about supports, services, and placements available in their community and helps them frame questions they might want to ask specific providers or agencies. The family partner helps families and their teams implement practical strategies for getting access to whatever it will take to successfully transition home or stay in the community. The family partner encourages thinking beyond the customary services and supports.</p> <p>The family partner helps the family clearly expresses the “why” behind their choices (including critical needs still to be addressed) to the rest of the team. The family partner also helps the family understand why others on the team might make a different recommendation and works towards blending the best from each team member’s perspective and expertise into the family’s plan.</p>

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<p>6. <i>Culturally competent.</i> 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.</p>	<p>Family partners recognize and value differences among families, ethnic and cultural groups, and communities. Delivering culturally competent services begins with discovering what is important to the family. Each family has its own unique culture, as do any groups with whom the family identifies. This influences how the family approaches the tasks of daily living (for example, food, dress, work, school, spiritual beliefs and practices). This cultural context can also direct how a family faces the challenges of raising children. Families work in different ways, have different resources at their disposal and achieve differing degrees of success at meeting the needs of all their members.</p> <p>Family partners draw on their own experiences of raising and loving a child with emotional or behavioral issues as they work with the family and its whole team to discover the family’s values, priorities, and preferences. Family partners can use their own experiences to illustrate cultural intelligence, to guide discussions about cultural needs, and to help the family and their team develop a relationship. The family partner makes sure that the culture of the family, as they define it, is respected and that the plan is grounded in the family’s ethnic and cultural background in the manner the family feels it is culturally relevant for them.</p> <p>Implementing this principle can be facilitated by assigning a family partner who comes from the same or a similar community as the family engaged in the wraparound team. A community’s wraparound initiative should recruit family partners who represent the diversity of families served through the wraparound effort, as well as individuals with varied kinds of parenting experience (such as single parents, gay or lesbian parents, grandparents, or adoptive parents).</p>

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<p>7. <i>Individualized</i>. To achieve the goals laid out in the wrap-around plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports, and services</p>	<p>The family partner helps the family ensure the plan is customized to meet their unique needs and is related to their values, history, and traditions. The family must feel that the plan is theirs and is tailored to their daily schedule, transportation requirements, and other specific conditions. The family partner helps the family form a better vision of what it would look like to be “doing okay.” The family can then identify their needs and goals to make sure the plan addresses the whole family not just a single individual. With coaching from the family partner, the family develops the skills and confidence to present these to the team and realize their vision.</p> <p>Family partners draw on their own experiences of negotiating services and supports for their own children to help teams understand how, regardless of system mandates, each child and family has different needs. Family partners can help the team understand how strategies used to meet one family's needs may need to be different from those effective for other families that have similar goals and needs.</p>

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<p>8. <i>Strengths based.</i> The wrap-around process and the wrap-around plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child and family, their community, and other team members.</p>	<p>Family partners, like all members of the team, should model a strengths-based approach in all their interactions with the family. Family partners spend time with families in their homes and communities; they can observe how each family copes with simple and complex tasks in daily life. Family partners use these observations to help families get in touch with their strengths, their children’s strengths, and the positive features of their communities. Family partners help families realize how their strengths (for example their resilience) may help address their needs.</p> <p>By sharing their own family’s journeys, family partners describe the process of discovering strengths, thereby showing other families how they can acquire this strength-based skill.</p> <p>A family’s view of itself can be compromised by systems that focus on risk factors and diagnosis or pathology. The family partner, by sharing his or her experience of discovering strengths and assets, helps the family develop new skills and competence and hope for a productive future. The family partner helps to coach other team members on always utilizing a strengths-based approach.</p>

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<p>9. <i>Persistence</i>. Despite challenges, the team persists in working toward the goals included in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer required.</p>	<p>Their own histories and determination in finding support and getting services for their own children and families deeply commit family partners to the principle of persistence. The family partner helps families find hope and encourages them to persist through difficulties to find solutions that work for them.</p> <p>The family partner works creatively with the family and their team to make sure that care does not cease when barriers and challenges are encountered. Using identified strengths, they vigilantly ensure that any undesired or unachieved outcomes are recognized by the team as a deficiency in the plan - and are not seen as the failure of the family or a particular team member. These strengths are used to promptly change in the plan when something is not working as anticipated. The family partner helps the team discover how the plan should be modified to ensure the family will get everything they need to succeed.</p> <p>Ideally the family partner should be committed to remaining with the family as long as (and no longer than) the family needs or desires. The family partner supports the family through self-advocacy. Phasing out the family partner should be a gradual process as families expand their role.</p>

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<p><i>10. Outcome based.</i> The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly.</p>	<p>The family partner ensures that indicators of success are not wholly driven by providers’ or systems’ goals for the family, but includes the family’s expression of what success will look like from their perspective. The family partner plays an active role in ensuring that the family’s vision of a positive future is the basis for indicators of success and that the team does indeed regularly and actively track progress toward these indicators and revises the wraparound plan when progress is not being achieved.</p> <p>In addition, a family’s success often is defined by the extent to which they have become self-empowered advocates. The family partner can play a key role in documenting the degree to which—and the specific ways in which—the family has moved along this path.</p> <p>Where wraparound teams are conducting assessments and collecting evaluation data, the family partner understands and is able to share this information with the family so that they can assess practices and progress and modify their plan to improve outcomes.</p>

Authors

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