

Family: The term “family” in family involvement is defined according to the meaning assigned by the individual receiving services. In this definition, “family” may refer to individuals who are related to the individual consumer through marriage, biology or adoption, affection, support, friendship, obligation, dependence or cooperation. Other meanings may be assigned to “family” in addition to those mentioned here. Alternatively, the individual may prefer to substitute another term (such as “support network”) when referencing the kinds of relationships that concern “family involvement.”

Peer-led Family Support and Education: Peer-led activities assist the family and/or individuals to understand mental illness and/or substance use, particularly from the perspectives of individuals and family members who have direct experiences with these concerns. Family members and/or individuals in recovery have been trained as facilitators to lead workshops, presentations or support groups. In peer-led activities, family support, education and problem-solving are approached through the combined wisdom of individuals and the entire group. Families and other natural supports are considered to be vital resources and sources of mutual support across the lifespan of individuals and families affected by mental illness, substance use or co-occurring disorders and are engaged in the recovery processes.

Family General Education. Family General Education offers families and individuals the opportunities to learn about mental illness or substance use or co-occurring disorders. Typically facilitators are professional staff members; peers and/or family consultants may be co-facilitators. Information is provided about behavioral health services, community services and resources that are available to families and individuals. The information can be provided in a variety of formats that may include video, testimonies, formal and informal discussion, and written materials and may be a combination of these formats.

Family Involvement and Psychoeducation. Family Involvement and Psychoeducation offers opportunities to families, natural supporters and individuals with mental illness, substance use or co-occurring disorder to be partners in the recovery process. Individuals, families and other supporters may obtain education about mental health and substance use problems and recovery processes, to develop coping strategies and other skills, to build mutual supports, and to problem-solve together with other families who have similar concerns. Family members are welcomed and seen as consultants and partners on the treatment team with the consent of the person receiving services.

Family Therapy (Note: not all agencies provide this service). Offered by a licensed professional, family therapy is a therapeutic intervention for families with complex needs. While there are several models of family therapy, each model helps families to be more effective in communication and problem-solving to promote overall family well-being.