

WATERBURY FAMILY INITIATIVE

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WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS PRESENTATION:

1. Get motivated to the importance of a family (cultural) initiative in your agency / community.
 2. Understand the important components that allow for a successful family program.
 3. Brainstorm together how we could enhance this kind of programming across our agencies.
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WHAT IS “FAMILY”?

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- Parents/children living together as a unit.
 - Group related by blood or marriage
 - Descendants of a common ancestor
 - A group united in criminal activity

- How should WE consider/define “family”?

Family can take many forms. Your client should define this for you. Clients may be living with parents, step-parents, relatives, foster families, adoptive families, or other “formal” or “informal” arrangements.

IMPORTANCE OF “BELONGING”

The “Family” Provides a Context for Recovery and moving forward in our lives.

- Hope (can give strength; guidance; encouragement)
- Sense of Agency (defines roles & purpose; fit-in)
- Self-determination (boundaries; limitations for self)
- Meaning & Purpose (morality; philosophy; compass)
- Awareness & Potentiality (exploration of world)

(Onken, Craig, Ridgway, Ralph, & Cook, 2007)

<https://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/center-for-mental-health-services-research>

IMPORTANT NOTE: COMPONENTS

Components of family initiatives can also be useful within specific programs (such as CSP) – but this slideshow shares what has worked for our Waterbury agency as a whole.

IS YOUR AGENCY READY??
LET'S GO!!!

FAMILY INITIATIVE – WATERBURY

1. FAMILY COMMITTEE
2. SUPPORT GROUPS
3. FAMILY NIGHTS

- There are three primary components that helped the Family Initiative in Waterbury succeed.



FAMILY COMMITTEE



- Enlist those who are compassionate about working with and supporting family members.
- Have 7 to 10 people (or more).
- Primarily plan for Family Nights and also greet and assist family members on those evenings.
- Endorse the Family Initiative components and welcome calls from (and in support of) family members.
- Create a Family Initiative brochure for your agency.
- Possibly create a quarterly newsletter 😊

SUPPORT GROUPS



- For family members only (Not family therapy)
- Open to the community regardless if connected to the agency.
- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. (3 PM to 4:15 PM)
- May want to consider evening hours instead if you have the resources. (Ask the family members...)
- Up to 10 total people. Keep it quaint, comfortable, and simple.
- Psycho-educational. Co-occurring topics. Safe place to share and feel supported.

SUPPORT GROUP

GOALS / PURPOSE

- **Promote family acceptance of mental health and addiction concerns**
- **Recognize the limits mental illness and/or substance use may impose on family members**
- **Develop realistic expectations of family members**
- **Lower guilt, anxiety, anger, depression, and isolation**
- **Let relatives and individuals know they are not alone**
- **Foster a collaborative spirit in coping with mental health concerns**
- **Explain pharmacological and psychological interventions**
- **Review components of individual's comprehensive treatment**
- **Help relatives reinforce an individual's continued involvement with treatment providers**
- **Assist family with recognizing warning signs of relapse and changes in persistent symptoms**
- **Facilitate family's ability with knowing how to respond to impending relapses by contacting the treatment team**
- **Assist family with understanding the importance of treatment compliance and recognizing medication side-effects**

FAMILY NIGHTS



- Family committee greets guests and serves food
- Every quarter (three months)
- Provide a dinner / no cost to families
- Flyers/invites - RSVP towards planning
- Topic of discussion for evening (guest speaker; topics chosen from the Family Group work; perhaps a film and discussion.)
- 5 PM – 7 PM on a given evening...
- Designed needs assessment/questionnaire

KEY POINTS:

1. Consider the importance of a family (cultural) initiative in your agency / community.
 2. The important components that allow for a successful family program.
 3. Considerations towards enhancing this kind of programming across our agencies statewide?
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QUESTION 1

What could your facility use from today's presentation?

QUESTION 2

What was most interesting / useful about our discussion today?

QUESTION 3

What is missing that might enhance our family initiatives in our facilities statewide?

FURTHER COMMENTS / DISCUSSION



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