



# Best Practices for Retaining Family Support Specialists (Family Partners)

## in BRIEF

*Briefs are provided as a best practice reference or topic example to support communities in developing the family partner role.*

### Introduction:

Family Support Specialists (Family Partners) bring a unique combination of lived experience, training and expertise, as well as community support and resource knowledge to an agency or organization. It is vital to the fidelity of the peer practice for agencies and organizations to be knowledgeable about, and understand:

1. The family support practice prior to recruitment and employment of Family Support Specialists (Family Partners),
2. Best practices for training Family Support Specialists (Family Partners), and,
3. Integral steps to sustain the investment in the Family Support Specialist (Family Partners).

This understanding and knowledge base will assist in building a strong foundation and infrastructure from which your agency or organization can benefit by achieving increased engagement with families, increased health care options and decreased costs.

### Organizational Preparation

- Prepare to include peers in team meetings and orient them to the culture
- Identify at least one peer 'champion' in the organization and plan an intentional connection with the Family Support Specialist (Family Partner)
- Understand Oregon's Administrative Rule on Traditional Health Worker (THW) standards, requirements and registry process
- Regularly discuss the value and scope of work of the Family Support Specialist among colleagues and leaders
- Arrange opportunities for the Family Support Specialist (Family Partner) to shadow an experienced Family Support Specialist (Family Partner).
- Plan to provide equitable resources such as business cards, cell phone, inclusion on website, brochures, etc.

### Maintaining Fidelity to the Family Support Practice

- Honor and support the lived experience of raising a child/youth with complex health needs that the Family Support Specialists (Family Partner) brings to their work. It is the basis of what makes their work so valuable.
- If Family Support Specialists (Family Partners) are hired internally, ensure that they are provided with regular Certified Peer Coaching and co-supervision with a peer supervisor and a clinical supervisor.
- Support ongoing professional development skills which apply to the practice of peer support.
- Understand the need for flexible work schedules, restrictions to wearing badges, use of acronyms and title credentials.
- Encourage Family Support Specialists (Family Partners) to use their lived experience in strategic daily work.
- Understand how boundaries differ in the peer practice when working in a clinical environment.



## Training, Education and Coaching Needs

- Peer Delivered Services Foundations for Family Support Specialists training should be completed within 3 months of hire date. This training is required to apply for professional certification by the State of Oregon as a Traditional Health Worker with a specialty of Family Support Specialist.
- Wraparound 101, Quality Wraparound, and Wraparound Foundations trainings should be completed within 3 months of hire date.
- Family Partner Orientation training should be completed within 3 months of hire date.
- Journey to Advocacy training should be completed within 3 months of hire date.
- Trauma Informed Care training should be completed within 3 months of hire date.
- Family Led Crisis and Safety Planning training should be completed within 3 months of hire date.
- Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid training should be completed within 6 months of hire date.
- Self-Care for those who work or live in Trauma Environments training should be completed within 6 months of hire date
- Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (Tool) Certification should be completed within 1 year of hire date.
- Collaborative Problem-Solving Tier 1 training should be completed within 1 year of hire date
- Certified Family Support Peer Coaching should be scheduled 2-4 hours per month.

## Retention and Sustainability

- Provide ongoing, regular Certified Peer Coaching
- Provide ongoing, regular Clinical and Peer Co- Supervision
- Support and invest in intentional connections to the peer practice thru regional, statewide or national family support practitioners and family run organizations.
- Involve Family Support Specialists (Family Partners) in group zoom meetings, regional coaching sessions, committee memberships, peer conferences, and continued education.
- Provide ongoing professional development using the Family Support Specialist Competencies Assessment Tool and consultation.
- Build an organizational culture of equality and value for all roles.
- Maintain equitable logistical support such as company cell phone, business cards, office space, desk, computer, lock box, file cabinets, visibility on organizational websites.

## Resources:

- *Oregon Health Authority Division 180 on Traditional Health Workers; 410-180-0305 (11) (d), 410-180-3010 (1), 410-180-3012 (1), 410-180-3025 (1), 410-180-0340 (1) (2) (3)*
- *Family Support Specialist Competency Descriptions – Oregon Family Support Network*
- *The Application of the Ten Principles of the Wraparound Process to the Role of Family Partners on Wraparound Teams – National Wraparound Initiative*
- *A Dozen Mistakes in Using Family Partners in Wraparound – National Wraparound Initiative*
- *Wraparound Best Practices Guide 1.0- State of Oregon*