

WRAPAROUND PARENT PARTNER WEBINAR TRAININGS

BACKGROUND

Below is some background information on the development of the *Parent Partner Role Description* and the *Parent Partner Fidelity Tool* by Parents Anonymous Inc. and the California Department of Social Services in collaboration with the Wraparound Parent Partner Outcomes Work Group. Two Webinar Trainings were offered to Wraparound Administrators/Coordinators, direct service staff and Parent Partners to assist them in utilizing these tools to enhance parent partner practices within their programs.

Introduction

Wraparound has become a very important approach to family strengthening. Much of its effectiveness is due to the Team approach to creating solutions. In addition to a Facilitator, Parent/Caregiver, other key family members and service providers, the California Wraparound Team often includes a *Parent Partner*—a parent who has had success in the child welfare, mental health, and/or probation systems and, ideally, has successfully completed a Wraparound program and can provide peer support and guidance to others involved in the Wraparound process.

Although the Wraparound approach has been found effective in improving family functioning, especially when fidelity to the model has been demonstrated, the specific role and effect of the Parent Partner has not been previously clearly defined or measured. With this in mind, in 2006, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Protection and Family Support Branch, Integrated Services Unit, began collaborating with Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. to investigate the role of the Parent Partner. Because Wraparound is a family-driven, team-based process for planning and implementing services, the role of the Parent Partner in helping families express their needs seemed crucial to the Team's success in achieving family improvement. Studies have shown that high fidelity in Wraparound is related to appropriate levels of training, coaching and the consistent availability of Parent Partners and that practices need to be implemented with model adherence (fidelity) in order to replicate positive outcomes reported in the literature. However, the Wraparound fidelity tools described in the literature do not have a specific focus on the Parent Partner.

Therefore, CDSS and Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. have developed a clear *Role Description* for the Parent Partner and a *Fidelity Tool* to help identify training and support needs. Our ultimate goal is to build evidence to demonstrate the value of the Parent Partner in Wraparound, fidelity to the model, and better outcomes for families.

Development of the *Parent Partner Role Description*

When Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. first began working on this project with the CDSS, we established a shared leadership[®] Wraparound Work Group comprised of Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. staff, CDSS staff, and state, county and local-level Wraparound experts, including parents serving as Parent Partners. The Work Group developed a survey to assess the status of Parent Partners in California Wraparound Programs. To maximize the perspectives represented in the data, separate but similar versions of the survey were distributed online for Wraparound County Coordinators/Administrators, Program Staff and Parent Partners (in English and Spanish). The primary focus of the survey was identification of the role functions, responsibilities, training and support needs of Wraparound Parent Partners in programs across the state. Two hundred and eleven surveys were submitted describing Wraparound programs in 23 California counties; 97

were from Parent Partners, 87 from Program Staff and 32 from Administrators/Coordinators (see Levine & Polinsky 2007, for a full report on the findings). A statewide Summit was held in June 2007 to discuss the survey findings and set the stage for Wraparound county administrators, program staff and Parent Partners to continue working in shared leadership[®] to examine and evaluate the Parent Partner role in California Wraparound Programs. With regard to terminology, the survey responses revealed that although Parent Partners had different names in different programs, including Parent Advocate and Family Partner, the predominant name was “Parent Partner” and it was decided that this title would be used in all future work. The findings also revealed that Parent Partners were viewed quite differently across Wraparound programs and that some type of standardized role description would be necessary before a fidelity tool could be developed. Some other key survey findings included the following:

- ✓ On average, Parent Partners stayed in their positions for about 4 years
- ✓ Most Parent Partners were regular, full-time employees with benefits
- ✓ Average Parent Partner wage was \$14.50/hour
- ✓ Parent Partner roles and activities varied across programs
- ✓ In general, Parent Partners needed additional training, supervision, and supports
- ✓ A significant problem area for Parent Partners was boundary and limit-setting with families.
- ✓ In general, Parent Partners were respected and valued, but staff attitudes were still a concern

Recommendations from the Summit included establishing an Outcomes Work Group to guide the development of a role description and a fidelity tool. Seventeen California Wraparound experts, including staff and Parent Partners with linkages to the National Wraparound Initiative, volunteered to serve on the Outcomes Work Group with Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. and CDSS. The Outcomes Work Group completed an extensive review of the survey findings, descriptions of Parent Partner roles from Wraparound programs and Parent Partner Wraparound Training Curricula, and California Wraparound Standards. A *Wraparound Parent Partner Role Description* was created and finalized in September 2008 with the following components: purpose, qualifications, essential functions of Parent Partners for each Wraparound phase, considerations for employment and maximizing the Parent Partner role, and a glossary of terms.

Development of the *Parent Partner Fidelity Tool*

Following the development of the *Parent Partner Role Description*, the Outcomes Work Group created the *Parent Partner Fidelity Tool* (PPFT) to measure the degree to which Parent Partners adhered to the activities outlined in the Role Description. This 28-item tool was designed to capture Parent Partner activities related to the four Wraparound phases designated by the National Wraparound Initiative: *Engagement, Planning, Implementation, and Transition*. Similar versions of the PPFT were developed for completion by Wraparound Facilitators, Parent Partners and Parents/Caregivers to provide multiple perspectives on the Parent Partner’s work on the Team. Pilot testing on the PPFT was conducted with 14 California Wraparound programs from February through June 2009. Analyses of 585 responses showed high reliability and validity, demonstrating that the PPFT is a psychometrically sound tool for measuring the fidelity of Parent Partners in performing their work, and for identifying training and support needs. The Parent Partner Fidelity Tool is now ready for use by Wraparound providers.

References and Resources

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