

Peer Parent Support & Wraparound: Managing the Difference

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Peer Parent Support & Wraparound

- **Wraparound Roots**
 - Developed in 70s, Early pilots in 80s
 - Rapid expansion 90s and 2000s
- **System of Care Projects**
 - Family Involvement often meant hired family partners
 - Wraparound begins to be integrated into SOC sites
- **Parent Partners in Wraparound**
 - Emerged in Mid-90s as contracted workers
 - Heavy focus on resource and heavy focus on process
 - Less emphasis on peer support
 - More generic applications: family support versus specific peer support

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Current State of Peer Support

- **Peer Support Booming**
 - Peer Parent Support discrete Medicaid billable service in many states
 - Peer Youth Support emerging
 - Youth or Used to Be Youth or Supportive Older People?
 - Various types of peer support
 - Growing realization that peer support is valuable rather than a means to an end
- **Wraparound**
 - Peer Support often seen as expected component
 - **High Commitment, Not so Much Clarity**
 - Confusion about peer
 - Confusion about support
 - Confusion about family involvement

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What is Peer Support?

- "A system of giving & receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement on what is helpful" and
- "Offered or provided by persons sharing a similar...condition to bring about a desired social or personal change"
 - Solomon in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal

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Key Assumptions

- Peer Support is a critical component of a person's journey towards balance or recovery
- Peer Support can be offered in a variety of settings
 - Wraparound, Residential, Clinical, In-Home, Office based
- If well delivered, Peer Support can make existing services work better for the person being supported
- But effective peer support should provide Direct Benefits
 - To the Person Being supported
 - Their family
 - Service providers

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Current Challenges

- Issues of Who
 - Supportive, Partnership based people without lived experience
- Issues of what
 - Peer Support new efforts at definition rather than personality driven
- Issues of Host Environment
 - Existing practice models
 - System Culture
 - Administrative operations

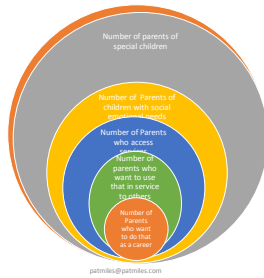
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Current State

- National Wraparound Initiative
 - Statement about qualifications for being a Parent Partner
 - Must be the biological or adoptive parent –or kin or other “forever” person in the parent role – who has been the primary caregiver of a child with emotional or behavioral challenges.
 - Must have lived experience navigating the Mental/Behavioral Health, Child Welfare, or Juvenile Justice system with their child.
 - Must be willing to use their own lived experiences to provide hope and peer support to other families experiencing similar challenges.
 - Must be committed to ensuring that other parents have a voice in their child’s care and are active participants in the wraparound process.
 - Must be able to engage and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds.
 - Must be able to maintain a non-judgmental attitude towards both families and professionals

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Where Do You Find a Parent Partner?



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Peer Parent Partners & Wraparound

- Lived Experience
 - Means first hand direct experience seeking and receiving services for a child you have raised in a permanent relationship
- Direct system involvement
 - Some sites have multiple systems involvements, others have less
- Willingness to disclose
 - Ability to share personal experiences as a peer rather than a role model
 - Ability to navigate disclosure with family members.

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Who Can Do Peer Parent Support?

- A parent with lived experience seeking and/or receiving services on behalf of their child
- An individual who can connect with and relate to another parent's experience based on their own personal experience
- A person who is committed to providing support and connection rather than service and correction
- Someone who is able to manage their own response and artfully and authentically build partnerships with others

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What Do Peer Parent Partners Do?

- Why hire parents in wraparound?
 - Different perspective to system operations
 - Personal experiences
 - Build bridges across all players
 - Create avenues for support
 - Creates a context for making meaning
 - Increases system empathy
- Food for Thought
 - The parent partner does not replace a skilled professional (not either/or)
 - The parent partner doesn't have to be paired with a professional
 - Both parties have an important but different role to play in helping family members find healing

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Wrong Way Assumptions

- Resource Access
 - Access to "something" can be helpful but in a peer relationship the conversation on the way to access is most important
- Educators, Mentors
 - The role of the peer is to support rather than educate; supportive information is one thing, instruction is another
- Correctors
 - Talking with "like kind" is one way to connection but the peer relationship is essentially more about listening and less about telling



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Peer Parent Support & Wraparound Discussion: True or False?

- Peer Parent Support in Wraparound delivery should lead to:
 - Quicker Engagement in the Wraparound process
 - Increased participation of friends and outside of household family members
 - Increased "fit" between need and response
 - Authentic family driven or determination in the process itself
 - Improved outcomes post Wraparound
 - Increased likelihood that the process will be adapted to cultural attributes of the family

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The Journey to Recover Self

- First, see through our own eyes rather than the eyes of others
- Second, telling what seemed to be shameful secrets only to find out that it is neither shameful or secret
- Third, giving names to that which has been nameless
- Fourth, bonding with others who share similar experience and
- Finally, achieving empowerment

Gloria Steinem

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The Parent's Journey



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Wraparound, Peer Parent Support & the Parent's Journey: Different paths

- The Parent is on their own journey regardless of the system intersection
- Wraparound has it's own milestones and pathways
- Peer Parent Support runs the risk of getting caught up in either the parent or wraparound journey



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Core Competencies of Peer Parent Support Partners

- Establish **peer based relationships**
- **Encourage** parents to grow as peers rather than as experts
- Able to communicate active **acceptance**
- Positively hold peers they are supporting with **respect**
- **Link** with others in collaboration and problem solving
- **Suspend** and Interrupt bias and blame

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Special Considerations for Supervising Parent Partners

- It is personal
 - Parent parents are on their own journey
 - Unique issues for managing the workforce
- **Boundaries versus barriers**
 - Recognize the difference between peer support & professional service
- **Organizational supports**
 - Access to information, access to professional growth, access to peers
- **Home & Work Balance**
 - Balance accountability with accommodation
 - Too much accommodation = irrelevance
 - Too little accommodation = resentment
- **Integration & Separation**
 - Other staff may experience this role as invasion
 - In an effort to belong Parent Partners may become over assimilated

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Some Unique Implementation Challenges with Peer Support and Wraparound

- **Team meeting or time between meetings**
 - Does peer support happen best in team meetings or between meetings?
 - Can relying on peer support cause "sloppy" Wraparound practice?
- **Competing Models**
 - Support Role
 - Philosophy
- **Difference in perception**
 - Facilitators can treat peers as "one of the family" and avoid understanding their perspective...conflict ensues
 - Family focus versus person focus
- **Debate about wraparound execution**
 - Peers relate & care about Wraparound; facilitators may not implement they way peers think it should go
 - Peers can take over facilitator roles and vice versa

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Where Does Peer Parent Support Happen?

- **As part of ongoing services or systems**
 - Mental Health Agencies
 - Family Support Organizations
 - Schools
 - Child Welfare
 - Juvenile Justice
- **In communities**
 - Where families live, work and connect
- **In homes**
 - Where families reside
- **Everywhere**

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Peer Support or Family Support?
 Family support is everyone's business whether they are clinicians, parents, teachers, psychiatrists or any other type of helper. Peer Support is the work of Peers with lived experience who are prepared to use their personal experience within their own family in helping other parents. Everyone should be supportive of families but only those with lived experience who are prepared to use that lived experience as part of their job or career path can deliver Peer Parent Support.

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