

 <p style="text-align: center;">County of Sacramento Department of Health Services Division of Behavioral Health Services Policy and Procedure</p>	Policy Issuer (Unit/Program)	Mental Health Services
	Policy Number	02-20
	Effective Date	07-09-09
	Revision Date	01-29-19
Title: Family Advocate/Partner		Functional Area: Contract Administration
<p>Approved By: <i>Signed version available upon request</i></p> <p>Melissa Jacobs, LCSW Acting Deputy Director, Division of Behavioral Health Services</p>		

Background/Context:

Parents/Caregivers who have had experience navigating the public mental health systems on behalf of a child have a unique and valuable perspective, which can inform services and improve systems of care.

Having a Family Advocate/Partner as part of the leadership team ensures parent/caregiver voice in the system of care which will improve the quality of services.

Definitions:

- **Family Advocate/Partner (FA/P):** A person who has had direct life experience as a parent or caregiver of a child receiving, or having previously received, services within the public systems including the mental health system, alcohol and drug services, child welfare, and/or juvenile justice system.
- **Lead Family Advocate/Partner:** Person who meets the definition of FA/P above and is a member of the Contractor’s leadership team representing the family voice in program planning and administration at the executive level, provides advocacy and supportive services to families as part of the treatment team, and may provide consultation to additional FA/Ps. In contract agencies with only one FA/P, that FA/P will be a member of the leadership team to represent the family voice. If there is only one Family Advocate/Partner, they are presumed to be the Lead Family Advocate/Partner.

Purpose:

To define and outline the role and scope of a lead and additional Family Advocates/Partners.

Details:

1. Each Contractor serving families will provide access to a FA/P.

2. Each Contractor will be required to have the FA/P attend the following trainings within twelve (12) months from hire date (training completed prior to hire date counts as meeting requirement):
 - a. Sacramento County Cultural Competency and Diversity Training
 - b. Mental Health First Aid or Youth Mental Health First Aid
 - c. Trauma Informed Care
 - d. Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)
 - e. Training related to Peer Certification (as it becomes available)
 - f. Other relevant trainings as appropriate
3. As a part of the treatment team, the FA/P shall:
 - a. Provide assistance to families including: peer support and mentoring (in person/telephone). They inform, educate, and support families receiving behavioral health services, guiding families to obtain appropriate resources, and build natural supports.
 - b. Provide support to families including: in-home support, accompanying youth and parents to meetings, such as Individual Education Plans (IEP), providing community resource information, advocating for services, informing clients about recovery and services, training, experiential sharing, relationship building, group facilitation, skills building/mentoring/goal setting, socialization/self-esteem building, team communication and assistance in overcoming barriers to seeking services due to racial, ethnic, cultural or language barriers.
 - c. Have knowledge about mental health and substance use challenges, and be prepared to make referrals for services to individuals.
 - d. Work within their scope of practice as it pertains to advocacy, education, navigation, referrals, and support without providing clinical, medical, and/or legal advice.
4. The FA/P will not work at the same agency where they had previously received mental health services within two (2) years from their date of discharge.
5. FA/P will not receive services from an agency where they are currently employed.

The Lead FA/P shall:

1. Attend Contractor Executive Leadership meetings.
2. Provide input to Contractor regarding policies and procedures that impact program planning and service delivery. FA/P shall ensure that Contractor policies and procedures are family-friendly, culturally-competent, stigma-free, and equitable at all levels.
3. Participate in interviews for hiring employees.
4. Provide training regarding the family voice and family driven services to all staff.
5. Provide support and technical assistance to other Family Advocate/Partners within the contract agency.
6. Attend Sacramento County's Behavioral Health Services Provider Meetings.
7. Not carry a caseload or have a billing requirement beyond the executed staffing detail, and must document services provided.
8. Continue to provide additional Family Partner/Advocate duties as outlined below.

All FA/Ps shall:

1. Participate on treatment teams as needed (e.g. intake, treatment planning, consultation, decision making, additional support, etc.), helping the family voice be heard.
2. Limit scope of practice to advocacy, education, referrals, resources, and support without providing clinical, medical or legal advice.
3. Attend Family Advocate/Partner Committee, which includes advocates from all contract agencies.
4. Participate in other County advisory meetings as requested and available. Examples include: Mental Health Services Act planning meetings and Division focus groups.
5. Provide direct services to families and may co-facilitate support groups, training/workshops, or self-help activities for the families being served.
6. Not provide clerical, reception, or solely transportation services during scheduled FA/P designated hours.
7. Document services provided in electronic health record and claim reimbursable services as appropriate.

Reference(s)/Attachments: N/A

Related Policies:

[PP-BHS-MH-02-21-Youth-Advocate](#)

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