Engagement of Parents as Agents of Healing

Adoption Competent Mental Health · https://bridges4mentalhealth.org/hub/adoption-competence/engagement-of-parents-as-agents-of-healing/

Engagement of Parents as **Agents of Healing**

The Role of Family Involvement

Child mental health policy and practice has increasingly embraced family-driven practice which promotes family involvement in all aspects of planning and service delivery.

Evidence for positive outcomes related to family involvement is mounting in mental health treatment for foster care.

"Parental support is crucial in creating a conducive healing environment. When parents are engaged in the therapeutic process, children often feel more secure and valued. Studies have shown a direct correlation between parental involvement and positive therapy outcomes." *

**The Importance of Parent Involvement in Child Therapy, Kids First, Oct 28, 2024*

There has been a shift to understanding the importance of relationships between the child and family, family functioning, and family involvement in healing, especially for long-term mental health goals. Adoption competent mental health services focus on the development of adoptive parenting competencies which are foundational to "parents as agents of healing." Several elements are critical to engage parents and build their competencies:

1. **The assessment must examine parent functioning and relationship/ attachment.**
2. **Assessment feedback must be provided to the parents - it shapes their understanding of the presenting problems, increases their motivation for/engagement in treatment, increases receptiveness to psychoeducation, re-framing of child behavior in light of greater understanding, and increase in use of more appropriate therapeutic parenting strategies.**

You can review all of the adoptive parent competencies on the National Center Knowledge Hub.

The Basics – Make It Clear	Help Designate Who Will Be Involved	Think About the Type of Family Involvement You Want
What are your: • Intentions • Expectations • Wishes • Opportunities • Challenges	**Foster/Bio Family Members** • Foster Child • Parents • Aunts, Uncles • Siblings • Others	• **Contact:** Direct or indirect with service providers and caseworkers • **Communication:** Visits, calls • **Planning:** Amount of input • Team Participation

Help Define A Treatment Plan*

Different disorders need different therapeutic approaches and interventions. Goals and objectives should address each child's specific symptoms and challenges.

A personalized treatment plan considers the unique goals, experiences, and circumstances of each child.

Mental health treatment plan goals and objectives should provide:

- Structure
- Improved communication
- Recognition of accomplishments
- Progress tracking
- Increased motivation

Mental health goals and objectives provide hope. And, HOPE is a crucial part of any mental health journey.

Participate in Creating a Roadmap

Once you and the team have defined the goals and objectives for WHAT is needed, it's time to figure out the HOW. Roadmaps always make the journey more manageable!

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The child and family should help define and pursue their mental health treatment plan goals and objectives creating a safe and supportive environment.

As you work to build your roadmap take into consideration feelings, self-perceptions, and desires for the mental health and well-being of yourself, your family, and the child in your care.

Using this process helps create a comprehensive, meaningful, personally relevant plan which increases the likelihood of positive outcomes.

** Goal planning in mental health service delivery: A systematic integrative review (NIH): https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9807176/*

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