

# Wraparound Parent Partner Role Description

## **JOB TITLE: Parent Partner**

### **PURPOSE OF THE POSITION:**

The purpose of this position is to provide active, hands-on peer support to parents/caregivers of youth receiving services. Effective peer support should be friendly, helpful, accessible and flexible. Peer support may be delivered in individual or group settings at the agency, in family homes or in community environments. The role of the Parent Partner is to provide peer support but also to work collaboratively to support systems change by increasing family involvement and decreasing unintentional, bias about parents.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Must be the biological, adoptive, kin parent, or non-related family member of a youth with emotional or behavioral challenges or has had systems experience with their child in a child serving system ((i.e. mental health, child welfare, probation and special education).
- Must have direct experiences with child serving systems (i.e. mental health, child welfare, probation and special education).
- It is optimal for the Parent Partner to have experienced the level of care with their youth equivalent to program assignment.
- Must have life experience as the parent of a youth with emotional or behavioral challenges. Education in the area of social services is optimal but not necessary..
- Demonstrates an ability to maintain a non-judgmental attitude towards families.

### **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE ROLE OF THE PARENT PARTNER:**

#### **I. Engagement Phase Core Skills**

1. Decide collaboratively with the facilitator details about the initial engagement meeting with the family.
2. Introduce yourself as a peer who is the parent of a child with emotional or behavioral challenges and explain the role of the Parent Partner.
3. Encourage the family to share their own story including their culture, beliefs, and situation.
4. Consider the family's story to identify family strengths, possible team members, and what parts of the Parent Partner's story would be helpful for the family to hear.
5. Effectively share your own story in a way which builds connection, confidence, and hope for the family relevant to the family's culture, beliefs and situation.
6. Participate collaboratively in identifying potential team members and what might motivate them to participate in the team process.

7. Explore the parent's situation regarding the need for rest, relief, and safety and work collaboratively with the facilitator to develop and support stabilization.
8. Work collaboratively with the family and facilitator to determine potential team members, both formal and informal, and decide who will invite them.
9. Decide with facilitator who will contact potential team members to hear their perspectives on family strengths and needs.
10. Secure agreement with family about the attendance of team members at the first child and family team meeting.

## **II. Planning Phase Core Skills**

1. Explain the parent's perspective, culture, and beliefs in a way that increases understanding by others while decreasing differences and highlighting similarities.
2. Check with team members to ensure they understand the parent's perspective and reassure others that having differences is acceptable.
3. Periodically facilitating the Wraparound process, as appropriate, including presenting and explaining the list of strengths prepared prior to the meeting and asking the team to identify additional strengths during the meeting.
4. Assess the level of support that is needed by the parent based on the families support network, their ability to involve their support network, and the ability of the parent to be heard by others.
5. Meet with the family regularly and consistently in order to encourage and support an understanding of their vision for the future.
6. Work with the parent to develop plans/strategies of how the Parent Partner can support the parent during meetings to ensure the parent's culture, beliefs, experience, voice and choice are heard by the team and are incorporated into the Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care.
7. Share information with other wraparound team members about the parent's perspective, culture, and beliefs including how the parent experiences being heard by the team.
8. Participate with the facilitator and the family in planning and developing a family team meeting agenda that includes timelines.
9. Assist the team in recognizing and acknowledging the family's lived experience, culture, and beliefs to build agreement for a common team vision statement.

10. Assist the team to reach agreement about underlying unmet needs that may be driving the situation in the family. Clarify unmet needs versus service provision.
11. Actively participate as needed, by speaking up and through actions, to support the family's perspective during the family team meeting.
12. Assist the team during brainstorming with identifying additional needs and strengths.
13. Participate with the team in brainstorming a wide range of interventions to prioritize needs, reminding team members of potential family strengths that will match interventions.
14. Volunteer for tasks if the Parent Partner's strengths match the intervention and encourage all team members to do the same. Document the action into the written Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care.
15. Actively participate with the family and other team members in the development of the initial Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care.
16. Assist the team in making sure that the family's culture, beliefs, voice and choice is reflected in the final Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care.

### **III. Implementation Phase Core Skills**

1. Provide individualized, peer to peer support to parents.
2. Attend and participate in all Child and Family Team meetings.
3. Develop plans/strategies with family to ensure their concerns are heard and understood.
4. Communicate on a regular basis with families, according to their identified needs.
5. Support, respond, and/or implement proactive responses to families in crisis, both during and after business hours as designated in the safety/crisis plan.
6. Connect the family with identified community resources. Assist in introducing and engaging the family with the community resource, ensuring they can access the service after transition.
7. Provide direct interventions as specified in the Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care.
8. Maintain direct communication with the parent between team meetings on the effectiveness of the interventions.
9. Develop communication strategies with the family to ensure their perspective is being heard.

10. Communicate information about the effectiveness of the interventions/process related to the Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care with the facilitator for inclusion on team meeting agendas.
11. Work with parents and other team members to continue to identify unmet needs that the team has agreed to address.
12. Recognize, celebrate and document team strengths and successes collaboratively with the team.

#### **IV. Transition Phase Core Skills**

1. Help introduce the transition phase of Wraparound and the completion of the Wraparound process to the family and team members.
2. Discuss the transition planning phase with the family related to their culture and beliefs, their mission statement and their identified needs.
3. Practice implementation and rehearse crisis responses with the family as identified in the Child and Family Team Plan or Plan of Care.
4. Continue to assist the family in accessing needed resources/supports utilizing the family's culture and beliefs and each team member's individual strengths ensuring that the family is engaged with new resources.
5. Assist the facilitator in preparing the transition phase of the Wraparound process by ensuring the family's culture; beliefs, voice and choice are evident in the process.
6. Celebrate the family accomplishments with a Transition/Family Achievement Portfolio and event that highlights their progress always considering the family's culture.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

- The qualifications for a Parent Partner must be deliberated carefully. The value of the role as one of peer to peer support should guide all decisions when hiring Parent Partners. The importance of hands on, real time experience with a child serving systems is imperative. A parent of a child with an emotional or behavioral challenge is one qualification but also a parent who had their child/children involved in child welfare could yet be another qualifier (even without a mental health diagnosis). The key is the parent/caregiver has lived the experience, managed to navigate the system, and been directly affected by services with their child. This might be a biological or adoptive, parent, a kin parent (grandparent), or even a non-related family member such as a long term foster parent.
- When a Parent Partner is employed by an agency providing services to their child, sensitivity to the Parent Partner's confidentiality must be a priority. The child's records should be accessible to their assigned Team (need to know) and HIPPA requirements must be followed to respect the child's and Parent Partner's privacy.
- Many Wraparound programs have made an effort to define the different and distinct roles of the facilitator and Parent Partner. It should be noted the role of the facilitator

is to remain neutral while the Parent Partner role is to ensure family voice and provide peer support. When it is necessary for a Parent Partner to facilitate a Child and Family team meeting, it should be announced that the Parent Partner is stepping out of their role temporarily and peer support to the parent may be suspended during that time.

- Care should be taken to ensure Parent Partners are not utilized as merely an extra pair of helping hands and that their role not take on the semblance of the gofer/assistant less the uniqueness of their peer support role be lost. This would apply also in the case of translating and transporting.
- There is a tendency to stay “in the moment” as teams try to assist families and youth. This results in teams that are not able to make progress. The Parent Partner should remind others about the team vision and that it should be future oriented.
- The Parent Partner is often the most appropriate person to present the family strengths at the Child and Family Team meeting because of their unique relationship with the family.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Child and Family Team	A group of people – chosen with the family and connected to them through natural, community, and formal support relationships – who develop and implement the family’s plan, address unmet needs, and work toward the family’s vision.
Child and Family Team Plan (Also known as Plan of Care)	A dynamic document that describes the family, the team, and the work to be undertaken to meet the family’s needs and achieve the family’s long-term vision. Since families are constantly changing, the plan should always be updated to reflect changes in strengths, resources, needs, or goals. Also called <i>individualized plan</i> , <i>integrated plan</i> , and <i>Wraparound plan</i> .
Communication Strategies	A highly developed strategy to communicate meaning.
Community	<i>Community</i> means the neighborhood, city, town, village, or rural area where the child/family chooses to live. We use the broader term <i>community</i> rather than city or town, because families have different perspectives of what their communities include. Community may also refer to the network of social supports upon which the family relies.
Culture and Beliefs	<p>“The vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies and practices peculiar to a particular group of people which provides them with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality”- Dr. Wade Nobles</p> <p>The state of being capable of functioning effectively in the context of cultural differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Awareness and acceptance of difference</li> <li>➤ An awareness of one’s own cultural values</li> <li>➤ Understanding the dynamics of difference</li> <li>➤ Development of cultural knowledge: Diverse cultural values, beliefs, and practices.</li> </ul> <p>Ability to adapt and implement practice skills to fit the cultural context of the client being served.</p>
Emotional and Behavioral Challenges	Emotional or behavioral factors that interfere with day to day functioning of a child in home, school, or community.
Engagement Phase	During this phase, the groundwork for trust and shared vision among the family and Wraparound team members is established, so people are prepared to come to meetings and collaborate. During this phase, the tone is set for teamwork and team interactions that are consistent with the Wraparound principles, particularly through the initial conversations about strengths, needs, and culture. In addition, this phase provides an opportunity to begin to shift the family's orientation to one in which they understand they are an integral part of the process and their preferences are prioritized. The activities of this phase should be completed relatively quickly (within 1-2 weeks if possible), so that the team can begin meeting and establish ownership of the process as quickly as possible. (NWI)
Family Perspective	A family’s understanding, values, culture or belief about a situation.

TERM	DEFINITION
Family Voice and Choice	Family and youth/child perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the Wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences. <i>The Wraparound Process User's Guide</i>
Formal Supports	Services and supports provided by professionals (or other individuals who are "paid to care") under a structure of requirements for which there is oversight by state or federal agencies, national professional associations, or the general public arena.
Implementation Phase	During this phase, the initial Wraparound plan is implemented, progress and successes are continually reviewed, and changes are made to the plan and then implemented, all while maintaining or building team cohesiveness and mutual respect. The activities of this phase are repeated until the team's mission is achieved and formal Wraparound is no longer needed. (NWI)
Informal and Natural Supports	Informal supports are individuals or organizations in the family's own community, kinship, social, or spiritual networks, such as friends, extended family members, ministers, neighbors, local businesspersons or shopkeepers, etc. Natural supports are resources that already exist in the family, their support network, or in their community. They often cost little or nothing and provide support to the family. This term can also be used to refer to friends or advocates of the family. For example, a caregiver may sometimes ask a neighbor to take her child out on an activity. Similarly, a community may have a strong community center or library that provides activities that the family likes to do.
Life Domains	Areas of daily activity critical to healthy growth and development of a child or successful functioning of a family. Life domains include such areas as safety, school/work, health, social/fun, a place to live, legal issues, culture, emotions, transportation, and finances.
Lived Experience	A person's life experience.
Mission Statement	A statement crafted by the Wraparound team that provides a one to two sentence summary of what the team is working toward with the youth and family. <i>The Wraparound Process User's Guide</i>
Outcomes	Child, family, or team goals stated in a way that can be observed and measured.
Parent Perspective	A parent's personal understanding or belief about a situation.
Parent/Caregiver	The person who is directly involved in nurturing and raising a child.
Peer to Peer Support	Peer support refers to initiatives where colleagues, members of self help organizations and others meet as equals to give each other support on a reciprocal basis. <i>Peer</i> in this case is taken to imply that each person has no more expertise as a supporter than the other and the relationship is one of equality. <i>Wikipedia</i>

TERM	DEFINITION
Planning Phase	During this phase, team trust and mutual respect are built while the team creates an initial plan of care using a high-quality planning process that reflects the Wraparound principles. In particular, youth and family should feel, during this phase, that they are heard, that the needs chosen are ones they want to work on, and that the options chosen have a reasonable chance of helping them meet these needs. This phase should be completed during one or two meetings that take place within 1-2 weeks; a rapid time frame intended to promote team cohesion and shared responsibility toward achieving the team's mission or overarching goal. (NWI)
Strengths-based	Strengths are the assets, skills, capacities, actions, talents, potential and gifts in each family member, each team member, the family as a whole, and the community. In Wraparound, strengths help family members and others to successfully navigate life situations; thus, a goal for the Wraparound process is to promote these strengths and to use them to accomplish the goals in the team's plan of care.
Supports and Services	This phrase refers to the full complement of formal services and informal supports received by the child or family.
Transition Phase	During this phase, plans are made for a purposeful transition out of formal Wraparound to a mix of formal and natural supports in the community (and, if appropriate, to services and supports in the adult system). The focus on transition is continual during the Wraparound process, and the preparation for transition is apparent even during the initial engagement activities. (NWI)
Transition Portfolio/Notebook	A Transition Portfolio or Notebook is the family's memory keeper. It contains the plan of care and other supporting documents. The Portfolio tracks the family's accomplishments and captures what the team tried that worked and didn't work. A transition safety plan and a referral letter to future service providers are usually included.
Unmet Needs	Something lacking in one's life that relates to basic needs.
Vision	A statement constructed by the youth and family (with help from their Facilitator and possibly the Wraparound team) that describes how they wish things to be in the future, individually and as a family.
Wraparound Facilitator	A person who is trained to coordinate the Wraparound process for an individual family. This person may also be called care coordinator, navigator, Wraparound specialist, Wraparound Facilitator or something else. The person in the Facilitator role may change over time, depending on what the family thinks is working best. For example, a parent, caregiver, or other team member may take over facilitating team meetings after a period of time.
Wraparound Process	Wraparound is a planning process that follows a series of steps to help children and their families realize their hopes and dreams. The Wraparound process also helps make sure children and youth grow up in their homes and communities. It is a planning process that brings people together from different parts of the whole family's life. With help from one or more facilitators, people from the family's life work together, coordinate their activities, and blend their perspectives of the family's situation. <i>The Wraparound Process User's Guide</i>

TERM	DEFINITION
Wraparound Team	A group of people – chosen with the family and connected to them through natural, community, and formal support relationships – who develop and implement the family’s plan, address unmet needs, and work toward the family’s vision. <i>The Wraparound Process User’s Guide</i>

## NATIONAL WRAPAROUND INITIATIVE DOCUMENTS

The Application of the Ten Principles of the Wraparound Process to the Role of Family Partners on Child and Family Teams: Penn, M. & Osher T.W. (2007). Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Portland State University. <http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi/pbNWI-FamilyPartner10Principles.pdf>

Ten Principles of the Wraparound Process: Bruns, E.J., Walker, J.S., Adams, J., Miles, P., Osher, T.W., Rast, J., VanDenBerg, J.D. & National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group (2004). *Ten principles of the Wraparound process*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children’s Mental Health, Portland State University. <http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi/TenPrincWAPProcess.pdf>

Phases and Activities of the Wraparound Process: Walker, J.S., Bruns, E.J., VanDenBerg, J.D., Rast, J., Osher, T.W., Miles, P., Adams, J., & National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group (2004). *Phases and activities of the Wraparound process*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children’s Mental Health, Portland State University. <http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi/PhaseActivWAPProcess.pdf>

The Wraparound Approach: An Overview: Abstracted from Burchard, J. D., Bruns, E.J., & Burchard, S.N. (2002). *The Wraparound Process*. In B. J. Burns & K. Hoagwood, *Community-based Treatment for Youth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi/WAOverview.pdf>

## CALIFORNIA WRAPAROUND STANDARDS

All County Information Notice No. 1-28-99, Department of Social Services, April 7, 1999. [http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/getinfo/acin99/1-28\\_99.pdf](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/getinfo/acin99/1-28_99.pdf).

The Wraparound Parent Partner Training Manual: P. Miles. (2001). Gresham, Oregon.

The Parent Partner Collaborative Toolkit: P. Miles. (2006). Gresham, Oregon.