

## Introduction

Family Peer Advocates (FPAs) are increasingly being used to assist parents to navigate multiple child-serving systems, improve engagement, promote family-centered decision-making and support effective parenting for children and youth with complex health, behavioral health, and developmental needs.

FPAs are trained, 'veteran' parents with lived-experience. New York State has a long-standing commitment to Family Peer Support Services (FPSS). As FPSS have matured and expanded to new settings, a consensus service definition was developed, steps have been taken to define core competencies and quality indicators, and a formal credentialing process was initiated in 2011. This poster describes key aspects of this process.

## Credentialing Process

### Consensus Service Definition

The first step in this process was the development of a consensus definition of Family Peer Support Services (FPSS) which includes activities that fall under these broad categories:

- § Outreach and Information
- § Engagement, Bridging and Transition Support
- § Self-Advocacy, Self-Efficacy and Empowerment
- § Community Connections and Natural Supports
- § Parent Skill Development
- § Promoting Effective Family-Driven Practice

(NYSOMH and FTNYS, 2014)

### Competency-Based Training

A standardized approach to training this paraprofessional workforce, the Parent Empowerment Program (PEP), was first developed in 2005. The training has evolved to address new competencies needed for work in a more integrated and outcome-focused changing health care environment. This new two-level modularized PEPm training (Table 1) includes the following components:

- Online Training Modules
- In-person Training
- Consultation Calls
- Work with Supervisors

## PEPm Family Peer Advocate Training

Table 1. Family Peer Advocate Parent Empowerment Program Modularized (PEPm) Training

### Parent Empowerment Program Modularized (PEPm)

#### Level 1 Training

##### Orientation Modules (on-line)

- Navigating the Family Peer Advocate Training Learning Management System
- FPA Training Overview
- NYS FPA Credential: Eligibility and Application Process

##### Training Modules (on-line)

- 1 Family Peer Support Services: Overview, History and New Directions
- 2 The FPA Role: Working with Families to Improve Child Outcomes
- 3 Introduction to Family-Driven Care
- 4 Power of Lived Experience
- 5 Embracing Each Family's Culture
- 6 Essential Communication Skills for Family Peer Advocates
- 7 Engagement Strategies for Family Peer Advocates
- 8 Learning About Families: Exploring Strengths, Needs and Culture
- 9 Measuring Progress and Outcomes
- 10 Creating a Family Support Plan
- 11 Empowerment Strategies for Family Peer Advocates
- 12 Developing Effective Partnerships
- 13 Recognizing and Responding to Safety Concerns
- 14 Documenting Your Work
- 15 Professionalism: FPA Code of Ethics, Confidentiality, Boundaries
- 16 The Importance of Self-Care

Required for Provisional FPA Credential

#### Level 2 Training

##### A. Required On-Line Modules (complete all)

- 1 Learning About Systems: Education
- 2 Running Groups: Planning and Strategies for Success
- 3 Building Community Connections and Natural Supports
- 4 Supporting Parents in their Parenting Role
- 5 Trauma Informed Care: Supporting Family Resiliency

##### B. Elective On-Line Modules (complete a minimum of 3)

- 1 Learning About Systems: Juvenile Justice
- 2 Learning About Systems: Child Welfare
- 3 Learning About Systems: Mental Health
- 4 Learning About Systems: Substance Use
- 5 Learning About Systems: Developmental Disabilities
- 6 Learning About Systems: Special Health Care Needs
- 7 Learning About Systems: Early Intervention
- 8 Working with Families with Transition Age Youth/Youth-Guided Care

##### C. In-Person Training (2 days)

- Engagement, Communication and Empowerment Strategies
- Putting it All Together: Assessment, Goal Development, Progress Evaluation, Plan Revision, Structuring for Self-Sufficiency

##### D. Consultant Calls

- 12 hour-long calls to reinforce application of skills and competency in practice

Required for Professional FPA Credential

## FPA Credentialing

Credentialing of FPAs was initiated in 2011. Professional FPA Credential requirements include:

- § 1000 hours FPA work experience
- § Lived-experience as the parent of a child with social, emotional, behavioral, health and/or developmental challenges
- § Completion of PEPm Training
- § Three recommendations
- § Agreement to practice according to the Code of Ethics

(FTNYS, 2016)

### Quality Indicators

This work is taking place in the context of a commitment to understand the impact of this service through an expanded research agenda (Hoagwood and Burns, 2014).

In the Family-to-Family Study, IDEAS researchers have used a structured approach to develop quality indicators for both the programs employing FPAs (e.g., certified FPAs, clear roles, specialized supervision) and the FPAs themselves (e.g., specific knowledge and skills; partnership with family/team; Olin et al 2013).

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These quality indicators were significantly associated with positive organizational social context in 21 NYS programs that deliver team-based family support services. (Olin, et al, 2014) This work, as well as other research, contributes to quality improvement efforts.

### Progress to Date

782 FPAs have been trained in PEP and over 425 have been credentialed. PEPm training will begin in 2017. The availability of a statewide protocol has aided the state's efforts to obtain approval for FPSS as a Medicaid State Plan service.

### Discussion

The use of Family Peer Support Services (FPSS) is viewed as pivotal to achieving many key health care goals including, but not limited to: improving patient engagement, activation, and experience, and supporting the integration of health, behavioral and developmental services.

