


Wisconsin Family Ties

Mission
Changing lives by improving
children's mental health

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Parent Peer Specialist Program Defined


Parent Peer Specialist Program

*"The Parent Peer Specialist Program supports parents raising children with emotional / behavioral challenges by **fostering parent empowerment** through the creation of a one-to-one relationship between a parent-in-need and a trained veteran parent who understands the parent's needs due to shared experiences. Support and information are provided; independence is fostered."*

Wisconsin Family Ties, <https://www.wifamilyties.org/our-program/whats-new/therapist/parent-peer-specialist-program-challenges-to-being-a-parent-when-your-child-has-mental-health-needs>

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Defined by Needs

Needs → Parent Peer Specialist Programs

<p>Conflicts with providers</p> <p>Communication issues with schools</p> <p>Increasing isolation</p> <p>Significant conflict in the home</p> <p>Hopelessness</p>	<p>➢ The majority of families raising children with mental health needs are healthy families experiencing a particularly stressful challenge.</p> <p>➢ "Good parenting" skills don't usually work when a child has mental health needs such as those related to anxiety, auditory hallucinations, depression or thoughts of self-harm.</p> <p>➢ Disciplinary strategies that work with "typically-developing" children are not effective for "behavior problems" related to mental health.</p>	<p>Challenging behaviors</p> <p>Risk for out-of-home placement</p> <p>Police involvement</p> <p>Exclusionary discipline at school</p> <p>Self-harm</p>
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Wisconsin Family Ties, <https://www.wifamilyties.org>

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Wisconsin Family Ties
Family Driven Comparison

Family Driven Comparison

	Family-focused	Family-centered	Family-driven
View of family	Potentially part of "the problem"	Potentially part of "the solution"	Vital to improved health of children
Role of family	Object of therapy	Key informant on the child & what works	Authority over the health care of their children
Decision making	Provider is primary decision maker	Family has input into decisions	Family makes informed choices
Outcomes - Family	Treatment adherence	Parent satisfaction	Parent empowerment & increased skills
Outcomes - System	Improved relationship between family and provider	Increased transparency and coordination	Families become important cog in system improvement

Seman, S. S., Bink, G. M., Malley, C. J. (2020) Family driven care in America: More than a good idea, 2010. Retrieved 10.27.2020 from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7038792/>

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Parent Peer Specialists Qualifications

Wisconsin Family Ties Parent Peer Specialist Qualifications

- At least one year of experience as a parent or primary caregiver involved in the day-to-day care of a child or adolescent with social, emotional or behavioral challenges;
- Successfully navigated the process of obtaining mental health services for his/her child, the need for which has persisted for a period of at least one year;
- Received specific training to provide support to families and to help equip parents with the confidence and tools to better meet their families' needs.

Parent peer specialist job description at Wisconsin Family Ties, 2015

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Self-Empowerment

"Parent peer support, also commonly called family peer support or family support services, offers hope, guidance, advocacy, and camaraderie for parents and caregivers of children and youth receiving services from mental health, substance use, and related service systems."

Resiliency Defined

- Having the capacity to make realistic plans.
- Being able to carry out those plans.
- Being able to effectively manage your feelings and impulses in a healthy manner.
- Having good communication skills.
- Having confidence in your strengths and abilities.

Self-empowerment Defined

- Understanding and acceptance of a child's diagnosis.
- Understanding of self and strengths and resources.
- Leading the child's care through advocacy
- Persevering in efforts

Gibson, C. H. (1995). The process of empowerment in mothers of chronically ill children. *Health, Behavior, & Society*, 1(1) 1995. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1080000/pdf/1080000.pdf>

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Wisconsin Family Ties
Parent Peer Specialists' Offer Supports

**Comments from Parents:
Anonymous Outcomes Survey**

Supports to Foster Empowerment

- Helping parents to navigate service systems including support with paperwork, follow-up, and coordination among multiple systems
- Attending meetings with the parent and schools, doctors, county
- Locating resources to meet basic needs
- Providing emotional support and reducing isolation
- Helping families to identify strategies that they can use in their homes to reduce conflict
- Identifying community resources for the parent and family
- Modeling interactions with different providers
- Modeling interactions with different providers
- Offering telephone support for critical situations
- Researching options for the parent about child care, placements, and more

"The parent peer specialist taught me to find my own voice, to tell people when I'm not OK with it."
Respondent #225

The parent peer specialist "would come and get me and help me be better understood at meetings. She's wonderful."
Respondent #330

Health Services, N. (2017). Annual Outcome Assessment 2016-2017 7

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Wisconsin Family Ties
Service Delivery Model

**WFT PPS Service Delivery Model
(Proprietary)**

W	Welcoming
I	Inviting
P	Perspective shifting
L	Listening
A	Acceptance
N	Never Giving Up

The parent peer specialist "doesn't try to persuade you to do what she wants. She doesn't put words in your mouth. She lets you talk for yourself."
Respondent #90

Wisconsin Family Ties Parent Peer Specialists Services, 2015. 8

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Wisconsin Family Ties
PPS Programs are Uniquely Helpful

Uniquely Helpful


"She [the parent peer specialist] is the only one who gets it."
Respondent #200

"She [the parent peer specialist] had the experience and knew the questions to ask and the services available."
Respondent #500

- Parents tend to quickly trust parent peer specialists in part due to shared experiences
- Parents view parent peer specialists as neutral professionals not aligned with any one service provider or perspective
- Parents are more likely to be responsive to requests made by parent peer specialists than requests made by other professionals
- Parent Peer Specialists offer wholistic support focused on removing barriers to health and wellbeing
- Parent Peer Specialists are familiar with local resources and the idiosyncrasies of accessing and navigating these supports
- Parent Peer Specialists are highly trained in best practices and participate in a year-long mentoring program to help ensure program fidelity

Health Services, N. (2017). Annual Outcome Assessment 2016-2017 9

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Evidence Based Research 2007


Evidence Base – Research Studies

“Without the parent peer specialist... the police would have sucked [my son] up by now.”
Respondent #460

Study	Parent Support: Building Structures That Support and Assist Children (Davis-Groves, et al., Univ. of Kansas, 2007)
Method	Mixed-methods approach consisting of focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, and secondary analysis of an existing database
Key Findings	Children whose parents received peer support specialist services have better outcomes in terms of residential status, law enforcement contact, academic performance, and school attendance. In addition, these children demonstrated fewer externalizing behaviors than children whose parents were not receiving support.

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Evidence Based Research 2010

Evidence Base – Research Studies


The parent peer specialist “helped me to be strong.”
Respondent #355

“I’ve wanted to give up. [The parent peer specialist has] been there and encouraged me.”
Respondent #462

Study	Parent Peer Support and Outcomes for Children with Mental Illness (Ramacher, UW-Stout, 2010)
Method	Non-random pilot study with self-administered online surveys with five demographic and eight closed-ended statements, based on the Likert Scale
Key Findings	Parents receiving peer specialist services experienced improvement in coping skills, emotional health and confidence, as well as increased knowledge, improved management of children’s behavior, and more confidence in advocacy skills. While the data do not as strongly support a link to improvement in children’s behavior, there is some indication that improvements for the parents impacted the children, as evidenced by better school grades.

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Evidence Based Research 1996-2012

Correlations Discovered

- Children engage earlier with appropriate resources. (Koroloff, Friesen, Reilly & Rinkin 1996)
- Fewer appointments are missed and fewer families are *prematurely terminated* by providers. (Davis-Groves, Byers, Johnson, McDonald 2011)
- Out of home placements are shorter in length and fewer in occurrence. (Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, Conway, 2010)
- School drop-out is less likely (Kutash et al., 2010)
- Uninsured children whose parents work with a trained parent mentor are more likely to become insured. (Flores, G. et al., 2020)
- Parents and caregivers are likely to experience a decrease in stress and an increase in self-efficacy and an understanding of the child. (Resendez, M.G. et al., 2000)

National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health. (2012). *Family Peer Support: Parents Helping Parents*.
Flores, G. et al. (2020). *Parent mentors and insurance enrollment of children: A randomized controlled trial*.
Resendez M.G. et al., (2000). *A Longitudinal Analysis of Family Empowerment and Client Outcomes*.

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Wisconsin Family Ties
The Outcomes: A

Wisconsin Family Ties Increases Parenting Skills & Confidence

"I was at my wit's end. I was considering long-term placement in a treatment facility [for my child]. I just didn't know what else to do."
Respondent #120

- 96%** Of parents report that they are better able to cope with their family situation
- 83%** Of parents note that they are more capable of dealing with the various systems that serve their child since connecting with the parent peer specialist
- 96%** Of parents indicate that they are better advocates for their child since connecting with the parent peer specialist

Wisconsin Family Ties: Improving children's mental health outcomes 13

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Wisconsin Family Ties
The Outcomes: B

Wisconsin Family Ties Prevents Child Abuse and Neglect

The parent peer specialist "helped me to be strong."
Respondent #155

The parent peer specialists "help me navigate. They give me moral and emotional support."
Respondent #100

- 1 Resilience:** 96% of parents note that they feel better able to cope with their family situation since connecting with Wisconsin Family Ties.
- 2 Social Connections:** 96% of parents say that Wisconsin Family Ties provides a place to turn for support.
- 3 Knowledge Base:** 92% of parents now know the steps to take when they are concerned about the services their child is, or is not, receiving.
- 4 Concrete Supports:** 83% of parents report feeling more capable of dealing with service systems.
- 5 Emotional Competence:** 83% of parents say that Wisconsin Family Ties helped improve their family situation.

Wisconsin Family Ties: Improving children's mental health outcomes 14

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Wisconsin Family Ties
The Outcomes: C

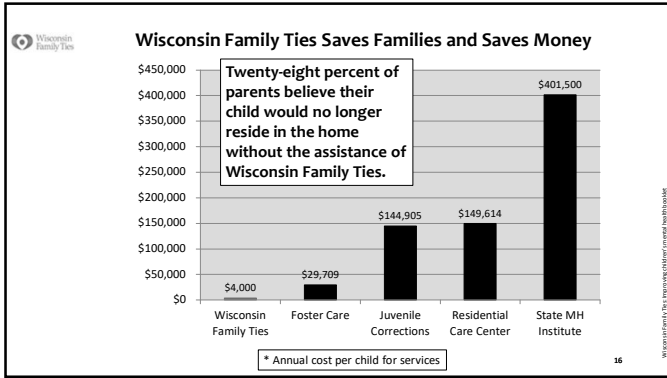
Wisconsin Family Ties Improves Family-School Relationships

"I don't understand 1/2 the stuff the school is talking about, but I just listen because I know my parent peer specialist will explain it to me."
Respondent #264

- 83%** Of parents surveyed indicate that Wisconsin Family Ties worked with them on school-related issues.
- 100%** Of the parents above state that the parent peer specialist models behavior for respectfully interacting with the school.
- 85%** Of the parents above report at least one improvement in the school situation/relationship since connecting with the parent peer specialist.

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Without Wisconsin Family Ties "I wouldn't have my son any more. I lost my older son [he died] when he was 16 years old. My younger son is the same image. [My younger son] would probably be gone now too. I wish I had Wisconsin Family Ties to help with my older son."
Respondent #100

Without Wisconsin Family Ties "My son would have fallen in to the court system and be labeled as a bad kid and getting punished instead of getting help."
Respondent #89

Questions?

Without Wisconsin Family Ties my son "would have been taken away from us by now because he gets violent."
Respondent #245

Without Wisconsin Family Ties "I would have placed my daughter in foster care because she was too much for me to handle."
Respondent #50

Wisconsin Family Ties logo: Wisconsin Family Ties

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