



System of Care Family Advocacy Council

in BRIEF

Briefs are provided as a best practice reference or topic example to support communities in developing the family partner role

Introduction:

The goal of a System of Care Family Advisory Council (SOCFAC) is to do intentional work towards meaningful family participation and involvement in local systems of care meetings and meet the need of a cultural broker between provider driven system meetings and authentic family voice and experience. Family Advisory Councils are intended to be comprised of families that have experienced the wraparound process, as well as, families who have navigated the local child and family serving systems. This technical assistance brief sets forth best practices for the development and sustainability of Family Advisory Councils at the local level.

Phase 1: Identification and Preparation

- Identify existing parent groups in the community.
- Gain an understanding of where families are meeting or connecting if not in formal support groups.
- Identify a Family Support Specialist (FSS) to reach out, compile a list of needs of the families in the communities identified as being currently supported (group types/focus for future groups or meetings).
- Complete a map of the county/community/region identified and gain a clear understanding of identified needs in each area.
- Identify a community member/family member who may be interested in facilitating a support group with FSS support if one does not exist.

Phase 2: Logistics Implementation

- Identify locations for SOCFAC meetings/support groups for family access.
- Coordinate child supervision, meals, as well as other family access issues for the meeting.
- Identify community members/family members who are ready to start SOCFAC team meetings to discuss System of Care needs for the area.
- FSS will assist the community in creating support groups (led by parent volunteers, supported by local FSS) when none have been identified or as the need has risen.
- SOCFAC and FSS will establish a warm hand off process and procedure as an option for families exiting the wraparound process to connect with local support groups.

Phase 3: Community Connection

- Connect to local support groups and parent meetings to inform the community about the SOCFAC work as well as recruit additional members who feel they are ready to engage in system change and SOC.
- Identify and provide specific training (based on the needs of the community) for all potential SOCFAC members that will assist in meaningful connection to the SOC governance structure.
- Develop and maintain a training schedule and expectation for the SOCFAC members.
- Develop and maintain a list of needs that the SOC contact can check off based on their needs for family participation for each SOC meeting.

- Develop and maintain a tracking document to list each SOCFAC member along with their interests, skills, knowledge, availability and experience with systems to use for best matching families with meaningful connection to SOC meetings.
- Gather needs/topics from SOC contacts and match SOCFAC members with advocacy opportunities based on their interests, knowledge, skills and experience.
- SOCFAC will meet regularly to discuss meetings attended, needs in the community and review the tracking document to assure the needs of the community are being met.
- SOCFAC team will build and maintain learning opportunities, consistent communication and open dialogue with community parent groups to continue to grow the diversity of age, experience and geographic location to meet the needs of the SOC.

Phase 4: Maintenance and Sustainability

- Continue to track community needs and team interests/skills on a tracker for easy communication of status with SOCFAC members or other SOC partners.
- Continue to ensure that the meetings for the SOCFAC are meaningful, family friendly and regular.
- Continue to assist the community in creating support groups when none have been identified or as the need has risen.
- Continue to create a culture of equity and inclusion at system meetings for meaningful family engagement and voice.
- Continue to explore and solidify braided funding to sustain family support specialist position, SOCFAC stipends, continued trainings/learning opportunities, appropriate amount of flex funding for family friendly meetings and other needs of the SOCFAC.

Conclusion:

When this process is followed and supported, the community will create a self-sustaining group of family members that will continue to meet the ever-changing needs of communities and independently and organically thrive. It will grow through the continual renewing of families being connected to local support groups/ parent meetings and the intentional communication, training and support of the SOCFAC, FSS and the local SOC.