



The CAFÉ TA Center Presents

Supports for Families
Workshop Series

Welcome

Welcome to our 5-part workshop series.

This is part of The CAFÉ TA Center's commitment to mental health and supporting families.

Welcome to the workshop series created with the family in mind. There are 5 workshops in this workbook that come with a video, slides and a workbook with information and activities you can do on your time. If you are a family member, this series is a tool you can use to support yourself or give to someone who may need some support. Family to us is what family is to you. It may be the traditional family or family of choice. You may be a parent, caregiver, relative or friend. It is how you define family. If you are a Family Peer Support Worker, this may be something you share with the families you are supporting.

All five of the workshops found in this workbook tackle separate subjects intended to support YOU, the family member of someone living with a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis (mental health challenge and substance use). To be honest, unless you have experienced a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis in your own family, you are likely unaware of the impact and heartbreak this has on all family members.

In section 1 of this workbook, there is information about the organizations and the writers of this series. The CAFÉ TA Center and Robyn Priest LIVE YOUR TRUTH are the organizations and Charlotte Sytnyk and Kirsten Drybrough are the writers. Kirsten and Charlotte are both trained family peer support workers and Kirsten will be the narrator in the videos. In this workbook, you will learn about peer support and family peer support (people who have had common experience) and why they are so passionate about supporting every member of the family when someone in the family is struggling with their mental health.

Kirsten, as the narrator, will be sharing from the perspective of her and Charlotte's own lived experience and expertise, and from their experience as family peer support workers. In their role as family peer support workers, they have connected with hundreds of families that were trying to make sense of what was happening with their own family mental health story.

Section 2 is additional information to reference about supporting the family, recovery, and why peer support matters.

If you would like to go straight to the workshops, these are in Section 3 of your workbook. There you will find the link to the video, the slides, and activities for that workshop. Please feel free to pause the video at any time and proceed when you are ready. There is no time limit. The order you watch the series in is up to you as well. Start with the one that speaks to you the most.

Section 4 of your workbook is all about definitions and resources. At any time, you can head to this section to find a definition or to clarify context.

Section 5 of your workbook is all about hope, planning, and YOU. There are a few activities and tools here that ask you to think about YOU. Your future. Your plans. AND your wellbeing.

All our workshops in this series were written and presented through the lens of lived experience of family peer supporters and family members and uphold the values of peer support. Your narrator and her co-writer and the stories shared come from their own lived experience and expertise as a family member and trained family peer support worker.

As Kirsten states in the videos "We are not clinical, we are not therapists we are family members supporting someone who is struggling with their mental health. It's through family peer support that we found hope in our family's mental health story. We no longer felt isolated – like we were the only family going through something like this. That level of shame we felt started to diminish as we began to find that community of other families going through something similar." And as Charlotte adds "Through our own family experience, we know that support services for family members are not always accessible and can be challenging to find. These workshops are designed to support YOU, the family member." Our hope is that you will find family peer support in your community and begin that journey of recovery, wellbeing, and healing for you and your family.

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Section 1

About Us





About the CAFÉ TA Center

The CAFÉ TA Center is a program of The Family Café, a cross-disability organization that has been connecting individuals with information, training, and resources since 1998. The Center is supported by SAMHSA to operate one of its five national technical assistance centers; providing technical assistance, training, and resources that facilitate the restructuring of the mental health system through effective consumer directed approaches for adults with serious mental illnesses across the country.

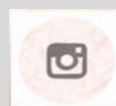
CAFÉ TAC is here to provide mental health consumers, families, professionals, and other stakeholders in the mental health system with information, training, networking opportunities and support as they seek to advocate for themselves and transform the mental health system of care to allow for and encourage genuine consumer involvement and peer leadership. We believe that better outcomes among Americans with serious mental illness will result from putting consumers with real world experience at the center of the mental health system of care, and we are here to provide the tools and expertise to make that happen.

Our approach is embodied in the acronym that gives our TA Center its name: Collaboration, Advocacy, Friendship and Empowerment. As a technical assistance center serving people with lived experience of mental health conditions, we have witnessed the transformative power of recovery advocates with lived experience of mental health conditions. We believe that recognition of the value and capability of people with lived experience, including certified peer specialists, is critical to radically improving the lives of people with mental health conditions, the systems that serve them, and the public's understanding of mental health.

To create the positive change we envision, CAFÉ TAC shares information on the evidence base for the effectiveness of people with lived experience in the system of care, and the many roles in which they can excel. The project also supports people with lived experience to grow and thrive in their recovery through access to educational opportunity, connection with family and other natural community supports, and linkages to resources on employment and economic self-sufficiency. Finally, CAFÉ TAC is a point of access for a wealth of nationally relevant resources, connecting individuals with news and information from a host of partners.

Follow Us On Social Media

cafetacenter@gmail.com



WWW.CAFETACENTER.NET

Our goal at

Robyn Priest LIVE YOUR TRUTH

is to facilitate the creation of connections whether it is in healthcare or workplaces; something that is integral in supporting people's mental health.

Everything impacts mental health, and mental health impacts everything.

Robyn Priest
LIVE YOUR TRUTH

A leader in the field of mental health and peer support training.

www.robypriest.com | info@robypriest.com | +1.431.688.7003



Robyn Priest LIVE YOUR TRUTH (RPLYT) is a mental health and peer support education and strategy firm. It is the dream child of Robyn Priest and Charlotte Sytnyk.

Its vision is: Every single person is truly heard and respected, and its mission is: People are supported to gain the life of their dreams. Robyn Priest is the principal developer and trainer related to individuals with mental health, Charlotte Sytnyk brings the knowledge and lived expertise of a family member. Both components are integral in ensuring supports are the best possible.

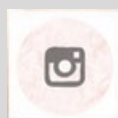
About US

We have also gathered a team of experts that support our endeavors. These people are called “the posse” and all have lived experience as an individual who experiences mental health challenges or dual diagnosis, or family members of someone experiencing these issues.

All workshops have been created by our family peer support staff headed by Kirsten Drybrough, the Ambassador of Advocacy and Family Support and Charlotte Sytnyk, Co-creator, and Mental Health Mom-ager.

Everything that Charlotte and Kirsten have created is through the lens of what they would have wanted when their family was struggling.

Follow Us on Social Media





About

Kirsten & Charlotte

Kirsten is a family peer support worker, a trainer and has the title of Ambassador of Advocacy and Parent Support at *Robyn Priest LIVE YOUR TRUTH*. She is also the co-founder of All IN Family Peer Support, a non-profit family peer support organization. She is known for having a calm and gentle demeanor but don't let that fool you, she is a powerful mental health advocate for Canadian families. Through her own family's mental health journey, she has become passionate about family peer support and support for families around mental health. Kirsten believes "when one person in your family is struggling with a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis the entire family is struggling". It is through the lens of her own personal journey that Kirsten approaches her work and her workshops, "I think of what would have made a difference for me and my family going back in time". Kirsten believes that family peer support was the necessary lifeline that finally appeared in her own family story. In her spare time, you can find Kirsten and her husband Keith renovating their 100-year-old home, entertaining friends, or working in the garden. Kirsten finds no greater joy than being a mom and spending time with her family.

Charlotte's kind and approachable demeanor makes her a hot commodity in the mental health world. A woman who believes that there is good in everyone, Charlotte uses her lived experience raising resilient daughters to bring awareness and support to families living with mental health issues. As a solution focused coach, Charlotte works with parents of children struggling with mental health challenges as well as dual diagnosis to support, advocate and provide strategies for success and recovery. She talks about the parallel process, when one member of the family is struggling it affects everyone in the family. Her work in mental health has been recognized with the Heroes of Mental Health award by CMHA as well as hundreds of thank "yous" from families around the world. Her education, coupled with her track record of helping families find the resources they need, has given her the "street cred." needed to make a difference. Charlotte is the mental health mom-ager and co-creator at *Robyn Priest LIVE YOUR TRUTH* as well as the co-founder of All IN Family Peer Support and believes whole heartedly in Peer Support and its role in Mental Wellness.

Section 2

Supporting the Family,
Recovery & Why Peer
Support Matters



A Note from Us

These Videos and Workbooks, Part of the Family Series, are For Any Family Who Has a Family Member Who Struggles with Mental Health Challenges/Illness or Dual Diagnosis (mental health challenge and substance use).

We bring the expertise and lived experience of a family member who supports an individual living with a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis. We believe that when one member of your family is struggling with their mental health the entire family is struggling. This is why we often refer to the family mental health story. It impacts all of us.

As a peer supporter, we believe that everyone can recover. We also believe that recovery looks different to everyone and that some people prefer the words wellbeing, wellness or healing instead of the word recovery. As a family peer supporter, we believe that everyone in the family has a recovery story which also can look different from the others in the family.

Our approach when supporting families is by framing experiences through a strengths-based, hopeful lens of recovery instead of a “diagnosis” and “illness” lens. This is central to peer support and for improving things for both people with mental health conditions and for families.

Connection is central as well. Going back in time, a connection to another family, or a family peer worker, would have made a huge difference in our own family stories. This is our motivation and intention with this workshop series, to connect and introduce you to family peer support.

Connecting with family peer support in your own communities can be a valuable addition to your own personal resources, especially looking at your own wellness or lack of it. Family peer support is a resource we wish we were able to access earlier in our own community.

We know that watching the videos and working through the workbook may bring up a plethora of emotions for you. We encourage you to take your time and take breaks as needed, maybe even debrief, and discuss with a friend or family member afterwards.

For us, we wish this series was around when our family was really struggling, and when we were looking for support. We also want to share that www.allinfamily.ca and the ALL IN Family's weekly (online) peer support group is an available resource for you as well.

Please trust in the process, engage in the process and give it your ALL IN!

- Kirsten & Charlotte

WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT & FAMILY BASED PEER SUPPORT?

Peer Support has been around for a long time, from mothers' and babies' groups to more formalized peer support in clinical settings. Currently, it is getting more publicity as more and more people are seeing the benefits of peer support in relation to their mental health.

Peer Support to us is that mutual relationship between people who share a similar experience. In our case, our shared experience is that of supporting someone in our family who struggles with their mental health. In the beginning when our children were first struggling, we thought no one else was going through what we were, and we felt very isolated and alone. When we found peer support and realized that there were others like us, this was a lifeline that was missing in our story. The lifeline was the support for our mental wellbeing.

Having another mom who had this shared experience and was there to support us as we supported our child was a big part of our recovery story, and it became our passion and our profession.

We have included some information about what peer support is in this section.

There are peer support organizations around the country; our hope is that you will see the value in peer support not only for yourself but also your family member and check out one of the many peer support organizations. If you find a great support whether it is peer support or not, please share it with us. We are always looking for resources to share with others.

Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common. In this case, the experience that individuals or groups have in common is in relation to a mental health challenge or illness. This common experience might be related to their own mental health or that of a loved one.

Family-based peer support recognizes the struggle that members in a person's circle of support experience in relation to the mental health challenge or illness of a loved one.

~ MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Family Peer Support is the instrumental, social, and informational support provided from one parent to another in an effort to reduce isolation, shame, and blame, to assist parents in navigating [...] systems and provide other relevant life experiences.

~ The benefits of family peer support services: let's examine the evidence SAMHSA

MORE ABOUT PEER SUPPORT?

We have included a couple of definitions and quotes about peer support from a number of countries. They really resonated with us, and as you read the definitions, you will have a better understanding of what peer supports.

"Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another's situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain."

~ Mead, Hilton, & Curtis, 2001

"Parents wanted their own support in order to enhance their emotional well-being in order to cope better with their child's problems. Peer support enables parents to give voice to these kinds of concerns without fear of judgment and without alienating the clinical staff, upon whom they and their child depend. Families also spoke of their other siblings who were experiencing worry and anxiety about their brother or sister's condition. Some parents suspected these children secretly worried that they might also become unwell.

Parents (and families) need to receive support from someone who understands what mental health means for a family...Parents expressed gratitude for having someone who had been through a similar experience. It was surprising that providing some form of peer support had not been more widely used.

We believe that the findings suggest that clinical staff are not always fully aware of the vulnerabilities and needs of family members."

~ "Sharing the Load: Parents & Carers" Australia
International Journal of Mental Health Nursing (2011) 20,
253-262

AND EVEN MORE ABOUT PEER SUPPORT

"Lived experience alone does not make someone a peer supporter. Peer support specialists' relevant training (determined on a state-by-state basis) on using personal experiences to inspire hope, and support someone in taking personal responsibility. Peer supporters promote increased self-awareness, self-determination, self-advocacy, and a sense of empowerment in those receiving recovery support services."

- National Association of Peer Supporters

Values of Peer Support:

"In three words peer support is: humanize, de-pathologize and socialize." A quote from a person utilizing peer support.

These values revolve around themes; self-determination; equality, mutuality, empathy, recovery & hope."

Peer support can occur anywhere in life, not just in the mental health and addiction field. There are formalized positions in both individual and family peer support. A few examples of where you can find both family and individual peer workers are hospital emergency rooms, health clinics, respite services, supportive community housing, community outreach programs, corporate airlines, police departments, forensics and justice systems, crisis response teams as well as companies and corporations that support their workforce.

GUIDING VALUES FOR THE PRACTICE OF PEER SUPPORT

In the words of Kirsten and Charlotte “As we created this workshop series, we kept the values of peer support in mind (as family peer workers) with all our conversations. We also keep these values in mind in our own personal relationships and in our relationship with our daughters. We thought we would share these values with you.”

No matter where you go in the world, as you can see below, you will find common values pertaining to peer support.

The National Association of Peer Supporters developed the Core Values of Peer Support for the US:

1. Peer support is voluntary
2. Peer supporters are hopeful
3. Peer supporters are open-minded
4. Peer supporters are empathetic
5. Peer supporters are respectful
6. Peer supporters facilitate change
7. Peer supporters are honest and direct
8. Peer support is mutual and reciprocal
9. Peer support is equally shared power
10. Peer support is strengths-focused
11. Peer support is transparent
12. Peer support is person-driven

Canada has the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Guiding Values and Principles of Practice for Peer Support Workers:

- Hope and Recovery
- Self Determination
- Empathetic and Equal Relationships
- Dignity, Respect and Social Inclusion
- Integrity, Authenticity and Trust
- Health and Wellness
- Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth

Section 3 Workshops

[Link to Introduction Video](#)

1. Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense Page 15
2. Just for Caregivers Page 41
3. True Connections Through Communications Page 60
4. Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process Page 87
5. Building Your Parenting Confidence..... Page 102

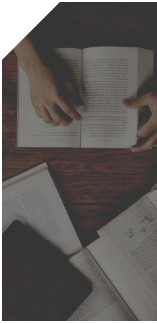


Workshop 1

Making Sense of Things That Don't Make Sense

Slide Presentation.....	Page 16
Workbook	Page 20


[Link to Video](#)



Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health

1



Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of:


- Your role and the impact of a family member
- What is family peer support and why is it so valuable
- Mental health challenge/illness vs. something else
- Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

2



What is Peer Support and Why is it So Valuable?

3



“Family Peer Support is the instrumental, social and informational support provided from one parent to another in an effort to reduce isolation, shame and blame, to assist parents in navigating [...] systems and provide other relevant life experiences”.

~ The benefits of family peer support services: let's examine the evidence SAMHSA

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common. In this case, the experience that individuals or groups have in common is in relation to a mental health challenge or illness. This common experience might be related to their own mental health or that of a loved one.

Family-based peer support recognizes the struggle that members in a person's circle of support experience in relation to the mental health challenge or illness of a loved one.


~ MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

4



✔ Less isolation, not alone	✔ Empowering
✔ Builds social connections	✔ Develops support system
✔ Improves well-being	✔ Problem-solving skills development
✔ Recognizing own needs	✔ Acceptance
✔ Non-judgemental	✔ Connection to resources
✔ Safe, secure	✔ Conversation, sharing
✔ Comfort, validation	✔ Learn from experiences
✔ Reduces stigma	✔ Modeling HOPE
✔ Shifts perspectives	✔ Recovery is possible!
✔ Reduces shame	
✔ Increases self-worth	

5



Why is this important?

6

What do I do now?

- Your role as family member
- What is family peer support and why is it so valuable?
- Is this a mental health challenge/illness OR SOMETHING ELSE
- Gaining a better understanding of mental health
- Advocacy and supporting vs. enabling
- Family experiences; managing attitudes & judgment

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Physical Health



Photo Credit: ian.kurachi@illuminata

Mental Health




Photo Credit: Alamy Stockphoto

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What Do I Do Now?

Your Role as Family Member



9

Your Supporting Role as Family Member

10

Is This a Mental Health Challenge/Illness or My Own Unconscious Bias?

Gaining a Better Understanding of Mental Health




Photo Credit: Polina Dotsmanova

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Photo Credit: Polina Dotsmanova

Looking at Our Own Understanding and Biases of Mental Health

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Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Your Role as Family Member

And then there's the Armchair Quarterback Role

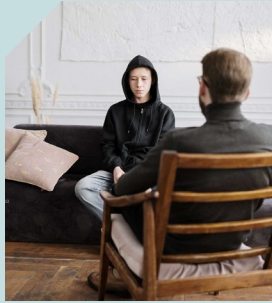


Photo Credit: Camille

Advocate

- Definition of Advocate
 - to publicly support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something
 - Cambridge Dictionary
- Definition of Supporter
 - A person who approves of and encourages someone or something (typically a public figure, a movement or party, or a policy)
 - Oxford English Dictionary

Enabler

- Definition of Enabler
 - Giving misguided support to a person
 - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Armchair Quarterback

Definition: This refers to someone in your life that does not participate in the action AND still makes judgement or criticizes YOUR action or lack of it.

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

- Are you ignoring or minimizing some "not great" behavior?
- Do you have a hard time saying no?
- Do you lie to cover up their behavior?
- Do you put their needs ahead of your own and the needs of your family?
- Do you make excuses or blame others for their actions?
- Do you continue to endure chaos even though it's destroying your family?

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling


Setting Up and Enforcing Boundaries



Photo Credit: Andrea Thompson

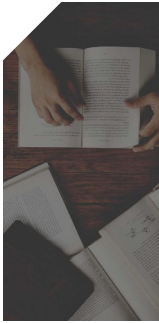
Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Being a True Advocate and a Great Supporter



PhotoCredit: danielmogh

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Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health

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PhotoCredit: Andrew Hall

Family Experiences Managing Attitudes and Judgement

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A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is y our life too

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Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health



info@rhygrps.com



cafetacenter@gmail.com

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Workbook:
Making Sense of Things
That Don't Make Sense



Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health

Here we go...

Welcome to our first workshop. We are glad you are here.

This workshop was written through our lived experience of what the early days of our family's mental health journey began. Through sharing our stories and the stories of others, our hope is that you will find some support for yourself as you begin to make sense of what your family is going through.

Here are the topics we will be discussing in the video:

- Your Role as Family Member
- What is Peer Support and Family Peer Support, and Why is it so Valuable?
- Is it a Mental Health Challenge/Illness or SOMETHING ELSE?
- Gaining a Better Understanding of Mental Health Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling
- Family Experiences: Managing Attitudes and Judgment

We start this first workshop by introducing you to the power of peer support and, in our case, the power of family peer support and its role in a family's recovery story. Peer Support, for us, became the missing support that made a difference in our recovery story.

And, like anything with peer support, we are sharing what worked for us. Our hope is that you might choose to explore if peer support is the right fit for you.

We will also be encouraging you to look at your own view and understanding of mental health.

Please remember, we are family peer support workers who are sharing our lived expertise. And through our sharing, we offer hope if that is something you are looking for.

- Charlotte & Kirsten



Photo Creds: Anna Shvets

- Less isolation, not alone
- Builds social connections
- Improves well-being
- Recognizing own needs
- Non-judgemental
- Safe, secure
- Comfort, validation
- Reduces stigma
- Shifts perspectives
- Reduces shame
- Increases self-worth
- Empowering
- Develops support system
- Problem-solving skills development
- Acceptance
- Connection to resources
- Conversation, sharing
- Learn from experiences
- Modeling HOPE
- Recovery is possible!

Benefits to Family Peer Support

Please look at the list of benefits. Which ones speak to you? If there are more, please add them.

What do I do Now?

In this workshop you will be introduced to the power of family peer support and its role in your family's recovery story.

We encourage you to look at your own view and understanding of mental health and look at making sense of “things” that just do not making sense to you right now.

Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health

Please Take a Few Minutes to Reflect on These Questions:

1. What Brought You Here Today?
2. What's Happening in the Here and Now for You?
3. What are You Hoping to Take Away from This?

What do I do Now?

Your Role as a Family Member

What do I do now is the #1 question we get asked by families supporting a family member. Early on, we thought our role was to fix, save, and solve.



Please take a few minutes to reflect and make notes on what comes up for you when you think of the words "fixing, saving, and solving" in context to your family's story?

FIXING

SAVING

SOLVING

More Space if Needed:

Is This a Mental Health Challenge/Illness or My Own Unconscious Bias?

Gaining a Better Understanding of Mental Health



Photo Creds: Polina Zimmerman

Workbook Activity:

A “bias” is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared to another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

Please reflect on how you are feeling when you read this question. Is this a mental health challenge/illness or is this my own unconscious bias?

We have a few more questions for you on the next page.

Something to Ponder

Please think about actions that you are seeing with your family member and place in the mental health challenge/illness or your unconscious bias column.

Mental Health
Challenge / Illness

Unconscious Bias

As you are thinking of this list,
are you making excuses or justifying the action?
Something to think about.

A photograph showing a person's hands holding a tablet. The tablet screen displays the words "MENTAL HEALTH" in bold, black, capital letters. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting with a plant visible on the left.

MENTAL
HEALTH

Looking at Our Own Understanding and Biases of Mental Health

Your Thoughts?

Pleasetakeafewminutesandmakenotes on what comes up for you when youlookatyourown biases around mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis.

Pleasereflectonhowyoucanprovideandhold space for your struggling family member that encompasses trust, compassion, respect, understanding and acceptance.

Makenote of actions and conversations you plan on having to follow through with this intention.

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Your Role as Family Member



What is your role in your family?

Workbook Activity:
space to write.

Advocate
Supporter

Enabler

Armchair
Quarterback

Let's Pause & Reflect

Please take a few minutes to reflect and make notes on what comes up for you when you think of the words “advocate” and “supporter” in context of your family's story

Space for Notes:

Advocate

- ▀ Definition of Advocate
 - to publicly support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something
 - Cambridge Dictionary
- ▀ Definition of Supporter
 - A person who approves of and encourages someone or something (typically a public figure, a movement or party, or a policy)
 - Oxford English Dictionary

Let's Pause & Reflect

Please take a few minutes to reflect and make notes on what comes up for you when you think of the word “enabler” in context of your family's story

Space for Notes:

Enabler



Definition of Enabler

- Giving misguided support to a person
 - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Let's Pause & Reflect

Please take a few minutes to reflect and make notes on what comes up for you when you think of the words “armchair quarterback” in context of your story

Space for Notes:

Armchair Quarterback

Definition: This refers to someone in your life that does not participate in the action AND still makes judgement or criticizes YOUR action or lack of it.

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

- Are you ignoring or minimizing some “not great” behavior?
- Do you have a hard time saying no?
- Do you lie to cover up their behavior?
- Do you put their needs ahead of your own and the needs of your family?
- Do you make excuses or blame others for their actions?
- Do you continue to endure chaos even though it's destroying your family?

Here is list of questions that you can use as a “check in” in times when you are questioning enabling?

Are you ignoring or minimizing behaviors that are not great? Sometimes we get used to these behaviors, and they start to feel normal or become our acceptable new normal. However, how you define these hard behaviors is up to you. My hope is that you will take a look at your role and the impact that it is having. Especially when a family member is experiencing a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis.

In times like this, try to take a step back and check in with yourself.

- Is this healthy?
- Is this the mental health challenge/illness or just not great behavior?
- What is really happening here?
- Are my biases in check?

Workbook Activity:

There are more questions on the next page for you to think about and answer.

1 - Do you have a hard time saying no?

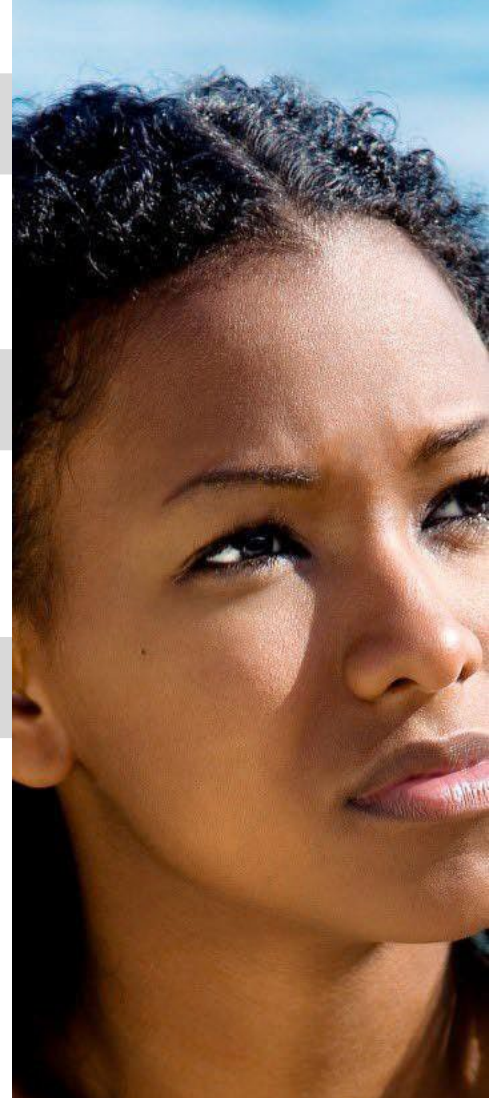
2 - Do you lie or cover up their behavior?

3 - Do you put their needs ahead of your own
and the needs of your family?

Your Thoughts

4 - Do you make excuses or blame others for
their actions?

5 - Do you continue to endure chaos even though
it's destroying your family?



Reflecting on the 5 questions from the last activity

Here are a few more questions to think about



Photo Credits: Andrea Piacquadio

Why is it so hard to say NO when my family member is putting demands on me?

Take a look at the rest of your family. What does your role in their life look like?

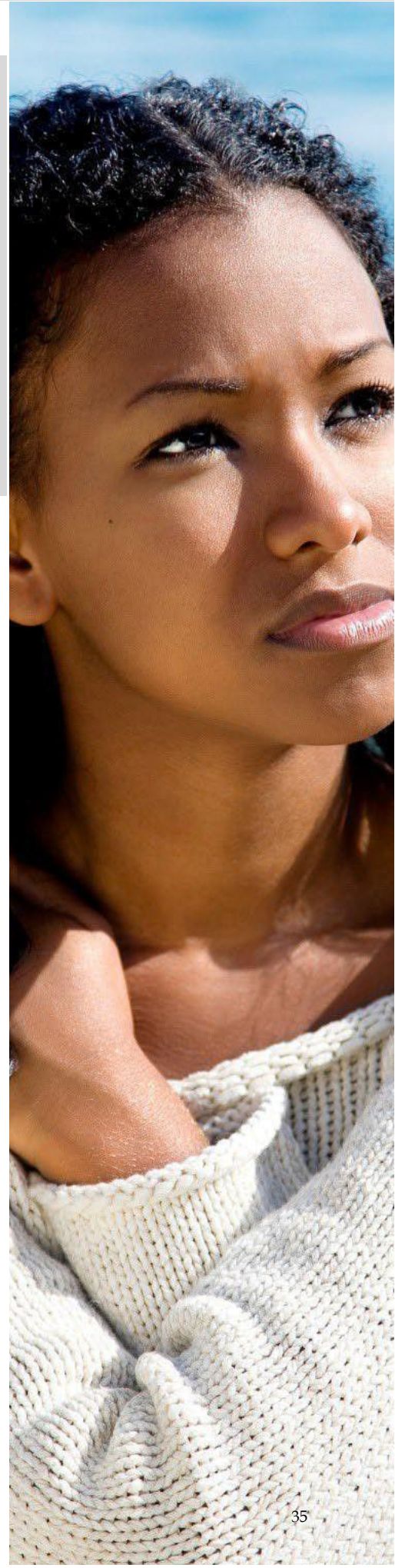
"It's not his/her fault". Do you have a story that sounds similar?

Are you living in chaos? Take a moment to think about your world and how your body may be responding and talking to you about the chronic stress and chaos?

Your Thoughts

Think of a time in your own life when you made a mistake. What were some of the consequences that happened because of this? What was the impact for you? What was the lesson for you? How did this experience change your life?

Did this moment add to your resilience and help you develop into a strong and capable person? And I know you are strong and a super caregiver/supporter because you are here and listening to this workshop.



Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Setting Up and Enforcing Boundaries



Photo Creds: Andrea Piacquadio

Setting up and enforcing boundaries – What this means is that your family member (or adult child) will need to start taking responsibility for their own health and life choices. Which is what I hope you want as much as I hope they want too.

Just remember what you learned from your own life experiences, and that adversity and hard times foster resiliency.

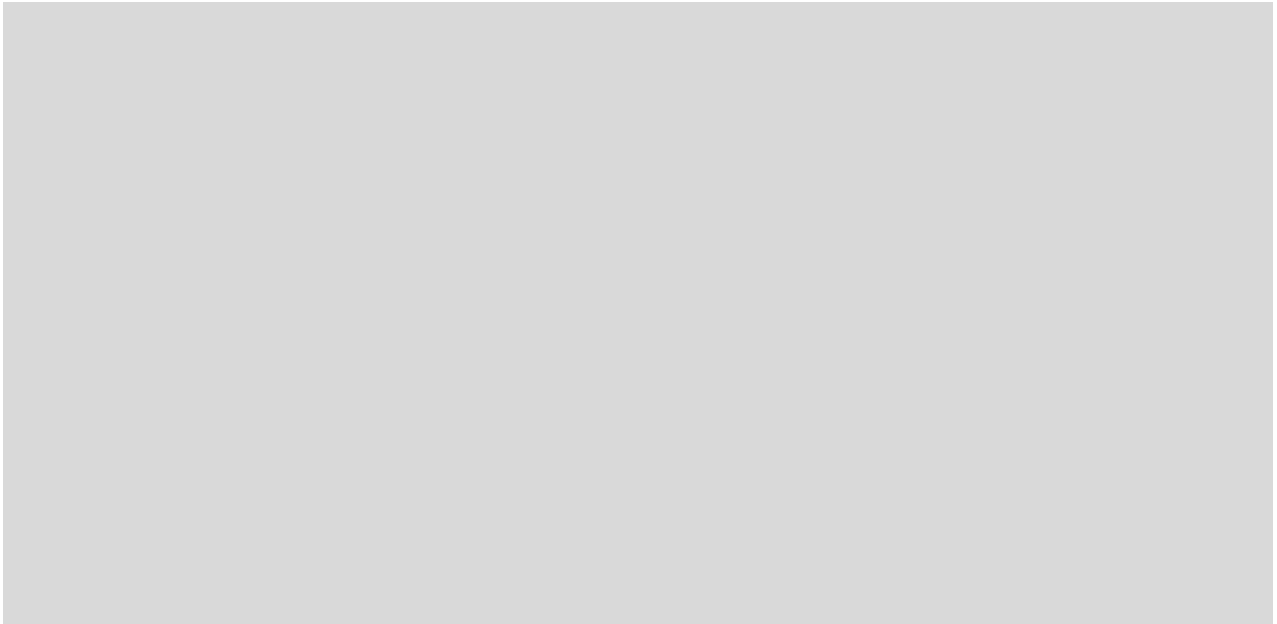
Change is difficult. It is natural that it will be difficult at first for you and for the family member you are supporting. You can love them unconditionally and enforce the limits and boundaries you set.

Is there a boundary you want to start with?

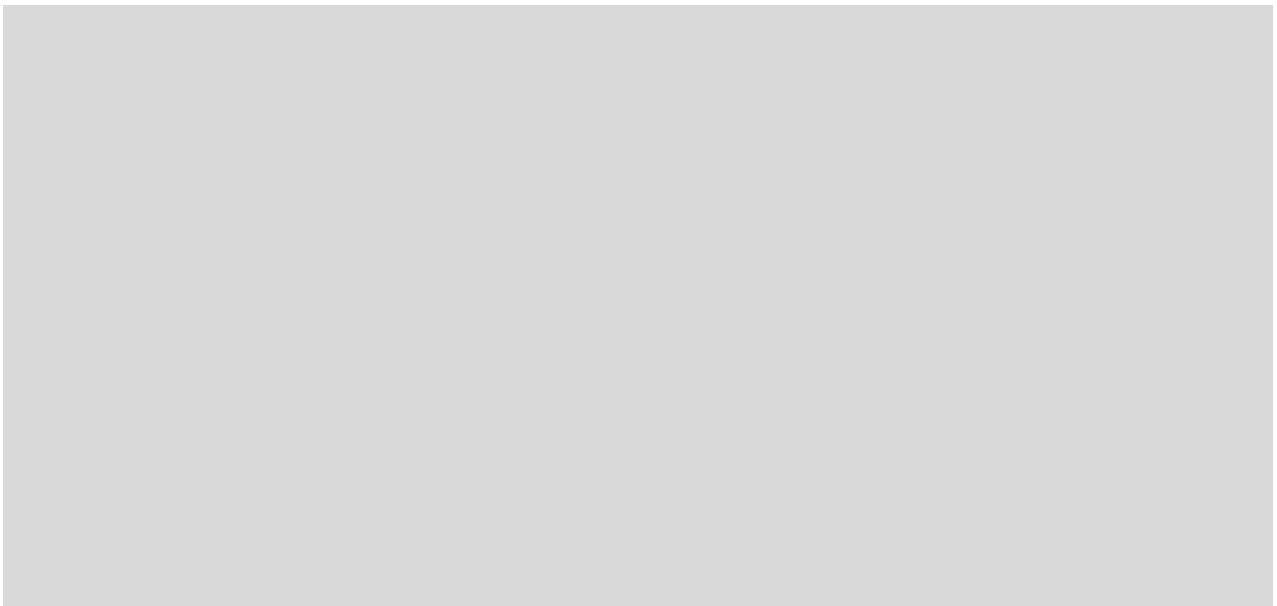
You may need help with this, and it is OK to reach out to others and ask for help for YOU.

Action Plan

What Boundary are You Thinking of Starting with? Set Your Intention for Change

A large, empty gray rectangular box intended for the user to write their response to the prompt above.

Make an Action Plan

A large, empty gray rectangular box intended for the user to write their response to the prompt above.

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Being a True Advocate
and a Great Supporter



Now that we have spent some time looking at being an enabler, let us reflect on being an advocate and a great supporter. If you want to be a great advocate and supporter, there are a few tips I would like to share.

First, we need to leave our enabling behaviors behind – we have already really explored what this looks like.

Second, we need to move away from our own agenda and the temptation to "fix, save, and solve." Here is what I mean by this. What we, as a caregiver or supporter, think recovery and wellness should look like for our struggling family member may look quite different from what they think of their recovery and wellness. Let us go a little deeper. How can we be a great supporter if our agenda and ideas about our family member's recovery and wellness are conflicted with their own ideas of recovery and wellness? This is often where a lot of the conflict begins.

Workbook Activity:

Reflect and makes notes on what comes up for you when you think of your agenda and the agenda of your family member. Ask yourself this – have you had a conversation where you have outright asked, "when you see yourself living your life and being happy, what does it look like? I would like to know more about this."

If you have had this conversation, what was your response? Positive? Dismissive?

What are Your Three Takeaways?



Photo Creds: Polina Zimmerman

Take some time to reflect and make notes on what this workshop has you thinking about in your own family's story?

one

two

three

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too

Thank you for spending time with us

Please check out our
other
workshops
in the family series

Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health




Workshop 2

Just for Caregivers

Slide Presentation.....	Page 42
Workbook	Page 45


[Link to Video](#)



Just For Caregivers

Yes, just for you!

1



Just for Care Givers

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- The importance of self-care and the impact this has on your family
- Your own path of recovery and wellness
- Managing shame, blame and other negative emotions

2



Why This is Important

3

Just For Caregivers


(yes, just for you)

- The Importance of Self-Care, a Necessity, Not a Luxury
- Walking Your Own Path to Recovery and Wellness
- Are You Living with Shame, Blame, Fear, and Anger? Tips and Tools to Let Go of Negative Emotions

4

The Importance of Self-Care

A Necessity Not a Luxury



5

5 Benefits of Self-Care for You and Your Family

6



Photo Credit: Gregor, Lee

Walking Your Own Path of Recovery and Wellness

7

Family Recovery Definition

“The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member’s path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one’s illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness.

• MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

8



Photo Credit: Bender

Walking Your Own Path of Recovery and Wellness

Tips and Tools

9



Photo Credit: Andrew Hall

Are You Living with Shame, Blame, Fear, and Anger?

10



Photo Credit: Pedro Zamora

Tips and Tools for Letting Go of Negative Emotions

11

You Are Not Alone

The Journeys of Other Families


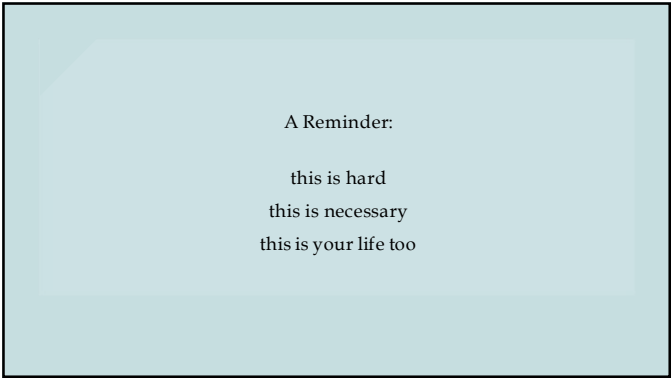


Photo Credit: Andrea D'Agostino

12



13



14

Workbook:
Just for Caregivers
Yes, Just for You!





Just For Caregivers

(Yes, just for you)

Here we go...

Welcome to our second workshop. We are glad you are here.

This workshop was written through our lived experience of when the early days of our family's mental health journey began. Through sharing our stories and the stories of others, our hope is that you will find some support for yourself as you begin to make sense of what your family is going through.

In this workshop, we will look at the necessity of self-care and why this is so important, not only for you, but also for your family. We will identify your own path of recovery and wellness, what this looks like, and why this is a path that is just for you.

Finally, we will identify the negative feelings that caregivers often struggle with: shame, blame, fear, and anger, where these feelings come from, and why sometimes we cannot shake them.

In the first workshop, we introduced you to peer support, and like anything with peer support, we are sharing what worked for us. Our hope is that you might choose to explore if peer support is the right fit for you.

Please remember, we are family peer support workers who are sharing our lived expertise. And through our sharing, we offer hope if that is something you are looking for.

- Charlotte & Kirsten

What do I do Now?

In this workshop, we will look at the necessity of self-care, and why this is so important not only for you but for your entire family. We will identify your own path of recovery and wellness, what this looks like and why this is a path just for you.

Finally, we will identify the negative feelings that caregivers often struggle with: shame, blame, fear, and anger, where these feelings come from, and why sometimes we cannot shake them.

- ▶ The Importance of Self-Care, a Necessity, Not a Luxury
- ▶ Walking Your Own Path to Recovery and Wellness
- ▶ Are You Living with Shame, Blame, Fear, and Anger? Tips and Tools to Let Go of Negative Emotions

Take a Few Minutes and Reflect on These Questions:

1. What Brought You Here Today?
2. What's Happening in the Here and Now For You?
3. What are You Hoping to Take Away from This Workshop?

The Importance of Self-Care

A Necessity Not a Luxury



What comes up for you when you think of your own self-care or lack of it?

Can you relate to my own story?

How would you define self-care?

5 Benefits of Self-Care for You and Your Family

- 1) **Risk reduction.** You reduce your risk of illness regarding both physical and mental health. If you are not well, you cannot give your family the best version of you.
- 2) **Wellbeing.** Restoring your health and wellbeing will help you live the life you desire, and your family will receive the best of you.
- 3) **Improving relationships.** Reducing battle fatigue will improve family relationships – if you are struggling under chronic stress and battle fatigue, you are likely exhausted, irritable, overwhelmed, unhappy, and may even be experiencing depression and/or anxiety. Under these circumstances, your own family relationships become stressed and are negatively impacted. Through the ongoing practice of self-care, you are less likely to have battle fatigue and more likely to have healthier family relationships.
- 4) **Enhancing Self.** Enhancing the "whole" you. When we have more energy, are happy, have hope, feel well and whole, we have the capacity to be a great support not only to our family member, but in all areas of our life. Think about it, if we have the ability to not simply react, what would our life look like?
- 5) **Healthy lifestyle.** Be a role model –for your entire family as well as the family member who is experiencing a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis. Modeling a healthy, active and nurturing lifestyle will benefit you, your family member, as well as your entire family.

The key message I really want to drive home here is this – self-care is not selfish or self-indulgent. Self-care is an act of survival. A necessity, not a luxury. AND it is a gift you give to your entire family – the best version of you.

Workbook Activity:

On the next page, please take a moment to think about your own self-care.

Let's Pause & Reflect

Please take some time and reflect on your own self-care. Make notes on what a self-care practice looks like for you.

Space for Notes:



We encourage you to create a self-care plan in the space provided on the next page, and to share this plan with a friend or family member. When we share a plan or a wish with another, it is more likely to come true or be put into action.

Weekly Self Care Planner



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY/ SUNDAY

Family Recovery Definition

“The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member’s path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one’s illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness.”

MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Pause & Reflect:

Please write what comes up for you as you read this definition.

What do I do Now?

There are three main tips we would like to share with you. Please add what you are thinking as you read this.

Walking Your Own Path of Recovery and Wellness

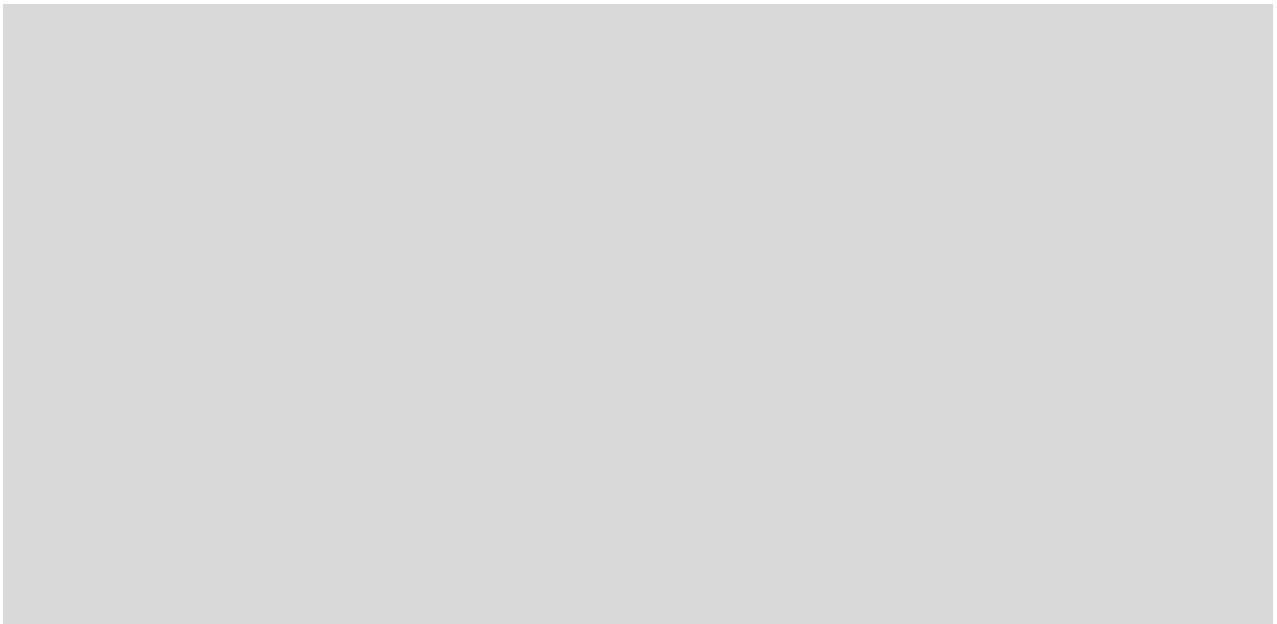
We wish we had received these tips years ago!

1. Listen to what your body and gut are telling you.
2. Ask for help and be open to support.
3. Find a community.

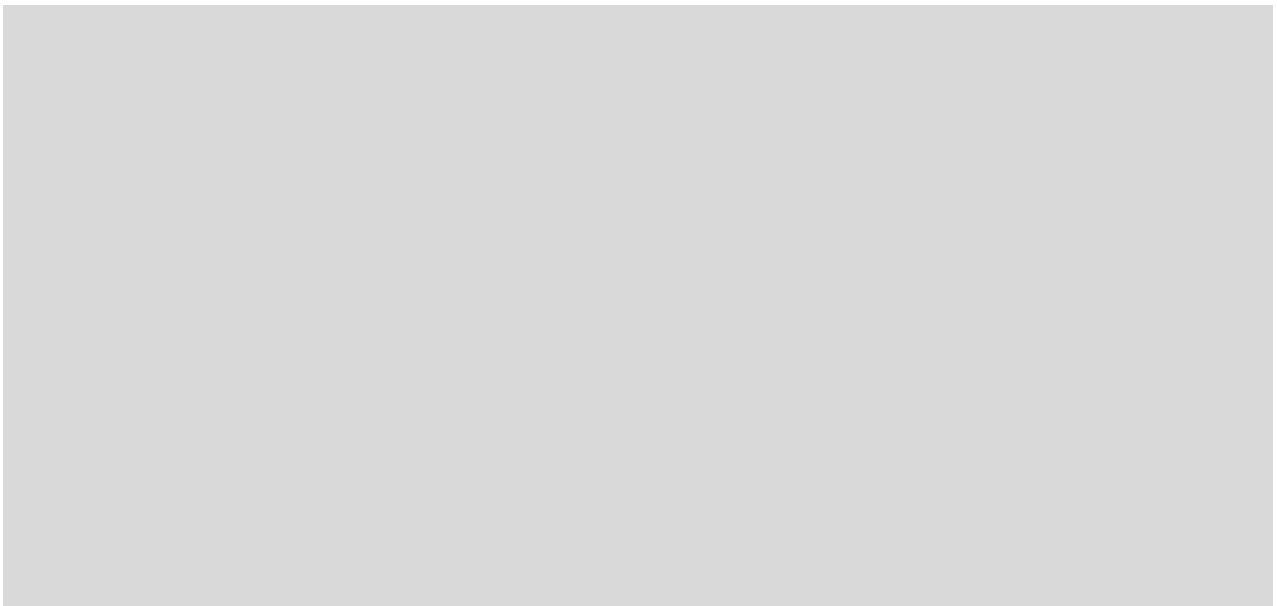
Action Plan

Looking at the three tips on the previous page

Set Your Intention for Change



Into an Action Plan





Are You Living with Shame, Blame, Fear, and Anger?

We were living in it too

Shame, blame, fear and anger were all the emotions I cast upon myself through my own narrative. I convinced myself for years that my daughter's mental health challenge was a direct result of my failure as a parent.

Workbook Activity:

Think about how these emotions come up for you when you think of your own family's story.

Do you struggle with shame? If so, is this an internal source of shame or external?

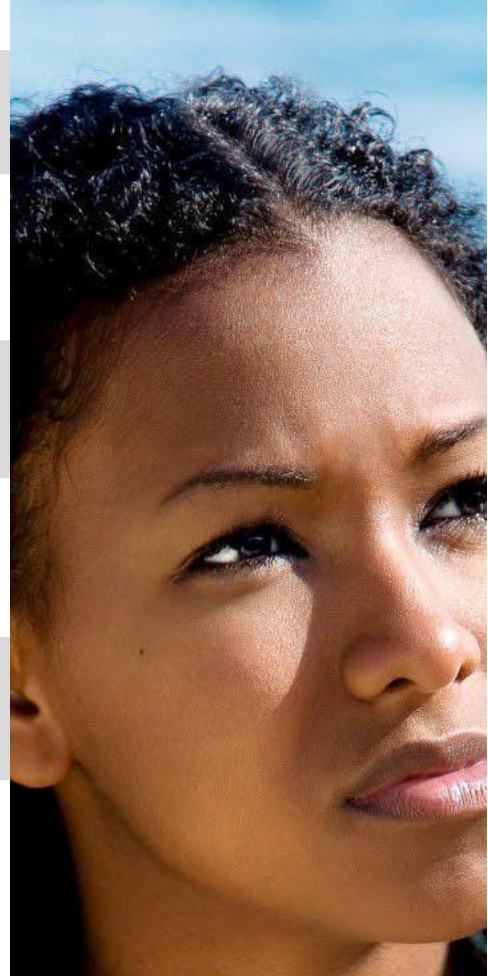
Can you identify specifically what has you feeling shameful in relation to your role as a caregiver/ supporter?

Do you blame yourself or others for your family member's mental health challenge/ illness or dual diagnosis? If yes, can you be specific?

Your Thoughts

Do you live in fear of the future? Are you foreboding today in fear of tomorrow's unknown?

How does anger come up for you in your family's story? Are you angry?



What do I do Now?

Some tips and tools
for promoting
our own emotional wellness

Tips and Tools for Letting Go of Negative Emotions

- 1) **Know it is ok to have both positive and negative feelings.** As a caregiver, you will have a plethora of feelings at times; this makes sense, given all that is happening. **Sharing with your support system is healthy.** Try not to harbor these negative feelings. Sharing can release the intensity and the hold that these feelings may have on you.
- 2) Focus on what **YOU** can do to promote your emotional wellbeing. Not what others should or could do. **Remember, you can only control YOU.** The change you are looking for starts here with your own actions.
- 3) **Be kind to yourself.** Learn to treat yourself with the same love and respect that you treat others in your life that you care about.
- 4) **Learn to forgive** – both yourself and others. Let go of harbored negative feelings you have towards others. This serves no one and will only cause you grief and be emotionally draining. Learning to let go and to move on is a gift you give yourself.
- 5) **Give yourself space** – space and time to feel whatever emotions you have. Sit with it. Take time to heal. And time to bounce back and move on. Remember, there is no right or wrong when it comes to your feelings. You are allowed to have your feelings. Whatever that may be.

For us, we wish we had these 5 tips years ago.

Today we still consciously try to honor them and do a "check-in" with them from time to time.

We hope you find this information as helpful as we do.

What are Your Three Takeaways?



Photo Credits: Polina Zimmerman

Take some time to reflect and make notes on what this workshop has you thinking about in your own family's story?

One

Two

Three

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too

Thank you for spending time with us

Please check out our
other
workshops
in the family series

Just For Caregivers

Yes, just for you!



Workshop 3

True Connections Through Communication

Slide Presentation.....	Page 61
Workbook.....	Page 65

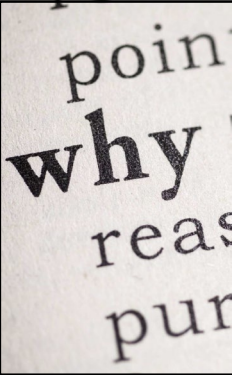
[Link to Video](#)



True Connections Through Communication


Nurturing Healthy Relationships

1



Why is this important?

2



True Connections Through Communication;
Nurturing Healthy Relationships

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- Basic communication concepts and strategies for your family
- Steps you can take to build your communication confidence
- Supporting with understanding
- How to tackle hard conversations and talk about the "S" word

3

Communication Strategies for Families

- Supporting with Understanding
- Family Experiences of the Communication Journey
- Talking About the "S" Word (Suicide and Self-Harm)

4

Communication Basics



5

Communication Barriers

6



Photo Credit: Anna Shvets

Communication Barriers

Giving Advice	Patronizing
Arguing	Responding Sarcastically
Assuming	Shaming
Using But Statements	Using Threatening Responses
Digging For Information	Being Abrupt*
Guilt and Blaming	Using a Negative Tone of Voice
Minimizing	Being Distracted
Using Persuasion	Crossing Arms*
Using Should Statements	Looking Away*
Asking Why Questions	Yawning, Shaking Head

*Culturally Dependent

7

What Discourages Communication?

8

What Encourages Communication?

9



Photo Credit: Anna Shvets

How to Encourage Communication

Asking Open Ended Questions	Asking When Unsure
Letting them Lead	Being Passionately Curious
Summarizing	Mirroring Back
Allowing Silences and Pauses	Paraphrasing
Using a Calm Tone of Voice	Encouraging Mutuality
Using Open Body Language	Seeking Clarification - Ask
Listening Fully - Being Present	Checking In and Getting Feedback
Validating Often	Listening to Understand
Highlighting Successes	

10

What Encourages Communication?

11



Photo Credit: Pedro Brandman

Communication Strategies for Families

12



13



**Communication
Strategies for
Families**

14



**Supporting with
Understanding**

15



16

**Talking About the
"S" Word (Suicide
and Self Harm)**

Communication in a Crisis



17

**Talking About
the "S" Word
(Suicide and
Self Harm)**

Hard Conversations



18

Family Experiences on the Communication Journey



Photo Credit: Celine

19

A Reminder:

this is hard


this is necessary

this is your life too


20

True Connections Through Communication

Nurturing Healthy Relationships



info@nayspress.com



cafe.center@gmail.com

21

Workbook: True Connections Through Communication



Here we go...



True Connections Through Communication

Nurturing Healthy Relationships

Welcome to our third workshop. We are glad you are here.

This workshop was written through our lived experience of when the early days of our family's mental health journey began. Through sharing our stories and the stories of others, our hope is that you will find some support for yourself as you begin to make sense of what your family is going through.

In this workshop we are going to look at effective communication strategies and skills for families. We will also explore what it means to support with understanding. We are also going to tackle how to talk about the "S" word (suicide and self-harm).

In the first workshop we introduced you to peer support, and like anything with peer support, we are sharing what worked for us. Our hope is that you might choose to explore if peer support is the right fit for you.

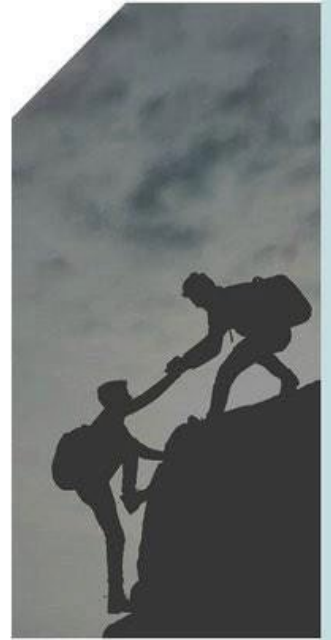
Please remember, we are family peer support workers who are sharing our lived expertise. And through our sharing, we offer hope if that is something you are looking for.

- Charlotte & Kirsten

What do I do Now?

In this workshop you will be introduced to the power of family peer support and its role in your family's recovery story.

You will look at the complications that may arise when a family is struggling with both a mental health challenge/illness and with communication barriers.



Take a Few Minutes and Reflect on These Questions :

1. What Brought You Here Today?

2. What's Happening in the Here and Now for You?

3. What are You Hoping to Take Away From This Workshop?

Communication Strategies for Families

- Supporting with Understanding
- Family Experiences of the Communication Journey
- Talking About the "S" Word (Suicide and Self-Harm)

Topics We Will Cover

Have you really ever thought about how you communicate?

How do you listen?

How do you speak?

Workbook Activity:

What are you thinking as you read these questions

Communication Basics



Context – have you ever heard the phrase "that was taken out of context?" Typically, this is where communication can go off the rails quickly. What is context? It is where you are coming from, and it shapes everything in communication. It is the situation, and your view of the situation. Often the person speaking and the person listening are coming from different points of context. To embrace and maintain healthy communication, it is critical that you are both coming from the same context. Here are a few moving parts of communication to think about.

Message – this is exactly that, the message being delivered. It is important that the message is clear and fulfilling the intention of the sender. Remember, I touched on having the best of intentions when communicating. Well, if the message is unclear, the intention of the message is lost.

Medium – in today's world, we not only communicate in a verbal manner, but we also communicate in non-verbal ways, such as written, texts, emails, Snapchat, and I may be missing a few. Here we are missing the cues of body language, facial expression, tone or pace of voice. In this case, context is assumed but rarely set up. When there is no emotional or verbal component, there is lots of room for misinterpretation.

Receiver/Decoder - The person receiving the message (could be text or verbal). This is the person listening or receiving a text or email. Their mood or whatever is happening in their life at the time may influence their context or interpretation of the message.

Something to Ponder

The next few pages are more information about communication basics. As you read through this, please reflect on your family story when you think of communication components.

Are any of these components speaking to you?

Are there any components that you need to spend more time working on?

Can you identify any barriers in your own family's communication?

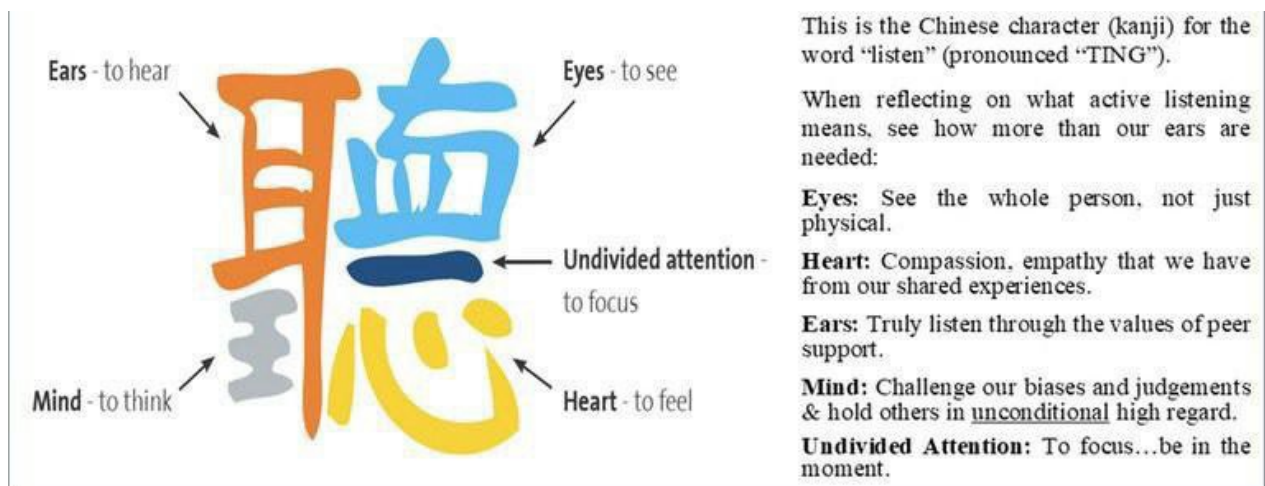
WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION?

Listening: The most important element of communication is listening. However, most people do not fully listen to someone speaking to them. Why? Because often we are concerned about what we are going to say back and listen only to part of what is being said and then are thinking about what to say back. This results in misinterpretation and an experience of not being heard for the speaker.

Undivided Attention: To focus...be in the

As a family member, it is critical to develop great listening skills known as "active listening." Active listening is the ability to focus completely on the person, understand their message, comprehend the information and respond thoughtfully. Not listening well can cause disconnection, resulting in a feeling of being dismissed and not feeling cared about, and can result in the other family member shutting down. Please remember to listen to understand rather than listen to respond.

I love this Chinese character for the word "listen," and I thought I would share it with you. It is a reminder for me to give it my ALL when I am listening.



Speaking: Speaking is complex. It is more than just words and includes other elements, such as tone of voice, volume and pace. You can emphasize something in speaking with tone or volume and it alters the message.

As a family member, you will want to pay attention to what you are saying and how you are saying it. If you speak too quickly, too loudly, or too quietly, you risk not getting your intended message across. And people are often embarrassed that they did not hear you or get your message, so they don't ask. Think before you speak, and take your time to make sure the other family member heard you and really understood what you were saying.

Body Language: Body language speaks. Remember body language is culturally sensitive, and we are speaking from a western culture lens: If you lean in, it is seen as encouraging. If you lean back, it is seen as being disengaged. If you cross your arms across your chest, it is seen as protecting yourself or closed off. If you are tapping your foot or hand or an object, it gives the message of impatience and discourages complete conversation.

Another important nonverbal cue we give in communication is our facial expression. Imagine being engaged in a conversation with a family member who has a look of disgust or dismay, shakes their head, taps their foot and has their arms crossed. How likely would you be to open up and really share yourself?

Tone of Voice: Calm, panic, anger, excitement, annoyance, etc. are all conveyed by tone of voice. It is important to pay attention to your tone of voice so that you are conveying the emotion you intend to.

Words: Did you know that words only account for approximately 7% of interpersonal communication? All the other elements play large parts in communication, but that does not mean that what you say is not important. It is, and you will want to make sure you are clear in what you are saying.

In written communication, such as email or text, words have a huge impact because you do not have the other elements to rely on. When you are writing to someone, read it aloud and make sure you are clear in what you are saying. If people call or email back to clarify frequently, you are likely not very clear in your written communication and should have someone listen or read what you wrote to support you in becoming clear in your message.

Workbook Activity:

What are your thoughts on effective communication?

Communication Barriers

Let us identify and talk about barriers

On the next few pages, we dive deeper into some barriers to communication.

- 1) **Misinterpretation or assuming a meaning.** This is going back to context. When we misinterpret context or make assumptions before we take the time to fully understand the facts and the intent, well, your conversation and attempt at healthy communication will likely fail.
- 2) **Dismissing or ignoring what is being said.** I think this one is obvious. Dismissive actions and reactions will put an abrupt halt to communication.
- 3) **Interrupting or jumping to your own conclusions.** Are you doing this? This, too, will put an abrupt halt to communication.
- 4) **Giving unsolicited advice or rapid-fire questioning.** Think about a time when a conversation went sideways. Were you putting forth unsolicited advice or interrogating through questioning? Maybe you were trying to fix, save or solve? I get that, and I have done this myself. Now think about that same conversation. What if you did not try to fix or solve? What if you did not ask interrogating questions? Maybe your conversation would have taken a different path than it did.
- 5) **Listening to argue, make a point, or preoccupation with your perfect response.** Have you ever been in a hard conversation? Maybe it was heated, and you were not really listening to understand, but rather listening to respond. I know I certainly have. This is definitely a barrier. We are going to talk more about the art of truly listening later in this unit.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

One of the most prominent barriers to effective communication is a lack of awareness. Having "blind spots" about your personal communication barriers can prevent the development of communication in your family.

Like any other ability, learning how to communicate effectively takes practice. To develop effective communication skills requires awareness, a learning mindset, openness to feedback and the opportunity to practice.

Spend some time reflecting on your own communication style and any areas you are aware of that you would like to improve. Practice these tips and tools with someone you are comfortable with, whose opinion you value, and who has developed the skill you are working on.

In the beginning of this workbook on page 13, we shared what the peer support values are and how important they are in supporting a person. Here are how the peer support values show up in communication. And we love to bring our peer support training into the family.

Aligning the Components of Communication with Peer Support Values: Hope and Recovery Common Context for the Dialogue

Peer Support Values

Empathetic and equal relationships
Self-determination
Dignity, respect and social inclusion
Integrity, authenticity and trust
Health and wellness
Lifelong learning and personal growth

Components of Communication

Connects with your intention in communicating
Relevant to both intention and feedback
Applies to all areas of effective communication
Applies to all areas of effective communication
Common context for the dialogue
Feedback and ongoing learning

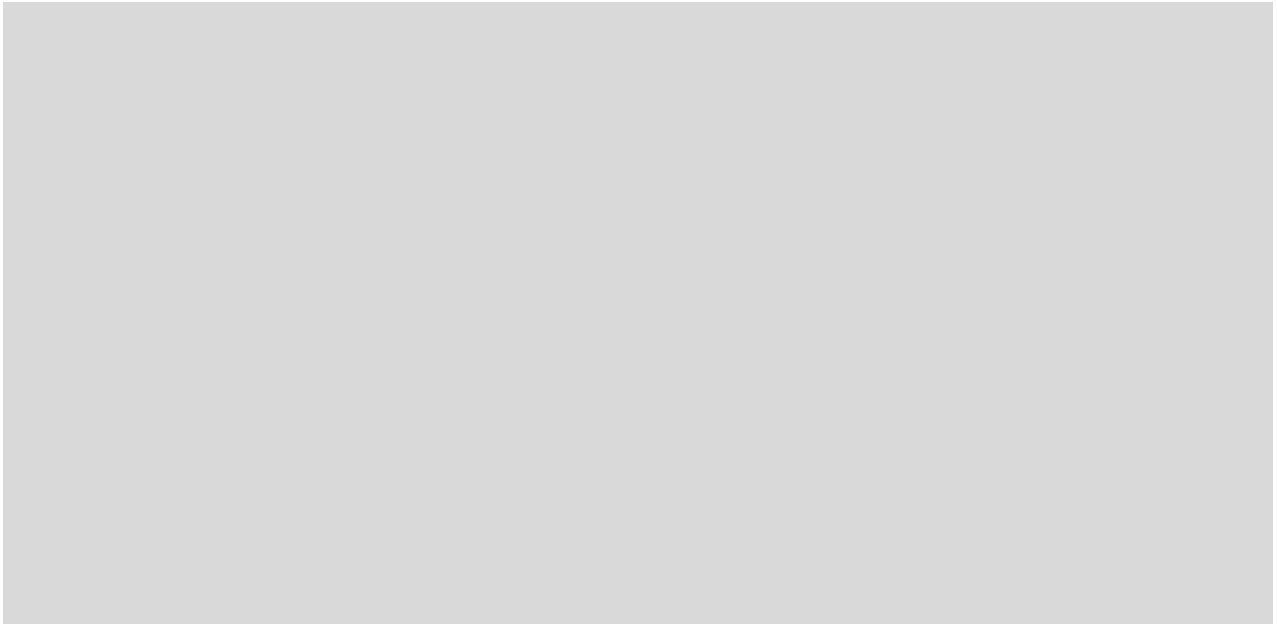
Workbook Activity:

What are your thoughts on the part you play in your family's communication story? Think about the changes you would like to see within you. On the next page is a place to put this change into action.

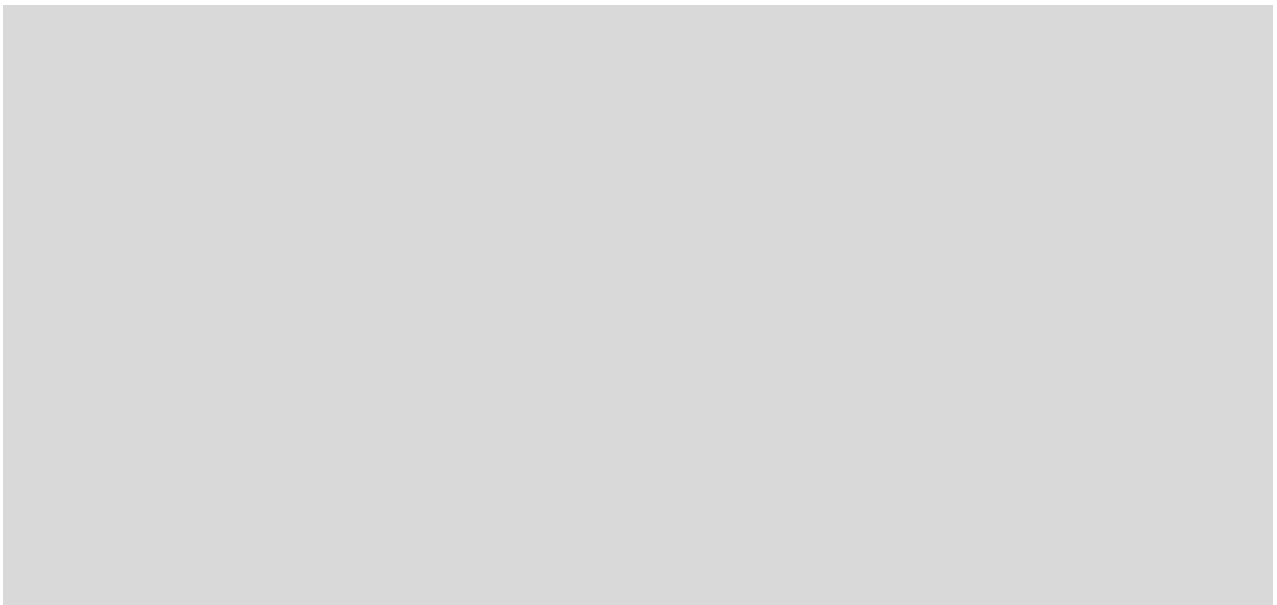
Action Plan

List changes you would like to see within yourself.
How can you put these changes in action?

Set Your Intention for Change



Into an Action Plan



Communication Barriers



Photo Credits: Anna Shvets

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ➤ Giving Advice | ➤ Patronizing |
| ➤ Arguing | ➤ Responding Sarcastically |
| ➤ Assuming | ➤ Shaming |
| ➤ Using But Statements | ➤ Using Threatening Responses |
| ➤ Digging For Information | ➤ Being Abrupt* |
| ➤ Guilting and Blaming | ➤ Using a Negative Tone of Voice |
| ➤ Minimizing | ➤ Being Distracted |
| ➤ Using Persuasion | ➤ Crossing Arms* |
| ➤ Using Should Statements | ➤ Looking Away* |
| ➤ Asking Why Questions | ➤ Yawning, Shaking Head |

*Culturally Dependent

The point I really want to make is that barriers can breakdown communication fast and hard. Sometimes we do not even see the barriers that we are putting up. Barriers in communication can result in barriers with trust and connection.

Workbook Activity:
Your thoughts on barriers.

How to Encourage Communication



Photo Credits: Anna Shvets

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Asking Open Ended Questions | Asking When Unsure |
| Letting them Lead | Being Passionately Curious |
| Summarizing | Mirroring Back |
| Allowing Silences and Pauses | Paraphrasing |
| Using a Calm Tone of Voice | Encouraging Mutuality |
| Using Open Body Language | Seeking Clarification - Ask |
| Listening Fully - Being Present | Checking In and Getting Feedback |
| Validating Often | Listening to Understand |
| Highlighting Successes | |

Workbook Activity:

Use this space to write what you are thinking when looking at this list.

"IT'S NOT ABOUT THE NAIL" VIDEO

For us to focus on the nail, even as obvious as it is to us in this video, is not meeting your family member where they are at. To the woman in this video there was something beyond the nail that was happening for her. If there is a “nail” in your family member's life and you can explore this with them and not jump to even the most obvious assumptions, well, you may begin to understand the less obvious.

Workbook Activity:

Use this space to write what you are thinking when watching this video in relation to your own family's communication story.



Photo Credits: Theo
Decker

Supporting with Understanding

Let us look at Supporting with Understanding and how it ties into effective communication. We already touched on this a little with communication skills. For the purpose of this unit, we define Supporting with Understanding as this – through a supportive and non-judgmental approach, combined with effective communication skills, a family member empowers and supports their person on a path to wellness.

Supporting with Understanding requires Empathy, Curiosity, Mutuality and Collaboration, and it fosters Connection. Let me break this down a bit.

Empathy: Feeling with someone as opposed to feeling sorry for someone.

Curiosity: We have already talked about this. It is being passionately curious to know more about your family member and explore their thoughts and ideas. Ideally, curiosity fosters empowerment.

Mutuality: The sharing of a feeling, experience or sharing of a relationship between you and your family member that upholds respect and trust. No one is more or less than the other.

Collaboration: Meeting your family member "where they are at" and working "with" or beside them. Never leading or working from your own agenda.

Connection: This is created naturally when you support with understanding. This part is easy. It just kind of happens when we support with understanding. Connection is you and your family member no longer feeling a disconnect or alone. You have each other and the connection is real.

EMPATHY VIDEO

The key messages that stand out for me are the four Qualities of Empathy that Brené describes.

- 1) Perspective taking. The ability to take the perspective of another person or recognize their perspective as their truth.
- 2) Staying out of judgement. Not always easy to do.
- 3) Recognizing emotion in other people and then communicating that.
- 4) Empathy. Feeling with people. Connecting with something in yourself that knows that feeling.

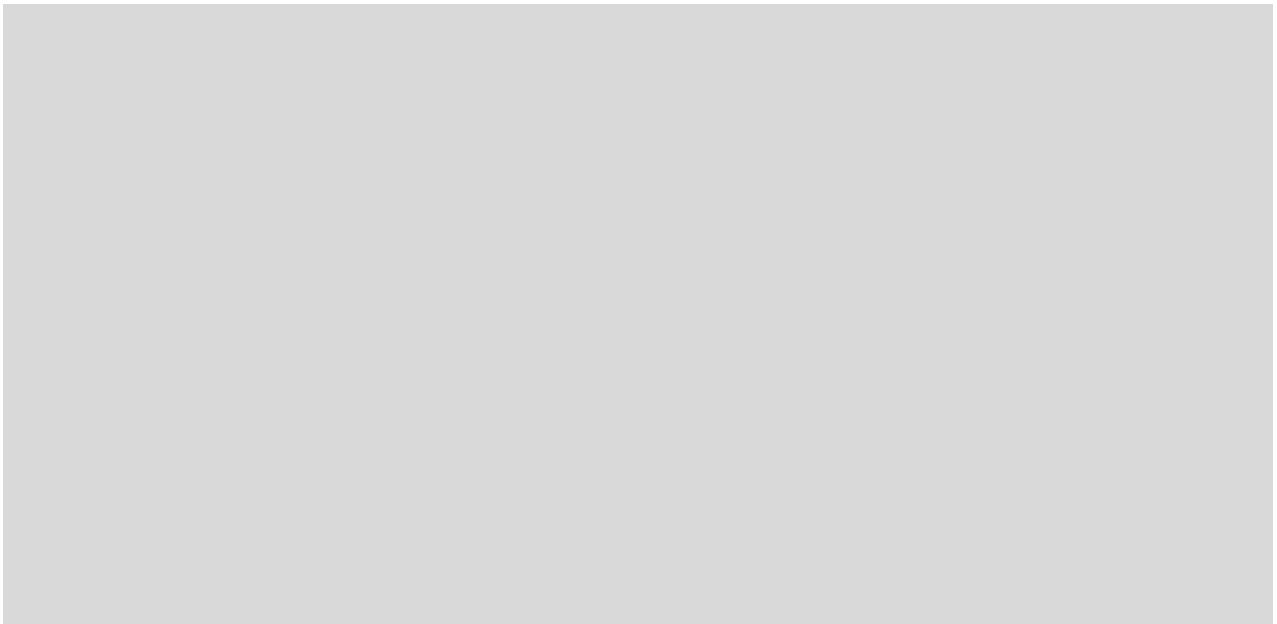
Workbook Activity:

Use this space to write what you are thinking when watching this video in relation to your own family's communication story. The next page has a place to write the steps you will take to put into action.

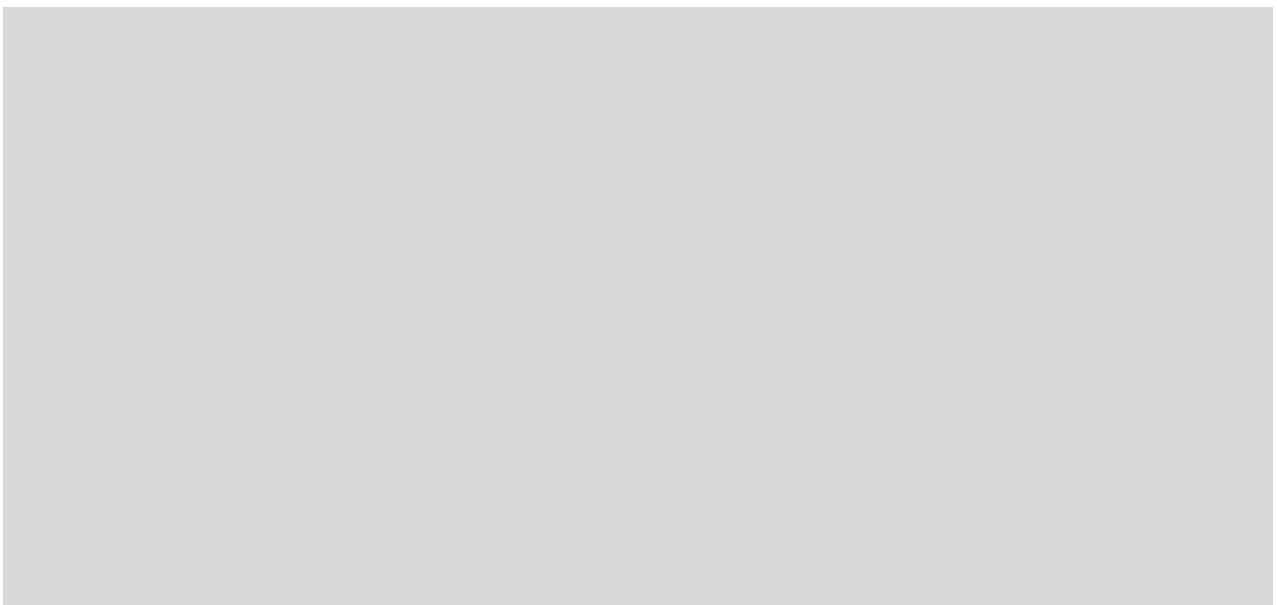
Action Plan

Make an action plan here of steps you are going to take to improve your own communication skills and to support with understanding

Set Your Intention for Change



Into an Action Plan



Talking About the "S" Word (Suicide and Self Harm)

Communication in a Crisis



Photo Credits: Polina Zimmerman

For most of us, talking about the S word, suicide, or self-harm, is hard and makes us uncomfortable, especially with a family member that is experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harm.

I totally get it. I have been there. Just to be clear, I am not a clinician. I am not suggesting that you do not need to seek additional supports from health professionals. What I do want you to think about is just being in a conversation with your family member. What may that look like? How could this conversation have a positive impact on the situation at hand? How could this perhaps create positive change?

This unit takes me back to a time early on in my family's story. I was really struggling to make sense of how or why my daughter had thoughts of the "S" word. Did you know there is no evidence to support that talking to someone in the context of care, in a supportive, respectful and preventative way, increases that individual's risk of suicide or self-harming behaviors?

Having these hard conversations in the scope of healthy communication and from the stance of supporting with understanding is not going to plant suicidal thoughts in your person's head. We can have these hard conversations. Perhaps with a better understanding of the situation, looking at our own communication skills, and with the insight from a person (such as myself or other family peer supporters) with lived experience, you will feel more confident to talk about the "S" word.

Let's Pause & Reflect

Here is a space to write down your thoughts as we talked about the "S" word.

Space for Notes:



Photo Credit: Cottonbro

What are Your Three Takeaways?



Photo Credits: Polina Zimmerman

Take some time to reflect and make note on what this workshop has you thinking about in your own family's story?

one

two

three

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too

Thank you for spending time with us

Please check out our
other
workshops
in the family series

True Connections Through Communication

Nurturing Healthy Relationships



Workshop 4

Mental Health Recovery & the Role of Families in the Recovery Process


Slide Presentation.....	Page 88
Workbook	Page 91

[Link to Video](#)



Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

1



Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- Recovery and Wellness, what it is and is not
- The foundations of Recovery and Wellness
- How to stay in the role as a supporter and let go of your agenda
- Family recovery and what that looks like for you

2




Why This is Important in Families

3

Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

- Foundations for Recovery and Wellness
- How to Stay in the Supporting Role and Letting Go of Your Own Agenda

4



SAMHSA has developed a working definition and set of principles for recovery.

Recovery is defined as: "A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential."

5

6

Foundations
for Recovery
and Wellness




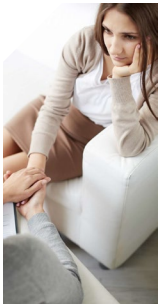
Photo Credit: Anna Shvets

7

Foundations for
Recovery and
Wellness

- Resiliency
- Hope
- Empowerment

8



Looking at my own
recovery and its
relationship to the
family member I
support

Photo Credit: Daria Kuznetsov

9

Family Recovery Definition

"The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member's path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one's illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness."

MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

10

How to Stay in the
Supporting Role
and Letting Go of
Your Own Agenda



Photo Credit: Anastasia Blazynski

11



How to Stay in
the Supporting
Role and Letting
Go of Your Own
Agenda

Photo Credit: Polina Zemanova

12

The Journey of Recovery of Other Families




Photo Credit: Light House

13

A Reminder:


this is hard

this is necessary


this is y our life too

14

Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process



info@nabypress.com



cafe.center@gmail.com

15

Workbook:
Mental Health Recovery and
the Role of Families in the Recovery Process





Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

Here we go...

Welcome to our fourth workshop. We are glad you are

This workshop was written through our lived experience of when the early days of our family's mental health journey began. Through sharing our stories and the stories of others, our hope is that you will find some support for yourself as you begin to make sense of what your family is going through.

In this workshop our hope is that you will gain a better understanding of recovery and wellness and what that looks like for your family member, your entire family and for you. We will look at the foundations of recovery and how you can uphold the core components of recovery through your own actions. We will also address that YOU have your own recovery and wellness processes that is equally as important.

In the first workshop we introduced you to peer support, and like anything with peer support, we are sharing what worked for us. Our hope is that you might choose to explore if peer support is the right fit for you.

Please remember, we are family peer support workers who are sharing our lived expertise. And through our sharing, we offer hope if that is something you are looking for.

- Charlotte & Kirsten

What do I do Now?

In this workshop, we will look at the foundations for recovery and wellness. How recovery is defined by the individual and by the family plays a critical role in the recovery process. We will have a hard look at our "own agenda" and how this agenda may be hampering the recovery process for the entire family. Finally, we will discuss and define the role of a "supporter" on the family's recovery and wellness journey.

- Foundations for Recovery and Wellness
- How to Stay in the Supporting Role and Letting Go of Your Own Agenda

Take a Few Minutes and Reflect on These Questions :

1. What Brought You Here Today?
2. What's Happening in the Here and Now for You?
3. What are You Hoping to Take Away from This Workshop?

Something to Ponder

Think of a time when you had to recover from something in your life that was not mental health related. Such as a breakup, a loss of job, a death, a great disappointment or perhaps a sickness

Please write about this time and what you are thinking about as you read the question.

Can you think of what hindered and what helped you through this time?

Were there any skills or tools that helped you navigate this difficult time?

Foundations for Recovery and Wellness



Workbook Activity:

Please reflect on your thoughts around recovery after you watched the video.

Foundations for Recovery and Wellness

- ▶ **Resiliency**
- ▶ **Hope**
- ▶ **Empowerment**

Resiliency, Hope and Empowerment are three core recovery components that a supporting family member can nurture.

Resiliency is our ability to bounce back during hard times. Some days we have more, and some days we have less. It is our ability to appropriately adapt to stress and adversity. The thing about resiliency is it is fostered and learned through adversity. And adversity is hard.

Hope is the thing that is going to be better than the "now," especially in hard times. Hope is the motivator for change. Hope is not tangible. You cannot see it or deliver it to someone. AND I do believe that hope can be somewhat contagious, just as hopelessness can be contagious, too. When our family member is losing or has lost hope, we can hold hope for them as a supporter.

Empowerment is something within. Others can support us to feel empowered. It is a strength within that fosters hope and the belief that you CAN do as opposed to you CAN' T do. Since recovery is self- directed and self-determined it make sense that empowerment is an important component of recovery and the family recovery story.

Workbook Activity:

A Place to write your thoughts when you think of resiliency, hope and empowerment.

Something to Ponder

Please answer the questions in this order and take all the time to you need to reflect and write your thoughts.

What does recovery and wellbeing look like to you for your family member who is struggling with a mental health challenge/illness?

What does recovery and wellbeing look like for yourself? Yes, I mean just you. This may be the first time you are thinking about this and that is ok.

Can you be in a place of recovery and wellbeing even if your family member is not?

Family Recovery Definition

“The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member’s path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one’s illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness.”

MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Workbook Activity:

What are your thoughts as you read this definition.

Workbook Activity:

Here is a list of open ended questions. They are there as suggestions on how to get started. I encourage you to take some time and reflect on what questions may work for you with your family member. This exercise is intended to get you thinking about starting your own family's collaborative process.

What does recovery or wellbeing look like for you?

What are your dreams for your life?

What steps do you see ahead of you that will help you achieve your dreams?

What does that feel like? I would like to hear more about that.

Could you say more ...?

I wonder why ...?

Is it possible to ...?

What would it be like to ...?

What could happen if ...?

What is it that you like about that ...?

What if ____ wasn't in the way?

What did you think about when you were 10?

Would it be different if you didn't have a diagnosis? How? Why?

When did you start feeling this way?

What was happening around the time you started feeling this way?

Is this the first time you've felt this way?

If they have felt this before, has anything been helpful in the past?

Is this a new experience for you, feeling the way you do now?

Is there anything else going on that may be affecting you?

Can you tell me more about (insert smaller part of the story)?

What are Your Three Takeaways?



Photo Credits: Polina Zimmerman

Take some time to reflect and make note on what this workshop has you thinking about in your own family's story?

one

two

three

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too

Thank you for spending time with us

Please check out our other
workshops
in the family series

Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process



Workshop 5

Building Your Parenting Confidence

Slide Presentation.....	Page 103
Workbook	Page 106

[Link to Video](#)



Building Your Parenting Confidence

1




Photo Credit: Polina Emmerman

Building Your Parenting Confidence

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- How you can build your parenting confidence
- Recognizing, readjusting and rerouting your own parenting patterns
- How to support resilience, empowerment and foster hope
- The power of validation

2

Building Your Parenting Confidence

- Why This is Important in Families
- Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns
- Supporting Resilience and Empowerment, and Fostering Hope
- The Power of Validation

3

Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns

Recognizing



4



Photo Credit: Brad Nelson

Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns

Readjusting

5

Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns

Rerouting

6



Photo Credit: Polina Romanova

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Supporting Resilience

7

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Empowerment




Photo Credit: Anastasia Shvarts

8

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Hope



Photo Credit: Camila Rhana Stein

9




Photo Credit: Steve Dicker

The Power of Validation

10



11




Photo Credit: Steve Dicker

The Power of Validation

12

Building Your Parenting Confidence

- Why This is Important in Families
- Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns
- Supporting Resilience and Empowerment, and Fostering Hope
- The Power of Validation

13



Photo Credit: August de Melhore

Parent Experiences Building Their Confidence


14

A Reminder:


this is hard
this is necessary
this is y our life too

15

Building Your Parenting Confidence



info@labyprogram.com



cafecenter@tmcu.edu

16

Workbook:
Building Your Parenting Confidence





Building Your Parenting Confidence

Here we go...

Welcome to our fifth workshop. We are glad you are here.

This workshop was written through our lived experience of when the early days of our family's mental health journey began. Through sharing our stories and the stories of others, our hope is that you will find some support for yourself as you begin to make sense of what your family is going through.

In this workshop we will touch on some subjects that we have addressed in other units. The difference in this workshop is the emphasis and direct link of these subjects to the parenting/caregiving role.

We will take a closer look at the role you play in your family's mental health journey and your own parenting/caregiving patterns. We will look at the importance of validation.

Finally, we will discuss how you as a parent/caregiver can support and nurture your child or family member's resiliency and empowerment, and foster hope.

In the first workshop we introduced you to peer support, and like anything with peer support, we are sharing what worked for us. Our hope is that you might choose to explore if peer support is the right fit for you.

Please remember, we are family peer support workers who are sharing our lived expertise. And through our sharing, we offer hope if that is something you are looking for.

- Charlotte & Kirsten

- ▼ Why This is Important in Families
- ▼ Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns
- ▼ Supporting Resilience and Empowerment, and Fostering Hope
- ▼ The Power of Validation

Building Your Parenting Confidence

Regardless of your child's age, thirteen or thirty-three, you never outgrow your role as a parent.

Parenting today is more challenging than ever before.

With the always changing and steady acceleration of technology, along with the pressures that come with social media, life for many (especially young people) is a constant barrage of messaging and navigating.

Parenting today is not the world WE grew up in.

We are feeling a bit old as we write this.

What do I do Now?

Building Your Parenting Confidence

Take a Few Minutes and Reflect on These Questions :

1. What Brought You Here Today?
2. What's Happening in the Here and Now for You?
3. What are You Hoping to Take Away from This Workshop?

Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns

Recognizing



Recognizing, Readjusting and Rerouting your own parenting patterns is all about you and looking at YOUR ACTIONS.

Let us start with Recognizing. We all play a part in our family's mental health journey. We often refer to embracing a parallel process.

What we mean by this is there is work to be done by both the child and the parent, a parallel process.

Workbook Activity:

Can you define and/or explain the role YOU play in your family's mental health story? Can you be specific with tasks and/or duties that come with your role?

Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns

Recognizing



Recognizing the part that YOU play and identifying YOUR actions is YOUR first step in changing YOUR family's story.

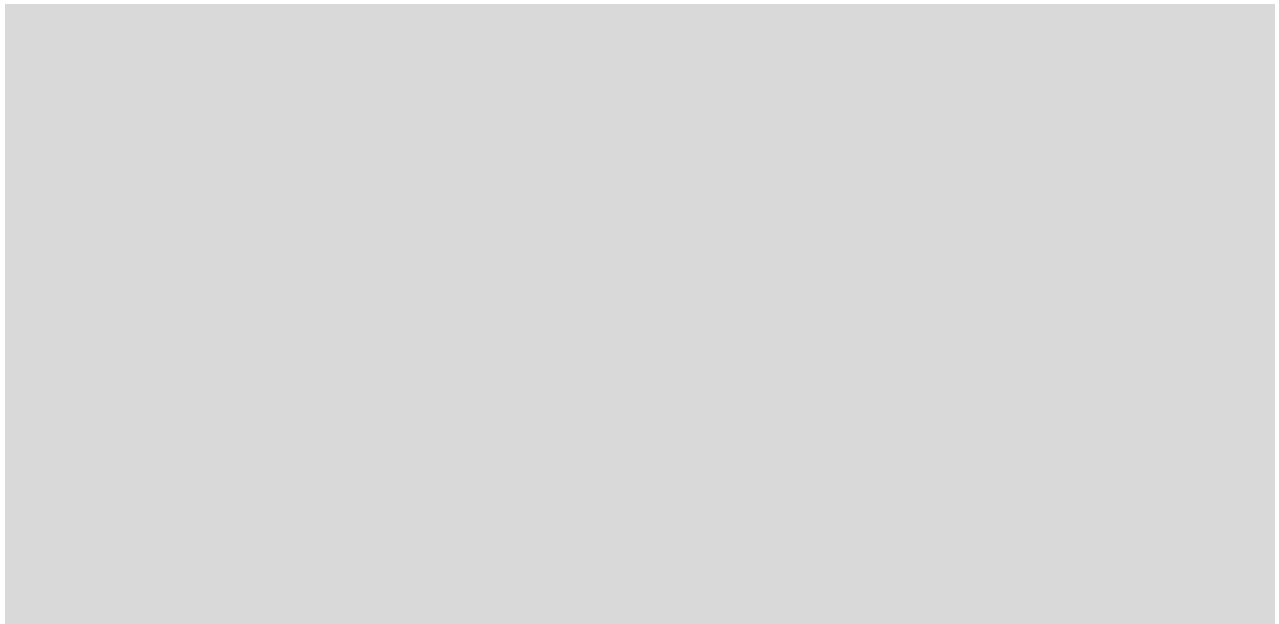
Workbook Activity:

Can you identify YOUR role and YOUR OWN actions that you would like to change in your family's story?

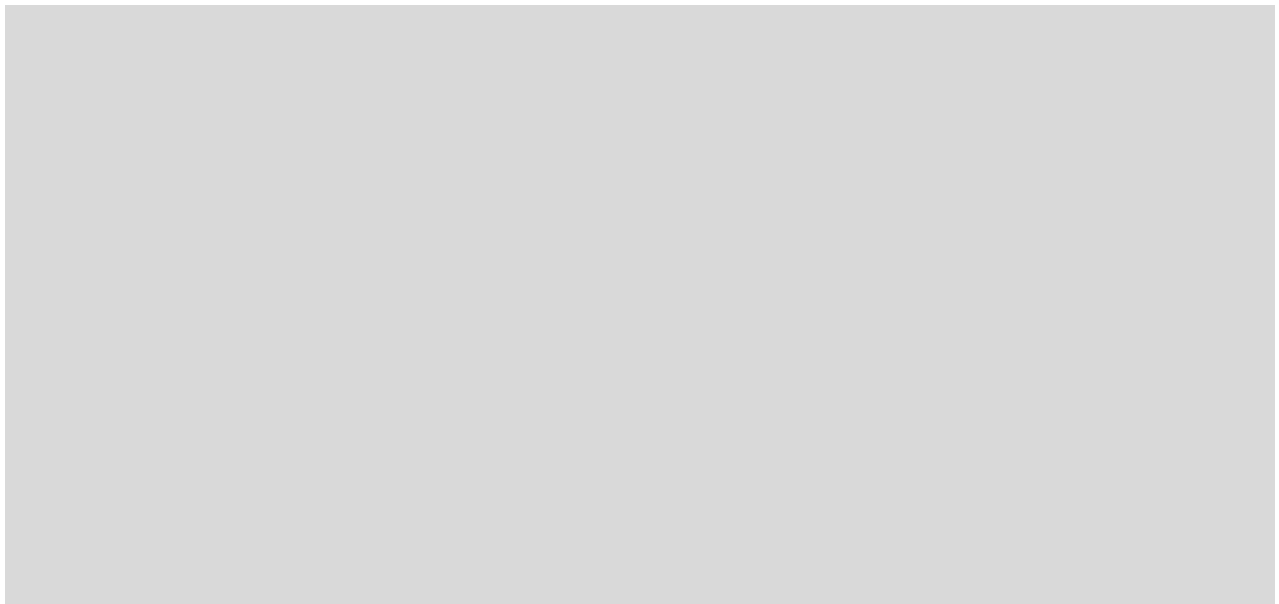
Workbook Activity:

Action Plan

Write a brief action plan that would support your desired change.



Steps to put this plan into action.



Something to Ponder

Workbook Activity: Please reflect and make notes on what comes up for you when you think about embracing recognizing, readjusting, and rerouting your actions in relation to your family's parallel process.

Recognizing:

Readjusting:

Rerouting:

Use this space to record your own thoughts.

Workbook Activity: Two Stories

Our role as a parent is to support our child to look beyond... the same story told two different ways from Shery Mead:

"Last week I got really depressed. I felt completely hopeless, couldn't get off the sofa, didn't answer the phone, and didn't eat. I even considered suicide briefly but didn't have the energy to even think about that. It was just dark, and I couldn't imagine life being any different ever again. I guess I'll have to increase my medication because it's just too hard to keep on feeling this way."

OR

"Last week I started experiencing some feelings I've felt before. It felt like other times when I've called it "depression," and for a little while that was what I thought it was. But I took another look at what was happening in my life. I had been waiting to see the doctor to solve some health problems, and the doctor told me she couldn't help me. I had expected she would help me and make me feel better. Now I'm extremely disappointed, frustrated, and a little bit angry. I know that I will have to do some work to figure out what comes next in my life, but right now I just need some time to feel the disappointment and other feelings."

Use this space to record your own thoughts
from these two stories. There are a few more questions on the next page.

Something to Ponder

Thinking of the two stories

What do you think is different about the two stories?

In what story do you think the person has the most power over what comes next?

Think of a time in the last year when you recognized that your child was experiencing an “increase in symptoms.” Looking back at what was happening in their life at the time or just before this happened, can you now think of another explanation, and/or narrative in the story, for that experience?

How might it have changed the outcome at the time if you had offered a strengths-based approach of support?

Something to Ponder

Workbook Activity: In the space provided, reflect and record your thoughts about Resiliency. How does this show up for you and your child in your family’s mental health story?

Resiliency

Your Family's Mental Health
Story

Supporting Resilience and Empowerment, and Fostering Hope

Empowerment



Photo Credits: Anastasia
Shuraeva

Let us look at how YOU, the parent, may play into your child's ability or inability to feel empowered.

Workbook Activity:

Use this space to record your own thoughts .
There are three more questions on the next page.

Something to Ponder

Workbook Activity: Thinking about your agenda and your child.

Write your thoughts on what comes up for you when thinking about YOUR agenda for your child.

Does your agenda align with the agenda that your child has for themselves?

Have you had a curious conversation with your child about their hopes, dreams and what they desire in their life?

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Hope



Hope can be defined as being able to believe. To trust. To look forward. Even when it does not look like what we are hoping for is possible.

Workbook Activity:

Use the space provided on the next page and write your thoughts about “hope” from your experience and how it appears in your family's mental health journey.

Something to Ponder

Workbook Activity: Please write down your thoughts on hope.



Photo Creds: Theo
Decker

The Power of Validation

The act of validation from a parent to a child can change the conversation and honestly change a relationship for the better.



Photo Credits: Theo
Duckert

The Power of Validation

It's not About the Nail Video

If you are looking for more information on communication, we encourage you to look at our workshop:

- True Connection Through Communication, Nurturing Healthy Relationships.

Thoughts from the video:

Something to Ponder

Your thoughts on validation and how it comes up for you in your family's mental health story.

What are Your Three Takeaways?



Photo Creds: Polina Zimmerman

Take some time to reflect and make note on what this workshop has you thinking about in your own family's story.

one

two

three

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too

Thank you for spending time with us

Please check out our other
workshops
in the family series

Building Your Parenting Confidence



Section 4

Definitions and Resources From all 5 Workshops



DEFINITIONS

Armchair Quarterback: This refers to someone in your life that does not participate in the action AND still makes judgement or criticizes YOUR action or lack of it.

Battle Fatigue (or Compassion Fatigue): This term shows up often in reference to war. This also is prevalent in the family story and supporting someone with mental health challenges/illness and dual diagnosis. Physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion can negatively affect the caregiver's ability to support not only the family member but also themselves. Often the caregiver does not even notice the strain that they are feeling.

Caregiver: A caregiver is anyone who provides support to another person. This may include a spouse, child, friend, or co-worker.

Child: All children in your family unit, regardless of age.

Collaboration: meeting your family member "where they are at" and working "with" or beside them. Never leading or working from your own agenda.

Connection: This is created naturally and just kind of happens when you support with understanding. Connection is you and your family member no longer feeling a disconnect or alone. You have each other, and the connection is real.

Crisis: When a person feels overwhelmed, is unable to cope, and feels intense emotional pain or fear of distress.

Curiosity: Being passionately curious to know more about your family member and explore their thoughts and ideas. Ideally, curiosity fosters empowerment.

Dual Diagnosis: Mental health challenge and substance use.

Emergency: Call 911 immediately. It is an immediate life-threatening "code red" with no other options.

Empathy: Feeling with someone as opposed to feeling sorry for someone.

Empowerment: Empowerment is something within. Others can support us to feel empowered. It is a strength within that fosters hope and the belief that YOU CAN DO as opposed to YOU CAN'T DO. Since recovery is self-directed and self-determined, it makes sense that empowerment is an important component of recovery and the family recovery story.

Enabling: Doing something for a person who is totally capable of doing things for themselves. Sometimes as caregivers, we believe that they cannot do for themselves and therefore we do it for them.

DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Family: Family to us is what family is to you. It is not restricted to the traditional definition. We believe family is also family of choice; it is whatever you identify with as your family. It is not limited to a bloodline or sharing of a last name (family of origin). It is those folks in your world that are dear to you, and you identify as family.

Family Mental Health Journey: The collective experience that all members of the family share when a family member struggles with a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis.

Family Peer Support: "Family Peer Support is the instrumental, social and informational support provided from one parent to another in an effort to reduce isolation, shame and blame, to assist parents in navigating [...] systems and provide other relevant life experiences."

- The benefits of family peer support services: let's examine the evidence SAMHSA

Family Recovery Definition: "The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member's path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one's illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness."

-Mental Health Commission of Canada Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Hope: Hope is the thing that is going to be better than the "now," especially in hard times. Hope is the motivator for change. Hope is not tangible. You cannot see it or deliver it to someone. And I do believe that hope can be somewhat contagious, just as hopelessness can be contagious too. When our family member is losing or has lost hope, we can hold hope for them as a supporter.

Learned Helplessness: Sometimes, the way we treat someone brings that person to develop a certain set of beliefs about themselves. We can actually be taught to be victims, to not rely on ourselves and to just allow people to do for us or tell us what to do. When a person comes to believe, through the comments and actions of others, that they cannot do things because of a mental health issue, "learned helplessness" becomes part of their world.

DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Letting go of the Social Measuring Stick: This is often connected with social media and our social circle. This is about judging your life through the lens of what you see to be true about others' lives. Often, we think others' lives are as perfect as what they create on social media and that our lives are so far from that. It is losing sight of your own family's successes because they are not as grand as what you see on social media.

Mental Disorders: "Mental disorders comprise a broad range of problems, with different symptoms. They are generally characterized, however, by some combination of disturbed thoughts, emotions, behavior, and relationships with others. Examples are depression, anxiety, conduct disorders in children, bipolar disorders, and schizophrenia. Many of these disorders can be successfully treated."

~ The world health report 2001 - Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope, page 10, ISBN 92 4 156201 3, WHO) - World Health Organization, Europe

Mental Health Challenge/Illness: Refers to a wide range of conditions that affect a person's brain, thoughts, and their ability to process their surroundings. A mental health challenge/illness impacts a person's mood and behavior, often resulting in emotional distress, and problems functioning in social, family and work settings (maybe one or a combination of these).

Mental Health Continuum: Mental Health exists on a continuum. It is fluid and moves up and down the continuum depending on circumstances. It ranges from wellbeing and having good mental health, to feeling crummy on the other end of the continuum; one end is someone living with excellent mental health (this could be with a diagnosis at the same time), and the other end is when someone's ability to live the life they want is significantly impacted.

Mutuality: the sharing of a feeling, experience or sharing of a relationship between you and your family member that upholds respect and trust. No one is more or less than the other.

Parallel Process: We all play a part in our family's mental health journey. When one family member is struggling, it affects all members of the family. To sit back and expect one family member to do all the work and make all the changes? Well, that will never create the change you are hoping for in your family. What we mean by this is there is work to be done by all members of the family. That is the parallel process.

DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Parent: All who identify with a parental role will not be limited to biological parents or a traditional family.

Peer Support: "Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common. In this case, the experience that individuals or groups have in common is in relation to a mental health challenge or illness. This common experience might be related to their own mental health or that of a loved one. Family-based peer support recognizes the struggle that members in a person's circle of support experience in relation to the mental health challenge or illness of a loved one."

-MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Physical Health: Physical health is on a continuum – at times, we may get a flu or a cold and feel crummy for a few days, break a bone from a fall and need hospital care and time to heal, or we may be diagnosed with a serious illness that requires a specific treatment for a specific time, or it may be ongoing. As we each move through life's various stages of physical health, illnesses are experienced – this is fluid. Ultimately, we fluctuate between extremely good physical health to extremely poor.

Recovery: A route to improved wellbeing that is person driven. Self-determination and self-direction are the foundations for recovery as an individual defines their own life goals and designs their unique path(s) towards those goals.

SAMHSA defines recovery as “a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”

It is based on 4 dimensions:

- Health
- Home
- Purpose
- Community

DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Recovery-Based: It is the understanding that each person is different and should be supported to make their own choices, listened to, and treated with dignity and respect.

Recovery Process: "Recovery is the personal process that people with mental illness go through in gaining control, meaning and purpose in their lives. Recovery involves different things for different people. For some, recovery means the complete absence of the symptoms of mental illness. For others, recovery means living a full life in the community while learning to live with ongoing symptoms."

~ Canadian Mental Health Association National

Resiliency: The ability to bounce back (after difficult times). Some days, we have more, and some days, we have less. It is an individual's ability to manage and adapt to stress and adversity.

Respect: This involves deep admiration for one another. You accept someone for who they are, even when they are different to you, or you disagree. Respect in a relationship builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing.

Self-care: Self-care is personal, and it can take on many different forms. It is the practice of taking steps to preserve or improve your own health and your own wellbeing, particularly in times of stress. It is recognizing the interconnected needs of your whole being – mind, body, and spirit.

Self-care Practice: This is not a one size fits all. This practice is customized to your needs. The areas of self-care to consider are physical, social, mental, spiritual, and emotional. For example: if you live alone, an area of self-care to consider is how much face-to-face time are you getting with friends, family? If you work 8 hours a day behind a desk, how much moving are you doing in those 8 hours? Just a couple of things to consider. It is not always bubble baths and walks on the beach.

Staying in the Supporting Role and Letting go of your Own Agenda: If you are going to stay in the role of a supporter, the relationship needs to be based on Mutuality, Trust, and Respect.

DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Strengths-Based Support: Strengths-based practice is a collaborative process between the person supported by services and those supporting them, allowing them to work together to determine an outcome that draws on the person's strengths and assets. As such, it concerns itself principally with the quality of the relationship that develops between those providing and being supported, as well as the elements that the person seeking support brings to the process (Duncan and Hubble, 2000). Working in a collaborative way promotes the opportunity for individuals to be co-producers of services and support, rather than solely consumers of those services (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007).

Supporter: Also called caregivers, are those in the circle of care that provide unpaid support to a person in need. They may include family members, friends, or co-workers.

Supporting with Understanding: Through a supportive and non-judgmental approach, combined with effective communication skills, a family member empowers and supports their person on a path to wellness.

Trust: To trust involves placing our confidence in another person. Without trust, you cannot be in the supporting role. This is crucial.

Unconscious Bias: Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

Walking Your Own Path of Recovery and Wellness: The idea of recovery is this – returning to a normal state of health, wellbeing, and strength. Yes, your family member has a path of recovery regarding their own experience with a mental health challenge/illness. This is THEIR path, and we cannot walk it for them or deliver it to them. The same goes for you – you have our OWN path of recovery that you walk. You have your own story within the family mental health journey. No one can walk it for you. And remember this is a path that is meant for one. WE all must do the work for ourselves.

Wellbeing and Wellness:

"...a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

~ The World Health Organization

"...a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential."

~ The National Wellness Institute

RESOURCES

Here are some resources that you may find useful.

Family Resources:

The CAFÉ TA Center: <https://cafetacenter.net/>

All IN Family Peer Support: <https://www.allinfamily.ca/>

NAMI: <https://nami.org/Home>

Peer Support Information:

Community Addiction Peer Support Association

<https://capsa.ca/>

Mental Health Commission Canada Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support:

<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/resource/guidelines-for-the-practice-and-training-of-peer-support/>

SAMHSA "What Are Peer Recovery Support Services?" Related to Addictions peer workers

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma09-4454.pdf>

N.A.P.S. National Association of Peer Supporters

<https://www.peersupportworks.org/>

Recovery:

Faces and Voices of Recovery and Faces and Voices of Recovery Canada

<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/> and <https://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.ca/>

Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health [Internet]. Chapter 5: The Many Paths to Wellness

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK424846/>

SAMHSA Definition of Recovery:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/recovery#:~:text=SAMHSA's%20working%20definition%20of%20recovery,to%20reach%20their%20full%20potential.>

RESOURCES

Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health [Internet]. Chapter 5: The Many Paths to Wellness
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK424846/>

Supports for Caregivers:

What is compassion fatigue?

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2020/08/23/7-ways-family-caregivers-can-combat-compassion-fatigue/?sh=52f134a87088>

Compassion Fatigue Self Tests

<http://compassionfatigue.org/pages/selftest.html>

What is caregiver stress?

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/caregiver-stress/art-20044784>

Tools for Understanding:

Strengths Based Approach- Experiencing Success in a Meaningful Way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGaEAzqWeQQ>

What is learned helplessness?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/basics/learned-helplessness>

What is a mental health continuum?

<https://theworkingmind.ca/continuum-self-check>

You and Me Poem

<https://dominatedepression.com/you-and-me-debbie-sesula/>

Zero Suicide: The Way Forward

<https://theactionalliance.org/sites/default/files/the-way-forward-final-2014-07-01.pdf>

R U OK? A conversation could change a life.

<https://www.ruok.org.au/>

RESOURCES

Videos:

Brené Brown on Empathy

<https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369Jw>

It's Not About the Nail

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg>

What is Recovery?


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y9dSgA-tiU>

Workshop 1

Making Sense of Things That Don't Make Sense

Slide Presentation with Space for Notes






Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health

1



Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of:

- Your role and the impact of a family member
- What is family peer support and why is it so valuable
- Mental health challenge/illness vs. something else
- Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

2



What is Peer Support and Why is it So Valuable?

3




Photo Credit: Theo Decker

"Family Peer Support is the instrumental, social and informational support provided from one parent to another in an effort to reduce isolation, shame and blame, to assist parents in navigating [...] systems and provide other relevant life experiences".

~ The benefits of family peer support services: let's examine the evidence SAMHSA

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common. In this case, the experience that individuals or groups have in common is in relation to a mental health challenge or illness. This common experience might be related to their own mental health or that of a loved one.

Family-based peer support recognizes the struggle that members in a person's circle of support experience in relation to the mental health challenge or illness of a loved one.

~ MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

4



Photo Credit: Anna Shuter

Less isolation, not alone	Empowering
Builds social connections	Develops support system
Improves well-being	Problem-solving skills development
Recognizing own needs	Acceptance
Non-judgemental	Connection to resources
Safe, secure	Conversation, sharing
Comfort, validation	Learn from experiences
Reduces stigma	Modeling HOPE
Shifts perspectives	Recovery is possible!
Reduces shame	
Increases self-worth	

5




Photo Credit: Ryan Williams

Why is this important?

6

What do I do now?

- Your role as family member
- What is family peer support and why is it so valuable?
- Is this a mental health challenge/illness OR SOMETHING ELSE
- Gaining a better understanding of mental health
- Advocacy and supporting vs. enabling
- Family experiences; managing attitudes & judgment

7

Physical Health




Photo Credit: iStockphoto.com

Mental Health





Photo Credit: Anna Shestakova

8

What Do I Do Now?

Your Role as Family Member



9

Your Supporting Role as Family Member

10

Is This a Mental Health Challenge/Illness or My Own Unconscious Bias?

Gaining a Better Understanding of Mental Health




Photo Credit: Polina Zolotareva

11



Photo Credit: Polina Zolotareva

Looking at Our Own Understanding and Biases of Mental Health

12

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Your Role as Family Member

And then there's the Armchair Quarterback Role



Photo Credit: Canva.com

13

Advocate


- Definition of Advocate
 - to publicly support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something
 - Cambridge Dictionary
- Definition of Supporter
 - A person who approves of and encourages someone or something (typically a public figure, a movement or party, or a policy)
 - Oxford English Dictionary

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Enabler

- Definition of Enabler
 - Giving misguided support to a person
 - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

15



Armchair Quarterback

Definition: This refers to someone in your life that does not participate in the action AND still makes judgement or criticizes YOUR action or lack of it.

16

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

- Are you ignoring or minimizing some “not great” behavior?
- Do you have a hard time saying no?
- Do you lie to cover up their behavior?
- Do you put their needs ahead of your own and the needs of your family?
- Do you make excuses or blame others for their actions?
- Do you continue to endure chaos even though it’s destroying your family?

17

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Setting Up and Enforcing
Boundaries





Photo Credit: Andrea Piquero

18

Advocacy and Supporting vs. Enabling

Being a True Advocate and a Great Supporter



PhotoCredit: dreamstime

19



Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health

20



PhotoCredit: Andrew Noll

Family Experiences Managing Attitudes and Judgement

21

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is y our life too

22

Making Sense of Things that Don't Make Sense

Looking at Your Family's Mental Health



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Workshop 2

Just for Caregivers

Slide Presentation with Space for Notes



Just For Caregivers

Yes, just for you!

1




Photo Credit: Polina Stetsman

Just for Care Givers

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- The importance of self-care and the impact this has on your family
- Your own path of recovery and wellness
- Managing shame, blame and other negative emotions

2



Photo Credit: Ryan Korman

Why This is Important

3

Just For Caregivers


(yes, just for you)

- The Importance of Self-Care, a Necessity, Not a Luxury
- Walking Your Own Path to Recovery and Wellness
- Are You Living with Shame, Blame, Fear, and Anger? Tips and Tools to Let Go of Negative Emotions

4

The Importance of Self-Care

A Necessity Not a Luxury



5

5 Benefits of Self-Care for You and Your Family

6



Photo Credit: Gregor, Lee

Walking Your Own Path of Recovery and Wellness

7

Family Recovery Definition

"The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member's path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one's illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness.

• MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

8



Photo Credit: Bender

Walking Your Own Path of Recovery and Wellness

Tips and Tools

9



Photo Credit: Andrew Ted

**Are You Living
with Shame,
Blame, Fear,
and Anger?**

10



Photo Credit: Polina Zastrow

**Tips and Tools for
Letting Go of
Negative
Emotions**

11

**You Are Not
Alone**

The Journeys of Other
Families




Photo Credit: Andrew Flanagan

12

A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too

13

**Just For
Caregivers**

Yes, just for you!



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Workshop 3

True Connections Through Communication

Slide Presentation with Space for Notes

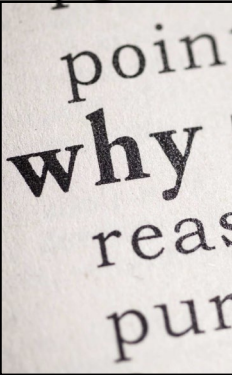




True Connections Through Communication

Nurturing Healthy Relationships

1



Why is this important?

2



True Connections Through Communication; Nurturing Healthy Relationships

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- Basic communication concepts and strategies for your family
- Steps you can take to build your communication confidence
- Supporting with understanding
- How to tackle hard conversations and talk about the "S" word


3

Communication Strategies for Families

- Supporting with Understanding
- Family Experiences of the Communication Journey
- Talking About the "S" Word (Suicide and Self-Harm)

4

Communication Basics



5

Communication Barriers

6



Photo Credit: Anna Shvets

Communication Barriers

Giving Advice	Patronizing
Arguing	Responding Sarcastically
Assuming	Shaming
Using But Statements	Using Threatening Responses
Digging For Information	Being Abrupt*
Guilt and Blaming	Using a Negative Tone of Voice
Minimizing	Being Distracted
Using Persuasion	Crossing Arms*
Using Should Statements	Looking Away*
Asking Why Questions	Yawning, Shaking Head

*Culturally Dependent

7

What Discourages Communication?

8

What Encourages Communication?

6



Photo Credit: Anna Bratt

How to Encourage Communication

Asking Open Ended Questions	Asking When Unsure
Letting them Lead	Being Passionately Curious
Summarizing	Mirroring Back
Allowing Silences and Pauses	Paraphrasing
Using a Calm Tone of Voice	Encouraging Mutuality
Using Open Body Language	Seeking Clarification - Ask
Listening Fully - Being Present	Checking In and Getting Feedback
Validating Often	Listening to Understand
Highlighting Successes	

10

What Encourages Communication?

11



Photo Credit: Fotnia Reinerman

Communication Strategies for Families

12



13



Photo Credit: Public Zimmern

**Communication
Strategies for
Families**

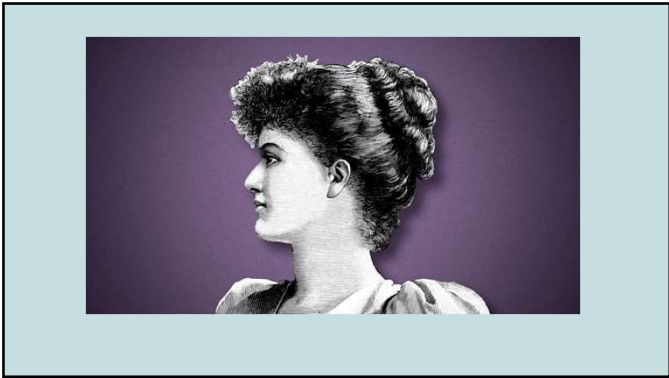
14



Photo Credit: Steve Dwyer

**Supporting with
Understanding**

15



16

Talking About the "S" Word (Suicide and Self Harm)

Communication in a Crisis

Photo Credit: Public Domain

17

Talking About the "S" Word (Suicide and Self Harm)

Hard Conversations

Photo Credit: Canva

18

Family Experiences on the Communication Journey



Photo Credit: Celine

19


A Reminder:

this is hard
this is necessary
this is your life too


20

True Connections Through Communication

Nurturing Healthy Relationships



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Workshop 4

Mental Health Recovery & the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

Slide Presentation with Space for Notes



Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

1




Photo Credit: Polina Stetsman

Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- Recovery and Wellness, what it is and is not
- The foundations of Recovery and Wellness
- How to stay in the role as a supporter and let go of your agenda
- Family recovery and what that looks like for you

2



Photo Credit: iStockphoto


Why This is Important in Families

3

Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process

- Foundations for Recovery and Wellness
- How to Stay in the Supporting Role and Letting Go of Your Own Agenda

4



SAMHSA has developed a working definition and set of principles for recovery.

Recovery is defined as: "A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential."

Photo Credit: Creative Edge

5

6

Foundations
for Recovery
and Wellness




Photo Credit: Anna Shvets

7

Foundations for
Recovery and
Wellness

- Resiliency
- Hope
- Empowerment

8




Photo Credit: Perimeter

Looking at my own
recovery and its
relationship to the
family member I
support

9

Family Recovery Definition

"The idea of recovery is approached from a slightly different perspective. The family member strives to recover from the emotional turmoil, grief and/or fatigue that may result from caring for someone with a mental health challenge or illness. The family member's path to their own mental wellness or recovery is likely to be enhanced by a better understanding of their loved one's illness and through the development of more effective coping skills. Greater confidence, accepting the situation, and having hope for their loved one will help them to be more effective caregivers and supporters, while also helping them to sustain their own wellbeing. We refer to this as having achieved a level of readiness."

MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

10

How to Stay in the Supporting Role and Letting Go of Your Own Agenda




Photo Credit: Alamy

11



Photo Credit: Pexels

How to Stay in the Supporting Role and Letting Go of Your Own Agenda

12

The Journey of Recovery of Other Families




Photo Credit: Light World Images


13

A Reminder:


this is hard
this is necessary
this is y our life too

14

Mental Health Recovery and the Role of Families in the Recovery Process



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15

Workshop 5

Building Your Parenting Confidence

Slide Presentation with Space for Notes



Building Your Parenting Confidence

1




Photo: Cindy Peltz Ziemann

Building Your Parenting Confidence

Objectives:
You will gain an understanding of

- How you can build your parenting confidence
- Recognizing, readjusting and rerouting your own parenting patterns
- How to support resilience, empowerment and foster hope
- The power of validation

2

Building Your Parenting Confidence

- ▀ Why This is Important in Families
- ▀ Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns
- ▀ Supporting Resilience and Empowerment, and Fostering Hope
- ▀ The Power of Validation

3

**Recognizing,
Readjusting, and
Rerouting Your
Own Parenting
Patterns**

Recognizing



4



**Recognizing,
Readjusting, and
Rerouting Your
Own Parenting
Patterns**

Readjusting

5

**Recognizing,
Readjusting, and
Rerouting Your
Own Parenting
Patterns**

Rerouting

6



Photo Credit: Pexels/Robertson

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Supporting Resilience

7

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Empowerment




Photo Credit: Anandade Shastri

8

Supporting Resilience, Empowerment and Fostering Hope

Hope



Photo Credit: Canva Photo Team

9




Photo Credit: Brent
Decker

The Power of Validation

10

10



11




Photo Credit: Brent
Decker

The Power of Validation


12

12

Building Your Parenting Confidence

- Why This is Important in Families
- Recognizing, Readjusting, and Rerouting Your Own Parenting Patterns
- Supporting Resilience and Empowerment, and Fostering Hope
- The Power of Validation

13



Parent Experiences Building Their Confidence

Photo Credit: August de Rodriguez


14

A Reminder:


this is hard
this is necessary
this is y our life too

15

Building Your Parenting Confidence



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Section 5

A Note from Us and Some Extra Things
We Thought You Might Like



A NOTE FROM US

When we started on this journey of mental health with our family, we did not take as much time to support our own mental health. There were so many missed opportunities along the way where we could have been a better support to ourselves.

If we could go back and have a conversation with ourselves, the message would be loud and clear. Please take care of you so you can support your family.

We have added some pages here that are just for you. There is extra space to write thoughts that are swirling in your head.

There is also a monthly calendar and a weekly calendar. We use this to fill with what supports we need for ourselves to get through the week/month. For example: going to the gym or connecting with a friend for coffee. Walking the dog or picking up that good book. If you put it in the calendar, our hope is that you will do it.

Our goal is to have something each day for ourselves that feeds our soul. Can that be yours?

The dream section is just that. What are your dreams? Have some fun with it. A wise friend reminded us once that this life is not a dress rehearsal, and we can still have dreams at our age.



Hope

Journal Page

*SELF
CARE*

When the world says
Give up
Hope whispers
Try it one more time

Workshop Notes

Use this page to take your own notes during the workshop.

Monthly Planner

ADD THE DATES TO THIS BLANK CALENDAR AND USE IT TO GET ORGANIZED AND KEEP ON TRACK OF YOUR INTENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS FOR SUPPORTING YOU

MON

TUE

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT

SUN

Weekly Self-Care Planner



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

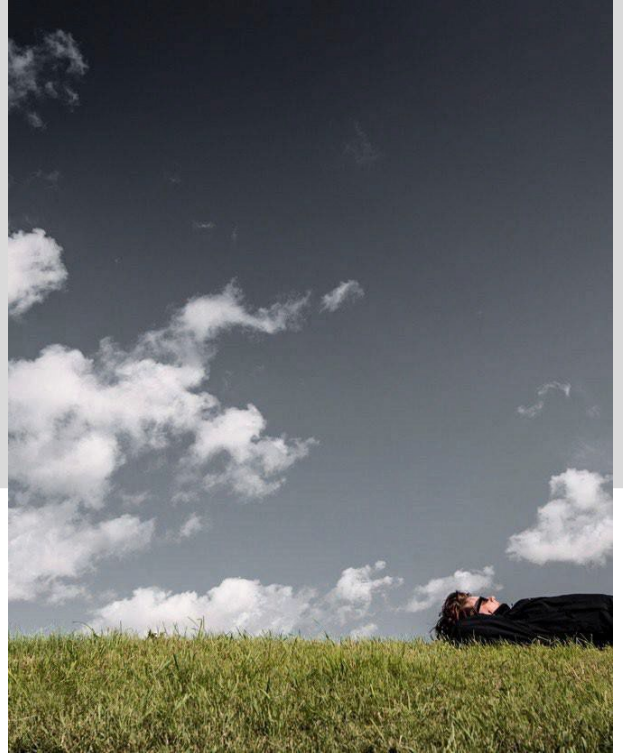
THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY/ SUNDAY

Let's Just Dream About You!

- ALLOW YOURSELF 30 MINUTES OF QUIET TIME TO CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS THAT HELP YOU CREATE AND SHAPE A VISION FOR YOUR FUTURE.
- WORK THROUGH THE QUESTIONS IN THE ORDER BELOW AND WRITE YOUR ANSWERS IN THE PRESENT TENSE.



Sometimes we just need a reminder that we matter too.

1. WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS?

2. WHAT IF THERE WERE NO OBSTACLES?

3. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE DOING (CAREER/BUSINESS/PERSONAL LIFE) IN:

A - 10 YEARS FROM NOW

D - 1 YEAR FROM NOW

B - 5 YEARS FROM NOW

E - 6 MONTHS FROM NOW

C - 2 YEARS FROM NOW

F - 3 MONTHS FROM NOW

Think About Your Hopes and Dreams



YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED DREAMING, NOW
THINK ABOUT THE TOP 3 THAT FEED YOUR
SOUL.

NOW ASK YOUR FAMILY TO DO THE SAME.
WHY NOT SHARE THOSE HOPES AND
DREAMS?

DREAM

DREAM

DREAM

A NOTE TO REMEMBER FROM US

When a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis appears, it can be devastating for families. There is little that can be done to minimize the initial heartbreak that comes with the realization that life for your family may fall drastically short of your initial hopes and dreams. Families may experience grief and shock as they begin to digest and understand that life for their family may be drastically altered and forever impacted. Although all of this is true, there is so much that we as a family member can do to change the course and the impact that a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis has on the individual and the entire family. An illness or diagnosis should not define you or your family. An illness should never have the power to destroy a family, especially when it is treatable. Everyone with a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis can recover and families play a critical part in the recovery process. Family members often end up in conflict when their idea of recovery does not align with the individual's idea of recovery. Remembering to take a strengths-based approach can create positive change. Upholding trust, respect, hope and mutuality, in the role of a supporter can have a positive impact. As a family member there is work to do to preserve your own wellness and a recovery process of your own that we encourage you to embrace. You do not have to do it alone. Connecting with a family peer support group was a lifeline in our stories. As you know, when one person in your family is struggling with a mental health challenge/illness or dual diagnosis the entire family is struggling. Taking ownership of your own actions and contributions to the family mental health journey is a necessary part of the family's recovery story.

~ Charlotte & Kirsten

On a more personal note, Charlotte and I would like to leave you with this:

"My daughter's mental health journey was the hardest thing I have ever experienced. It tested me in ways I never thought possible, both heartbreaking and rewarding. At times I lost hope and braced myself for a catastrophic ending. It also made me who I am today, more compassionate, more aware, I love deeper and am incredibly grateful and humbled. My daughter has taught me who I want to be, how I want to live my life and the value of giving back to the community. Living with the lens of a family mental health journey has forever changed me for the better and I can't imagine life any other way." ~ Kirsten

"My journey in caring for my teenage daughter who struggled with anxiety and depression led me on a journey of learning about my own mental health and how to take care of me. It was a huge shift in my thinking from being a doer and a pleaser and not keeping boundaries on how I let people treat me. Through this journey I learned to take better care of myself, and from that I am a better parent, partner, business partner and friend. I like to say that "saving my daughter, saved me." I wish that the person I am today could go back in time and be a peer supporter to the me when my world looked so much different. I know it would have made a huge difference in my family's story. The phrase "it is not just her; it is us too" would have rang loud. You see, we all play a part in our family's mental health story. And we all have to work at it. I am happy to say that my adult daughter is thriving and so am I." ~ Charlotte