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# Wraparound Process

Eric J. Bruns, PhD; Janet S. Walker, PhD; Patricia Miles, BS and the National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group

## Learning Objectives

Course participants will be able to identify and describe the:

- Ten principles of wraparound
- 4 phases of wraparound
- Staff roles and activities of wraparound

*The following continuing education article provides an introduction to wraparound. Wraparound is both a philosophy of care and a practice model being used in a variety of settings, including the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). The Children's Behavioral Health Initiative is an interagency initiative of the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Health and Human Services whose mission is to strengthen, expand and integrate Massachusetts state services into a comprehensive, community-based system of care, to ensure that families and their children with significant behavioral, emotional and mental health needs obtain the services necessary for success in home, school and community. The article below summarizes the principles of wraparound, the phases & activities of the wraparound process, the roles on the wraparound teams, and how to engage youth in the wraparound process.*

The philosophical principles of wraparound have long provided the basis for understanding this widely-practiced service delivery model. This value base for working in collaboration and partnership with families has its roots in early programs such as Kaleidoscope in Chicago, the Alaska Youth Initiative, Project Wraparound in Vermont, and other trailblazing efforts. For many

years, the philosophy of wraparound was expressed through the work of such local initiatives, but not formally captured in publications for the field. Critical first descriptions were provided by VanDenBerg & Grealish (1996) as part of a special issue on wraparound, and by Goldman (1999) as part of an influential monograph on wraparound (Burns & Goldman, 1999). These resources presented elements and practice principles that spanned activity at the team, organization, and system levels. In other words, some elements were intended to guide work at the team level with the youth, family and hands-on support people, while other elements described activities at the program or system level. For many, these documents were the best means available for understanding the wraparound process. They also provided the basis for initial efforts at measuring wraparound implementation.

## I. What is Wraparound

The wraparound process is an intensive, individualized care planning and management process for children and adolescents with complex mental health and/or other needs. Wraparound is often implemented for young people who have involvement in multiple child-serving agencies and whose families would thus benefit from coordination of effort across these systems. Wraparound is also often aimed at young people in a community who, regardless of the system(s) in which they are involved, are at risk of placement in out-of-home or out-of-community settings, or who are transitioning back to the community from such placements.

Wraparound is not a treatment *per se*. The wraparound *process* aims to achieve positive outcomes for these young

people through several mechanisms. For example, well-implemented wraparound provides a structured, creative and individualized team planning process that, compared to traditional treatment planning, can result in plans that are more effective and more relevant to the family. Additionally, wraparound plans are more holistic than traditional care plans in that they are designed to meet the identified needs of caregivers and siblings and address a range of life areas. Through the team-based planning and implementation process that takes place, wraparound also aims to develop the problem-solving skills, coping skills, and self-efficacy of the young people and family members. Finally, there is an emphasis on integrating the youth into the community and building the family's social support network.

During the wraparound process, a team of individuals who are relevant to the life of the child or youth (e.g., family members, members of the family's social support network, service providers, and agency representatives) collaboratively develop an individualized plan of care, implement this plan, monitor the efficacy of the plan, and work towards success over time. A hallmark of the wraparound process is that it is driven by the perspective of the family and the child or youth. The plan should reflect their goals and their ideas about what sorts of service and support strategies are most likely to be helpful to them in reaching their goals. The wraparound plan typically includes formal services and interventions, together with community services and interpersonal support and assistance provided by friends, kin, and other people drawn from the family's social networks. After the initial plan is developed, the team continues to meet often enough to monitor progress, which it does by measuring the plan's components against the indicators of

## I. What is Wraparound

success selected by the team. Plan components, interventions and strategies are revised when the team determines that they are not working, i.e., when the relevant indicators of success are not being achieved.

The wraparound process—engaging the family, convening the team, developing and implementing the plan, and transitioning the youth out of formal wraparound—is typically facilitated by a trained care coordinator or “wraparound facilitator,” often in collaboration with family partners or family support workers and, increasingly, youth support workers (i.e., peers and “near peers”). The wraparound process, like the wraparound plan itself, is designed to be culturally competent, strengths based, and organized around family members’ own perceptions of needs, goals, and likelihood of success of specific strategies.

### Wraparound System and Community-Level Support

The wraparound process is intended to ensure that youth with the most complex needs in a system or community benefit from a coordinated care planning process that is responsive to their needs and the needs of their families. The wraparound process produces a single, comprehensive plan of care that integrates the efforts of multiple agencies and providers on behalf of a youth and his or her family. The wraparound plan is designed to ensure that the young person and family receive the support needed to live successfully in the community, and at home or in the most home-like setting possible. To achieve this, wraparound plans and wraparound teams require access to flexible resources and a well-developed array of services and supports in the community.

Providing comprehensive care through the wraparound process thus requires a high degree of collaboration and coordination among the child and family-serving agencies and organizations in a community. These agencies and organizations need to work together

to provide the essential community—or system-level—supports that are necessary for wraparound to be successfully implemented and sustained.

Research on wraparound implementation has defined these essential community and system supports for wraparound, and grouped them into six themes:

- 1) **Community partnership:** Representatives of key stakeholder groups, including families, young people, agencies, providers, and community representatives have joined together in a collaborative effort to plan, implement and oversee wraparound as a community process.
- 2) **Collaborative action:** Stakeholders involved in the wraparound effort work together to take steps to translate the wraparound philosophy into concrete policies, practices and achievements that work across systems.
- 3) **Fiscal policies and sustainability:** The community has developed fiscal strategies to support and sustain wraparound and to better meet the needs of children and youth participating in wraparound.
- 4) **Access to needed supports and services:** The community has developed mechanisms for ensuring access to the wraparound process as well as to the services and supports that wraparound teams need to fully implement their plans
- 5) **Human resource development and support:** The system supports wraparound staff and partner agency staff to fully implement the wraparound model and to provide relevant and transparent information to families and their extended networks about effective participation in wraparound.
- 6) **Accountability:** The community implements mechanisms to monitor wraparound fidelity, service quality, and outcomes, and to oversee the quality and development of the overall wraparound effort.

### Organizational Support

In addition to these system-level supports, the wraparound process requires that people in key wraparound roles—facilitators, family support partners, peer partners, etc.—have the right skills and the right working conditions to do their jobs. This means that the lead agency or agencies responsible for providing wraparound to families must also provide organizational supports for wraparound, including maintaining right-sized workloads (typically 6 – 15 youth/families per coordinator dependent upon paperwork expectations and other duties); empowering teams to make timely decisions regarding funding needed for individualized strategies to meet families’ unique needs; and ensuring that primary staff receive comprehensive training, support and skill development. Many of the biggest challenges faced by organizations providing wraparound have to do with human resource issues: having the right people, with the right skills, available with sufficient time to complete a high quality wraparound process with each child and family.

**Several of the key types of issues that organizations face include the following:**

**Role Definition:** Wraparound initiatives often are implemented using a wide range of staff roles (e.g., facilitators, family partners, clinicians, youth partners, paraprofessional support workers, supervisors, coaches, and others). Expectations for each role must be clearly defined before professional development strategies for each can be implemented.

**Training and Skill Development:** Wraparound is a complex process involving many different skill sets. People with key roles for carrying out the wraparound process therefore require substantial training, as well as ongoing coaching and supervision, to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills they need. Most wraparound projects, at least in their early stages of development, rely to some extent on outside people for training and for consultation on how

## II. The Ten Principles of Wraparound as presented by the National Wraparound Initiative (NWI)

to set up ongoing procedures for staff development and quality assurance. Finding a consultant or trainer is not always easy, however, since wraparound is not a proprietary model. Thus, there is no single purveyor organization or consultant group that is recognized as the single entity with which a community or local initiative must contract for training, skill development, or other type of human resource development and support.

### The wraparound process has four phases:

- *engagement and team preparation*
- *initial plan development*
- *plan implementation, and*
- *transition.*

Each phase has several core activities. Wraparound is also frequently described in terms of the ten principles or values to which practice must adhere.

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At the outset of the NWI, the principles were relatively well understood, but it was determined that they might be more effective if they were: (1) confirmed and codified by the many experts and advisors that had convened to form the NWI, and (2) expressed purely at the family and team level. Many have expressed a need to move beyond a value base for wraparound in order to facilitate program development and replicate positive outcomes. However, wraparound's philosophical principles will always remain the starting point for understanding wraparound.

### Principle 1: Family voice and choice

Family and youth/child perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound

process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences. The wraparound process recognizes the importance of long-term connections between people, particularly the bonds between family members. The principle of family voice and choice in wraparound stems from this recognition and acknowledges that the people who have a long-term, ongoing relationship with a child or youth have a unique stake in and commitment to the wraparound process and its outcomes. This principle further recognizes that a young person who is receiving wraparound also has a unique stake in the process and its outcomes. The principle of family voice and choice affirms that these are the people who should have the greatest influence over the wraparound process as it unfolds.

This principle also recognizes that the likelihood of successful outcomes and youth/child and family ownership of the wraparound plan are increased when the wraparound process reflects family members' priorities and perspectives. The principle thus explicitly calls for family voice—the provision of opportunities for family members to fully explore and express their perspectives during wraparound activities—and family choice—the structuring of decision making such that family members can select, from among various options, the one(s) that are most consistent with their own perceptions of how things are, how things should be, and what needs to happen to help the family achieve its vision of well-being. Wraparound is a collaborative process (principle four); however within that collaboration, family members' perspectives must be the most influential.

The principle of voice and choice explicitly recognizes that the perspectives of family members are not likely to have sufficient impact during wraparound unless *intentional* activity occurs to ensure their voice and choice drives the process. Families of children with emotional and behavioral disorders

are often stigmatized and blamed for their children's difficulties. This and other factors—including possible differences in social and educational status between family members and professionals, and the idea of professionals as experts whose role is to “fix” the family—can lead teams to discount, rather than prioritize, family members' perspectives during group discussions and decision making. These same factors also decrease the probability that youth perspectives will have impact in groups when adults and professionals are present.

Furthermore, prior experiences of stigma and shame can leave family members reluctant to express their perspectives at all. Putting the principle of youth and family voice and choice into action thus requires intentional activity that supports family members as they explore their perspectives and as they express their perspectives during the various activities of wraparound. Further intentional activity must take place to ensure that this perspective has sufficient impact within the collaborative process, so that it exerts primary influence during decision making. Team procedures, interactions, and products—including the wraparound plan—should provide evidence that the team is indeed engaging in intentional activity to prioritize the family perspectives.

While the principle speaks of *family* voice and choice, the wraparound process recognizes that the families, who participate in wraparound, like American families generally, come in many forms. In many families, it is the biological parents who are the primary caregivers and who have the deepest and most enduring commitment to a youth or child. In other families, this role is filled by adoptive parents, step-parents, extended family members, or even non-family caregivers. In many cases, there will not be a single, unified “family” perspective expressed during the various activities of the wraparound process. Disagreements can occur between adult family members/ caregivers or between parents/caregivers and extended

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family. As a young person matures and becomes more independent, it becomes necessary to balance the collaboration in ways that allow the youth to have growing influence within the wraparound process. Wraparound is intended to be inclusive and to manage disagreement by facilitating collaboration and creativity; however, throughout the process, the goal is always to prioritize the influence of the people who have the deepest and most persistent connection to the young person and commitment to his or her well-being.

Special attention to the balancing of influence and perspectives within wraparound is also necessary when legal considerations restrict the extent to which family members are free to make choices. This is the case, for example, when a youth is on probation, or when a child is in protective custody. In these instances, an adult acting for the agency may take on caregiving and/or decision making responsibilities vis-à-vis the child, and may exercise considerable influence within wraparound. In conducting our review of opinions of wraparound experts about the principles, this has been one of several points of contention: How best to balance the priorities of youth and family against those of these individuals. Regardless, there is strong consensus in the field that the principle of family voice and choice is a constant reminder that the wraparound process must place special emphasis on the perspectives of the people who will still be connected to the young person after agency involvement has ended.

### Principle 2: Team-based

The wraparound team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to the family through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships. Wraparound is a collaborative process (see principle four), undertaken by a team. The wraparound team should be composed of people who have a strong commitment to the family's well-being. In accordance with principle one, choices about who is

invited to join the team should be driven by family members' perspectives.

At times, family members' choices about team membership may be shaped or limited by practical or legal considerations. For example, one or more family members may be reluctant to invite a particular person— e.g., a teacher, a therapist, a probation officer, or a non-custodial ex-spouse—to join the team. At the same time, not inviting that person may mean that the team will not have access to resources and/or interpersonal support that would otherwise be available. Not inviting a particular person to join the team can also mean that the activities or support that he or she offers will not be coordinated with the team's efforts. It can also mean that the family loses the opportunity to have the team influence that person so that he or she becomes better able to act supportively. If that person is a professional, the team may also lose the opportunity to access services or funds that are available through that person's organization or agency.

Not inviting a particular professional to join the team may also bring undesired consequences, for example, if participation of the probation officer on the wraparound team is required as a condition of probation. Family members should be provided with support for making informed decisions about whom they invite to join the team, as well as support for dealing with any conflicts or negative emotions that may arise from working with such team members. Or, when relevant and possible, the family should be supported to explore options such as inviting a different representative from an agency or organization. Ultimately, the family may also choose not to participate in wraparound.

When a state agency has legal custody of a child or youth, the caregiver in the permanency setting and/or another person designated by that agency may have a great deal of influence over who should be on the team; however, in accordance with principle one, efforts should be made to include participation

of family members and others who have a long-term commitment to the young person and who will remain connected to him or her after formal agency involvement has ended.

### Principle 3: Natural supports

The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support.

This principle recognizes the central importance of the support that a youth/child, parents/caregivers, and other family members receive "naturally," i.e., from the individuals and organizations whose connection to the family is independent of the formal service system and its resources. These sources of natural support are sustainable and thus most likely to be available for the youth/child and family after wraparound and other formal services have ended. People who represent sources of natural support often have a high degree of importance and influence within family members' lives. These relationships bring value to the wraparound process by broadening the diversity of support, knowledge, skills, perspectives, and strategies available to the team. Such individuals and organizations also may be able to provide certain types of support that more formal or professional providers find hard to provide.

The primary source of natural support is the family's network of interpersonal relationships, which includes friends, extended family, neighbors, co-workers, church members, and so on. Natural support is also available to the family through community institutions, organizations, and associations such as churches, clubs, libraries, or sports leagues. Professionals and paraprofessionals who interact with the family primarily offer paid support; however, they can also be connected to family members through caring relationships that exceed the boundaries and expectations of their formal roles.

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When they act in this way, professionals and paraprofessionals too can become sources of natural support.

Practical experience with wraparound has shown that formal service providers often have great difficulty accessing or engaging potential team members from the family's community and informal support networks. Thus, there is a tendency that these important relationships will be underrepresented on wraparound teams. This principle emphasizes the need for the team to act intentionally to encourage the full participation of team members representing sources of natural support.

### Principle 4: Collaboration

Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members' perspectives, mandates, and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team member's work towards meeting the team's goals.

Wraparound is a collaborative activity—team members must reach collective agreement on numerous decisions throughout the wraparound process. For example, the team must reach decisions about what goals to pursue, what sorts of strategies to use to reach the goals, and how to evaluate whether or not progress is actually being made in reaching the goals. The principle of collaboration recognizes that the team is more likely to accomplish its work when team members approach decisions in an open-minded manner, prepared to listen to and be influenced by other team members' ideas and opinions. Team members must also be willing to provide their own perspectives, and the whole team will need to work to ensure that each member has opportunities to provide input and feels safe in doing so. As they work to reach agreement, team members will need to remain focused on the team's overarching goals and how best to achieve these goals in a manner that reflects all of the principles of wraparound.

The principle of collaboration emphasizes that each team member must be committed to the team, the team's goals, and the wraparound plan. For professional team members, this means that the work they do with family members is governed by the goals in the plan and the decisions reached by the team. Similarly, the use of resources available to the team—including those controlled by individual professionals on the team—should be governed by team decisions and team goals.

This principle recognizes that there are certain constraints that operate on team decision making, and that collaboration must operate within these boundaries. In particular, legal mandates or other requirements often constrain decisions. Team members must be willing to work creatively and flexibly to find ways to satisfy these mandates and requirements while also working towards team goals.

Finally, it should be noted that, as for principles one (family voice and choice) and two (team-based), defining wraparound's principle of collaboration raises legitimate concern about how best to strike a balance between wraparound being youth and family-driven as well as team-driven. This issue is difficult to resolve completely, because it is clear that wraparound's strengths as a planning and implementation process derive from being team-based and collaborative while also prioritizing the perspectives of family members and natural supports that will provide support to the youth and family over the long run. Such tension can only be resolved on an individual family and team basis, and is best accomplished when team members, providers, and community members are well supported to fully implement wraparound in keeping with all its principles.

### Principle 5: Community-based

The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible, and least restrictive settings possible; and that safely promote child and family

integration into home and community life. This principle recognizes that families and young people who receive wraparound, like all people, should have the opportunity to participate fully in family and community life. This implies that the team will strive to implement service and support strategies that are accessible to the family and that are located within the community where the family chooses to live. Teams will also work to ensure that family members receiving wraparound have the greatest possible access to the range of activities and environments that are available to other families, children, and youth within their communities, and that support positive functioning and development.

### Principle 6: Culturally competent

The wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of the child/youth and family, and their community.

The perspectives people express in wraparound—as well as the manner in which they express their perspectives—are importantly shaped by their culture and identity. In order to collaborate successfully, team members must be able to interact in ways that demonstrate respect for diversity in expression, opinion, and preference, even as they work to come together to reach decisions. This principle emphasizes that respect toward the family in this regard is particularly crucial, so that the principle of family voice and choice can be realized in the wraparound process.

This principle also recognizes that a family's traditions, values, and heritage are sources of great strength. Family relationships with people and organizations with whom they share a cultural identity can be essential sources of support and resources; what is more, these connections are often "natural" in that they are likely to endure as sources of strength and support after formal services have ended. Such individuals and organizations also may be better able to provide types of support difficult to provide through more formal or

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professional relationships. Thus, this principle also emphasizes the importance of embracing these individuals and organizations, and nurturing and strengthening these connections and resources so as to help the team achieve its goals, and help the family sustain positive momentum after formal wraparound has ended.

This principle further implies that the team will strive to ensure that the service and support strategies that are included in the wraparound plan also build on and demonstrate respect for family members' beliefs, values, culture, and identity. The principle requires that team members are vigilant about ensuring that culturally competent services and supports extend beyond wraparound team meetings.

### Principle 7: Individualized

To achieve the goals laid out in the wraparound plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports, and services. This principle emphasizes that, when wraparound is undertaken in a manner consistent with all of the principles, the resulting plan will be uniquely tailored to fit the family. The principle of family voice and choice lays the foundation for individualization. That principle requires that wraparound must be based in the family's perspective about how things are for them, how things should be, and what needs to happen to achieve the latter.

Practical experience with wraparound has shown that when families are able to fully express their perspectives, it quickly becomes clear that only a portion of the help and support required is available through existing formal services. Wraparound teams are thus challenged to create strategies for providing help and support that can be delivered outside the boundaries of the traditional service environment. Moreover, the wraparound plan must be designed to build on the particular strengths of family members, and on the assets and resources of their community and culture. Individualization necessarily results as team members collaboratively craft a plan that

capitalizes on their collective strengths, creativity, and knowledge of possible strategies and available resources.

### Principle 8: Strengths based

The wraparound process and the wraparound plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child and family, their community, and other team members. The wraparound process is strengths based in that the team takes time to recognize and validate the skills, knowledge, insight, and strategies that each team member has used to meet the challenges they have encountered in life. The wraparound plan is constructed in such a way that the strategies included in the plan capitalize on and enhance the strengths of the people who participate in carrying out the plan. This principle also implies that interactions between team members will demonstrate mutual respect and appreciation for the value each person brings to the team.

The commitment to a strengths orientation is particularly pronounced with regard to the child or youth and family. Wraparound is intended to achieve outcomes not through a focus on eliminating family members' deficits but rather through efforts to utilize and increase their assets. Wraparound thus seeks to validate, build on, and expand family members' psychological assets (such as positive self-regard, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and clarity of values, purpose, and identity), their interpersonal assets (such as social competence and social connectedness), and their expertise, skill, and knowledge.

### Principle 9: Unconditional

A wraparound team does not give up on, blame, or reject children, youth, and their families. When faced with challenges or setbacks, the team continues working towards meeting the needs of the youth and family and towards achieving the goals in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer

necessary. This principle emphasizes that the team's commitment to achieving its goals persists regardless of the child's behavior or placement setting, the family's circumstances, or the availability of services in the community. This principle includes the idea that undesired behavior, events, or outcomes are not seen as evidence of youth or family "failure" and are not seen as a reason to reject or eject the family from wraparound. Instead, adverse events or outcomes are interpreted as indicating a need to revise the wraparound plan so that it more successfully promotes the positive outcomes associated with the goals. This principle also includes the idea that the team is committed to providing the supports and services that are necessary for success, and will not terminate wraparound because available services are deemed insufficient. Instead, the team is committed to creating and implementing a plan that reflects the wraparound principles, even in the face of limited system capacity.

At the same time, it is worth noting that many wraparound experts, including family members and advocates, have observed that providing "unconditional" care to youth and families can be challenging for teams to achieve in the face of certain system-level constraints. One such constraint is when funding limitations or rules will not fund the type or mix of services determined most appropriate by the team. In these instances the team must develop a plan that can be implemented in the absence of such resources without giving up on the youth or family. Providing unconditional care can be complicated in other situations, such as the context of child welfare, where unconditional care includes the duty to keep children and youth safe. Regardless, team members as well as those overseeing wraparound initiatives must strive to achieve the principle of unconditional care for the youth and all family members if the wraparound process is to have its full impact on youth, families, and communities.

**Principle 10: Outcome based**

The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly. This principle emphasizes that the wraparound team is accountable—to the family and to all team members; to the individuals, organizations and agencies that participate in wraparound; and, ultimately, to the public—for achieving the goals laid out in the plan. Determining outcomes and tracking progress toward outcomes should be an active part of wraparound team functioning. Outcomes monitoring allows the team to regularly assess the effectiveness of the plan as a whole, as well as the strategies included within the plan, and to determine when the plan needs revision. Tracking progress also helps the team maintain hope, cohesiveness, and efficacy. Tracking progress and outcomes also helps the family know that things are changing. Finally, team-level outcome monitoring aids the program and community to demonstrate success as part of their overall evaluation plan, which may be important to gaining support and resources for wraparound teams throughout the community.

**III. Phases & Activities of the Wraparound Process**

The activities below identify a *facilitator* as responsible for guiding, motivating, or undertaking the various activities. This is not meant to imply that a single person must facilitate all of the activities. The various activities may be split up among a number of different people. For example, on many teams, a parent partner or advocate takes responsibility for some activities associated with family and youth engagement, while a care coordinator is responsible for other activities. On other teams, a care coordinator takes on most of the

facilitation activities with specific tasks or responsibilities taken on by a parent, youth, and/or other team members. In addition, facilitation of wraparound team work may transition between individuals over time, such as from a care coordinator to a parent, family member, or other natural support person, during the course of a wraparound process.

The use of *numbering for the phases and activities* described below is not meant to imply that the activities must invariably be carried out in a specific order, or that one activity or phase must be finished before another can be started. Instead, the numbering and ordering is meant to convey an overall flow of activity and attention. For example, focus on transition activities is most apparent during the latter portions of the wraparound process; however, attention to transition begins with the earliest activities in a wraparound process.

**Phase 1: Engagement and team preparation.**

During this phase, the groundwork for trust and shared vision among the family and wraparound team members is established, so people are prepared to come to meetings and collaborate. The tone is set for teamwork and team interactions that are consistent with the wraparound principles, particularly through the initial conversations about strengths, needs, and culture. In addition, this phase provides an opportunity to begin to shift the family's orientation to one in which they understand they are an integral part of the process and their preferences are prioritized. The activities of this phase should be completed relatively quickly (within 1-2 weeks if possible), so that the team can begin meeting and establish ownership of the process as quickly as possible.

**Goal: Orienting the family and youth to the wraparound process**

*This is the major task or goal during phase one. In face-to-face conversations, the facilitator explains the wraparound*

*philosophy and process to family members and describes who will be involved and the nature of family and youth/child participation. The facilitator answers questions and addresses concerns. The facilitator describes alternatives to wraparound and asks family and youth if they choose to participate in wraparound. The facilitator describes types of supports available to family and youth as they participate on the teams (e.g., family/youth may want coaching so they can feel more comfortable and/or effective in partnering with other team members).*

*This orientation to wraparound should be brief and clear, and should avoid the use of jargon, so as not to overwhelm family members. At this stage, the focus is on providing enough information so that the family and youth can make an informed choice regarding participation in the wraparound process. For some families, alternatives to wraparound may be very limited and/or non-participation in wraparound may bring negative consequences (as when wraparound is court ordered); however, this does not prevent families/youth from making an informed choice to participate based on knowledge of the alternatives and/or the consequences of non-participation.*

**Activity: Address legal and ethical issues.** The facilitator reviews all consent and release forms with the family and youth, answers questions, and explains options and their consequences. The facilitator discusses relevant legal and ethical issues (e.g., mandatory reporting), informs family of their rights, and obtains necessary consents and release forms before the first team meeting. Ethical and legal considerations will also need to be reviewed with the entire team as described in phase two.

**Goal: Stabilize crisis**

*Any pressing needs and concerns are addressed so that the family and team can give their attention to the wraparound process.*

### III. Phases & Activities of the Wraparound Process

#### **Activity: Ask family and youth about immediate crisis concerns**

The facilitator elicits information from the family and youth about immediate safety issues, current crises, or crises that they anticipate might happen in the very near future. These may include crises stemming from a lack of basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, utilities such as heat or electricity). The goal of this activity is to quickly address the most pressing concerns. The whole team engages in proactive and future-oriented crisis/safety planning during phase two. As with other activities in this phase, the goal is to do no more than necessary prior to convening the team, so that the facilitator does not come to be viewed as the primary service provider and so that team as a whole can feel ownership for the plan and the process.

**Activity: Elicit information from agency representatives and potential team members about immediate crises or potential crises.** The facilitator elicits information from the referring source and other knowledgeable people about pressing crisis and safety concerns. Information about previous crises and their resolution can be useful in planning a response to future crises.

**Activity: If immediate response is necessary, formulate a response for immediate intervention and/or stabilization, and stabilize crisis.** The facilitator and family reach agreement about whether concerns require immediate attention and, if so, work to formulate a response that will provide immediate relief while also allowing the process of team building to move ahead. This response should describe clear, specific steps to accomplish stabilization.

**Goal: Facilitate conversations with family and youth/child**

*Individual and family strengths, needs, culture, and vision are explored and used to develop a document that will serve as the starting point for planning.*

**Activity: Explore strengths, needs,**

#### **culture, and vision with child/youth and family.**

The facilitator meets with the youth/child and family to hear about their experiences; gather their perspective on their individual and collective strengths, needs, elements of culture, and long-term goals or vision; and learn about natural and formal supports. The facilitator helps family identify potential team members and asks family to talk about needs and preferences for meeting arrangements (location, time, supports needed such as child care, translation). This activity is used to develop information that will be presented to and augmented by the team in phase two. Family members should be encouraged to consider these topics broadly.

**Activity: Facilitator prepares a summary document.** Using the information from the initial conversations with family members, the facilitator prepares a strengths-based document that summarizes key information about individual family member strengths and strengths of the family unit, as well as needs, culture, and vision. The family then reviews and approves the summary.

**Goal: Engage other team members**

*Team members are reached out to in order to gain the participation of team members who care about and can aid the youth/child and family, and to set the stage for their active and collaborative participation on the team in a manner consistent with the wraparound principles.*

**Activity: Solicit participation/orient team members.** The facilitator, together with family members if they so choose, approaches potential team members identified by the youth and family. The facilitator describes the wraparound process and clarifies the potential role and responsibilities of this person on the team. The facilitator asks the potential team members if they will participate. If so, the facilitator talks with them briefly to learn their perspectives on the

family's strengths and needs, and to learn about their needs and preferences for meeting. The youth and/or family may choose to invite potential team members themselves and/or to participate in this activity alongside the facilitator. It is important, however, not to burden family members by establishing (even inadvertently) the expectation that they will be primarily responsible for recruiting and orienting team members.

**Goal: Make necessary meeting arrangements**

*All necessary procedures are undertaken so the team is prepared to begin an effective wraparound process.*

**Activity: Arrange meeting logistics.** The facilitator integrates information gathered from all sources to arrange the meeting time and location and to assure the availability of necessary supports or adaptations such as translators or child care. Meeting time and location should be accessible and comfortable, especially for the family but also for other team members. The facilitator prepares materials—including the document summarizing family members' individual and collective strengths, and their needs, culture, and vision—to be distributed to team members.

#### **Phase 2: Initial plan development**

During this phase, team trust and mutual respect are built while the team creates an initial plan of care using a high-quality planning process that reflects the wraparound principles. In particular, youth and family should feel, during this phase, that they are heard, that the needs chosen are ones they want to work on, and that the options chosen have a reasonable chance of helping them meet these needs. This phase should be completed during one or two meetings that take place within 1-2 weeks; a rapid time frame intended to promote team cohesion and shared responsibility toward achieving the team's *mission* or overarching goal.



**Goal: Develop an initial plan of care**

*An initial plan of care is created using a high-quality team process that elicits multiple perspectives and builds trust and shared vision among team members, while also being consistent with the wraparound principles.*

**Activity: Determine ground rules.** The facilitator guides the team in a discussion of basic ground rules, elicits additional ground rules important to team members, and facilitates discussion of how these will operate during team meetings. At a minimum, this discussion should address legal and ethical issues—including confidentiality, mandatory reporting, and other legal requirements—and how to create a safe and blame-free environment for youth/family and all team members. Ground rules are recorded in team documentation and distributed to members. In this activity, the team members define their collective expectations for team interaction and collaboration. These expectations, as written into the ground rules, should reflect the principles of wraparound. For example, the principles stress that interactions should promote family and youth voice and choice and should reflect a strengths orientation. The principles also stress that important decisions are made within the team.

**Activity: Describe and document strengths.** The facilitator presents strengths from the summary document prepared during Phase 1, and elicits feedback and additional strengths, including strengths of team members and community. While strengths are highlighted during this activity, the wraparound process features a strengths orientation throughout.

**Activity: Create team mission.** The facilitator reviews youth and family's vision and leads team in setting a *team mission*, introducing idea that this is the overarching goal that will guide the team through phases and, ultimately, through transition from formal wraparound. The team mission is the collaboratively set,

long-term goal that provides a one or two sentence summary of what the team is working towards.

**Activity: Describe and prioritize needs/goals.** The facilitator guides the team in reviewing needs and adding to the list. The facilitator then guides the team in prioritizing a small number of needs that the youth, family, and team want to work on first, and that they feel will help the team achieve the mission. The elicitation and prioritization of needs is often viewed as one of the most crucial and difficult activities of the wraparound process. The team must ensure that needs are considered broadly, and that the prioritization of needs reflects youth and family views about what is most important. Needs are not services but rather broader statements related to the underlying conditions that, if addressed, will lead to the accomplishment of the mission.

**Activity: Determine goals and associated outcomes and indicators for each goal.** Facilitator guides team in discussing a specific goal or outcome that will represent success in meeting each need that the team has chosen to work on. The facilitator guides the team in deciding how the outcome will be assessed, including specific indicators and how frequently they will be measured. Depending on the need being considered, multiple goals or outcomes may be determined. Similarly, for each goal or outcome determined by the team for measurement, multiple indicators may be chosen to be tracked by the team. However, the plan should not include so many goals, outcomes, or indicators that team members become overwhelmed or tracking of progress becomes difficult.

**Activity: Select strategies.** The facilitator guides the team in a process to think in a creative and open-ended manner about strategies for meeting needs and achieving outcomes. The facilitator uses techniques for generating multiple options, which are then evaluated by considering the extent to which they are likely to be effective

in helping reach the goal, outcome, or indicator associated with the need; the extent to which they are community based, the extent to which they build on/incorporate strengths; and the extent to which they are consistent with family culture and values. When evaluating more formal service and support options, facilitator aids team in acquiring information about and /or considering the evidence base for relevant options. This activity emphasizes creative problem solving, usually through brainstorming or other techniques, with the team considering the full range of available resources as they come up with strategies to meet needs and achieve outcomes. Importantly, this includes generating strategy options that extend beyond formal services and reach families through other avenues and time frames. These are frequently brainstormed by the team, with the youth and family and people representing their interpersonal and community connections being primary nominators of such supports. Finally, in order to best consider the evidence base for potential strategies or supports, it may be useful for a wraparound team or program to have access to and gain counsel from a point person who is well-informed on the evidence base.

**Activity: Assign action steps.** Team assigns responsibility for undertaking action steps associated with each strategy to specific individuals and within a particular time frame. Action steps are the separate small activities that are needed to put a strategy into place, for example, making a phone call, transporting a child, working with a family member, finding out more information, attending a support meeting, arranging an appointment. While all team members will not necessarily participate at the same level, all team members should be responsible for carrying out action steps. Care should be taken to ensure that individual team members, particularly the youth and family, are not overtaxed by the number of action steps they are assigned.

### III. Phases & Activities of the Wraparound Process

#### Goal: Develop crisis/safety plan

*Potential problems and crises are identified and prioritized according to seriousness and likelihood of occurrence. An effective and well-specified crisis prevention and response plan that is consistent with the wraparound principles is created. A more proactive safety plan may also be created.*

**Activity: Determine potential serious risks.** The facilitator guides the team in a discussion of how to maintain the safety of all family members and things that could potentially go wrong, followed by a process of prioritization based on seriousness and likelihood of occurrence. Past crises, and the outcomes of strategies used to manage them, are often an important source of information in current crisis/safety planning.

**Activity: Create crisis/safety plan.** In order of priority, the facilitator guides team in discussion of each serious risk identified. The discussion includes safety needs or concerns and potential crisis situations, including antecedents and associated strategies for preventing each potential type of crisis, as well as potential responses for each type of crisis. Specific roles and responsibilities are created for team members. This information is documented in a written *crisis plan*. Some teams may also undertake steps to create a separate *safety plan*, which specifies all the ways in which the wraparound plan addresses potential safety issues. One potential difficulty with this activity is the identification of a large number of crises or safety issues can mean that the crisis/safety plan “takes over” from the wraparound plan. The team thus needs to balance the need to address all risks that are deemed serious with the need to maintain focus on the larger wraparound plan as well as youth, family, and team strengths.

**Activity: Complete necessary documentation and logistics.** The facilitator guides team in setting meeting schedule and determining means of contacting team members

and distributing documentation to team members.

#### Phase 3: Implementation

During this phase, the initial wraparound plan is implemented, progress and successes are continually reviewed, and changes are made to the plan and then implemented, all while maintaining or building team cohesiveness and mutual respect. The activities of this phase are repeated until the team’s mission is achieved and formal wraparound is no longer needed.

#### Goal: Implement the wraparound plan

*The initial plan of care is implemented and there is monitoring of the completion of action steps and strategies and their success in meeting need and achieving outcomes in a manner consistent with the wraparound principles.*

**Activity: Implement action steps for each strategy.** For each strategy in the wraparound plan, team members undertake action steps for which they are responsible. The facilitator aids completion of action steps by checking in and following up with team members; educating providers and other system and community representatives about wraparound as needed; and identifying and obtaining necessary resources. The level of need for educating providers and other system and community representatives about wraparound varies considerably from one community to another. Where communities are new to the type of collaboration required by wraparound, getting provider “buy in” can be very difficult and time consuming for facilitators. Agencies implementing wraparound should be aware of these demands and be prepared to devote sufficient time, resources, and support to this need.

**Activity: Track progress on action steps.** The team monitors progress on the action steps for each strategy in the plan, tracking information about the timeliness of completion of

responsibilities assigned to each team member, fidelity to the plan, and the completion of the requirements of any particular intervention. Using the timelines associated with the action steps, the team tracks progress. When steps do not occur, teams can profit from examining the reasons why not. For example, teams may find that the person responsible needs additional support or resources to carry out the action step, or, alternatively, that different actions are necessary.

**Activity: Evaluate success of strategies.** Using the outcomes/indicators associated with each need, the facilitator guides the team in evaluating whether selected strategies are helping team meet the youth and family’s needs. Evaluation should happen at regular intervals. Exactly how frequently may be determined by program policies and/or the nature of the needs/goals. The process of evaluation should also help the team maintain focus on the “big picture” defined by the team’s mission: Are these strategies, by meeting needs, helping achieve the mission?

**Activity: Celebrate successes.** The facilitator encourages the team to acknowledge and celebrate successes, such as when progress has been made on action steps, when outcomes or indicators of success have been achieved, or when positive events or achievements occur. Acknowledging success is one way of maintaining a focus on the strengths and capacity of the team and its members. Successes do not have to be “big”, nor do they necessarily have to result directly from the team plan. Some teams make recognition of “what’s gone right” a part of each meeting.

#### Goal: Revisit and update the plan

*A high quality team process is used to ensure that the wraparound plan is continually revisited and updated to respond to the successes of initial strategies and the need for new strategies.*

**Activity: Consider new strategies as necessary.** When the team determines that strategies for meeting needs are not working, or when new needs are prioritized, the facilitator guides the team in a process of considering new strategies and action steps using the process described in previous activities titled “select strategies” and “assign action steps.” Revising of the plan takes place in the context of the needs previously identified when the team engaged in the activity called “described and prioritized needs and goals.” Since the needs are in turn connected to the mission, the mission helps to guide evaluation and plan revisions.

**Goal: Maintain/build team cohesiveness and trust**

*There is awareness of team members’ satisfaction with and “buy-in” to the process, and steps are to maintain or build team cohesiveness and trust.*

**Activity: Maintain awareness of team members’ satisfaction and “buy-in.”** The facilitator makes use of available information (e.g., informal chats, team feedback, surveys—if available) to assess team members’ satisfaction with and commitment to the team process and plan, and shares this information with the team as appropriate. The facilitator welcomes and orients new team members who may be added to the team as the process unfolds. Many teams maintain formal or informal processes for addressing team member engagement or “buy in”, e.g. periodic surveys or an end-of-meeting wrap-up activity. In addition, youth and family members should be frequently consulted about their satisfaction with the team’s work and whether they believe it is achieving progress toward their long-term vision, especially after major strategizing sessions. In general, however, this focus on assessing the process of teamwork should not eclipse the overall evaluation that is keyed to meeting identified needs and achieving the team mission.

**Activity: Address issues of team**

**cohesiveness and trust.** Making use of available information, the facilitator helps the team maintain cohesiveness and satisfaction (e.g., by continually educating team members—including new team members—about wraparound principles and activities, and/or by guiding team in procedures to understand and manage disagreement, conflict, or dissatisfaction). Teams will vary in the extent to which issues of cohesiveness and trust arise. Often, difficulties in this area arise from one or more team members’ perceptions that the team’s work—and/or the overall mission or needs being currently addressed—is not addressing the youth and family’s “real” needs. This points to the importance of careful work in deriving the needs and mission in the first place, since shared goals are essential to maintaining team cohesiveness over time.

**Activity: Complete necessary documentation and logistics.** The facilitator maintains/updates the plan and maintains and distributes meeting minutes. Team documentation should record completion of action steps, team attendance, use of formal and informal services and supports, and expenditures. The facilitator documents results of reviews of progress, successes, and changes to the team and plan. The facilitator guides team in revising meeting logistics as necessary and distributes documentation to team members. Team documentation should be kept current and updated, and should be distributed to and/or available to all team members in a timely fashion.

#### Phase 4: Transition

During this phase, plans are made for a purposeful transition out of formal wraparound to a mix of formal and natural supports in the community (and, if appropriate, to services and supports in the adult system). The focus on transition is continual during the wraparound process, and the preparation for transition is apparent even during the initial engagement activities.

**Goal: Plan for cessation of formal wraparound**

*Planning occurs for a purposeful transition out of formal wraparound in a way that is consistent with the wraparound principles, and that supports the youth and family in maintaining the positive outcomes achieved in the wraparound process.*

**Activity: Create a transition plan.** The facilitator guides the team in focusing on the transition from wraparound, reviewing strengths and needs and identifying services and supports to meet needs that will persist past formal wraparound. Preparation for transition begins early in the wraparound process, but intensifies as team meets needs and moves towards achieving the mission. While formal supports and services may be needed post-transition, the team is attentive to the need for developing a sustainable system of supports that is not dependent on formal wraparound. Teams may decide to continue wraparound—or a variation of wraparound—even after it is no longer being provided as a formal service.

**Activity: Create a post-transition crisis management plan.** The facilitator guides the team in creating a post-wraparound crisis management plan that includes action steps, specific responsibilities, and communication protocols. Planning may include rehearsing responses to crises and creating linkage to post-wraparound crisis resources. At this point in transition, youth and family members, together with their continuing supports, should have acquired skills and knowledge in how to manage crises. Post-transition crisis management planning should acknowledge and capitalize on this increased knowledge and strengthened support system. This activity will likely include identification of access points and entitlements for formal services that may be used following formal wraparound.

**Activity: Modify wraparound process to reflect transition.** New members may

#### IV. Wraparound Staff Roles

be added to the team to reflect identified post-transition strategies, services, and supports. The team discusses responses to potential future situations, including crises, and negotiates the nature of each team member's post-wraparound participation with the team/family. Formal wraparound team meetings reduce frequency and ultimately cease. Teams may continue to meet using a wraparound process (or other process or format) even after formal wraparound has ended. Should teamwork continue, family members and youth, or other supports, will likely take on some or all of the facilitation and coordination activities.

#### Goal: Create a "commencement"

*Ensure that the cessation of formal wraparound is conducted in a way that celebrates successes and frames transition proactively and positively.*

#### **Activity: Document the team's work.**

The facilitator guides the team in creating a document that describes the strengths of the youth/child, family, and team members, and lessons learned about strategies that worked well and those that did not work so well. The team participates in preparing/reviewing necessary final reports (e.g., to court or participating providers, where necessary). This creates a package of information that can be useful in the future.

**Activity: Celebrate success.** The facilitator encourages the team to create and/or participate in a culturally appropriate "commencement" celebration that is meaningful to the youth/child, family, and team, and that recognizes their accomplishments. This activity may be considered optional. Youth/child and family should feel that they are ready to transition from formal wraparound, and it is important that "graduation" is not constructed by systems primarily as a way to get families out of services.

#### Goal: Follow-up with the family

*Ensure that the family is continuing to experience success after wraparound and*

*to provide support if necessary.*

**Activity: Check in with family.** The facilitator leads the team in creating a procedure for checking in with the youth and family periodically after commencement. If new needs have emerged that require a formal response, facilitator and/or other team members may aid the family in accessing appropriate services, possibly including a reconvening of the wraparound team. The check-in procedure can be done impersonally (e.g., through questionnaires) or through contact initiated at agreed-upon intervals either by the youth or family, or by another team member.

### IV. Wraparound Staff Roles

A range of positions exist within wraparound projects across sites. Typical positions include:

- **Wraparound Facilitator/Care Coordinator:** This position is typically responsible for organizing the steps of the wraparound process, documenting the plan, hosting and facilitating team meetings, and troubleshooting and organizing support, interventions and services to achieve outcomes.
- **Parent Partner/Family Partner/Family Support Partner:** This position is typically filled by someone who has first-person experience within the service system on behalf of their child or loved one. The role of this person varies somewhat from site to site but typically those in this role provide peer-to-peer support for family members and consultation about family perspective to the organization and team. Being someone who has experienced the service system from the consumer perspective, this allows for individuals to relate to families in unique ways and also helps professionals see their activities from a different perspective. The parent partner also participates in activities within the wraparound-implementing agency, including utilization and

quality review meetings.

Family partners coach, educate, support and encourage family members to use their own voices to express their views clearly and to make informed choices. The family partner helps create a safe environment in which families may express their needs and views or vent frustration. They can help the family discover and learn new ways to describe negative experiences and express fears and anxieties to the team in a way that promotes communication. The family partner has responsibility to educate the other team members on the significance of family voices and choice and how their own practice and behavior can create an environment where families feel safe using their voice and expressing their choices.

When a family member feels unwilling to talk about an issue, he or she may ask that the family partner (or someone else) act as a spokesperson. In such cases the family partner encourages the family member to find a way to express him or herself before accepting responsibility of being a temporarily designated spokesperson. When acting as a spokesperson, the family partner invests as much time as is necessary to develop a complete understanding of the family's perspective. When family members specifically ask the family partner to speak on their behalf, the family partner always makes sure the family member is present and confirms what is communicated.

The family partner coaches the family through an ongoing process of discovery and inquiry about possible team members to make sure they are connecting with individuals or agencies who can meet their needs. As a result, the family is prepared to make informed choices about team membership and understands why some team members are mandated by systems working with the family. The family partner helps the family recognize what each of these individuals could contribute as well as the advantages and possible

challenges that might arise from their participation on the team.

The family partner helps a family understand how natural supports can contribute to the overall success of their wraparound plan and helps the family identify natural supports they want to bring onto their team and incorporate into their wraparound plan. The family partner encourages the family to bring their natural supports to the wraparound process. However, they must also respect the family's choice to withhold information about natural supports if they so wish.

- **Child & Family Specialist/Community Support Specialist/Intervention Specialists:** Some sites have found it helpful to have direct, hands-one practitioners who are available to provide specific interventions as agreed on in the wraparound plan. These individuals will work flexible hours in various locations to provide support and interventions, especially to young people who are participating in wraparound. Support activities can include recreational activities, transportation, and socialization. More structured interventions might include crisis response, skills building and intensive behavioral intervention.
- **Wraparound Clinicians:** Some projects integrate a clinical perspective by creating unique roles for clinicians within the wraparound project itself. That does not mean that all families get clinical services from that project clinician. Instead the person in that role may do a variety of things including providing clinical consultation to the wraparound staff and team, providing direct clinical interventions as requested by the team and providing crisis support and intervention as needed.
- **Resource Developers/Resource Brokers/Community Development Specialists:** Some projects have found that their ability to practice quality wraparound is enhanced by developing capacity to systematically connect with community resources.

Those in this role do more than manage community resource manuals. Instead they are responsible for developing connections among community options and the wraparound project, communicating about options for wraparound staff, negotiating for access for wraparound families within the identified resource, and assisting community resources with maintaining a welcoming stance for families involved in wraparound.

#### Working with Wraparound Staff

Some wraparound projects have a range of staff assigned including wraparound facilitators, wraparound clinicians, parent partners, (near-) peer youth partners and, in some locations, youth specialists who provide direct interventions between team meetings. Some wraparound projects operate with facilitators only while others may have one or two of the roles listed above. Wraparound supervisors who lead a diverse workforce should be prepared to demonstrate a variety of skills including:

#### Conflict Resolution

The more diverse the workforce the greater the likelihood that there will be multiple perspectives. The wraparound supervisor should manage conflict creatively to assure that all of those perspectives are blending into a holistic experience for families.

#### Coaching Staff

As the range of staff roles grow within the wraparound project, the wraparound supervisor has to develop a capacity to provide proactive, behavioral, field and office-based coaching and instruction to staff. Coaching and supervising staff is different from maintaining fidelity to the practice model. Instead this is the process by which staff is given clear directives defining how they should perform their duties in a way that adds value to the comprehensive wraparound package.

#### Correcting Staff

No matter how much proactive coaching has occurred, supervisors will find it necessary to correct staff behavior and practice patterns. Wraparound supervisors have to translate staff behaviors back to the values base that is articulated in a wraparound model and assure those behaviors are being demonstrated in everyday interactions with families and communities. When there is not a fit, wraparound supervisors should provide clear, consistent and direct feedback about not only what has happened but why it's a problem for the project and what needs to happen instead. The effective wraparound supervisor takes responsibility for fostering an environment in which staff seeks to continuously improve their skills while assuring pride in their development as wraparound practitioners.

#### Developing Staff

As staff becomes proficient in demonstrating the wraparound process steps, they will undoubtedly want new challenges. This may mean that they are interested in advancing within the wraparound project or may want to move into other departments that have a philosophy that is compatible with the wraparound philosophy. Effective supervisors are able to champion the growth of their workforce by sponsoring and supporting employee talent and continued growth, through formal education/training, lateral transfers, promotions and/or restructuring jobs to enhance growth. Wraparound supervisors walk a fine line when making these adjustments and need to be sure that they are making accommodations that really enhance the employee's strengths, thus improving the overall program performance. Accommodations must be balanced with accountability to ensure that individuals are still producing good outcomes while consistently following practice pathways.

## Wraparound Supervisors Working with Systems and Organizations

Quality wraparound implementation takes the combined efforts of practitioners, managers, and partners on the inside who can tame the bureaucracy and organization, as well as family and community members. Many wraparound projects are initiated as an alternative to other services specifically targeted for those situations that can't be resolved effectively with what's already available. This alternative nature often makes wraparound programs very political within the host environments in which they are housed. Those involved in trying to serve the family prior to the referral to the wraparound project may feel defensive that the wraparound project will be able to achieve what they couldn't accomplish. This can set up an "us-them" mentality within the organization whether it is housed in a non-profit, public sector or other type of service agency. Some wraparound projects fail because of the inability of the host environment to change. Effective wraparound supervisors must demonstrate the following capacities:

### Lateral Alliance Building

Effective supervisors have the ability to work across departments with peers and others to assure that all employees within an organization or service system feel a sense of ownership and participation in the wraparound project. This means the effective supervisor has to stay away from taking on the role of "hero" within the organization and ultimately realize that a right-size host environment is fully participatory.

### Manage Up

Effective supervisors are those who are able to produce the right type of practice model within the organization. This requires creating capacity within the organization to tolerate responsible risk taking, realigning rules and policies for individual situations, and working cooperatively with administrative

leadership to assure that wraparound is well-placed within the organization. Smart organizational thinkers avoid the trap of developing their wraparound project as a subculture within the larger organization. Instead, they work cooperatively within the organization to increase compatibility between the operations within the wraparound project and those within the larger organization.

### Build Out

Wraparound is a process that we use when we don't know what to do. It's also a process that you can't do alone. Wraparound supervisors find they spend a great deal of their time building connections in addition to those they need to build within their organizational environment. Many wraparound supervisors find they need to develop effective alliances with public systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice or mental health, so that they continue to make referrals to the project. Once the referral is made, wraparound supervisors must manage to assure continued participation by individuals in those systems. This can be a challenge for the individual who is used to referring "to" a service rather than joining with that project. Wraparound supervisors spend a great deal of their time assuring that their staff and project don't end up "going it alone" but instead, bring on everyone together.

### Make Over

Wraparound supervisors should be prepared to partner with others in creating new opportunities within their primary host environment and within the larger service system. The wraparound project is often seen as a laboratory for innovative ideas or strategies and effective wraparound supervisors find ways to work with the organization to apply those strategies more widely. One example is an organization that has hired parent partners within their wraparound project, and after experimenting in that setting, discovers that the rest of their programs could be enhanced by hiring those with "first person experience of the

system." In this case, the organization has parent partners hired within their foster care, residential, day treatment and outpatient programs. Another example is the wraparound project that involved family members in hiring new staff. Over time, the organization has institutionalized that process in its human resource department by assuring that all new staff, including administrative staff, is screened by family members who are currently receiving services.

Effective supervisors are often faced with the need to define the practice model, build support for the practice model, and tame policies that may be in conflict with the practice model, while also creating procedures that are compatible with the spirit and intent of wraparound. Very few wraparound supervisors find themselves in situations that don't require some retrofitting of the host environment. The effective supervisor strikes a balance between the need to work on the larger environmental issues, the need to nurture the work force and the need to continually improve and adapt the process for the benefit of families.

When communities start new wraparound projects, supervisors may find themselves managing a project they have never done before. Staff or others may sometimes raise this as an issue in questioning the capacity of the supervisor to supervise. Some supervisors have elected to take on the role of facilitator for at least one family to assure they have a good understanding of the process. Others have elected to educate themselves by working closely with staff and being available within a variety of meetings and settings so they can gather information in that manner. Others find themselves networking with peers from other wraparound settings in order to get feedback and information. Some will also use consultants and trainers as a way to build their own confidence and knowledge base. It is important to remember that the skill set for supervising wraparound is different than the skill set for implementing wraparound. Those projects that are maturing and can create promotional opportunities for wraparound staff will

do well to remember this. Effective projects invest in building supervisory skills at the same time they are developing strong wraparound capacities.

## V. Youth Participation in Wraparound Team Planning: The Why and How

Human service and educational agencies and systems often convene teams to work collaboratively on plans for serving children or youth. This is particularly true for children and youth who are involved with multiple systems or who are felt to be in need of intensive intervention. The focus has been on wraparound planning teams, but similar planning goes on in IEP (Individualized Education Plan) teams, foster care independent living program teams, transition planning teams, youth/family decision teams, and other teams that create service or treatment plans. Unfortunately, it is often true that these plans are created *for* youth, with little input or buy-in from the young people themselves.

While many adults are eager to involve youth in planning in a more meaningful way some are unsure of how to feasibly accomplish this goal. Others are not committed to the idea that youth should have an important role in making decisions for their care, service, education and treatment plans. Some raise a range of objections:

- Involving youth is not worth the time it would take.
- We know what's best for youth and we should make the decisions.
- We already do give youth the opportunity to participate in planning, but they just aren't interested.
- Our youth have emotional and behavioral difficulties—they don't know what's good for them and anyway they can't work productively in meetings.
- Our youth have attentional problems—they really don't want to sit through

long meetings.

- Our youth have cognitive delays—they don't have the skills to contribute to plans.
- Our youth have difficult lives—their feelings will be hurt if they come to meetings and we discuss what's going on, and so on.

Subsequently, *Achieve My Plan (AMP)* was developed as a five-year project that is developing and testing ways to increase the meaningful participation of youth in collaborative team planning meetings. The work of the AMP project is undertaken with the guidance and active participation of an advisory group that includes youth, caregivers and providers who have extensive personal experience with multiple service systems and interdisciplinary planning. Advisors have worked together with research staff to design and evaluate the products from the AMP project.

AMP aims to answer two questions: First, *Why?* Why is it worthwhile for organizations and agencies that participate in team planning for youth to change what they do, to adopt new practices that increase young people's role in team discussions and decisions?

And second, *How?* What do these organizations and agencies need to do—and what do the people who participate on teams need to do—to ensure that planning with youth is collaborative and productive rather than confrontational or (as youth fear) one more opportunity for adults to lecture young people all about the bad things they did in the past and tell the young people what they are going to have to do now.

### The WHY of Meaningful Youth Participation

The article "*Youth Participation in Collaborative Team Planning: Research Tells Us We Should be Doing Better*" reviews published research as a means to providing answers to a series of questions or doubts that people may have regarding the usefulness and feasibility of youth participation. Here, we review

the main questions and answers. Please see the full document for more detailed answers and research citations.

*Aren't young people already involved in their education, care, and treatment planning?* The best available research indicates that few students participate meaningfully in creating their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). It also appears that youth with emotional or behavioral disorders do not usually participate meaningfully in creating their own care, treatment, or service plans. Professionals who participate in this kind of planning are also dissatisfied with the level of youth participation.

*Participating meaningfully in planning means that young people have to take part in making decisions and setting and monitoring goals. Can youth who have significant mental health, learning, and/or cognitive difficulties really be expected to master the skills needed to do this?* Children and youth of all ages and with a variety of disabilities and challenges have successfully learned the necessary skills and participated in planning.

*Why is it so important to include young people in planning for their education, treatment or care? What's to be gained?* There are a lot of potential benefits to increasing youth participation in planning. First of all, when people feel they are doing something because they want to, they tend to be happier and more engaged, and do a better job, than when they don't feel they have a choice. Second, learning to make plans and achieve goals is an important part of growing up for any young person. People who are confident that they can solve problems in their lives and reach the goals they set for themselves experience many positive outcomes—including positive emotional and behavioral outcomes. Developing self-efficacy would seem particularly important for youth who face high levels of challenge in life. However, it appears that children with disabilities and children who are involved with the child welfare or mental health systems have far fewer opportunities than their peers to experience self-efficacy. In addition

## V. Youth Participation in Wraparound Team Planning: The Why and How

to all these reasons, perhaps the most important reason for including youth meaningfully in planning is because it's the right thing to do.

### The HOW of Meaningful Youth Participation

The *how* of promoting meaningful youth participation in wraparound team planning has several distinct aspects. First, the organization(s) that take the lead in convening wraparound teams need to build an organizational culture that prioritizes and values youth voice in team discussions and decisions. Additionally, the organization needs to define and build capacity for new ways of working directly with youth. These include practices for preparing youth for participation, running meetings that encourage youth participation, and holding teams accountable for carrying out collaborative decisions.

#### Organizational culture

Agency staff is more likely to support youth participation if they see that it is a priority within the agency, and if the agency provides resources—like time and training—so that staff can gain the skills they need to carry out activities that encourage youth participation. Staff, families, and youth themselves will be more open to youth participation if they are exposed to information—like the AMP video and other publications—that demonstrates that increasing youth participation is both desirable and possible. The agency should be clear about its commitment to youth participation in decision making. Once decisions are made (with youth participation), the decisions should not be changed later without further youth participation. Youth should be invited to participate in the entire meeting, and important information should not be shared when youth are absent.

#### Preparation for the meeting

One of the things that our youth advisors were clearest about is that a team meeting

should not have surprises. Many of the youth had had bad experiences with meetings when they felt blindsided by topics that were to be discussed. Or they were told they would have input into a decisions and then (surprise!), the actual decision was made without consideration of what they thought or what they wanted. Because of experiences such as these—and also because of a natural anxiety about sitting in a room with a group of adults who have power over their lives—youth are likely to anticipate a meeting with distrust, anxiety, or even anger. If, however, a young person knows what will happen in the meeting, he or she can feel more of a sense of security that there will be no unpleasant surprises. Additionally, knowing what is going to happen at the meeting means that the young person can prepare his or her thoughts and ideas in advance. Thus, an organization that promotes meaningful youth participation helps make sure that a young person knows what is going to happen during a meeting, and further ensures that the young person has adequate support to prepare for the meeting.

Specifically, such an organization ensures that...

- In consultation with the youth, an agenda is formulated before the meeting.
- Adequate preparation is provided so that a young person has an opportunity to be supported through a process of thinking about what and how he or she wants to contribute to the topics on the agenda.
- Preparation includes an opportunity for the youth to formulate goals that will be part of the plan.
- Preparation also includes helping the youth plan to contribute to the meeting in whatever manner feels comfortable to him or her.
- The youth is supported in planning specific strategies he or she might use during the meeting to help stay calm and/or focused.
- Someone helps the youth figure out

who can support him or her during the meeting and prepare that “support person” for this role.

### Running a Meeting that Feels Safe for Participation

Young people report that, during team meetings, they are often ignored, lectured at, and/or harshly criticized. To help the meeting feel safe, the team should agree to a set of ground rules, and the facilitator should be able to control the meeting in a way that ensures that people follow the rules.

Ground rules should include the following:

- All team members treat each other respectfully, the youth no less than others.
- Remain strengths-based and solution-focused.
- During the meeting, stick to the agenda that the youth has helped create.
- Make sure everyone can understand what's going on.
- Speak in ways that don't alienate or hurt the youth.
- Be clear about exactly who is doing what to follow up on decisions made in the meeting.

During the meeting, team members must act and interact in ways that ensure that the youth will have real influence in discussion and decision making. Thus, the team should purposefully structure discussion in ways that provide multiple opportunities for the youth to express his or her ideas or offer comments, even if he/she doesn't want to say a lot at any one time.

Beyond this, it is also important for the team to structure decision making in ways that support collaboration. Collaboration (with youth or with anyone else) is supported when people are able to keep an open mind and explore different perspectives and different options fully before making decisions about what to do. Thus, collaborative teams do not make decisions about



solutions until they have had a chance to think carefully about what the goal, problem, or need really is. Furthermore, a collaborative and creative team will consider several different strategies to solve a problem or meet a need before selecting an option to pursue.

### Holding Each Other Accountable

Finally, team members earn each other's trust—and accomplish their work—by following through on the action steps they commit to during planning. Seeing people follow through on their commitments to the plan is particularly important for young people who have been heavily involved with service systems. Often, these young people have experience with being let down by providers. Youth who have had input into decisions for a plan may be particularly skeptical, thinking it entirely possible that providers will be unmotivated to follow through on decisions that reflect a young person's priorities rather than their own. Thus it is important for team members to hold each other accountable for carrying out the action steps that they commit to during planning. In order for this to happen, these commitments must be made clear during planning and they must be recorded. The team must also have a process for checking in later on to see whether or not team members have actually followed through.

### Outcomes

The wraparound process has been implemented widely across the United States and internationally for several reasons, including its documented success in promoting shifts from residential treatment and inpatient options to community-based care (and associated cost savings); its alignment with the value base for systems of care; and its resonance with families and family advocates. Wraparound has been included in the Surgeon General's reports on both Children's Mental Health and Youth Violence, mandated for use in several federal grant programs, and presented by leading researchers as a mechanism for improving the uptake of evidence-based practices.

Continued expansion of the wraparound research base has provided additional support for ongoing investment in wraparound. To date, results of 8-10 (depending on criteria used) controlled (experimental and quasi-experimental) studies have been published in the peer-reviewed literature. A meta-analysis of seven of these studies has recently been published showing consistent and significant outcomes in favor of the wraparound group compared to control groups across a wide range of outcome domains, including residential placement, mental health outcomes, school success, and juvenile justice recidivism (Suter & Bruns, 2009). The overall effect size in this meta-analysis was found to be between 0.33-0.40, about the same as was found in a recent meta-analysis of children's mental health evidence-based treatments. Thus, though wraparound has typically been described as a "promising" intervention, there has been consistent documentation of the model's ability to impact residential placement and other outcomes for youth with complex needs. The research base for wraparound continues to expand and, as a result, wraparound is likely to be more consistently referenced as an "evidence-based" model in the years to come.

### Article Adapted from...

*National Wraparound Institute Resource Guide to Wraparound*, Supporting Wraparound Implementation: Chapter 5a.2 (Eric Bruns & Janet Walker).

*Wraparound Practice*: Chapter 4b.3 Family Partners and the Wraparound Practice (Patricia Miles).

*Wraparound Practice*: Chapter 4c.3 Youth Participation in Team Planning: Why and How (Janet Walker).

*The Principles of Wrap*: Chapter 2.1 Ten Principles of the Wrap process (Eric J. Bruns & Janet S. Walker).

*Supporting Wraparound Implementation*: Chapter 5c.6 Wraparound supervision and management (Patricia Miles).

*The Wraparound Process: An Overview of Implementation Essentials*: 4a.1 Phases and Activities of Wraparound: Building Agreement about a Practice Model (Janet Walker, Eric Bruns, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group) with permission of National Wraparound Initiative.

HTTP://WWW.NWI.PDX.EDU/NWI-BOOK/PGBOOKANDCOMPLETESECTIONS.SHTML

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- Dennis, K.W. & Lourie, I.S. (2006). *Everything is normal until proven otherwise: A book about wraparound services*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
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# Wraparound Process

## POST TEST— 2 CEs

Please select one answer per multiple-choice question.

### 1. A point of contention in implementing family voice and choice has been:

- a) How to define who is considered family for inclusion on the teams.
- b) How to balance the priorities of families with those of staff who are acting as custodians.
- c) How to manage disagreement.
- d) How to integrate older youth into the process.

### 2. Inclusion of natural supports on the wraparound team is important because:

- a) Natural supports broaden the diversity of support, knowledge, and skills available to the team.
- b) Natural supports are sustainable and continue after formal services have ended.
- c) People who are natural supports often are important to and valued by family members.
- d) All of the above.

### 3. The principle of collaboration means that wraparound teams must:

- a) Reach full consensus about the plan.
- b) Have 100% participation at team meetings.
- c) Ensure that each member feels safe and can contribute.
- d) Include as many services in the plan as possible.

### 4. Teams can promote individualization by:

- a) Including supports that are not typically considered part of the service environment.
- b) Striking a balance between being family-driven and team-driven
- c) Providing support to family members about whom they invite to join the team.
- d) Managing disagreement through collaboration and creativity.

### 5. Challenges to being unconditional include:

- a) Continuing service when encountering poor outcomes.
- b) Facing system-level constraints.
- c) Working with team members who are being resistant.
- d) All of the above.

### 6. When developing an initial plan of care, the wraparound team should:

- a) Meet at least three times to discuss the team's mission and overarching goal(s).
- b) Assign responsibility for action steps to specific individuals on the team but delay decisions about the time frame in which they will be accomplished.
- c) Document a plan for what actions will be taken in a crisis.
- d) Develop a detailed plan to address all possible crises that may arise, even if the team does not have time to complete the larger wraparound plan.

### 7. If the wraparound team determines that certain strategies are not working:

- a) The original goals set by the team should be revised.
- b) The facilitator should guide the team in a process of considering new strategies and action steps.
- c) The team should seek consultation from an outside expert who is not a core team member.
- d) The facilitator will make use of available information to assess the team members' commitment to the team process.

### 8. The family partner is:

- a) An informal member of the wraparound team.
- b) Responsible for speaking on behalf of the family when the family is not present.
- c) Available to family members primarily during the initial planning stages.
- d) Responsible for ensuring that the family's point of view—not the family partner's—is heard by the team.

### 9. Which of these activities is not a part of the implementation phase:

- a) Ensuring fidelity to the plan.
- b) Recognizing "what's gone right."
- c) Evaluating how successful strategies have been.
- d) Creating a team mission.

### 10. A hallmark of the transition phase is:

- a) Moving from the child system to the adult system.
- b) Increasing use of services.
- c) Purposefully moving from formal supports to natural supports.
- d) Dissolving the wraparound team.

**How this works:** Read the CE program, and complete the post-test and evaluation. Mail these two pages back to the NASW MA Chapter office with your check. Score 80% or better and we'll mail you a certificate for CEs. It's that easy!

**11. In working with staff, supervisors need such skills as conflict resolution, coaching, making corrections, and providing development because:**

- a) They must ensure high fidelity, which requires these skills.
- b) They usually have a diverse staff, which can include clinicians, parents, child/adolescent peers, and youth specialists.
- c) They are expected to demonstrate all of these skills in order to receive funding.
- d) They are preparing the staff to become future supervisors.

**12. Which of the following is not typically involved in supervisors' collaboration with systems and organizations:**

- a) Tolerating responsible risk taking.
- b) Developing effective alliances with systems like child welfare and juvenile justice.
- c) Avoidance of overly complex systems which bog down effective communication.
- d) Working across departments to ensure that everyone feels a sense of ownership and participation in the wraparound process.

**14. When involving youth in wraparound meetings, agency staff members should:**

- a) Develop the agenda in advance of the meeting.
- b) Have the youth create goals for the plan.
- c) Help the youth develop strategies for staying calm and focused during the meeting.
- d) All of the above.

**13. Which of the following roles provide interventions and support to youth such as transportation, recreational activities, and crisis response:**

- a) Child and family specialists.
- b) Wraparound facilitators.
- c) Parent or family partners.
- d) Resource developers.

**15. To make meetings safe for youth participants, the facilitator should:**

- a) Have everyone introduce themselves and state their role on the team.
- b) Meet with the parents/caregivers separately to talk about progress on goals.
- c) Set ground rules and implement the rules during the meeting.
- d) Ensure there is a crisis plan.

After completing the Post-Test and Evaluation, return this page to NASW along with your payment. If you scored 80% or better, we'll mail you 2 CEs!

## FOCUS CE Course Evaluation—September 2010

**Please indicate whether the following learning objectives were achieved:**

- A. I can identify and describe the ten principles of wraparound.  
*Achieved in full 5 4 3 2 1 Not Achieved*
- B. I can identify and describe the four phases of wraparound.  
*Achieved in full 5 4 3 2 1 Not Achieved*
- C. I can identify and describe the staff roles and activities of wraparound.  
*Achieved in full 5 4 3 2 1 Not Achieved*
- D. Please provide comments on current course and suggestions for future courses:

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