

## What is Family Peer Support?

Family Peer Support Services are an array of services and supports provided to families raising a child or young adult up to age 21 who is experiencing social, emotional, addiction, or behavioral health challenges in their home, school, community and/or placement.

Family Peer Support Services are provided by a trained and credentialed Family Peer Advocate (FPA) who is uniquely qualified to work with families based on his/her personal experience parenting a child with similar needs and the specialized training they receive. This service can be provided through individual, group or other settings that fits a families needs.

This service provides a structured, strength-based relationship between a credentialed Family Peer Advocate and the parent/caregiver for the benefit of the child/youth.

The purpose of this service is to support the parent/caregiver and enhance their skills so they can promote positive youth functioning and their child's ability to live successfully in their community.



*"Family support means that I am not alone. Others have walked in my shoes, have learned a few things and are able to share that with me and for that I am thankful."*  
- A Parent



### Families Together in New York State

737 Madison Avenue  
Albany, New York 12208  
www.ftnys.org  
(518) 432-0333

Establishing a unified voice  
for families of children and youth with  
social, emotional and behavioral health  
challenges with cross systems needs

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## Family Peer Support

For Families, By Families



## What are Family Peer Support Services?

## Principles of Family Peer Support Services

## Who Provides Family Peer Support Services?

There are **six** categories of Family Peer Support Services. A Family Peer Support Provider has the capacity to offer all six categories of services based on the individual needs and preferences of the family.

1. Outreach and Information
2. Engagement, Bridging and Transition Support
3. Self-Advocacy, Self-Belief and Empowerment
4. Community Connections and Natural Supports
5. Parent Skill Development
6. Promoting Effective Family-Driven Practice

*“My Family Peer Advocate helped me help my children. She is a parent of a child who has challenges and she understood me in a way only someone who has been there could”*

*- A Parent*



***Is Individualized.*** Tailored to the specific needs of parents and families; demonstrates willingness to continuously assess and learn about families' needs, incorporating what is learned into working flexibly with them.

***Makes Connections.*** Facilitates connections to services, agencies, activities, training and other families.

***Is Respectful and Culturally Competent.*** Listens without judgment to families' ideas, preferences, and decisions and acknowledges families' struggles, efforts and successes; accepts and honors differences.

***Builds Skills.*** Creates a safe environment that fosters growth and empowerment; develops competent mental health consumers through training, mentorship and activities.

***Builds Knowledge.*** Provides current information, resources and appropriate interventions to help parents in their own decision-making.

***Is Engaging.*** Invests in parent involvement and actively partners with families.

***Solution Focused.*** Focuses on identifying needs and solutions; bridges successes of the past and options for continued success.

***Focuses on Outcomes and Success.*** Goal-oriented, hopeful and encouraging; monitors outcomes in line with what families want.

***Broadens Horizons.*** Expands possibilities for parental involvement at multiple levels and cultivates a community of peer support.

***Promotes Advocacy.*** Informs policymakers and providers as part of a larger advocacy community.

A New York State Credentialed Family Peer Advocate (FPA) delivers Family Peer Support Services for families whose children have been involved in many systems including mental health, addiction, special education, juvenile justice, and child welfare. Family Peer Advocates have lived experience as a parent or primary caregiver who has navigated these multiple child serving systems on behalf of their child(ren).

*“As a Family Peer Advocate I have learned that sharing my experiences as a parent who has been through similar circumstances creates an instant trust with the families I work with. “*  
*- A Family Peer Advocate*

