



# ParentingWell

PRACTICE PROFILE  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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## **PRACTICE PROFILE**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ParentingWell® is an approach to routine practice that makes talking about parenting, children, and family experiences a natural part of the conversation and of an adult's recovery process. Appropriate, effective treatment for an adult's specific behavioral health condition is paramount.

However, recovery does not occur in isolation. Family can provide motivation for change. Family members can encourage and support individuals to seek help. Parenting provides opportunities to be part of a community—in the neighborhood or through participation at children's school events, for example. ParentingWell promotes a parent's ability to live interdependently and to pursue recovery in the context of family life.

The ParentingWell practice approach promotes opportunities to conduct family-focused conversations, to generate a family-informed service plan, or simply to provide services to an adult living with a mental health condition or addiction, taking parenting and family circumstances into account. Just as you might routinely ask about housing, school or employment, or friends and social supports, it is important to ask:

1. Whether a person is or wants to be a parent,
2. How parenting and family experiences are going, and
3. How parents would like things to be.



## **FAMILY- FOCUSED:**

The practitioner recognizes and respects the adult's unique experiences and expectations for parenting and family roles and responsibilities.

ParentingWell is a versatile, responsive approach to a parent's situation and needs across the lifespan—meeting the parent “where they're at,” when they're ready. You can implement conversations focusing on parenting and family life in an initial assessment or in the context of an ongoing relationship when the timing seems right and the parent is willing and able.

The initial objective of ParentingWell is achieved when the practitioner and parent work together to identify a parenting- or family-related goal and develop an action plan with steps for achieving this goal. Together, you can monitor progress and adjust the plan as necessary to insure success.

The goal may become part of the larger plan for services that the parent receives. Our hope is that parenting and family life become an ongoing part of the conversation over time. The key underlying principles of ParentingWell reflect a set of values shared by practitioners across service sectors: **family-focused, culturally-sensitive, strengths-based, and trauma-informed.**



## **CULTURALLY- SENSITIVE:**

The practitioner works actively to explore and understand the nuances and implications of a parent's cultural context and identity.



## **STRENGTHS- BASED:**

The practitioner encourages and assists parents in identifying strengths to inspire hope for change and in building on strengths to set and achieve goals.



## **TRAUMA- INFORMED:**

The practitioner is open to the likelihood that parents have experienced stressful life events and circumstances and helps them understand the relationship between past experiences, current functioning, and present family life.

The Core Elements and activities of the ParentingWell practice approach provide the framework for your conversations with parents. The Core Elements include: **Engage, Explore, Plan, and Access and Advocate.**

The purpose of the ParentingWell practice approach is to acknowledge that parenting is an important life role and to incorporate talking about

goals for parenting and family life as part of the relationship routine. At best, ParentingWell becomes a part of the ongoing relationship and service delivery process.

Helping a parent succeed in this important life domain contributes to positive recovery outcomes.



## ENGAGE

The first step is asking about a person's family situation and whether the person is, hopes to be, or has ever been a parent. Respectful, non-judgmental questions about parenting and family life promote normalization and community inclusion.



## EXPLORE

Exploration involves asking how things are going currently regarding parenting, family life, and experiences with children and asking about past experiences to the extent they contribute to the person's current functioning as a parent, participation in treatment, and progress in recovery.



## PLAN

Addressing adults' concerns as parents by helping them envision possibilities, assess options, and set and achieve goals is an essential focus of partnering with parents. Goals related to parenting and family life are woven into the parent's personal plan for change or into a formal treatment or service plan to support progress in the recovery journey.



## ACCESS & ADVOCATE

Learning about whom or what the parent relies on for emotional, financial, spiritual, or concrete assistance helps to identify solid supports that can help parents to achieve their goals and cope with daily life and to address gaps where advocacy may help.