



THE CORE ELEMENT OF PLAN

An essential focus of the ParentingWell® practice approach is to address parents' needs by helping them envision possibilities, assess options, and set and achieve their desired goals. Goals related to parenting and family life may be woven into a personal plan to make desired changes or may become part of a more formal treatment or service plan to support progress in the recovery journey.

To create plans, help parents explore their motivation for change; picture desired outcomes; set goals; specify realistic, reasonable steps; identify resources and supports necessary to make progress; and determine appropriate time frames with feedback loops to adjust plans as necessary.

You can work in partnership with parents to explore options, to develop alternatives, and to think about the consequences of choosing one path over another. Parents may need information about existing but unknown possibilities, for example, community resources or entitlements.

The key to a good plan is creating incremental opportunities for success—baby steps—that lead to the desired outcome.

TRANSLATING PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

CORE ACTIVITIES



Family-focused

- Understands that parents should be asked about their priorities, particularly as they relate to family life, parenting, wellbeing, and recovery.
- Recognizes that parents are free to decide how they will act and what steps they will take to address their priorities, knowing that they may have to comply with the expectations of child welfare services or family court.
- Acknowledges that balancing parenting responsibilities with taking care of one's self can be challenging for most parents, even if the parent doesn't have a behavioral health condition.
- From the parent's perspective, understands that making the choice to prioritize the parent's own needs may seem contrary to taking care of their children, may contribute to feelings of guilt or shame, but may be essential to improving the parent's coping skills and resilience.



Culturally-sensitive

- Recognizes that parents' priorities may, in part, be influenced by the expectations of others in the family or community.
- Understands that parents may set priorities that are not consistent with the attitudes and beliefs of practitioners.

- Helps parents identify what they want to change and picture the outcomes.
- Assists parents in setting priorities.
- Helps parents identify options and consider the benefits or costs of choosing one option over another.
- Works together with parents to set goals that are "SMART"—specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time-bound.
- Discusses the value of following up on implementing the plan, evaluating, and revising or setting a new goal to continue moving forward.
- Assists with a problem-solving approach if parents cannot "put the pieces in place" to take steps forward.
- Debriefs with parents when goals are not achieved to discuss options, to make a new plan, and to use lessons learned to move forward.
- Helps parents anticipate crises and address vulnerabilities through preventive action (e.g., developing a plan for coping with an anticipated challenge) or activating resources (e.g., identifying someone who could help the parent).

TRANSLATING PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

CORE ACTIVITIES



Strengths-based

- Understands that progress is measured in baby steps.
- Does not judge but offers guidance and feedback to keep parents' priorities, goals, and solutions realistic, reasonable, and safe.
- Role models good self-care for parents by taking care of themselves.



Trauma-informed

- Understands that parents may have options but may not have experience making good choices.
- Recognizes the importance of parents building resilience and developing coping skills for themselves to serve as role models for their children.
- Understands that trauma survivors may have to practice healthy ways of coping to replace unhealthy ways of coping from the past.

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- Provides concrete suggestions for time management and other organizational skills essential to achieving goals successfully.
- Assists parents to develop strategies for keeping in touch with children when they are apart, possibly due to a hospitalization, custody issues, or out-of-home placement or when adult children live independently.
- Helps parents make back-up plans for providing for children if and when symptoms emerge or if parents need to be hospitalized.
- Provides the rationale for taking care of oneself—to be able to take care of one's children better. Asks about current self-care strategies and routines.
- Checks-in regularly to help parents evaluate progress and adjust goals or action steps, if necessary.
- Supports parents in identifying ways to celebrate small steps and large accomplishments.