

ParentingWell Learning Community

Overview

The [Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center](#) at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and the [National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities](#) at Brandeis University are excited to announce the opportunity for adult serving behavioral health providers¹ to participate in a learning collaborative designed to encourage and support the routine discussion of parenting and family life by practitioners working with adults with behavioral health challenges who are parents or may be thinking about becoming parents.

ParentingWell® is an approach to 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 behavioral health challenge, 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:

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

Provider Eligibility and Team Composition

It is anticipated that **up to five non-profit behavioral health provider agencies** will be selected to participate in this project. Each provider must identify a team of **up to four adult-serving staff member volunteers from one program area**, but no fewer than three, to be trained in the ParentingWell approach. At least one of these staff members must be **a supervisor or program manager** who will be responsible for leading the implementation at the selected program site. Because ParentingWell is an approach that is useful to all practitioners, staff members can be peers, clinicians, parent partners, or case managers. We encourage the nomination of peer specialists. For coaching to work properly for this project all proposed staff **must be co-located at a single**

¹ Eligible providers include those that deliver services to adults with serious behavioral health challenges. This could be in an outpatient clinic, a PACT team, an inpatient hospital, ACCS, a Clubhouse, peer support, or any other service delivery setting that serves adults with serious behavioral health challenges.

site/location and must work within a single program area or level of care. Again, we are seeking volunteers who are interested in actively participating and providing feedback to help us refine and adapt this practice approach.

The designated staff at each provider agency must be able to identify **parents (mothers or fathers) or adults who are planning to become parents** with whom they are working, up to a total of two per number of staff participating to try out the ParentingWell practice approach. For example, if an agency would like to have 4 staff members participate in the learning collaborative, they must be able to identify 8 parents with whom they are working or will be working during the training and coaching period from May to October 2019.

All providers must also identify a **senior leader**, in addition to the participating supervisor and staff members, who will serve as the “executive sponsor” for this initiative. This person should be a high-level administrator at the organization (i.e. CEO, Executive Director, COO, Division Director, VP). It is expected that this individual will attend the onsite orientation, watch the ParentingWell webinar, and serve as a champion within the agency for ongoing support of the initiative.

Training, Coaching and Learning Collaborative Activities

A learning collaborative is a short-term (6- to 12-month) professional development approach that brings together teams of participants who are interested in seeking improvement in a focused topic area, in this case, the use of the ParentingWell approach by adult-serving behavioral health practitioners. Communities operate on adult learning principles, and require focused work by each team to adapt effective changes to their setting, use methods for accelerating improvement, and capitalize on shared learning and collaboration.

The components of the ParentingWell Learning Collaborative are:

Onsite Orientation

A one-to-two-hour orientation meeting will be arranged prior to the training sessions. This meeting will take place onsite at each agency and will be scheduled during April/May 2019. Attendees must include leadership from the selected program where implementation of this project will occur. At this meeting, we hope to meet all staff members who will be participating in the ParentingWell learning community. During this visit staff participants will complete a pre-training survey, consider implementation issues, and review the characteristics and attributes of parents who may benefit most from this approach. Because we are framing this as a feasibility initiative, with the intention of obtaining feedback to refine the approach, materials and resources, staff will be asked to consent to participate as volunteers in the learning community. Our goal is to obtain feedback from participants on the ParentingWell practice approach, the training and coaching resources, and the process of implementing ParentingWell.

Training

- 15 to 18 hours of training for program supervisors and staff. This training will take place on three non-consecutive days in late May and June, 2019. We are applying for continuing education credits for social workers and licensed mental health counselors, and will let applicants know as soon as possible to confirm this. Following each training session, participants will complete a brief evaluation.

- A brief ParentingWell orientation webinar **must** be watched by all participants prior to the first training session. Participants will be expected to review the ParentingWell practice profile as well, and complete a brief practice self-assessment.
- There will be assigned reading and homework between each training session, along with emailed or text messaged practice tips.
- Trainees will be asked to actively participate in a Basecamp group that will be created for this project to support learning in between training sessions.

Coaching

Coaching sessions will occur monthly in person or using a web-based platform from July to October 2019. Each coaching session will be approximately one hour in length. Trainees will be asked to address a topic or theme, specified in advance, using experiences with the parents they work with currently. Depending on the number of staff participating per agency, these sessions will be held with a single agency group or staff from several agencies will work together. Coaching tips will be provided via email or text message between coaching sessions. Opportunity for peer support and sharing will be established in an online Basecamp group. Following each coaching session, participants will complete a brief evaluation.

Debriefing

A one-half day wrap-up, feedback and sustainability group meeting will be held in November 2019, to include all trainees, supervisors and the senior leader/executive sponsors for this project. Participating staff members will complete a post-survey and have opportunity to provide feedback in the group session.

Agency Stipends

Participating agencies will receive a stipend of \$1,000 per supervisor/staff member participant, in acknowledgment of participation in the pilot initiative and the provision of feedback, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research. This stipend is in recognition of staff participation at the agency level. The Department of Mental Health, as co-sponsor, is not eligible to receive this stipend for employee participation.

The stipend will be split into 2 payments:

1. One-half the total stipend after program supervisors/staff attend all three training sessions.
2. The second half of the stipend after the supervisor/staff actively participate in mentoring/coaching, and the debriefing session in November 2019.

Project Leads

Joanne Nicholson is a Professor at the Institute for Behavioral Health at the Heller School, Brandeis University, co-principal investigator of the National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities, and a clinical and research psychologist with over 25 years of experience. She has an active program of research and intervention development for parents with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders and their children, in partnership with people in recovery. She and her collaborators have developed rehabilitation, education and training programs and materials for parents and their families including the first guide *for* parents living with mental illness written *by* parents, *Parenting Well When You're Depressed* and a guide *for* professionals written *with* professionals, *Creating Options for Family Recovery: A Provider's Guide to*

Promoting Parental Mental Health. Joanne has provided clinical consultation and training nationally and internationally and is frequently invited as a keynote speaker at conferences in the US and abroad. She is a licensed psychologist provider in Massachusetts.

Kelly English is the Director of the Children’s Behavioral Health Knowledge Center at MA/DMH. She is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Center, consistent with its legislative authorization; developing partnerships with state agencies, community-based organizations, research institutes, and advocates; and developing and managing projects that advance the Center’s mission and the children’s behavioral health system. She has worked in a variety of organizations, including a national consulting firm, MassHealth, and behavioral health provider organizations. Kelly is a licensed independent clinical social worker and holds a Ph.D. in social work from the Boston College School of Social Work.

Kerry Patenaude is the project manager for the National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities at Brandeis University and will provide infrastructure and support for this project. Kerry is a doctoral student at Lesley University. Her areas of interest include disabilities studies, public policy, and transitions. Kerry has worked with individuals with disabilities of all ages in a variety of contexts for over 25 years, including as a mother. Most recently she served as the Assistant Director of Disability Services & Support at Brandeis University.

Schedule of Activities

The activities of this collaborative will take place between March and November 2019. All trainings and the debriefing session will be held in a location in central Massachusetts TBD (e.g. Shrewsbury, Worcester area, etc.). Coaching sessions will be held at agency sites and via web conference.

Activity	Date/Time	Participants
Onsite agency orientation and pre-survey	To be arranged with each participating agency. Will take place during April/May 2019.	All staff, supervisors and executive sponsors
ParentingWell webinar and participant practice self-assessment	Prior to the first day of training	All staff and supervisors
Training and homework assignments	May 28, 2019 June 4, 2019 June 18, 2019	All staff and supervisors
Access to learning collaborative resources, online and Base Camp	beginning in May 2019	All staff, supervisors and executive sponsors
Coaching	Monthly, TBD, in July, August, September and October. Each coaching session will focus on a particular aspect of the practice profile.	All staff and supervisors

Activity	Date/Time	Participants
Practice Tips	Beginning in June 2019; emailed or text messaged tips and video clips.	All staff and supervisors
Debriefing Session and post-survey	November 2019	All staff, supervisors and executive sponsors

Application Process and Timelines

Application Process	Timeline
Please send a non-binding email of intent to: kerry@brandeis.edu	March 18 by 5:00 PM
Application due electronically by 5:00 pm. The application must be submitted online at: The ParentingWell Learning Collaborative Application	March 29 by 5 pm
A written decision will be disseminated to both selected and non-selected applicants.	Week of April 8, 2019

For questions or to learn more about this opportunity contact Kerry Patenaude at kerry@brandeis.edu.