

Parent Leadership Training Directory:

Building A Family Driven
Workforce in Connecticut

Prepared for the
Partnering With Parents Network

by Lisa Conlan & Cliff Davis

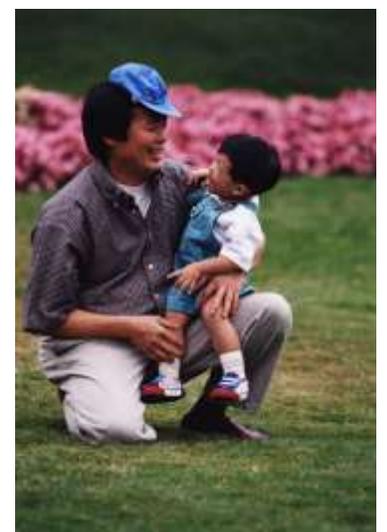


May 2011



**CONNECTICUT
WORKFORCE
COLLABORATIVE
ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Strong Workforce | Healthy Connecticut



Acknowledgements

The Connecticut Workforce Collaborative on Behavioral Health would like to thank Lisa Conlan, Parent Leadership Consultant, and Cliff Davis, Partner, Human Service Collaborative, for creating the first draft of this Parent Leadership Training Directory on behalf of the Workforce Collaborative. The Collaborative was funded through the Connecticut Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant awarded to the State of Connecticut by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) from 2005-2010 and implemented through the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (DMHAS). We would like to thank all the family-run organization directors, staff, family members, and parent leadership development agency representatives who participated in the preparation and review of this parent leadership training directory.

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Introduction to Parent Leadership Training

The Connecticut Workforce Collaborative on Behavioral Health, supported by the Connecticut Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant, has promoted transformation activities aligned with the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Goal 2: Mental Health will be consumer and family driven.

“Family Driven” has been defined by the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH) as families having a primary decision making role in the care of their own children, as well as in the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community, state, tribe, territory and nation. This includes:

- ✓ Choosing culturally and linguistically competent supports, services, and providers;
- ✓ Setting goals;
- ✓ Designing, implementing and evaluating programs;
- ✓ Monitoring outcomes; and
- ✓ Partnering in funding decisions.

Parent leadership development is a strength-based approach to family support founded on the belief that parents and caregivers have much knowledge about families and communities and can provide valuable insight into programmatic and community changes to benefit children and families. All parents and caregivers have the potential to be leaders and share their knowledge and experience. The ongoing development of parent leadership skills will better equip parents and caregivers to be effective in many different roles: meeting their own child and family needs; or serving as: program evaluators; members of local and state policy boards; leaders and facilitators of parent advocacy groups; elected officials; and as volunteers and paid personnel in the mental health workforce. Parent leaders can share their perspectives and experiences to ensure quality programs and services that meet the needs of children, youth, and families. Parent leadership builds collaboration and partnership between parents and professionals. Leadership is a combination of attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors; there is a need for developmental opportunities for parents and professionals to promote mutual respect for each other and appreciation for the expertise of each, based on strengths, skills, and experiences.

There is a growing number of training programs being developed and implemented in state and national advocacy organizations to support parents and caregivers in becoming effective leaders for their children, youth, families, and communities. These training programs have been successful because they: support culturally-diverse and special populations; identify clear objectives based on effective adult learning principles; document trainer and participant curricula that build knowledge and skills; utilize broad outreach and recruitment strategies; lead to role certification; incorporate evaluation tools to identify outcomes; and lead to continued opportunities for sharing leadership skills and learning.

The Connecticut Workforce Collaborative on Behavioral Health has identified and promoted parent leadership training opportunities in Connecticut that focus on increasing and strengthening the leadership capabilities of parents and caregivers who have children and youth at risk for or with serious emotional or behavioral health challenges to become advocates in the mental health workforce. This directory provides information on a number of parent leadership training programs and training activities that are being implemented by organizations and advocacy groups in Connecticut, including how parents, caregivers, system of care partners, family organizations, and advocacy groups across the state can access those programs and learn more about opportunities to become involved.

Connecticut Parent Leadership Training Programs, Trainings, and Workshops

The following are current parent leadership development training programs, workshops, and educational activities currently implemented in Connecticut by family advocacy organizations, commissions, and universities, presented in alphabetical order by organization. Contact information for the organization offering each program is at the end of each entry.

African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP)

Community Parent Leadership Training & Other Workshops

Population of focus

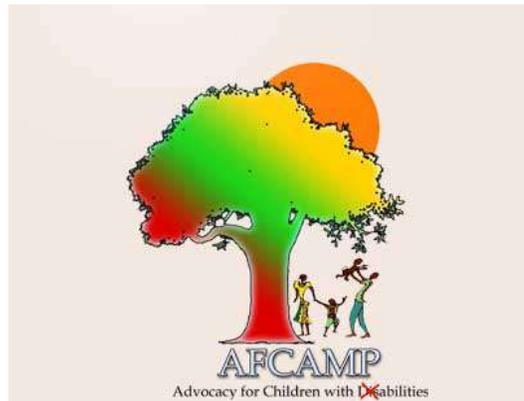
The AFCAMP *Parent Leadership Training Program* and other workshops are aimed at parents, caregivers, and community stakeholders in contact with children with varying disabilities. Twenty-five individuals are selected for the *Parent Leadership Training Program* through an application process that includes an interview; selection is based on the level of interest and the ability to participate in the training sessions.

Time commitment and intensity

The *Parent Leadership Training Program* is offered in ten weekly sessions.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in trainings

AFCAMP offers workshop opportunities to raise awareness and provide information and education to parents, caregivers, and community stakeholders on disability, mental illness, and the effects of the child welfare, and juvenile justice systems on families, caregivers, and youths with disabilities in the community. These workshops help to identify parents, caregivers, and community stakeholders who wish to participate in training to empower them to be their child's best advocate; and identify parents, caregivers and community stakeholders



interested in providing peer support to other parents, caregivers, and participants in system change initiatives.

The *Parent Leadership Training Program* curriculum is designed to prepare participants for leadership roles on various committees and boards addressing the mental health and juvenile justice systems, and special education services, and others.

Training components in the curriculum include: an overview of understanding policy, and suggestions and techniques to influence policy and policymakers; tips for how and when to use personal experience to support change; strategies to successfully work with professionals and participate in policy making groups, and ideas about what to do to make a difference and affect systems change.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

The Parent Leadership Training Program has the prerequisite of previous participation in various workshops and other trainings. Other workshops do not have prerequisites and persons who simply wish to learn more are encouraged to attend.

Location and accessibility to families

All workshops and *Parent Leadership Training Program* sessions are held at locations around the Hartford area that are accessible, including the AFCAMP office and other community sites.

Participant supports

When funds are available, AFCAMP may offer mileage reimbursement and/or stipends to participants, but that is not always possible. Childcare is provided when sessions take place in the evening.

Language adaptability

Some AFCAMP programming is offered in Spanish. Check with the office regarding specific workshops.

Post-training support and opportunities

AFCAMP offers technical and information support to participants of any programming who need or request additional support or information.

Utilization of adult learning principles

Adult learning principles are at the forefront of all training program activities. First and foremost is receiving all participants with respect. AFCAMP has learned that when the life experiences of participants are acknowledged and accepted, those participants are more willing to engage in programming and give voice to their concerns.

Training materials

All workshops and the Parent Leadership Training Program are driven by core materials that are adapted for each setting and each group in response to their collective needs and experience.

Trainers

The Parent Leadership Training Program and individual workshops are presented by AFCAMP staff and/or professionals from various fields that provide their time and expertise.

Contact Information for Community Parent Leadership Training Program and Workshops:

African Caribbean American Parents of
Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP)
60-B Weston Street
Hartford, CT 06120-1551
Phone: 860-297-4358
AFCAMP@sbcglobal.net

Connecticut Commission on Children

Parent Leadership Training Institute

Population of focus

The Parent Leadership Training Institute (*PLTI*) is a civic leadership initiative that supports parents and caregivers in building their own leadership capacities to improve health, safety and learning outcomes for children. Each *PLTI* series is provided to support the development of sustainable relationships and create opportunities for each parent leader to work on a specific community project.



Time commitment and intensity

PLTI is a twenty week program that supports parents and caregivers in building their own leadership capacities and learning new skills for practicing democracy and policy reform.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in training

Training Objectives: 1) Help parents become leaders they wish to be; 2) expand the capacity of parents as change agents for their children; 3) develop supportive communities of parents within targeted regions to support one another in skill development and successful parenting; 4) develop supportive communities of parents within parent-driven institutions; 5) facilitate parents' capacity to offer input into community efforts at all levels; 6) facilitate systems change for parental involvement with increased utilization of parents in policy and process decisions; and 7) increase parent-child interactions and quality children's programs through parent involvement.

Parents who participate in this training opportunity have been able to reflect on their personal history and its impact on: their perceptions of leadership; thriving and working with diversity; assessing and defining problems; thinking critically; using media; public speaking; using benchmarks and outcome measures; forming useful coalitions and building community; working with and how to engage opposition; understanding policy and municipal budgets; and understanding city, state, and federal law.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

An application and in-person interview with the local *PLTI* community coordinator are required. Program graduates may become *PLTI* facilitators. Some participants join the statewide parent led organization, CT Parent Power, as state delegates. Certain participants may qualify to receive CEUs through SDE or 3 college credits through Charter Oak State College.

Location and accessibility to families

Generally, *PLTI* is offered in many different environments, including college classrooms, churches, local school buildings, community centers, and childcare facilities. Any such spaces meet health and safety requirements for that facility type. Program planners seek space that can be donated, with free parking and nearness to a bus line. The spaces are comfortable and safe for on-site childcare.

Participant supports

Trainings are local and organized across different towns and communities in CT. Childcare and dinner are available at the trainings, as are mentors from previous classes. Local groups interested in offering the training seek funds through a variety of sources, with the support of the Connecticut Commission on Children.

Language adaptability

PLTI is provided only in English, at this time.

Post-training support and opportunities

As a family civics initiative, each community offering PLTI establishes a civic design team to guide the community service component, including the facilitation team, the local PLTI coordinator, and various PLTI alumni from previous classes (now over 2,000 alumni). Graduates may join that advisory process and lead the PLTI alumni

Utilization of adult learning principles

PLTI utilizes the following adult learning principles: adults have years of experience and a wealth of information; adults have established values, beliefs, and opinions; adults follow different styles and paces of learning than when they were children; adults are best as the origin of their own learning; adults relate new knowledge and information to previous information and experiences; adults need breaks and changes of pace; adults have pride; adult learning includes ego involvement; adults need feedback, particularly about the results of their efforts; adults are primarily self-directing; differences among individuals increase with age; adults bring a problem-centered orientation to learning; and learning transfer generally must be facilitated for adults (coaching, peer support, mentoring, etc.).

Training material

The copyrighted curriculum was developed in 1992 and is updated annually. The Commission on Children provides technical assistance to communities offering PLTI. A memorandum of understanding with the Commission on Children is required for use of the curriculum.

Trainers

Three trainers provide each class, with the support of the local coordinator, and guest speakers are recruited locally (a mayor, state representative, etc.). Facilitators must complete a 3-day certification program offered by the Commission on Children. Participants provide nightly feedback sheets and participate in pre- and post-testing; those data are analyzed annually.

Contact Information for the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI):

Connecticut Commission on Children

18-20 Trinity Street

Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Phone: 860-240-0085

Fax: 860-240-0248

www.cga.ct.gov/coc/plti.htm

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center

Multiple Trainings



Next STEPS Training

Population of focus

Next STEPs (Support and Training for Educators and Parents) is a workshop series designed to provide information to both parents and educators and is infused with perspective taking for both audiences. Bringing parents and educators together to receive and share information promotes a common understanding of issues and roles which is one of the intended outcomes of the training. Participants are prepared to support their own child and to assume support and leadership roles within their community.

Time commitment and intensity

The initial training takes place over the course of five weeks in three-hour sessions. Additionally, there are assignments to complete and reading to be done between each session. Follow up topical workshops and ongoing technical assistance is offered to participants throughout the year.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in training

Participants will increase their knowledge of and skills related to:

- ◆ the intent and requirements of education laws
- ◆ the function of the IEP in educational planning
- ◆ appropriate planning and monitoring for student success
- ◆ the parent's role in educational decision making at the individual and system's level
- ◆ dispute resolution
- ◆ tools, methods and activities that can increase family engagement
- ◆ data to measure student achievement and school improvement
- ◆ opportunities for parent leadership

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

There are no prerequisites to participation. Every participant brings their own knowledge and experience to the training and this is explored and shared as another vehicle for participant's learning.

Location and accessibility to families

This training is offered in various locations throughout the state. Over the last ten years it has been held in 13 different communities, multiple times in some locations and always in a district which is identified by the CT State Department of Education as a priority school district. The sites are chosen so as to be accessible to public transportation and have safe and well lit parking options. Facilities are chosen that are accessible to individuals with disabilities and in a community location frequented by families.

Participant supports

Anyone requiring support for transportation or childcare can ask for a minimal stipend on a weekly basis. Some information provided is from the internet and printed copies are made available as needed.

Language adaptability

This training series has been, and can be, presented in English or Spanish

Post-training support and opportunities

Next STEPs participants receive ongoing support once they take the initial training. The relationship is mutually beneficial as CPAC provides ongoing training on a variety of topics but also involves participants in a variety of opportunities to speak to pre-service personnel and other audiences as well as serve parents near their own community on an individualized basis. Many of the former participants have gone on to create parent support groups, become advocates, serve on community and statewide committees. CPAC is prepared to give ongoing support in all of these roles.

Utilization of adult learning principles

CPAC programming provides opportunities for participants to relate/apply the information being shared to their own personal situations, creates opportunities to practice new skills (e.g., role plays, case studies, self assessment exercises), and provides content in a variety of formats (e.g., lecture, discussion, self reflection, small group discussion). Staff members are available to provide telephone coaching following sessions.

Training material

Next STEPs has a standard curriculum used in each series .The curriculum is continuously updated based on participant evaluation, relevant changes in state or federal policies and procedures and guidance from CPAC's national technical assistance providers . Training materials include a resource binder, hard copies of all power point presentations, agendas, supplementary reading and resource materials, checklists etc.

Trainers

Next STEPs is presented by CPAC staff members who are either parents of children with disabilities or special education professionals.

Contact Information for the Connecticut Parent Advisory Center:

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
338 Main Street
Niantic, CT 06357
Phone: 800-445-2722 (toll free) or 860-739-3089
FAX: 860-739-7460
www.cpacinc.org

Families United for Children's Mental Health

*Agents of Transformation:
Community Mobilization
For the Wellbeing of
Children, Youth, and Families*



Population of focus

Any parent or caregiver of a child, youth, or young adult who is at risk for or has serious emotional or behavioral challenges is welcome to participate. This can include families of youth who receive mental health services and/or are involved with the juvenile justice system, child welfare and/or receiving special education services. Class sizes can accommodate up to 25 participants. To date, there have been over 300 graduates of this training series.

Time commitment and intensity

Six two-hour sessions are offered and can be scheduled to best fit the needs of the training group. Training sessions have been scheduled to meet once or twice a week and can be offered during the day, or evenings, or on the weekend. Training sessions offer information, interactive learning exercises, and group discussions. Each participant has a “Speak Out” assignment they share with the group at the final class, along with a group celebration. Participants are requested to participate in a parent leadership study and be surveyed a few times each year to learn more about how they are participating as volunteer or paid leaders in the behavioral health workforce.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in training

AOT is a parent leadership workforce training curriculum that was adapted from Parent Support Network in Rhode Island and implemented by Families United for Children’s Mental Health, in partnership with the Connecticut Workforce Collaborative on Mental Health and the Connecticut Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant, through the Connecticut Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services. Families United continues to offer this training upon agency or community request and seeks grant funding to support the continued capacity to offer and train parents and caregivers statewide.

This curriculum provides an opportunity to increase the individual and collective advocacy skills needed in order to be effective “family driven” change agents. This curriculum will strengthen leadership skills necessary to lead their own child and family needs and treatment planning; expand the workforce of knowledgeable family advocates within family organizations, provider agencies, and advocacy groups; and help transform local and state policy. This will improve outcomes in meeting the wellbeing of all families and their children and youth involved in the Connecticut Children’s Behavioral Health System of Care.

Learning Objectives include:

1. Explore different views and attitudes for reducing stigma in mental health and improve policy and practice for children and youth at risk or who have mental health needs and their families.
2. Build opportunities for family leaders to get know each other better, share their strengths and increase their individual and collective advocacy skills for supporting families, the workforce and systems transformation.
3. Learn more how to navigate the interacting child serving state, county and local agencies and all of their policies, programs, and partnerships; and better understand the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of federal and state government, including the state budget process.
4. Practice facilitation and public speaking skills and discuss strategies for public conflict resolution to help strengthen the family voice, access to pertinent information and decision making.
5. Use of “Agents of Transformation” Leadership and ongoing learning and advocacy opportunities to call for accountability, promote change and raise public awareness.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

AOT is an entry level training that supports parents and caregivers who are learning to meet their child and family care needs; want to meet parents/caregivers who are going through similar experiences; and need to be able to navigate child and family services and supports to access and receive services and advocate for system reform. Graduates from *AOT* are encouraged to continue to participate in the peer mentor training; facilitate or join local family

support networks; receive information about ongoing trainings and activities; and participate in system reform activities, such as serving on local and state policy boards.

Location and accessibility to families

Families United offers this training across the state in many local communities. Families United will work with agency partners and funders to identify a training location that is warm and welcoming and accessible to participants. This includes looking for locations on bus lines that are handicap accessible and equipped to handle onsite children's activities. Families United will work with partners to advertise and market this training to families free of charge in their communities.

Participant supports

Families United has learned that parents and caregivers make a big investment of their time to participate in this training and that most who participate contribute time and expertise through volunteer support to others and participating on their local policy boards and system of care activities. Families United encourages funders to support the additional cost of being able to offer participants meals, onsite children's activities, transportation and reimbursement for mileage, and/or incentives. When offering all of these supports the average training cost for participant is about \$160.

Language adaptability

AOT curriculum is offered in English and/or Spanish. Families United has AOT Bilingual (Spanish/English) trainers to assist with simultaneous translation of content. In addition, Families United has simultaneous equipment that can be used for interpretation.

Post-training support and opportunities

Families United sends out ongoing email alerts, special mailings to graduates; conducts ongoing topical teleconference calls for continued learning; and provides ongoing leadership coaching and support to graduates. Families United has graduates who participate on a statewide family leadership team who offer advice, learn from one another; and work to build a statewide family leadership network.

Utilization of adult learning principles

AOT training was developed to be delivered to adhere to adult learning principles of sharing of caregiver life experiences, diverse perspectives, and knowledge. Trainers act as facilitators to introduce new topics and information that is relevant. There are many interactive exercises that promote practical learning and dialogue. This training motivates participants to develop new social relationships, increase their individual and collective leadership and support capacities; and to become advocates for change.

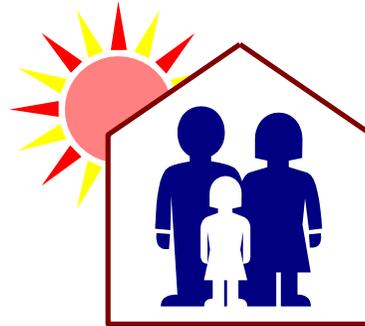
Training material

Families United has available a Trainers manual that includes information for the participant manual. The participant manual includes the agenda, power point slides, DVD resources, and pre and post evaluation survey. The Trainer manual and participant handouts are available in English and Spanish.

Trainers

Families United has a cadre of diverse Trainers who are prepared and skilled to deliver *AOT* training in English and Spanish. Families United encourages that this training be delivered by an experienced *AOT* Trainer and continues to recruit additional trainers who are graduates of *AOT* and offer ongoing learning and workforce opportunities for delivering *AOT* and other trainings.

Volunteer Peer Mentor Training, Families Helping Families With Support, Education, and Advocacy



Population of focus

Volunteer peer mentors are experienced parents or caregivers fostering children, youth, or young adults who are at risk for or who have serious emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health challenges. Peer mentors provide support, education and advocacy within a structured one-to-one relationship with another family member. They offer non-judgmental support from a position of empathy as family members themselves.

Time commitment and intensity

This training is an introductory training that is 12 hours in length. This training is offered to participants who have a readiness and who want to commit to serving as volunteers or within the paid workforce providing peer support and mentoring to parents and caregivers in their community.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in training

The *Peer Mentor Training* will provide an opportunity to learn more about the idea and practice of mentoring, including its purpose and ways in which it takes place. The training will focus on the skills and qualities needed to be a peer mentor, and will help participants acquire and demonstrate skills through reflection, discussion, and practical exercises. Participants will learn about relevant policies and procedures, such as those relating to confidentiality, boundaries, active listening, goal setting, recognizing crisis, service array, and

reporting. Participants will learn about Families United's Volunteer *Peer Mentor Program* and how it works in partnership with other family organizations and system of care partners.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

Families United has an application and interview process to be accepted into the training. The application reviews current experiences and skills; areas of confidence and knowledge that will be used to provide mentoring and support; times of availability and mobility; cultural and language; and references.

Location and accessibility to families

Families United offers this training at least twice a year in Hartford and New Haven and as requested by agencies and potential funders in specific communities.

Participant supports

Families United has learned that there is a big investment on behalf of a parent or caregiver's time to participate in this training and that most parents who make the commitment to participate in this training contribute time and expertise in providing volunteer support to others. Families United encourages funders to support the additional cost of being able to offer participants meals, onsite children's activities, transportation and reimbursement for mileage, and/or incentives. When offering all of these supports the average training cost for participant is about \$160.

Language adaptability

Currently Families United only offers this training in English. There are trainers available who are bilingual and the participation of bilingual (Spanish/English) participants to serve as peer mentors is encouraged. In addition, Families United has equipment that can be used for simultaneous interpretation.

Post-training support and opportunities

Peer mentors who attend and complete this training will receive a certificate which can be used when applying for positions to join the workforce or to volunteer with Families United for Children's Mental Health. Families United will invite graduates of the training to apply to become part of the statewide Volunteer *Peer Mentor Program*. All volunteer peer mentors will have a strength based profile in the Families United website that will enable Families United to match them to families in need of mentoring and support. Once a match is made the peer mentoring relationship will begin. Families United will help to ensure quality support within the mentoring relationship. Peer mentors will be covered under volunteer insurance and will require background clearances. Volunteer peer mentors will receive continued training and joint learning opportunities. Families United does offer incentives and rewards to the most valuable volunteer peer mentors.

Utilization of adult learning principles

The training will focus on the skills and qualities needed to be a peer mentor, and will help participants acquire and demonstrate skills through reflection, discussion, and practical exercises. Being a parent or caregiver of a child or youth with emotional or behavioral challenges can at times be overwhelming and isolating. Sometimes friends, families, and neighbors may not understand what the family is experiencing. Navigating multiple child and family services and supports can be complex. Families who are experiencing this find that support, guidance, advice and encouragement can make all the difference. Becoming a peer mentor contributes to continued personal growth and can be very rewarding.

Training material

Families United has available a Trainers' Manual that includes a participant packet of handouts. The Trainers' Manual also includes application, detailed trainer notes and agenda, power point slides, and pre and post evaluation survey.

Trainers

Families United has a cadre of diverse Trainers who are prepared and skilled to deliver the Volunteer *Peer Mentor Training* in English and Spanish. Families United encourages that this training be delivered by an experienced volunteer peer mentor trainer. Families United continues to recruit additional trainers who are graduates of our volunteer peer mentor program and offer ongoing learning and workforce opportunities for delivering this training.

Contact Information for Agents of Transformation and Peer Mentor Training:

Families United for Children's Mental Health
131 Main Street Extension
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: 860-343-7330
FAX: 860-563-3961
www.familiesunitedct.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness - Connecticut

Family to Family

Population of focus

NAMI CT programs are primarily aimed at families with a child(ren) with mental illness, helping them understand the illness and the resources available to help. NAMI CT also provides training in many areas to schools, service agencies, and other community groups.



Time commitment and intensity

Family to Family is a 12-week course, meeting once per week for 2½ hours.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in trainings

Family to Family provides the following: current information about a range of mental illnesses and addictive disorders; information about medications; current research about the biology of brain disorders and effective treatments; coping skills; gaining empathy by understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness; problem solving, listening, and communication techniques; strategies for crises and relapse; exploration of the well-being of the parent/caregiver and coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload; services and supports in the community; and advocacy guidance to improve services.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

NAMI CT works to match participants to appropriate programming by getting to know them and discussing their needs and wishes. As a general guide, family members of adults with mental illness are likely to be referred to *Family to Family*, while family members and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness are likely to be referred first to NAMI-BASICS. Both are valuable for some participants.

Location and accessibility to families

NAMI CT offers its programming to community groups of all types, including service organizations, faith communities, businesses, schools, and others. Those hosts generally plan program locations, but all try to ensure that locations are accessible and near public transportation, if that is possible.

Participant supports

NAMI CT has more than a dozen local affiliate groups across Connecticut, and the local groups host many training events. Some groups are able to offer light refreshments while others may not. NAMI CT has no resources to provide transportation assistance.

Language adaptability

Family to Family, originally developed by NAMI (national), is now available in many languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Italian, Portuguese, and Chinese.

Post-training support and opportunities

NAMI CT data show that approximately 50% of the participants in *Family to Family* express a desire for more opportunities – to learn, to serve, or to do both. Staff members are always available to assist persons wishing to explore options.

Utilization of adult learning principles

Family to Family incorporates adult learning principles, including the importance of life experience, small group and experiential learning opportunities, self-work, and learning in partnership with others. *Family to Family* was developed nationally and is regularly updated to incorporate new information and strategies.

Training materials

Family to Family is well documented, with trainer materials and participant materials.

Trainers

Trainers participate in a three-day “training of trainers” during which they are exposed to the content and the teaching style of the program, with multiple opportunities to practice and master relevant competencies.

Learning Together: Changing Minds – Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes

Population of focus

NAMI CT programs are primarily aimed at families with a child(ren) with mental illness, helping them understand the illness and the resources available to help, and this program is aimed at Spanish-speaking families and caregivers. NAMI CT also provides training in many areas to schools, service agencies, and other community groups.

Time commitment and intensity

Learning Together: Changing Minds (“*Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes*”) is a six-week course about mental illness and schools offered in Spanish, with content similar to *NAMI-BASICS*, in 2 ½ hour sessions.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in trainings

Learning Together: Changing Minds (“*Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes*”) was developed by NAMI CT and provides in Spanish a content similar to *NAMI-BASICS*.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

NAMI CT works to match participants to appropriate programming by getting to know them and discussing their needs and wishes. As a general guide, family members of adults with mental illness are likely to be referred to *Family to Family*, while family members and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness are likely to be referred first to

NAMI-BASICS. Families and caregivers whose functional language is Spanish will be referred to *Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes*.

Location and accessibility to families

NAMI CT offers its programming to community groups of all types, including service organizations, faith communities, businesses, schools, and others. Those hosts generally plan program locations, but all try to ensure that locations are accessible and near public transportation, if that is possible.

Participant supports

NAMI CT has more than a dozen local affiliate groups across Connecticut, and the local groups host many training events. Some groups are able to offer light refreshments while others may not. NAMI CT has no resources to provide transportation assistance.

Language adaptability

Learning Together: Changing Minds (“Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes”) is specifically aimed at Spanish-speaking parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with a mental illness.

Post-training support and opportunities

NAMI CT data show that many participants in its programming express a desire for more opportunities – to learn, to serve, or to do both. Staff members are always available to assist persons wishing to explore options.

Utilization of adult learning principles

Learning Together: Changing Minds (“Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes”) incorporates adult learning principles, including the importance of life experience, small group and experiential learning opportunities, self-work, and learning in partnership with others.

Training materials

Learning Together: Changing Minds (“Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes”) is well documented, with trainer materials and participant materials.

Trainers

Trainers participate in a three-day “training of trainers” during which they are exposed to the content and the teaching style of the program, with multiple opportunities to practice and master relevant competencies.

NAMI-BASICS

Population of focus

NAMI CT programs are primarily aimed at families with a child(ren) with mental illness, helping them understand the illness and the resources available to help. NAMI CT also provides training in many areas to schools, service agencies, and other community groups.

Time commitment and intensity

NAMI-BASICS is six different classes, 2-½ hours each, that may be offered on a weekly basis or in multiple classes per week and is offered free of charge.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in trainings

NAMI-BASICS addresses the following elements: provide fundamental information to parents/caregivers; help parents/caregivers cope with the trauma of mental illness for the child and family; provide tools for parents/caregivers to use into the future of raising their child; and help parents/caregivers care for their children and themselves with the best possible outcomes.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

NAMI CT works to match participants to appropriate programming by getting to know them and discussing their needs and wishes. As a general guide, family members of adults with mental illness are likely to be referred to Family to Family, while family members and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness are likely to be referred first to *NAMI-BASICS*. Both are valuable for some participants.

Location and accessibility to families

NAMI CT offers its programming to community groups of all types, including service organizations, faith communities, businesses, schools, and others. Those hosts generally plan program locations, but all try to ensure that locations are accessible and near public transportation, if that is possible.

Participant supports

NAMI CT has more than a dozen local affiliate groups across Connecticut, and the local groups host many training events. Some groups are able to offer light refreshments while others may not. Childcare is sometimes offered on site for *NAMI-BASICS* but that depends upon the host. NAMI CT has no resources to provide transportation assistance.

Language adaptability

Learning Together: Changing Minds (“*Aprendiendo Juntos: Cambiando Mentes*”) is specifically aimed at Spanish-speaking parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with a mental illness. The content of this original Connecticut Spanish program is very similar to *NAMI-BASICS*.

Post-training support and opportunities

Participants in NAMI CT programs show a consistent desire for more opportunities – to learn, to serve, or to do both. Staff are always available to assist persons wishing to explore options.

Utilization of adult learning principles

NAMI-BASICS incorporates adult learning principles, including the importance of life experience, small group and experiential learning opportunities, self-work, and learning in partnership with others. *NAMI-BASICS* was developed nationally and is regularly updated to incorporate new information and strategies.

Training materials

NAMI-BASICS is well documented, with trainer materials and participant materials.

Trainers

Trainers participate in a three-day “training of trainers” during which they are exposed to the content and the teaching style of the programs, with multiple opportunities to practice and master relevant competencies.

Contact Information for NAMI-BASICS, Family to Family, and Learning Together: Changing Minds (“Aprendiendo Juntos Cambiando Mentes”):

NAMI-CT: Connecticut’s Voice on Mental Illness
241 Main Street, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-882-0236
www.namict.org



Padres Abriendo Puertas (PAP)

Multiple Trainings

Population of focus

Padres Abriendo Puertas (PAP), also known as Parents Opening Doors, is focused on empowering and educating Latino and Hispanic families of children with developmental disabilities and mental health issues in the Hartford area. All PAP programming is aimed at these families and children.

Time commitment and intensity

PAP offers six specific training programs, each requiring different numbers of sessions, as follows:

- Understanding Special Education* – 4 sessions, 2.5 hours each;
- Principles of Inclusion* – 2 sessions, 2.5 hours each;
- Transition: From School to Adult Life* – 4 sessions, 2.5 hours each;
- Parent to Parent* – 3 sessions, 2.5 hours each;
- PANITA* (peer advocacy) – 6 sessions, 2.5 hours each; and
- Getting to Know My Child* – 7 sessions, 2.5 hours each.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in trainings

The overall objectives of all PAP training programs are to 1) provide Latino parents with tools they need to increase their involvement in the education of their children, 2) promote education access and needed mental health interventions through empowerment of parents, and 3) create a body of effective parent advocates on education and mental health issues. Individual training programs focus on developing an understanding of: educational rights and Individualized Educational Programs (IEP); inclusion of special education students in the classroom; options available to assist the transition from school to adult life; building support networks within the Latino culture; how to provide peer-to-peer parent advocacy and support; and the basic community functioning of systems of care.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

Parents interested in any of PAP's programs are not required to have had any previous trainings or contact with the organization. PAP programs are not sequential; they are

designed to allow parents and other caregivers to choose the program that is most important to them at a given time.

Location and accessibility to families

PAP seeks partnerships with other community organizations to create access to community facilities and to deliver training to specific populations. Event locations are chosen to ensure maximum accessibility for the population of focus.

Participant supports

Generally, PAP tries to provide transportation supports, childcare, and food for all training events, if funding allows. Staff will attempt to find whatever supports are needed to create access to programming for Latino families.

Language adaptability

PAP trainings can be provided in English and/or Spanish.

Post-training support and opportunities

Supports are provided to families on an as-needed basis. Some training participants have utilized PAP training certificates as part of their personal portfolio or resume.

Utilization of adult learning principles

PAP serves many families with limited reading and writing capabilities, causing a particular focus on hands-on learning and peer discussion/support groups. Specific training programs are adapted to each audience or group of participants, as the trainers learn about the needs, interests, and capabilities of each group.

Training materials

Written materials are provided when appropriate, recognizing that many families served by PAP do not make use of written materials.

Trainers

PAP works with well-known professionals and volunteers from the community who bring their experience to the training programs as trainers. Staff may also provide training.

Contact Information for Padres Abriendo Puertas:

Padres Abriendo Puertas (PAP)

60-B Weston Street

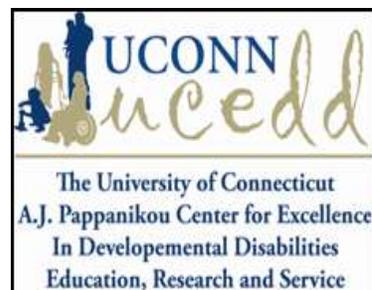
Hartford, CT 06120-1551

Phone: 860-297-4391

Parentsopeningdoor@sbcglobal.net

University of Connecticut A. J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Parent Leadership and Advocacy Training



UCONN *Parent Leadership and Advocacy Training* is a training course for emerging leaders who are parents of children with disabilities. This training will develop a core of strong parent leaders who can improve the lives of children with disabilities or special health care needs and their families in Connecticut. The training program is thirty-six hours and is designed to provide participants with skills to partner for systems change at local, regional, and state levels. Graduates of this training will partner with agencies and providers on local and state councils.

Population of focus

Emerging parent leaders who are parents of children with disabilities or special health care needs, without regard to the type or duration of a disability, are invited to participate. Emerging parent leaders have expressed an interest in expanding their skills to serve in an advisory capacity on community committees and boards, advocating on behalf of others.

Time commitment and intensity

The training program is 36 total hours, spread across 6 modules.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in training

This program is focused on the development of advocacy skills, including knowledge of rights, laws affecting disabilities, the legislative process, the language of healthcare, and healthcare financing, as well as relevant skills, such as communicating with legislators, accessing resources, general communication strategies, running a meeting, and other advocacy skills.

Training objectives include: history of the disability rights and parent movements; Federal and State policies affecting persons with disabilities; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the IEP (Individualized Education Program) and IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan); Transition; Adult services; the legislative process; effective strategies to communicate with legislators; health care financing; the language of healthcare; effective strategies to access health care financing resource; effective communication strategies; parents as advocates and advisors; running a meeting; and effective advocacy strategies.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

All participants must commit to attend all six modules in order to receive their certificate and to participate in the graduation (absences may be excused only for illness or family emergency); actively engage in discussion and activities during each training module; and deliver three minute speeches at each module on assigned topics.

Location and accessibility to families

Programs are presented within the sponsoring community, often in locations arranged locally, such as a church or community organization. All sites are chosen to comply with physical accessibility requirements, and the program seeks sites that are local and accessible.

Participant supports

The program does not provide childcare, although some sponsoring organizations provide childcare in conjunction with offering the program. Transportation is not provided, although the program will help link participants who wish to carpool.

Language adaptability

At this time, the program is offered only in English, although the program has simultaneous translation equipment and can hire interpreters, when needed. UCEDD has plans to translate all materials into Spanish during 2011.

Post-training support and opportunities

Graduates partner with agencies and providers on local and state councils.

Utilization of adult learning principles

The program strongly emphasizes the linkage between training content and participant's work and life experience. Program activities are designed to impact multiple learning styles, and small group networking and discussion is an important program tool.

Training material

Training materials include participant and trainer manuals; the latter includes a process agenda for each session, PowerPoint slides with notes, handouts, and instructions for various aspects of the training itself and the logistics surrounding the training. The overall curriculum is designed to be easy to replicate.

Trainers

All training is led by staff from the UCEDD, including parents who are staff.

Contact Information for Parent Leadership and Advocacy Training:

A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
263 Farmington Ave., MC 6222
Farmington, CT 06030
Phone: 860-679-1595
www.uconnucedd.org

University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System

People Empowering People (PEP)

Population of focus

The People Empowering People program is a personal, family and leadership program with a strong community focus. PEP is designed to build on the unique strengths and life experiences of participants who are parents, step parents, teen parents or single adults. PEP is facilitated by community agency staff or volunteers trained by UConn CES.

Time commitment and intensity

PEP is a 4-6 month program which includes 10 two-hour training sessions, followed by weekly follow-up training sessions and work on community projects.

Objectives and Competencies addressed in training

Training objectives: help participants 1) recognize and build upon their personal strengths 2) strengthen parent/family relationships and 3) increase their understanding of and involvement in their community.

Adults who participate in the training learn the following: values clarification, using "I" statements, expressing opinions appropriately when others disagree, problem solving strategies, positive parenting techniques, leadership qualities, and how to plan and conduct a community project.

Prerequisites or related training opportunities

Participants complete an application form and an in-person interview with the PEP facilitator. Some program graduates join the statewide parent lead CT Parent Power . Some PLTI graduates and graduates of other parent leadership programs are trained as PEP facilitators.



Location and accessibility to families

Generally PEP is offered in many different environments, including schools, faith communities and public meeting places which meet health and safety standards. Child care is offered at most sites.

Participant supports

The PEP program is offered through community agencies in more than 25 communities. Also, it is offered at seven CT prisons. A youth PEP curriculum is being edited and will be available in the future.

Language adaptability

PEP is offered in English and Spanish.

Post-training support and opportunities

A graduate PEP program (PEP2) is being developed. In some communities PEP graduates become involved in alumni activities.

Utilization of adult learning principles

PEP uses the following adult learning principles: adults possess personal strengths and unique life experiences; adults have their own values and beliefs, adults learn at their own pace; adults have many demands on their time; adults may have had negative learning experiences; adults may have physical limitations etc.

Training material

The community PEP curriculum includes a 200 page facilitator manual with participant handouts. The prison PEP curriculum includes a 150 page facilitator manual and a 70 page inmate participant workbook. The youth PEP curriculum is being edited.

Trainers

The UConn Cooperative Extension System offers two days of facilitator training 2 –or-3 times a year. Also, a yearly conference and e mail/ phone support is provided to facilitators. In addition, UConn CES has a list of qualified trainers.

Contact Information for the People Empowering People program:

Cheryl Czuba, Extension Educator
UConn Cooperative Extension

1066 Saybrook Road, Box 70
Haddam, CT 06438-0070
Phone:860-345-5215
Email:cheryl.czuba@uconn.edu
Web:www.pep.uconn.edu

Programs Funded through the Parent Trust Fund

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness



Leadership Empowerment & Advocacy Development (LEAD) Training

The target audience is homeless and/or formerly homeless individuals. The program includes prescreening, recommendations, and mentoring from program/case managers who have made referrals to the training along with a post-graduate placement, with mentor, from an existing community leadership group as an opportunity to practice newly acquired skills.

Mentor volunteers from within existing leadership groups provide support, transportation, orientation, and information that encourage a successful transition from leadership theory to leadership practice in actual community settings.

Four two-hour training sessions are offered at sites as determined and a cash stipend is available to each graduate. Trainers are invited on an “as needed” basis to supplement training provided by Tracy Helin, Manager of Community Impact Initiatives.

Upon program completion, CCEH offers opportunities to advocate at the state Capitol, participate in local Community Plans to End Homelessness, and attend conferences. The contact person is Tracy Helin, thelin@cceh.org or (860) 721-7876.

Contact Information for LEAD:

Tracy Helin
Manager of Community Impact
CT Coalition to End Homelessness

77 Buckingham St.
Hartford, CT 06106
860-721-7826
Fax 860-257-1148
Website: www.cceh.org
Email: thelin@cceh.org

Parents Supporting Educational Excellence (Parents SEE)

- Parent leadership within a school setting.
- Half-day retreat followed by 12 3-hour weekly sessions offered at night focusing on effective school practices, how schools function, the achievement gap, understanding education policy, and parent leadership in schools.
- Class size ranges from 15-20.
- Meals, transportation and child care are provided.
- Memorandum of Understanding with the Center for School Change/Commission on Children required for use of the curriculum.
- For more information visit www.ctschoolchange.org or call Doug Edwards or Patrice Nelson @ 860-586-2340.

Parent Leadership Academy - Amy Witbro 860-253-6552 or awitbro@enfieldschools.org

Voices for Families

- Parent involvement/leadership with a community perspective.
- Full day retreat followed by 15 3-hour classes focusing on problem definition, interpersonal skills, diversity, media, budgets and state/local government.
- Meals, child care and transportation are provided.
- Class size ranges from 15-20.
- For more information contact Sherry Filiatreault at sherryf@cityofnorwich.org or 860-823-3782.