

Linking Support for Families



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Youth and Family Counseling

Who Am I?

- Licensed Professional Counselor – Supervisor
- Texas Woman's University graduate –*Counseling Psychology*
- Experience working with non-profits, schools, private practice, and contracting with various agencies
- Past three years as Executive Director for Youth and Family Counseling, located in Lewisville, but serving all of Denton County



Who Are You?

- What types of professionals and community members are represented?
- What agencies or organizations?
- What areas do you serve?
- What do you hope to gain from this seminar?



Objectives

- ✓ Recognize that helping children often means first helping the parents and family
- ✓ Learn strategies for supporting families in your agencies and circles of influence
- ✓ Learn how to identify community supports
- ✓ Understand how to work with other agencies to best serve the needs of your clients



Helping Kids = Helping Families

- Even for those of us that specialize in care to children, we know that the child is part of the family unit.
- Oftentimes, to best help the child, we must provide help to the parents or guardians.
- If stress is reduced in the home, this can lead to peace and better care for the children.



Support Strategies

1. Train your First Connection and Second Connection people.
2. Know what questions to ask of your clients.
3. Have the knowledge to help the clients who don't know what they need.



Feedback from Families

When Mental Health Connection conducted a survey, the feedback was:

Families trying to access services told us:

- You don't listen!
- You lack empathy!
- You make inappropriate referrals!

First Connections

- The person who has the first contact with the client:
 - Receptionists
 - Volunteers
- Importance of First Impressions: This may be the only contact the person has with your agency, so the First Connection has to be:
 - Compassionate
 - Patient
 - Well-Trained
 - Knowledgeable
- This person can be the difference between hope and despair for a caller.



Training Your First Connection

- Basic telephone skills are just the beginning.
 - Make sure they are able to stay polite regardless of the circumstances.
 - Recognize that those calling are under stress and may be upset, short-tempered, confused, etc.
 - Provide a script about your agency, the services provided, and what information to gather from the caller.
 - Instruct them not to give counseling or other advice outside of their area of expertise.



First Connections Continued

- The more thorough the training, the more efficient the staff will be with callers.
- Provide staff and volunteers with a clear explanation on what your agency does and doesn't treat:
 - Examples include residents outside of service area, specialized clients, or people better served at another organization.
- Encourage a balance between gathering information and allowing client an opportunity to share their story.



Skills of First Connectors

- ✓ Stays clear of his or her purpose.
- ✓ Focuses on caller in an empathic manner.
- ✓ Remains aware of professional/ personal split.
- ✓ Has mindset of *“What is best for this caller?”*
- ✓ Has knowledge to know when to plug caller in to agency’s services and when to provide referrals if appropriate.



3 Steps to Successful Transfer

1. Connect
2. Support
3. Transition



Second Connections

- A crisis situation may not start or be identified until the family is already receiving services at your facility.
- The person working with this child or family is considered the Second Connection.
 - These can be teachers, counselors, medical staff, etc. –anyone who has established a professional relationship with the individuals seeking help.
 - This person continues to operate from the mindset of “*What is best for this client/family?*”
 - Should be trained in crisis management and familiar with available referral options.



Second Connections Continued

- If a crisis arises, be prepared that the family may not know what help to ask for.
- Remain calm.
- Depending on the situation, check to make sure basic needs are covered.
- Be willing to give more guidance than in a non-crisis situation.
- Provide simple, step-by-step instructions if necessary.



Questions to Ask in a Crisis

Depending on the situation, the following questions may be helpful:

- Do you feel safe?
- Do you need medical care?
- Do you have access to shelter, food, transportation?
- Is there a relative or friend that we can contact?
- What are you most concerned about right now?

Do not bombard the client with questions.

Listen empathically.

Provide support.



Identifying Community Support

- Get to know your service area.
 - Recognize that most people who need help need it in more than one area.
 - Create or add to a list of resources that pertains to your specific population and area.
 - Reach out to the providers on your list.
 - Call or visit, so you know where you are sending referrals.
 - **Added bonus:** They get to know you, so referrals can go both ways!



None of Us Can Do It Alone!

If we work in the best interest of our clients, then our mindset needs to be one of helping them in the best way possible.

This means we cannot concern ourselves merely with growing our own businesses, but with finding the most appropriate care for the ones we serve.



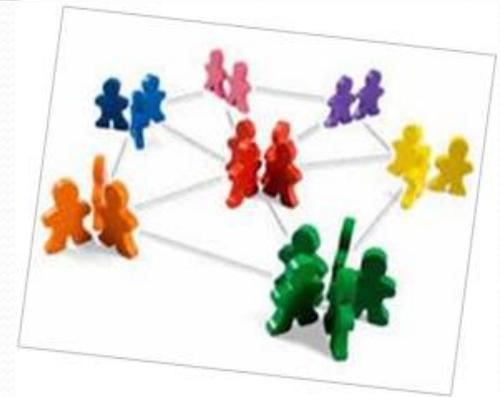
Resources & Recommendations

- Denton County Resource List has been provided.
- What is missing?
- What should be added?
- Any corrections needed?
- Any other information that would be helpful?

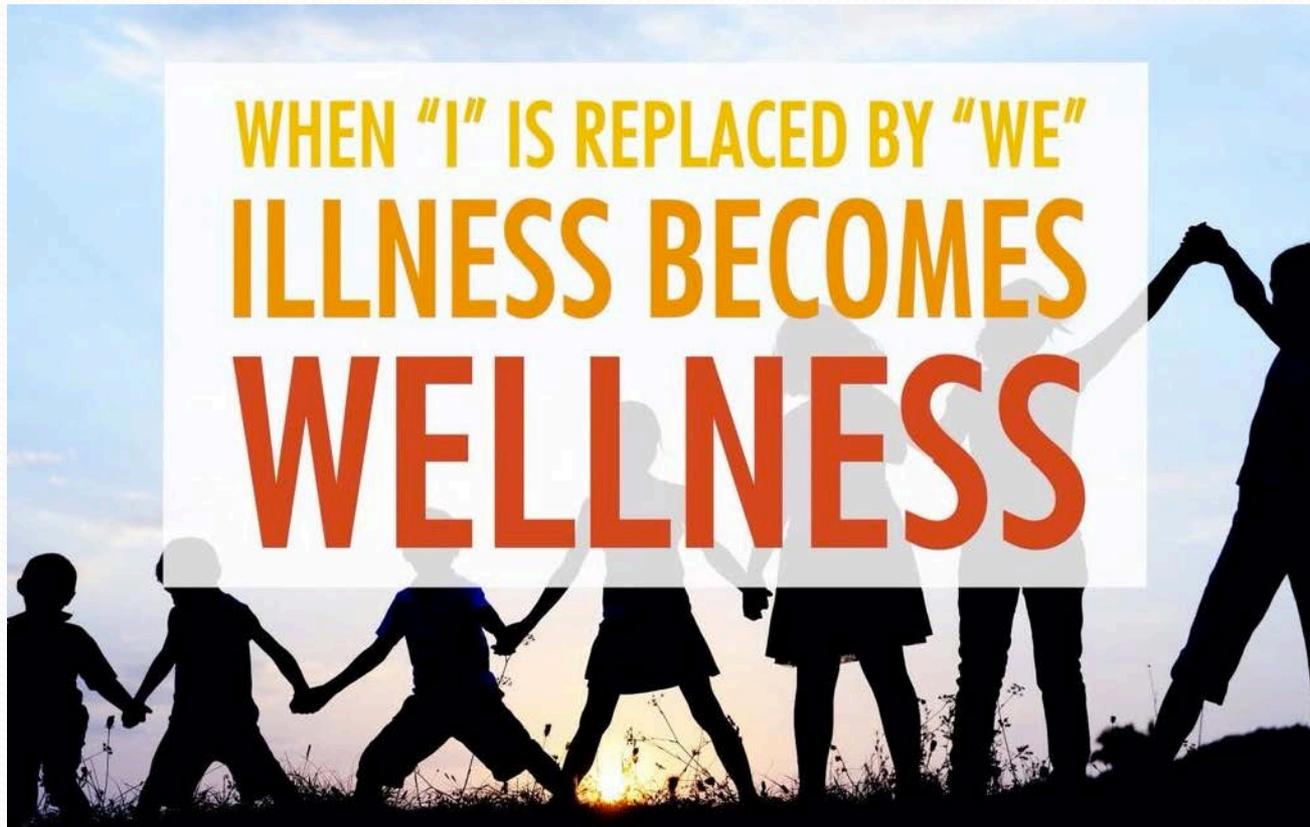


Agency Collaboration

- Our community functions better when we are all willing to help one another.
- Develop relationships with other agencies and businesses to network and help your clients.
 - Lead presentations together.
 - Organize resource fairs or community events together.
 - Offer to host an event so others can see your location.
- By building these relationships, your client base will actually grow instead of decrease.
 - Clients have confidence that you are getting them the help they need.
 - Other professionals will understand your agency better and know who to refer to you.



Agency Collaboration



WHEN "I" IS REPLACED BY "WE"
ILLNESS BECOMES
WELLNESS

Training is Available

- ❖ **Psychological First Aid** –*course that trains professionals in a multitude of fields on how to address an immediate trauma situation*

Course is offered at various times through Denton County MHMR and the Denton Medical Reserve Corps, or online at <http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid>.

- ❖ **No Wrong Door** –*course being developed to train First Connectors on how to properly interact with callers and direct them to appropriate resources*

Offered through the Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County: <http://www.mentalhealthconnection.org/>

Contact Information

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