



# The Wraparound Bulletin

Family driven. Youth guided. Community Based. Culturally Sensitive.

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## From the Desks of...

<p>Philip Endress Commissioner Department of Mental Health</p>	<p>Marie Morilus-Black, LCSW-R Director Family Voices Network</p>
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We believe in the direction of our county in implementing the wraparound fidelity model and that services provided to families should be family driven, youth guided, community based and culturally sensitive. Our goal is for families to be satisfied with services and significant improvements in their family.

The public sector can no longer achieve this alone. We need the participation and support of our partnering agencies, communities, universities, schools and families. With their support we can achieve sustainability in our system transformation. We believe that every level of our system must be

## Collectively Addressing Stigma

***Stop the Bleeding. Start the Healing.***

↑↓  
(Stigma)
↑↓  
(Understanding Mental Health)

Family Voices Network of Erie County (FVN) works with multiple systems within Erie County to improve how services are delivered to children, youth and families. We are making improvements to help keep families together who have children experiencing mental health challenges.

The Department of Mental Health is in partnership with Department of Social Services, Juvenile Justice and the Court system. Together, we are educating and raising community awareness about mental health while advancing Erie County's System of Care. Also, we're working to decrease stigma that is often associated with mental health and prevents people from getting the help they need to function at home and in their community.

## About Family Voices Network (FVN)

*"Only about 21% of children in the United States who need mental health services actually receive them."*  
*American Journal of Psychiatry, 2002*

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded Erie County \$9.5 million over 6 years to implement the Wraparound Process. This grant supports services for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances (SED); those experiencing emotional, behavioral and social challenges and at risk of placement or are already placed away from their homes, schools and communities.

Family Voices Network of Erie County was created by the County in October 2004 to address the needs of children, youth and families; and to implement a new system of care called the "Wraparound Process."

Erie County is currently one of 61 communities across the country that are helping to transform and improve how services are delivered to children, youth and families.



## How is Family Voices Network Funded?

Family Voices Network of Erie County receives funding from various sources to support children with serious emotional disturbances (SED) or those experiencing emotional, behavioral, or social challenges in their everyday lives. Our total dollars allocated for 2007 is approximately \$10M with distributions as follows:

- 22% from a Federal Grant through the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA);
- 40% from Non-Federal Sources (Erie County government and the New York State Offices of Mental Health and Children & Family Services and the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance);

- 19% from the reinvestment of savings resulting from the reduced utilization of institutional care for Erie County children and youth; and,
- 19% from the N Y State Office of Mental Health's Children's Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver Program.

These Federal and State Offices support our initiative and how we're making improvements to the system of care within Erie County; and how services are delivered to children, youth and families. We are creating a family driven, youth guided, community based and culturally sensitive method of service delivery.



## What is the Wraparound Process?

Family Voices Network of Erie County and the Care Coordination agencies operate under the values and principles of the wraparound process.

Wraparound works with children, youth and families to provide individualized care plans. Families and youths participate in all areas of planning and service delivery.

Parents know their children better than anyone else. Parents work with a Care Coordinator (who serves as a family

facilitator) to develop a "Child and Family Team" (CFT) and plan of care that will help their family. A CFT is a family support system.

- Along with the family and care coordinate, the CFT may include relatives, friends, faith-based, family advocates and other community support.
- Together, they will design one integrated cross-system plan of care to meet the individual needs of the whole family.

## Our Partners: Care Coordination & Family Advocacy

Here are the agencies who have partnered with Family Voices Network to provide care coordination services and family advocacy support to families through the wraparound process. Each agency works with referred families to identify their strength & needs, develop and implement a plan to address those needs

- Families' CAN! (*advocacy support*)
- Child & Family Services
- Gateway-Longview, Inc.

- Child Adolescent Treatment Services
- Hopevale, Inc.
- Joan A. Male Family Center
- Mid-Erie Counseling & Treatment Services
- New Directions

When a family needs a special support or service the care coordination agency will find it among the more than 40 contracted vendors. The vendor provide individualized services based on the needs of the family.

## University of Buffalo: Evaluation

The federal grant that partially funds Family Voices Network of Erie County requires an evaluation to help determine the effectiveness of services for children and families, and whether they experience improvement over time. Parents and youth (age 11 or older) agree to be interviewed at intake into services and every 6 months for up to 3 years. As of January

2007 we have enrolled about 95 families into the study. We plan to enroll a total of 270 families over the next 3 years. The results of the evaluation are reported regularly to our system partners and to the federal government. The University at Buffalo Department of Family Medicine is conducting the evaluation.





## Mental Health: Real Lives. Real People.

### *"My Life, My Struggles"*

Natalie, age 18, Orchard Park, NY



Over the years I have been struggling with many mental illnesses which include borderline personality disorder and post traumatic stress disorder that was caused by being sexually abused when I was young. I also suffer from major depression, anxiety (fear of

being in crowds and trying new things) and bipolar disorder (where I cut myself to remove me from the pain I'm suffering inside). Most of my problems started when I was younger especially the depression but the other illnesses were determined as I got older, when I was sixteen. This is when most of my mental health problems became overwhelming.

When I was sixteen, I was put on medication (Zoloft) which made me feel more depressed and suicidal. I wanted to hurt myself and was cutting which led to my hospitalization. I kept the cutting to myself. *My parents didn't know I was cutting myself or that I had a friend in school who was cutting herself.* She would tell me about her problems and what she was doing. I started cutting myself because it was a way for me to deal with my emotions. Cutting helped me to deal with the pain I felt inside due to the sexual abuse I suffered and the episodes of depression. My friend got help because we went to the guidance counselor at school as her cuts got deeper. No one knew I was cutting myself; I kept it a secret from my family for four months. My cutting was discovered by my doctor and therapist when I went for a routine checkup.

*I was afraid to tell my parents;* the doctor and my parents decided that I needed to be in the hospital. I was admitted to Erie County Medical Center for a couple of weeks. Coming home was hard because now I was treated differently by my family. *They were always asking what's wrong, are you okay, stuff like that and all I wanted was for them to leave me alone.* Their constant worry annoyed me because it made me feel as though they didn't trust me. Of course, four months later I was admitted to ECMC again because the doctors wanted to increase the dosage of my medication and wouldn't listen to me.

So, I stopped taking the medication and one night I had a really bad night and took all the medication and got scared, felt sick and called my doctor. The doctor told my

parents I had overdosed and needed to be rushed to the hospital. Once again, I was admitted to the hospital for three weeks. This time the doctors and my parents decided that I should go to Western New York Children Psychiatric Center (CPC) and I didn't want to go because I knew it was long term. *I felt they were taking me away from my family,* but I got used to being there, connected with the staff and they helped me through the process and to understanding me. This was around the time I entered the wraparound process.

It was very difficult living away from home for so long, but I was able to work through it with my therapist and doctor. *While at CPC I learned new skills on how to deal with my emotions rather than cutting.* After being discharged home from CPC, where I stayed for five months, I was hospitalized again for overdosing on Tylenol and for cutting. I stayed in the hospital for a couple of weeks until I was discharged again to CPC. This time, my parents did not want me home. When I was discharged I went to Hillside Children's Center instead. By this time I was already in the wraparound program. So instead of being discharged home I was discharged to Hillside Children's Center.

*Being in the wraparound program helped me to stay out of the hospital and stay home* even when I was having a hard time. It also helped me realize that I'm not alone and I don't have to go through what I'm going through alone, that there are people out there just like me. I have been out of the hospital since July and although I have cut myself and harmed myself I have also had more good days than bad days and that's something positive that I can look at. I've managed to stay out of the hospital with the help of my psychologist, my case worker and my medications, my will power and with my family support.

*Yes, I have had days that I have wanted to kill myself but I have realized that you can only live once and I only have one chance to live life to its fullest.* I know that I'm always going to have my ups and downs; it's a matter of how I handle those ups and downs.

Although I have had a somewhat hard life, I know that there are other people who have a more difficult life than me, and I still look forward to the future. I'm planning on going to college soon at Hilbert College to study Early Childhood Education or Psychology in the fall of 2007. I want to help children and other people to deal with their problems the way some people have helped me.

## Youth Empowerment Advocacy (YEA)

This is our youth group. It supports young people from ages 14-21 involved in any system (i.e., juvenile justice, foster care, social services, mental health, etc.) who have emotional, behavioral or social challenges. All youth are welcomed to join. Call David Serwinowski: 858-1578

## Families' CAN!

Families CAN! is an independent, nonprofit organization, designed, created and directed by family members for the purpose of ensuring access to needed support, information and services to all families in Erie County raising children with emotional, behavioral, and/or social disabilities. For more information call Vicki McCarthy: 884-2599



## Social Marketing & Evaluation Committee of Parents

This newsletter is developed by the Social Marketing & Evaluation Committee, consisting primarily of parents.

The committee includes 51% parents representation who are actively participating in the review and development of this quarterly newsletter, event planning and other marketing activities.

Parents also attend our twice a month Management Team Meetings where they are lending their voice to help FVN improve how services are delivered to children, youth and families.

Parents have a voice and a choice within Erie County's system of care.

This committee represent those parents who are willing to volunteer their time and efforts to help us ensure family involvement throughout the system of care. These are parents who have or have had children involved in the system (i.e., Mental Health, Social Services or Juvenile Justice) or the wraparound process are welcome.

Parents meet once a month. We welcome parents. Please call Deborah Porter at 898-6134 for more information.

To subscribe/unsubscribe to this newsletter, to offer comments, questions or inquires, please send a note to:

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Spring 2007






### FVN Cultural Competency

Family Voices Network of Erie County is committed to insuring children's mental health services are delivered in a culturally and linguistically relevant manner and that the system of care responds to the unique cultural attributes of its diverse population.

Our county is one of the most ethnically diverse populations in all of New York State (the exception being New York City), with most of its people of color geographically concentrated in the City of Buffalo. The racial and ethnic population in our area consists of Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Arabs and Africans. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American

Community Survey, Erie County/City of Buffalo).

Our mission is to:

-  Review service initiatives with respect to their impact on families;
-  Recommend enhancement of services or new initiatives;
-  Directly transmits recommendations to executive level of agency;
-  Represent youth and families
-  Reflect the diversity within the community at large

### Members of the FVN Team

Here's a list of our dedicated support team working to improving how services are delivered to children, youth and families in Erie County; decreasing stigma associated with mental health and helping families stay together.

-  Philip Endress, Commissioner of Mental Health
-  Peter Curtis, Assistant Commissioner, Planning & Analysis
-  Marie Morilus-Black, Director
-  Vicki McCarthy, Families' CAN!, Executive Director
-  Linda Eckert, Clinical Director
-  Elizabeth Benetiz, Assistant Clinical Director
-  Joan Kernan, Reva Fish & Linda Kahn University at Buffalo Evaluation Team
-  Deborah Porter, Jennifer Klock, Elizabeth Schachtner, Social Marketing Team
-  Doris Carbonell-Medina, Director of Cultural Competency
-  Joan Goble, Family Advocate/Buffalo Public School Support
-  Geraldine Talley, Administrative Assistant
-  Deborah Goldman, Technical Assistance
-  David Serwinowski, Youth Coordinator