

ACCESS Open Minds Family & Carers Council: Active partners in youth mental healthcare

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INTRODUCTION

- AFC Council is the **voice of families and carers** in ACCESS Open Minds (AOM) network. Our council :
- Shares a wealth of lived experience from culturally diverse, rural and remote, urban and Indigenous communities
- Has developed unique expertise in knowledge mobilization of family engagement and family peer support as part of best practices in youth mental health services
- Tree of engagement illustrates AFC's vision and experience to date connecting families with families across Canada

INSIGHTS

- Our work in 14 diverse contexts have yielded specific insights about factors that facilitate and hinder family engagement.
- These insights have broad relevance for other mental health initiatives.
- This Table illustrates facilitators and barriers that hinder family engagement.

Facilitating Factors	Rationale	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early case identification activities (outreach) Community mapping: Local resources for youth and families Psychoeducation Positions for families within clinical settings: Family navigator/ family peer support Strategy for families to evaluate services Families as trainers Trainings/KT for families, clinicians and researchers Multidisciplinary teamwork: Knowing and using your team Family advisors to inform strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families have unique knowledge (Chovil, 2010; MacKean et al., 2012) Families are allies in the help-seeking process. They have a positive impact on service retention and treatment adherence (Coldham, Addington, & Addington, 2002; Doyle et al., 2014) Illness creates distress that impacts the circle of care Carers have a right to be engaged (Fischer, 2000). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feelings of exclusion (Duchnowski & Kutash, 2007) Timing & readiness (Selick et al., 2017) "Confidentiality smokescreen" (Gray, et al., 2008) Services operate in silos Client centered care Socio-economic factors Stigma



Rooted in shared vision & values

- a shared vision and values
- evidence based practices in family engagement and family peer support
- relationships bonded through shared initiatives
- co-developing programming and policies with service providers and decision makers which engage families to be supported and empowered
- unparalleled insights** through evidence based practice to better inform youth mental healthcare outcomes

OUTCOMES

As our tree of engagement grows, our leaves showcase outcomes and lessons learnt:

- Active partnership between families, service providers and researchers - a true culture shift
- Family peer navigator and peer support in place or developing at AOM sites
- Integrated family member on youth mental health teams
- Participation and delivery of team trainings to increase capacity across contexts
- Participation in research and evaluation

Implementing family engagement and family peer support

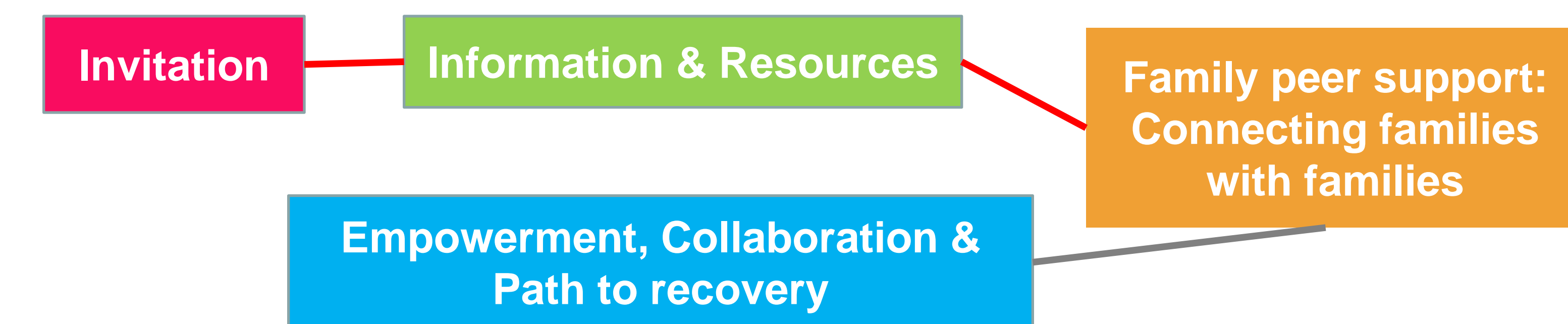


Figure. Family engagement begins with an invitation to families and can lead to empowerment.

Diversity: Family engagement & family peer support initiatives

AFC members are family advisors, navigators and family peer supporters. They spearhead various initiatives in their respective communities.

"I offer a holistic , client centred approach to navigating various systems that are offered to First Nations both in and out of the community. By walking with them through their journey of holistic wellness and healing, we can work towards healing the family and the community as well."

- Norma G., Eskasoni First Nation

"I help coordinate family-carer projects across AOM sites and work in a local hospital clinic as a family peer support worker."

- Mary Anne L., Montreal

"I am family navigator at the Chatham-Kent ACCESS OM hub. I offer peer support and navigate families to services in the community which best suit their desires and needs."

- Laurie R., Chatham-Kent

"I am the Chapter Co-Leader in Chatham-Kent for our 'Parents for Children's Mental Health', an opportunity to provide support to parents in the journey they are on with their children. "

- Heather B., Chatham-Kent

"I am the family peer support worker. I meet families in the community for peer support and I help families with finding resources and navigating the health care system. I also help facilitate family education and support groups."

- Kathy S., Edmonton

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