

 <p style="text-align: center;">County of Sacramento Department of Health Services Division of Behavioral Health Services Policy and Procedure</p>	Policy Issuer (Unit/Program)	BHS-CMH-YDF
	Policy Number	06-14
	Effective Date	10/2009
	Revision Date	07/2017
Title: Family and Youth Advocacy Program		Functional Area: Clinical Care
Approved By:		
Matthew Quinley, LCSW Health Program Manager		Christopher Eldridge, LMFT Mental Health Program Coordinator

Background/Context:

The Juvenile Justice Institutions Mental Health Team (JJIMHT) is dedicated to providing culturally competent, adaptive, responsive and meaningful mental health services to improve the lives of youth and families served by the Juvenile Justice System. This mission drives our work with the youth in our care, their family members, natural supports, system of care providers, facility staff and community members.

Families and natural supports of youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System often face complex challenges; begrudge involvement of “outsiders,” feel powerless, judged and suppressed by a lack of input in the process. Families are often assumed to be the primary causes of their youth’s criminal activity and/or problematic behavior. The JJIMHT recognizes the youth served are members of families and communities, and that other partners of these spheres must be identified and integrated into the process as families and community are key components to improved outcomes for youth.

Connecting and engaging youth and families can be taxing, “system” influence and intervention is often constrained. Planning for and implementing interventions can be strengthened with the support and buy-in from parents, family members and other key natural supports. Advocates regularly perform constructive bridging between the “system,” the youth, parents, families and natural supports resulting in improved outcomes.

Definitions:

Family Advocate: The parent, caregiver or family member of a youth who has received mental health services (many of the advocates have youth having had contact with the Juvenile Justice System), who provide outreach and support services to families. Advocates provide individual advocacy and support to families through information, education and training. Advocates can provide support to families following a crisis situation, during team meetings or when talking with a service provider.

Youth Advocate: a young adult who has had personal experience with the mental health system (many have had contact with the Juvenile Justice System) who now provide individual peer support and advocacy services to youth that are utilizing or seeking to utilize mental health services in Sacramento County. Advocates can assist in preparing

youth for meetings affecting their services, providing support for youth after a crisis situation, providing information and referrals to community services and empowering youth to articulate what they need from service providers.

Purpose:

The intent of this policy and procedure is to convey the ability of JJIMHT members to connect youth and families with advocacy services to increase youth, family and natural supports' connection to community-based service providers.

Details:

1. Referrals to Advocacy Program
 - A. JJIMHT clinicians may make referrals to the NorCal Mental Health America Sacramento Advocates for Family Empowerment (SAFE) Program to connect families and youth with appropriate services and community resources.
 - B. The SAFE Program provides youth and families with the following at no cost to the youth or parent/guardian:
 - I. Information to assist parents/guardians to make informed decisions about their youth's treatment.
 - II. Model how parents/guardians can work with their youth's school to create or improve an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to improve the youth's success in school.
 - III. Attend IEP meetings to support parents/guardians in communicating their needs or to better understand the IEP process.
 - IV. Aid parents/guardians in communicating their needs to the various treatment teams and providers involved in the youth's treatment and supervision.
 - V. Inform about and provide contacts to community resources that may benefit the family.
 - VI. Provide support groups for families of special needs youth, as well as, youth in the community.
 - VII. Provide Spanish language advocacy and aid in linkage to services for those with limited English proficiency.
 - VIII. Aid youth, families and natural supports in the identification of their strengths and methods to implement these strengths to improve their circumstances.
2. Youth Groups
 - A. The SAFE Program provides the following groups for youth to make connections, improve coping skills, increase motivation and restore hope:
 - I. Co-Ed Teen Group: a group facilitated by young adults who have personal experience with the mental health system. Aged 13-18 are welcome to attend, meet other youth with similar experiences and learn new skills to navigate everyday life in a judgment free environment.

- II. Anger Management Program (AMP): youth aged 13-18 are encouraged to attend to explore managing anger, identify triggers and how to create solutions. This group is approved by Sacramento County Courts.
3. Parent/Guardian Groups
 - A. Family Night Out: a self-help support group often featuring informational forums on youth's mental health, open discussions about issues affecting everyday life and family fun nights.
 - B. Latino Support Group: Spanish speaking support group focuses on mental health within the Spanish speaking communities. Groups often feature informational forums on youth's mental health, open discussions about issues affecting everyday life and family fun nights.
 - C. On a regular basis, a representative from the SAFE Program attends the Probation Parent Orientation Night held each third Thursday of every month in the YDF Visiting Center, providing parents visiting youth with information about their advocacy supports.
 4. SAFE Program Contact Information
 - A. Street address: 1908 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95811
 - B. Phone number: (916) 855-5427
 - C. Fax number: (916) 855-5448
 - D. Email: baders@saccounty.net
 - E. Webpage: www.norcalmha.org

Reference(s)/Attachments:

NorCal America SAFE Program Referral Form

Contact Information:

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