

Family Engagement Suggestions for Facilitators of Family Advisory Work Wendy Luckenbill, 2011

1. **Assure Confidentiality**- Reinforce consistently that while you have invited families to give their perspective and advice on issues, and that you do not expect them to provide specific details of their experience. They are considered experts and do not have to justify or explain what their opinions are based on. They are not asked to share specifics. This includes their children's diagnosis, and treatment or services that a family member has received, or just general personal details that are not usually shared in public. Also, ask that any personal information members do share is kept within the meeting.
2. **Resolve**- Make sure that families are connected with resources including each other and other family peer support to resolve any immediate and longer term problems they are facing. Give out a sheet with contact info for local and family advocacy resources including:
 - **Community Care Case Manager and Member Services** – www.ccbh.com (go to Members Handbook for County information).
 - **Family To Family Peer Support** – PA Families Inc. , www.pafamiliesinc.com
 - **Disability rights- Disability Rights Network of PA-** www.drnpa.org, 877-692-7443
 - **Education and Health Support- PEAL Center-** www.pealcenter.org , 866-950-1040
3. **Give Hope**- Let families know that you are part of a change process that rejects blaming the family and is committed to partnering with them to achieve positive change.
4. **Give Perspective**- Let families know that people come to human services to do good, but that too frequently they are not given the information and tools to truly achieve the objectives they are responsible for, and again this is something you are asking them to join in helping to resolve.
5. **Validate**- Acknowledge that past and current practice from all the agencies including JJ, CW, BH and ED have done harm to them and their children, and that we are still making it up as we go along, and that it is only within the last decade that we have really been applying evidence and accountability, vs. local practice and gut feelings to decision making.
6. **Follow-up**- Identify how they can be informed about how things will be changing., and a variety of ways they can be involved with this change, based on their own availability.
7. **Reimburse**- For travel, child care, time (stipends, honorariums, gift cards, etc.) and other resources including training and conferences, information on how to help their children etc.
8. **Affirm**- Affirm their heroism in living lives with multiple challenges and being willing to participate with you in making things better.