

**INSTITUTE  
OF FAMILIES**

*for Child and Youth Mental Health*

**WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER**

# BC Provincial Family Council

*An affiliate of the* National Institute of Families  
*for Child & Youth Mental Health*

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**Parent & Youth Members**



# Definition of Family

*Family is defined as both biological and non-biological. It encompasses children, youth, parents, grandparents, siblings, guardians, foster parents, adoptive parents and extended family caregivers and youth who may have no family ties, biological or otherwise.*



**Mission** – To support child and youth mental health by creating and strengthening partnerships WITH families

**Vision** - British Columbia families are flourishing and engaged as integral partners in optimizing child and youth mental wellness.



# Goals & Objectives

- ❖ Create an informed and unified voice of families to improve Child & Youth Mental Health.
- ❖ Ensure broad representation of families on the council
- ❖ Connect with Community Based Groups
- ❖ Provide input in the development of plans, policies, programs, research and practices to improve the mental health of children, youth and their families.
- ❖ Link with relevant planning committees and networks



# Goals & Objectives

- ❖ Promote families as allies in child and youth mental health
- ❖ Identify and create opportunities for partnerships between families and professionals at all levels of the system.
- ❖ Ensure evaluations of child and youth mental health research, programs and services include outcomes that are meaningful to families.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for family input into the design of evaluations.



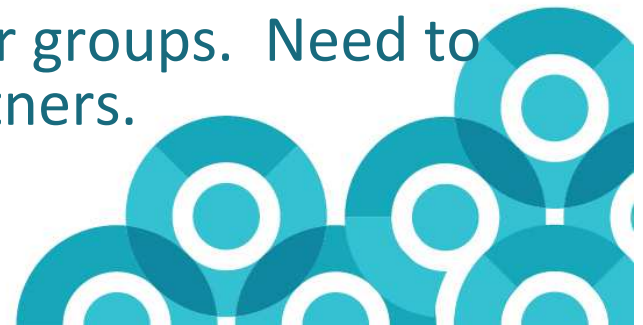
# Why this model is important *and* *unique*

- ❖ It shifts from a philosophy of families as visitors to one where families are allies in the delivery of quality mental health care. In this approach, families are valued as constant and consistent advocates for children and youth.
- ❖ The ‘frame’ for family brings together youth, parents, caregivers and various ‘family’ members ***with lived experience*** as an interdisciplinary team.
- ❖ Systems people are part of the interdisciplinary model for the Family Council. They sat on the working group with youth and family members and are now advisors to the Family Council.



# Challenges/Barriers to Implementation

- ❖ Lived experience – there is an ebb and flow in the wellness of the participants and where they are in the process of grief and recovery that needs to be respected.
- ❖ Needing relationships with key systems people to be part of the development and ongoing support to the Family Council.
- ❖ Multiple silos and fragmented services that exist for child & youth mental health.
- ❖ Funding and competition between other groups. Need to build relationships with community partners.



# Overcoming Barriers

- ❖ Having 'back-ups' for chair and key positions on Council
- ❖ Having a big enough group so if some members can't attend, there are enough members to do the work and represent the lens' needed.
- ❖ Find champions and use plans that have been developed and are successful.
- ❖ Get representatives from as many systems as possible and identify key systems and representatives missing and reach out to bring them in.
- ❖ Demonstrate that what you are doing is a 'value-add' and not competing or duplicating what others are doing.



# Outcomes

- ❖ Working Group transitioned to the new Provincial Family Council.
- ❖ Brought together and unified youth and various family members in a common understanding and commitment to leverage and assist change in child and youth mental health.
- ❖ Priorities of both the Systems and the Council have been aligned and plans set for active participation in development of strategies and plans that affect child, youth and family mental health in BC.
- ❖ Invitations to present on the successful Family Council model at conferences; CAPHC, Sixth World Conference on Promotion of Mental Health – Washington DC.



***“Find other champions and be champions together.  
It is the magic of relationships that make possibilities real.”<sup>1</sup>***

***1 Davidson, J & Anderson, K. (2010). Engaging Children, Youth and Families – More Than a Good Idea. Journal Before and after conception...engaging parents of today and parents of tomorrow. Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 19, 3, page 168.***



***Thank You***

