



Power of Family, NY

A Coalition of Family Peer Support Providers New York

What is the practice of Authentic Family Peer Support ?

The practice of *Authentic* Family Peer Support refers to a system of assistance where individuals with shared experiences, particularly in the context of family challenges, come together to provide emotional, informational, and practical support to one another. This model emphasizes the value of lived experience, allowing families to connect with others who understand their specific circumstances, such as dealing with mental health issues, disabilities, or other significant life challenges.

Key features of authentic family peer support include:

- 1. FAMILY DRIVEN!!: A family-driven model is a framework that emphasizes the active involvement of families in decision-making processes related to their own lives. Frequently occurring in contexts such as healthcare, education, and social services. This approach recognizes that families are the primary support systems for individuals, especially children and young adults, and that their insights and preferences are crucial for effective interventions.*
- 2. Relationship centered: A relationship-centered approach focuses on building and maintaining strong interpersonal connections across a multitude of social landscapes, including personal relationships, workplaces, and community interactions. This approach emphasizes the importance of trust, empathy, and communication to foster positive relationships.*
- 3. Strength-Based: A strength-based process emphasizes the strengths and resources of the family, rather than solely focusing on challenges or problems. This helps build confidence and resilience. All participants in this approach recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of families, ensuring that services are culturally relevant and appropriate. Preferred View™, a strength-based narrative technique, is taught as a “way” to find, emphasize and utilize strengths in Family Peer Support.*
- 4. Collaboration: Support is provided in a collaborative manner, where families work together to share resources, strategies, and coping mechanisms.*
- 5. Mutuality: Mutuality in Authentic Family Peer Support refers to a reciprocal relationship wherein individuals share their experiences, feelings, and insights in a way that promotes healing, growth, and understanding. This concept emphasizes equality and collaboration between peers, where both parties contribute to and benefit from the interaction. A training in how to use “mutuality” has been developed and trained to FPA’s.*
- 6. Non-judgmental Environment: This support is offered in a safe space, free of stigma or judgment, allowing families to express their feelings and concerns openly*

7. *Holistic Approach: We look at the overall well-being of the family, addressing emotional, social, and practical aspects of their situation.*
8. *Belonging and Community: Peer support acknowledges that all human beings need to belong and to be a part of a community. Peer support recognizes that many people have barriers that keep them from developing community. We actively work towards deconstructing those social blockades that prevent inclusion and acceptance. Peer support workers assist families in identifying and strengthening their natural support network. thereby reducing stigma and creating a safe space for families to prosper.*
9. *Social Justice Mindset: Family Peer Support Advocates serve with a social justice mindset, and intentionally practice empathy, compassion, and self-compassion. Family Peer Support Advocates believe that all families have a right to the best mental health care New York State can offer.*
10. *Respect, Dignity and Equity All human beings have intrinsic value. Peer support workers acknowledge that deep worth by:*
 - *practicing cultural humility and sensitivity*
 - *serving with a trauma-informed approach*
 - *offering generosity of assumption[1] in communication and conflict*
 - *mindfully addressing personal biases*
 - *Peer support is about meeting people where they are at, and serving others with a emphasis on equity.*
11. *Curiosity: We are always intentional about how curiosity and inquiry support connection, growth, learning, and engagement. We encourage curiosity while respecting the boundaries and protecting the privacy of the people we support. We are continually curious, but not invasive, while challenging assumptions and narratives. We ask powerful questions. We offer generosity of assumption to those who think differently than we do. We know that active, nonjudgmental listening, and asking questions are more important than providing answers.*

It is important to recognize that Authentic Family Peer Support “looks like something” these are not just words on a page but each tenet has specific methods that a Family Peer Advocate can utilize in their relationship development with family members.

Authentic Family Peer Support is a powerful, researched resource for fostering connection, improving mental health, and enhancing the overall quality of life for families facing similar challenges.

A little about Power of Family, NY

Power of Family’s goal is to empower families by fostering a unified, supportive network of peer support providers who share lived experiences and wisdom. We are dedicated to enhancing the resilience and well-being of families through collaboration, advocacy, and accessible resources. By promoting a family-driven approach, we aim to create a community where every family feels heard, valued, and equipped to navigate challenges together. Through education, compassion, and mutual support, we strive to uplift families, ensuring their voices are integral in shaping the services and systems that impact their lives.