



Serving the Whole Family in Supportive Housing

Stacy Matuza, LCSW, Deputy Chief Program Officer, CUCS

Carolina Grynbal, LMSW, MS, Consultant, Carolina Grynbal Consulting

Gabby Gomez, LCSW, Program Director, Kingsbridge Heights, CUCS

Lydia Patterson, Education and Activity Specialist, Lenniger & Sydelle, CUCS



CUCS Brief History

- Mission is to help people rise from poverty, homelessness, and be healthy
- Affordable housing and programming that links housing, health and social services for low income individuals and families
- Columbia School of Social Work, 1979
- Established as a non-profit in 1993
- First Permanent Congregate Supportive Housing Program opened in 1991
- 20 Permanent Supportive Housing Programs as of 2023



Our Family Supportive Housing Programs

- **The Lenniger**
 - Opened in 2012
 - 91 Total Units
 - 11 Units for Homeless Families with Mentally Ill Head of Household
- **The Sydelle**
 - Opened in 2016
 - 107 Total Units
 - 23 Units for Homeless Families with Mentally Ill Head of Household
- **Kingsbridge Heights**
 - Opened in 2019
 - 135 Total Units
 - 40 Units for Homeless Families with Mentally Ill Head of Household
- **The Hannigan**
 - Opened in 2021
 - 116 Total Units
 - 34 Units for Homeless Families with Mentally Ill Head of Household
- **Williamsbridge Gardens**
 - Opened in 2023
 - 170 Total Units
 - 51 Units for Homeless Families with Mentally Ill Head of Household or Substance Abuse Disorder





All Good Stories Start with a Challenge

- For over 2 decades, our work centered on individuals
- In 2012 we began working with families in supportive housing
- In 2017 we began a process to develop a comprehensive model for family supportive housing



**Our Work
with Families**



A Centering Question: *What about the family?*

- Clinical and Case Management Services
 - Family-centered work that is grounded in Family Systems theory
- Partnering with outside experts
 - Engaging with Education systems and supports
 - Understanding the family's external environment and systems they are connected to
- Creating environments that are inclusive and responsive to family needs

Our Model of Supportive Housing for Families





Creating a Family Centered Approach in Supportive Housing

- A family centered practice:
 - Involves a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach aimed at serving the whole family
 - Integrates assessments that focus on identifying strengths as well as gaps/needs in the family system
 - Includes hiring and training staff with a focus on family centered practice
 - Uses tools developed to support family functioning
 - Fosters a culture of comprehensive family engagement within a residential environment





3 Areas of Focus in Creating a Family Centered Model

1. Strengthening Staff Skills
2. Assessing and Developing Organizational Systems and Approaches to Produce a Sustainable and Healthy Family Centered Model
3. Coaching, Consultation and Modeling the Use of the Clinical Tools and Approaches to ensure Sustainability



Strengthening Staff Skills

- It's All in Interconnected: Understanding Family Systems
 - Enhancing assessment, analytical and practice skills of staff in essential areas of family engagement practices
 - *Bridge to Practice tool: Family Assessment Interview*
- Effective Practices in Family and Community Engagement: Engaging Families through a Whole Team Approach
- The Art of Helping: A Reflective Conversation about Case Management within a Residential Environment
 - Needs are more complex and varied
 - Understanding and acknowledgement of the role trauma plays



Strengthening Staff Skills

- Leveraging Connection: Building a Culture of Empathy
 - *Bridge to Practice tool: Self Awareness Worksheet*
- Group Facilitation Skills: Conducting Effective Family Visits
 - The Family Visit is an integral part of the Family Centered Model
 - *Bridge to Practice tools: Family Visit Facilitation Guidance, Family Visit Debrief Guidance*



The Family Assessment Interview

FAMILY ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

Family Head of Household _____

Family Members _____

Date _____

Domain 1- Family STRUCTURE

Who are its members? *TIP: Remember to include extended family.*

What are their roles and positions within the family?-

Helpful questions: In what ways does _____ help you when things are difficult? In what ways does _____ make things harder for you sometimes? PRACTICE TIP: It is always good to ask for anecdotes and stories. Ex: Tell me about a time when _____ was most helpful to you, or made this harder.

Who has the most power, who has the least? *Helpful questions: Who makes most of the decisions in your family? Who do you think is one of the most important people in this family and why?*

SUMMARY

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Domain 2- Family INTERACTIONS-

What are the ways in which they relate to one another? *Helpful questions: When do you get along best? When do you fight and what do you fight about? PRACTICE TIP: Notice how they respond to questions and interventions during your visit.*

What factors contribute to this family's interactions? *Helpful questions: What helps you all get along the most? What gets in the way of getting along? PRACTICE TIP: Notice attitudes and approaches about communication, discipline, negotiation and how they negotiate the balance of power in their relationships*

Domain 3- FAMILY FUNCTIONING –

How does each family member act to meet the family's needs? – *Helpful questions: Prompt the client- Lets make a short list of what this family needs. There are day to day needs like routines/cooking, cleaning, homework, laundry etc. There are social needs like getting together with other family and friends etc. There are emotional needs like love and affection. Who is the cheerleader in this family? Who is the sweetest? Who takes care of things all around?*

What are some factors that may impact or influence family functioning. (Remember to include positive as well as challenging factors) *Helpful questions: Is there anything that could change that? (Ex. My daughter is going to start preschool soon. I wont have her during the day anymore...)*



The Family Assessment Interview

Domain 4- FAMILY LIFE-CYCLE

How is the family changing as its members move through the life-cycle?

PRACTICE TIP: Ask how old everyone is.

What intergenerational dynamics are present in this family?

Helpful questions: What is it like to be ____ and have a ____ (teenager, toddler, combination or ages...?)

Domain 5- The family's ENVIRONMENT:

What do you notice about their universe of extended relationships?

Helpful questions: Who are the important people in your life that DON'T live here at the residence? Why? PRACTICE TIP: Explore how often they communicate with them, how are they helpful or not. Are they supportive and how?

Domain 6- The family's PERSPECTIVE-. What does the family see as their challenges and opportunities? What is important to the family? *Helpful questions: We made a list of family needs, now lets ask: What is the biggest challenge for you and your family that you see right now? Why? What are you most looking forward to for you and your family right now? Why?*

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND IMPRESSIONS

What is clearer to you about this family as a system?

NEXT STEPS: INTERVENTIONS, FOLLOW UP and TIMELINE

What are this family's immediate needs?

What interventions are you planning to support the family? (Please include timelines and Family Support Coordinator input or involvement via referral)





Assessing and Developing Systems

- Clinical Documentation
 - The Family Assessment
 - The Family Emergency Plan
 - Tracking systems for Education and Child Welfare
- Case Presentation
 - Focused and intentional engagement of all team members to discuss and brainstorm approaches for interventions with families who are struggling
 - *Bridge to Practice Tool: Case Presentation Discussion Guidance*
- Creation of Family Specific Staff Positions
 - Education and Activity Specialist



Coaching, Consultation and Modeling

- Supervisor Coaching Sessions
 - Aimed at strengthening supervisory staff skills in the integration of family centered tools and interventions
 - Family centered work is most successful when it is ongoing and a full team effort
 - *Bridge to Practice Tool: Supervisory Guidance*
- Integration of Family Centered Practice Model into CUCS Institute Training Curriculum
- Family Quality of Life Survey



Family Centered Practice Model Outcomes

- Professional Development/Training Outcomes
 - Staff fully trained and skills in family centered interventions and practices
- Family Assessment and Summary Tool Outcomes
 - Assessment findings incorporated and integrated into case management practices and tools engaged by program leadership and staff
- Case Presentation Outcomes
 - Integration of family assessment and family focused interventions into case discussions and direct impact on service plans and goals
- Supervisor Coaching Outcomes
 - Strengthened knowledge and skills in family centered individual and group supervision
 - Strengthened knowledge and skills in best practices around building family centered program culture



Questions





Thank You.