

## How does a family member get involved?

Once the consumer has identified a person or persons who may be helpful in supporting her/his treatment and recovery, a mental health professional will contact the family member(s) and extend an invitation to participate in an initial Family Consultation meeting. Ideally, the consumer extends the invitation directly and provides some information about Family Consultation before the consultant contacts the family. The commitment will be to attend a single meeting, which will last approximately one hour. If there is a desire or need for subsequent meeting(s), that will be identified at this meeting.

### Contact Information

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Family  
Consultant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Put your agencies contact information here

# Consumer Centered Family Consultation

*The Family Institute for Education,  
Practice & Research*

is pleased to offer a service to consumers who choose to invite members of their family or social network to play a role in their treatment and recovery.

This brochure is designed to provide consumers, family members and providers with a brief overview of this important service, and to answer a number of frequently asked questions about it.



## What is Consumer Centered Family Consultation (CCFC)

With the consumer's expressed and documented consent, Family Centered Family Consultation (CCFC) is a service designed to provide information, support, and practical guidance to members of a consumer's family or social network. It is important to recognize that the purpose of a CCFC is to support the consumer's treatment and recovery. Therefore, the focus of discussion will be on ways in which family members can assist with this important task. At the same time, it will be important to learn about those issues and priorities that are important to family members. CCFC often involves providing family members with the following:

- § **Information** about a loved one's mental health problems including information about causes, treatments and other services. Typically, information related to the questions family members want answered.
- § **Practical Guidance** related to how family members may support their loved one's treatment and service plan goals.
- § **Support** especially as it relates to addressing stigma and how a loved one's mental health problems have affected the lives of family members.
- § **Community Resources Education** involves informing and assisting family members to make use of community resources such as those provided by the National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Mental Health Association (MHA) including consumer-run organizations.

## Who are considered family members who may receive CCFC services?

Family members are not simply close relatives. Rather, this term applies to anyone the consumer identifies as being helpful in supporting treatment and recovery. This can include close relatives, friends, clergy, employers and others. This does **not** include paid mental health providers.

## Why is CCFC important?

Research and experience have shown that providing information, guidance, and support to members of a consumer's family or social network can play a significant role in supporting the consumer's treatment goals and recovery. Educated and informed people in a consumer's life are in a better position to support the consumer's treatment and recovery goals than people who are not informed, ill informed or disconnected from community supports and resources.

## Who provides this service?

CCFC is provided by a mental health professional who works closely with the consumer. In this way, the Family Consultation will be fully integrated into the consumer's total mental health service plan.

## How long does this service last?

CCFC is a brief and time limited service usually involving no more than three face-to-face hour-long meetings.

## Does the consumer attend these meetings?

The participation of the consumer in one or more of the meetings is a decision made between the consumer and the family consultant. There are pros and cons related to involving the consumer in all CCFC meetings. However, the extent of the consumer's participation in the meetings is based on the expressed preferences and wants of the consumer. We anticipate that some consumers may want to attend some or all of these meetings and others may not. CCFC is helpful in either case.

## Is CCFC the same as Family Therapy?

No. It is important to recognize that the purpose of this consultation is to focus on the here and now concerns, needs and wants of the consumer and family members. The emphasis is on providing basic information, education and guidance rather than resolving family conflicts or addressing the deepest emotional and psychological experiences of family members. A CCFC provides participants with up to date information related to their loved one's involvement in the mental health system and guidance on how they may help support their loved one's treatment and recovery.

## What if the consumer or family needs have not been fully met by CCFC?

CCFC represents a very meaningful first step in developing a partnership with the consumer, the provider and members of the consumer's family. It is expected that a number of families and consumers will desire and can benefit from ongoing services beyond those offered through CCFC. If additional support is desired, the consultant may suggest a number of possibilities including ongoing family and/or consumer oriented services in this or other local agencies. The consultant may also recommend community resources such as NAMI and advise you about services that are planned for the future. It is also possible to contact the family consultant by phone as needed.

## What guiding principles inform CCFC?

There are three guiding principles that are very important for this work: collaboration, shared decision making, and self-directed recovery. Collaboration among the consumer, family members, and consultant is an important ingredient for success. Working together, decisions can be made in a shared manner that respects the goals and wishes of the consumer. This leads to improved quality of life and ownership of one's personal recovery.

