

CRAWFORD COUNTY FAMILY NAVIGATORS

Early Access, Lasting Impact:
Navigating Mental Health Together



OVERVIEW

The primary aim of the Crawford County Family Navigators program is to provide short-term, individualized support to children, youth, and young adults (CYA) ages 5-21 and family caregivers seeking mental health services and resources to meet the needs of their CYA. This support could be given in a single phone call or could be offered up to six months, helping navigate the complex systems that serve CYA with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) or Serious Mental Illness (SMI).

The Family Navigator program seeks to:

- **Promote Early Access:** Supporting CYA and family caregivers in reducing barriers to access with mental health services and resources.
- **Enhance Engagement:** Encouraging active participation from both the CYA and family caregivers in developing Family Driven Action Plans.
- **Improve Coordination:** Streamlining communication and collaboration between service providers and systems through integrated planning.
- **Optimize Treatment:** Tailoring connections to mental health interventions to meet the unique needs of each CYA and family.

THE PROCESS

The Family Navigator model guides collaboration between CYA, family caregivers, and support teams. The goal is to prioritize needs, integrate planning, and connect families to resources to build self-efficacy through three key phases:

- During the **Engagement** phase, Family Navigators:
 - Collaborate with the CYA and family caregivers to develop a deeper understanding of crisis needs, developing an individualized Family Driven Crisis Plan to stabilize safety concerns.
 - Develop strong engagement by learning about the family's needs, strengths and culture that guide the Family Driven Action Plan.
 - Explore community resources that will help the family move towards their vision.
- During the **Planning and Implementation** phases, Family Navigators:
 - Facilitate monthly Family Driven Action Plans that provide clear direction to the family accessing the services and resources that fit their needs.
 - Orient, educate, and support CYA and family caregivers in accessing services they are seeking in their communities.
 - Empowering CYA and their family caregivers to learn the skills needed to access services and resources in the future.
- During the **Transition Phase**, Family Navigators:
 - Develop a Transition Plan with the CYA and family caregivers that will solidify skills developed and finalize next steps needed to navigate the child-serving system more independently.
 - Partner with the service or resources that the CYA enrolls in, providing a "warm handoff" to assist in a successful transition out of the Family Navigator program.

IMPACT

- Improved Mental Health Outcomes and Satisfaction with Care
- Reduced Family Caregiver Stress
- Increased Engagement in the Care Process
- Improved System Navigation and Integrated Planning
- Increased Access to Insurance

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY NAVIGATOR

- **Providing Information and Education:** Family Navigators inform CYA and family caregivers about mental health, treatment options, and services. They provide education on rights, empower voice and choice, and share lived experiences for support and guidance.
- **Assisting with System Navigation:** Family Navigators assist CYA and family caregivers in accessing services, understanding provider roles, and connecting to resources like therapy and crisis intervention.
- **Supporting Emotional and Practical Needs:** Family Navigators provide emotional support and practical help to CYA and family caregivers, assist with stress management, daily challenges, understanding care plans, and accessing community resources.
- **Supporting Family Empowerment:** Family Navigators give CYA and family caregivers tools, knowledge, and the confidence to manage care coordination.
- **Facilitating Access to Resources:** Family Navigators link CYA and family caregivers to local resources and services with a warm handoff, provide follow-up support, and help create Family Driven Action Plans to meet their CYA's needs.
- **Promoting Collaboration:** Family Navigators work with teams to facilitate effective communication, promoting coordinated care.
- **Crisis Support:** Family Navigators help CYA and family caregivers identify immediate needs and access crisis services during emergencies; however, they are not on call 24/7.
- **Culturally Competent Care:** Action plans align with the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of the individual and family, enhancing engagement and buy-in.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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