



# School-Based Family Navigator Partnership Model

Bonita Davis, Family Navigator  
Franziska Racker Centers  
Groton Public Schools

Tina Hallock, Family Navigator  
Franziska Racker Centers  
South Seneca Central Schools

Sally Manning, M.S., Supervisor  
Franziska Racker Centers

We are...

Franziska Racker Centers  
Ithaca, NY

[www.rackercenters.org](http://www.rackercenters.org)

In collaboration with . . .

Collaborative Solutions Network

[www.collaborativesolutionsnetwork.org](http://www.collaborativesolutionsnetwork.org)

# Why peer family support?

- ▶ 2009: Mental Health Integration Grant through the US Dept. of Education which led to the development of a formal regional strategic plan to improve the system of care that supports children, youth and families - and the Collaborative Solutions Network (our system of care entity)
- ▶ 2011: New York State Success mini-grant to integrate System Of Care principles and values

# Why peer family support?

Community partners, youth and families identified "Peer Family Partnership" as an area for growth through our collaborative work in the following areas:

1. Peer parent partnership was one of the top three action items identified as strategies to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of our network of care during work on an initiative to develop a collaborative best practice for emergency mental health services at our local hospital.

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2. Families who were experiencing transitions between hospitals and other residential placements identified peer family support as important element In successful transitions between levels of care

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2. Families who were experiencing transitions between hospitals and other residential placements identified peer family support as important element In successful transitions between levels of care
3. Families with children who have experienced a positive screen for mental health concerns identified that peer parent support would be a helpful resource as they enter the child serving system for the first time.

# How did we make this happen?

- ▶ Gathered information from parents, caregivers, youth about what they needed
- ▶ Collaborated with System of Care partners about needs of families
- ▶ Wrote grants with community partners
- ▶ Developed contracts with school districts
- ▶ Provided Training



**PAY IT**  
*forward*

"We rise  
by lifting  
others."

-Robert Ingersoll

[fourbeautifulife.org](http://fourbeautifulife.org)

AT THE END OF  
THE DAY IT'S NOT  
ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE  
OR EVEN WHAT YOU'VE  
ACCOMPLISHED... IT'S  
ABOUT WHO YOU'VE  
LIFTED UP, WHO YOU'VE  
MADE BETTER. IT'S  
ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE  
GIVEN BACK.

DENZEL WASHINGTON

NEVER GET  
TIRED OF DOING  
LITTLE THINGS  
FOR OTHERS  
SOMETIMES  
THOSE LITTLE  
THINGS OCCUPY  
THE BIGGEST  
PART OF  
THEIR HEARTS



# Helping Families Find Their Way



## What is a Family Navigator?

A Family Navigator is a warm, caring person who has raised a child with social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges. They are ready to “pay it forward,” and help other parents who may need support and a listening ear.

# Family Navigator Partnership Connection

- Open to any parent/caregiver....No diagnosis needed
- Easy access.....No intake process
- Parent Driven.....No goals
- Support....Not advocacy
- Listen, Reflect, Support....no fixing, no advice
- Confidential and judgment-free
- Support has no determined time frame
- Meet people where they are

L isten

E mpathize

A cknowledge and Reflect

N etwork (Connection)

O pportunity to Build Hope

N ormalize Emotional Health

M eet Families Where they Are

E mphasize Partnership and Collaboration



# Hear from some of our School-Based Partners:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqfmRlCTKnY>

# My Supports

Think of people or organizations that support you. These supports might include family, friends, community support groups, spiritual supports, professionals, etc. Don't forget to include your Family Navigator!

The diagram consists of a central blue stick figure with the text "ME" above it. Surrounding the figure are six large, empty circles of different colors: pink (top-left), light purple (top-right), light blue (middle-right), light red (bottom-right), light grey (bottom-left), and light green (middle-left). The pink circle at the top-left contains the following text and lines for input:

Your Family Navigator:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The other five circles are empty for additional support contacts.

# *What is a School-Based Family Navigator?*

School-based Family Navigators help create partnerships among families, schools, and community and increase student success by providing peer support to families. They listen, make connections, collaborate, inform, help bridge communication and understanding, and build hope together.





# Hear from some of our School-Based Partners:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIUPpE\\_c4qg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIUPpE_c4qg)

# Examples of School-Based Interactions





# Hear from some of our School-Based Partners:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADx7Nv3l58E>

# I want my child/my student to be successful and I WONDER...

## P A R E N T

...if I am the only parent who struggles to help my child with homework?

...about all of the acronyms used in meetings. Should I know these things?

...how I can best partner with the school when I had a bad school experience myself?

...how I can approach someone at school knowing my son is depressed and his grades are falling?

## T E A C H E R

...if parents only hear part of what I say?

...how to create opportunities and encourage parents to feel more connected?

...how to find time to reach out to parents when I feel overwhelmed by my job?

...how to talk with a parent when I notice grades falling and the student seeming depressed?



# Hear from some of our School-Based Partners:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Mh6Ddlus4s>

# Supervision

**Individual 1x/week**

**Group supervision 2x/month**

**Peer Group supervision 2x/month**

## COMMON SUPERVISION THEMES

- Emotional Support
- Boundary Issues
- Impact of Ongoing Lived Experience
- Resources
- Building Connections
- Ongoing Training – System of Care values (family driven, culturally sensitive, trauma informed), active listening
- System change





# Categories of Contact/ Documentation

- Outreach and Information
- Self advocacy, Power restoration
- Engagement, bridging, transition support
- Community connections, natural supports
- Emotional support



# Partnership Activities

- Community Events
- Parent Support Groups
- Early Recognition
- Administrative Meetings
- Outreach and Marketing
- Curriculum/material development
- Staff Development/Community Workshops



# PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION

- ▶ Ongoing assessment with each contact with a parent
- ▶ Parent surveys at beginning and end of school year
- ▶ School staff surveys at beginning and end of school year
- ▶ Regular communication and ongoing assessment with school administrators  
(with Navigators and with Supervisor)
- ▶ Assessment with Superintendents at least 2x/year



# Initial Funding



## New York State Success - System of Care

- ▶ Innovations Grant and Technical Assistance Grant
  - ▶ Create, Brand, Market and Operationalize the community based Navigator model
  - ▶ Codify the School Based Navigator model
  - ▶ Promote Navigator model to all school districts in the county
  - ▶ Promote and Support Family Driven practices

# Ongoing Funding



## ► School Based Contracts

Contract amount includes

- Hourly stipend for Family Navigator (up to 20 hours/week)
- Cell phone service
- Printing of rack cards
- Administrative costs covering weekly individual supervision with master's level mental health professional
- Mileage
- Contribution to local System of Care entity (Collaborative Solutions Network)

## ► Early Recognition Grant - NYS Office of Mental Health

- Assist with developing partnerships with primary care and school districts to promote universal mental health screening
- Assist with events to de-stigmatize conversation about emotional health
- Initiating contact with families who have questions about connecting with mental health resources in the community

Parting words of wisdom...

keep an open mind....



Bonita Davis  
[bonitad@rackercenters.org](mailto:bonitad@rackercenters.org)  
607-793-0931

Tina Hallock  
[tinah@rackercenters.org](mailto:tinah@rackercenters.org)  
607-793-0969

Sally Manning  
[sallymcss@rackercenters.org](mailto:sallymcss@rackercenters.org)  
607-592-0992

## Links to full videos:

[South Seneca Schools: Mr. Z.](#)

[Groton Schools: Mr. H](#)

[Groton Schools: Mrs. P.](#)

# Family Navigators



School-Based Partnership

*Family Navigators  
Build Hope...with Heart!*

Questions?