

DRUG & ALCOHOL 2018 COMMUNITY REPORT

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

The Bucks County Customer/Family Satisfaction Team (C/FST) Workgroup, comprised of Voice and Vision, Inc., Bucks County Department of Mental Health/Developmental Programs, Bucks County Department of Behavioral Health, the Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc., and Magellan Behavioral Health of PA, has been focusing on the growing addiction epidemic in Bucks County, gaining perspective from individuals who have participated in treatment and informing the community through these findings. For the first project, the D&A Transition-age Youth Survey, Voice and Vision gathered information from youth and young adults about their drug and alcohol treatment experience and what supports they need to achieve or maintain recovery. One major finding of this project was the overwhelming consensus of respondents that they needed their family (or other sober support) to be a part of their treatment and recovery.

In response to this result and recognizing that family involvement in a person's drug and alcohol treatment and recovery faces many challenges, Voice and Vision was commissioned to conduct several subsequent projects to gather feedback about what families need to support their family member's recovery and how the behavioral health system can help families to meet these needs. This report summarizes the results, common themes, and recommendations from individuals in recovery, family members, provider staff, and other interested stakeholders who participated.

THE PROCESS

D&A TAY Survey 2015: 74 Transition-Age Youth (TAY) in D&A treatment or recovery interviewed



D&A Family Survey 2017: 44 family members of persons in treatment/recovery interviewed



D&A Provider Survey 2017: 108 Bucks County D&A provider staff participated in online survey



Focus Groups 2018: Two focus groups with individuals in recovery, family members, and provider staff held to review salient themes and recommendations from survey data



Results and recommendations 2018: Developed with C/FST Workgroup and shared with D&A providers, community groups, and other interested parties.



THE RESULTS

The top themes below represent the recommendations common to all four outreach projects: the D&A TAY, Family, and Provider surveys and the focus groups.

Individuals in Recovery Need Families: A person in recovery faces many challenges and family support has a powerful impact. Learning new skills helps families stay involved in a healthy way.

Families Benefit from Education: Education about addiction/recovery, especially the biological aspect of addiction, results in being able to separate the person from the addiction, reducing anger and resentment.

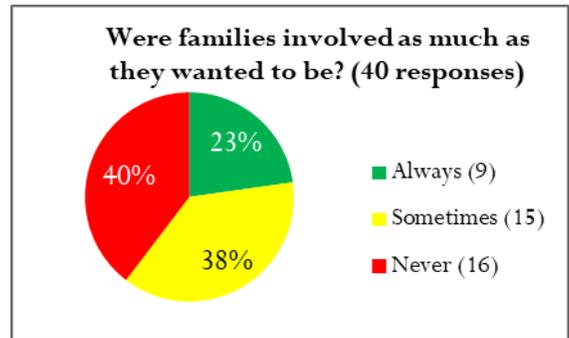
Families Need Support: Families benefit from emotional support for themselves to deal with the trauma of addiction in the family. Families also often need help with practical concerns: childcare, transportation, resources, financial assistance. Due to stigma, families often hesitate to ask for help.

Engage Families Early in Treatment: Make involving families from the first contact with an individual a priority in every level of treatment.

Recommendations for Providers

❖ Help families stay involved in their family member's recovery journey...

- ◆ Create a welcoming, non-judgmental atmosphere at all stages of treatment
- ◆ Reach out to families and ask about what they need
- ◆ When a person in treatment does not sign a consent to have their family involved:
 - Work with the individual to recognize the advantages of including family
 - Explain varying levels of family involvement
 - Identify HIPPA-compliant processes to support the individual and families



- ◆ Identify a person to provide general information/resources to support families
- ◆ Prepare families for family therapy sessions by clearly identifying goals for the session
- ◆ Use a team approach in discharge planning to involve all of a person's identified supports in the process (such as immediate and extended family, case manager, recovery specialist, probation officer, etc.)
- ◆ Help individuals and families to identify challenges to recovery as part of discharge planning and to connect to needed after-care resources.
- ◆ Encourage families to seek counselling for themselves and assist in finding appropriate resource

❖ Educate families about addiction and recovery...

- ◆ Provide opportunities for peers (persons in recovery/family members) to share stories of hope
- ◆ Utilize the family orientation program to provide in depth information about the bio-psycho-social aspects of addiction and helpful resources.
- ◆ Make available information on Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and relevant research about its effectiveness

“(Education on) physical process of brain in addiction...helped to separate person from the addiction. Made it clear he is suffering from a disease....you can love your son, but not the addiction.”

— A Father interviewed for Family Survey

❖ Provide emotional and concrete support to families....

- ◆ Facilitate or sponsor family support groups which include an educational and skill building component
- ◆ Educate families about the advantages of community support groups
- ◆ Utilize peer support/alumni to connect families to various types of support in the community

❖ Involve families early on in treatment stays....

- ◆ Create opportunities for families to share history and concerns, especially during assessment
- ◆ Provide training to treatment staff on engaging and working with families
- ◆ Explore opportunities to use Certified Recovery Specialists (or other peer supports) to engage families, especially from the first assessment or intake

“Asking family members to provide detailed collateral-- patients do not always divulge the full picture and having details earlier on could assist in continued stay reviews and making sure treatment needs are clearly known as early as possible. “

— A Clinical director/supervisor in the Provider Survey

Recommendations for Families

❖ Stay involved in your family member's recovery journey...

"I don't think it's possible to get clean without family. But if family support is not possible, turning to the community for support would be important. You need love and support for recovery."

— Young adult in Youth Survey

- ◆ Don't give up!
- ◆ When a person in treatment does not sign a consent to have family involved,
 - Understand that information about the individual in treatment can't be shared without a release, but you can still share history and your own concerns
 - Take advantage of support and educational opportunities offered by provider
- ◆ During family therapy sessions, be prepared to communicate your needs and concerns
- ◆ Seek counselling for yourselves
- ◆ Seek information on recovery supports and treatment options, including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), and advocate for your family member in treatment

I learned a lot about addict's patterns...how to know when he's not in a good place. I learned about how he has underlying issues he had which addiction just makes worse. Understanding of addiction. I didn't know how much help is really out there. — Parent in Family Survey

❖ Educate yourselves about addiction and recovery...

- ◆ Look for opportunities to connect with other families and persons in recovery to hear stories of hope and examples of healthy support
- ◆ Learn about the bio-psycho-social aspects of addiction
- ◆ Learn new skills to better communicate and set healthy boundaries

❖ Get support for yourself and your family....

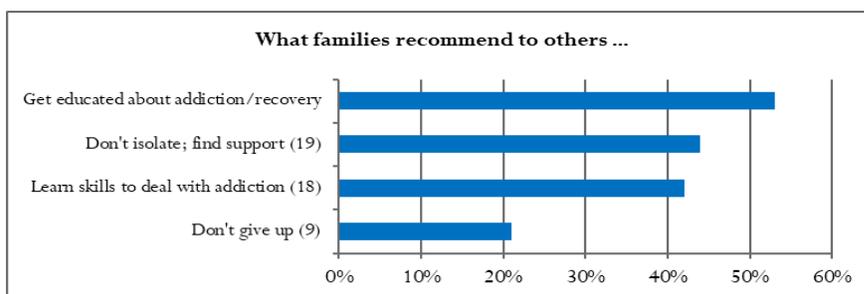
- ◆ Seek support groups near you
- ◆ Identify community groups that provide assistance and ask for help with concrete needs
- ◆ Connect to alcohol-free, fun family activities. Understand what "triggers" are and how the environment, especially social activities, can contribute to relapse

"Gain your own outside supports as it relates to D/A & MH because you can be no support unless you too are supported. Attend 12 step support and education events Learn as much as you can about the addictions community / resources so you can be safe, connect and empower your family member."

— Clinical director/supervisor in Provider Survey

❖ Encourage family member to continue treatment

- ◆ For long term changes to occur, encourage individuals to participate in full "continuum of care" which can include residential treatment followed by intensive and general outpatient treatment and/or MAT.
- ◆ Continue to seek help for yourself even if family member isn't in treatment



Recommendations for Communities

Following are suggestions for community groups from our D&A survey projects as well as a helpful summary of the "toolkit" from the Health & Human Services Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (www.Partnerships@HHS.gov):

❖ **Help families stay involved in their family member's recovery journey...**

- ◆ Work to reduce stigma surrounding addiction by using language that distinguishes the person from the addiction
- ◆ Become knowledgeable about resources for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery in your area
- ◆ Identify a person in your organization/community to provide information and support to families
- ◆ Collaborate and partner with other community groups and services

❖ **Educate families about addiction and recovery...**

- ◆ Provide opportunities for peers (persons in recovery and family members) to share stories of hope
- ◆ Include information about the bio-psycho-social aspects of substance use and addiction into all programming (i.e., programs on parenting, healthy living, etc.)
- ◆ Offer prevention skill-building programs that encourage healthy communication and boundaries in all relationships

❖ **Provide emotional and concrete support to families....**

- ◆ Facilitate or sponsor family support groups which include an educational component
- ◆ Encourage families impacted by addiction to ask for assistance and provide (or connect to) help
- ◆ Sponsor sober social activities
- ◆ Help families connect to community support groups by accompanying them to a first meeting

The Opioid Epidemic Practical Toolkit:

Helping Faith-based and Community Leaders Bring Hope and Healing to Our Communities

	Open Your Doors	Host or connect people to recovery programs and support groups
	Increase Awareness	Provide educational opportunities that create understanding and encourage compassion
	Build Community Capacity	Offer training programs to build the capacity of communities to respond
	Rebuild and Restore	Support individuals and families in rebuilding their lives
	Get Ahead of the Problem	Focus efforts on youth and prevention
	Connect and Collaborate	Join local substance-use prevention coalitions, so as to inform, connect and strengthen your efforts
	Federal Resources	Inform and educate your community



A Few Other Bucks County Resources...

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| ❖ PA Compass 1-800-692-7462 (to access services) | ❖ 12 Step groups: AA.org; NA.org; Nar-Anon.org, Al-Anon.org, CelebrateRecovery.com, |
| ❖ Magellan Behavioral Health of PA: 1-877-769-9784 | ❖ Other family support groups: |
| ❖ Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc. 215-773-9313 www.bcdac.org | ◆ Be a Part of the Conversation: www.conversation.zone |
| ❖ PA Get Help Now: 1-800-662-4357 | ◆ Anna Straw Initiative: pcdeepun.org/anna-straw-initiative |
| ❖ Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania/PRO-ACT: 800-221-6333 www.councilsepa.org | ◆ Rise Up Refuge Group: www.riseuprefuge.org |

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