

Supporting Siblings of Youth with Mental & Behavioral Health Needs

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UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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Workshop Agenda

1. Overview of *UMass Sibling Support Program: A Family-Centered Mental Health Initiative*
2. The sibling experience
3. Parenting strategies to increase sibling resiliency
4. The trainee experience
5. Resources
6. Questions from the audience



UMass Sibling Support Program: A Family-Centered Mental Health Initiative

Siblings of Youth with Mental Health Needs

Confusion

Safety

Shame

Parentification

Independence

Overprotectiveness

Competing for Attention

Love/Hate Relationship

Anger and Resentment

Sibling Support Program Goals

Increase sibling resiliency and decrease trauma

Increase parental competency and confidence

Increase family stabilization

Build capacity among providers who practice family-centered mental health care

Reduce hospital admission rates

Key Programmatic Components

Avoid “drop-off” group model

Utilize trained parent mentors

Involve trainees

Offer the program free of charge to families

Accommodate schedule for families

Provide dinner

How Does the UMass SSP Work?

First point of contact is trained parent mentor

Virtual delivery

Multiple groups offered simultaneously

- Caregiver psychoeducational group***
- Caregiver follow-up group***
- Siblings are grouped by age***

Families participate as often as they like

Strategies to Support Siblings

Talk openly and honestly

Give siblings language

Validate the sibling's experience

Spend one on one time

Identify caring adults

Individual therapy

Help siblings have their own lives

Self-care for parents

Parents connecting

Role modeling

Building Capacity Among Clinicians

Family-centered approach improves outcomes for patients

Family-centered skills are among the most important but least taught skills in psychiatry training programs

Many training programs do not offer clinical experiences with families or siblings

Trainee Views on Family-Centered Care

<i>Mean Response (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree)</i>	Participant Trainees	Non-participant Trainees	Significance
During my training, I increased my understanding of the impact of mental illness on siblings.	6.2	2.6	< .00001
I am able to do the things expected of me according to a family-centered approach.	5.4	3.7	0.0007
I am confident that I am able to work with others in a family-centered way.	5.7	4.0	0.0001
I have the skills and abilities needed to participate in a family-centered approach to service.	5.5	4.0	0.001
I intend to participate in services in a family-centered way.	6.1	4.9	0.011
I plan to practice in an underserved area once I am done with my training.	5.9	6.1	0.702
I feel overwhelmed by the larger social conditions that impede the physical and emotional health of my patients and their families.	5.0	5.3	0.548

Do you have a child with behavioral challenges?
Do you have other children who are impacted?
If so, caregivers and siblings are invited to join us!

Supporting Siblings

*Intended for parents/caregivers and siblings of youth
with Autism, Developmental Disabilities, and/or Mental Health Issues*

What's it like? Over Zoom, siblings meet other children and teens who know what it's like to have a brother or sister with behavioral challenges. Siblings have a chance to talk, learn coping skills and feel better. The Zoom is facilitated by psychiatrists and trainees at UMass Chan Medical School.

What about parents & caregivers? First-time participants join a Zoom session led by our trained parent mentor. They learn about the sibling experience, the importance of supporting siblings, and strategies to support siblings. Returning participants join a different Zoom session, led by the program social worker, to address ongoing family challenges that impact siblings.

Registration is required. We meet the first Thursday night of each month at 5:30pm.

Details...

- 1. Is there a cost?** This is a free program.
- 2. Who is eligible?** All caregivers are eligible if the affected child has siblings of any age. Siblings are eligible if they are 6 - 18 years old and do not have significant behavioral issues of their own.
- 3. Can caregivers attend even if siblings do not attend?** Yes, and vice versa.
- 4. How do I register?** To ask questions or reserve your spot, call (857) 523-1145 or email emily.rubin@umassmed.edu. After signing an online consent form, you will receive an email with instructions to log into Zoom.

UMass Chan Medical School Department of Psychiatry collaborates with Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) and MCPAP. We are grateful for funding from The FAR Fund and The Well Foundation.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Press

<https://naswpress.org/product/supporting-siblings-and-parents-of-children-with-behavioral-challenges>



SUPPORTING SIBLINGS and PARENTS of *Children* with Behavioral Challenges

A CLINICALLY BASED,
RESEARCH-INFORMED CURRICULUM

EMILY RUBIN

WHAT ABOUT ADULT SIBLINGS?

People with disabilities are living longer than before¹

Many people with disabilities now live at home until their parents can no longer provide care²

Funding options at the state and government level are decreasing³

1 (Braddock et al., 2015; Coppus, 2013); 2 (Braddock et al., 2015; Fujiura, 2014); 3 (Hewitt, Agosta, Heller, Williams, & Reinke, 2013).

Factors Impacting the Adult Sibling Experience

- Attitude of parents toward the sibling
- Attitude of parents toward the individual's disability
- Severity and type of disability
- Family characteristics
- Family culture

Adult Siblings Tend to Worry About...

CA
Money

Government benefits

Legal documents

Disability language

The Special Needs Planning Guide by Nadworny and Haddad provides answers to common questions

Resources

1. Emily's book published by NASW Press

<https://naswpress.org/product/supporting-siblings-and-parents-of-children-with-behavioral-challenges>

2. Sibling Support Program: A Family-Centered Mental Health Initiative (program flyer)

<https://shriver.umassmed.edu/siteassets/uploads/2023/12/ssp-flyer-current.pdf>

3. Supporting Siblings of Children with Mental Health Needs (brochure)

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/supporting-siblings-of-children-with-mental-health-needs/download>

4. Sibling Leadership Network: <https://siblingleadership.org/>

Time for Questions

**For more information,
contact
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