

# Bring Hope

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According to Wikipedia: *hope is a belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life.*

Hope is the feeling that what is wanted can be had and that events will turn out for the best. To hope is to wish for something *with the expectation that wish will be fulfilled*. Sadly, we have too often seen, instead, a sense of hopelessness in our children, families, and communities.

Robert Louis Stephenson said, “Winning in life is not so much a matter of holding good cards, but of playing a poor hand well.” Many people are dealt poor hands, but those who have real hope often win anyway. You know that Family Involvement is not only required, but is a vital and necessary role not only in child and family teams, but equally in our Systems of Care. Many times, family members may want to be more involved with their community Systems of Care, but either they have not been invited or worry that they may not have enough to give or make a difference. As we invite family members to attend our Community Coalition meetings, remember that we are giving them an opportunity to learn and be supported as an equal partner of the team.

One aspect of their learning is by giving those opportunities to attend conferences, workshops, and build skills that they can more effectively provide quality levels of family involvement. I've seen families who have no idea as to the assets they can bring to the table, but with support, education, and the opportunity to apply new skills, they grow in self confidence to their abilities. They learn how to give hope to others and bring powerful synergy to their teams. Of course we start providing those opportunities when we support and empower families thru the Wraparound process. Another layer of support is promoting and supporting a family group that will open up opportunities for peer to peer connections. Below are the key Concepts for Family Support Groups, which lead to bringing families more hope, opportunities to learn and grow skills that can be fostered to a whole new level of family involvement.

## Family Support Group

### Key Concepts

- Provide participants the recognition that they are not alone.
- Provide participants with mutual support from their peers.
- Offer a safe place for telling their stories/disclosure.
- Empower personal responsibility and a place to learn advocacy skills.
- Help participants develop new skills.
- Help participants develop new informal supports.
- Provides participants new information.
- Provides participants with an outlet to become an active member of their community.
- The support group can act as a family-focus group for their community.