

 <b>Children's Treatment Network</b>		<b>CHILDREN'S TREATMENT NETWORK OF SIMCOE YORK</b> <b>Organizational Policy and Procedure Manual</b>	
Section:	Leadership	Review Period	2025-07-11
Policy Title:	Family Engagement Policy	Approval Date:	2018-01-23
		Revision Date:	2024-01-04
Page:	1 of 5	Approved By:	Director, Autism Program & Service Planning

<b>PURPOSE</b>	<p>CTN is committed to the engagement of families in all aspects of the Network, including governance, operations, and the planning and delivery of services and supports for children, youth and families.</p>
<b>APPLICATION</b>	<p>This policy applies to CTN clients and their families, and to family engagement in operations, planning and delivery of services and supports, including family-to-family supports. Family engagement in Network governance activities, including membership on the Board of Directors, is outlined in CTN's By-Law and Governance Policies.</p> <p><b>Definitions</b></p> <p><b>Family</b>  Family consists of two or more people, whether living together or apart, related by blood, marriage, adoption or commitment to care for one another (Children's Mental Health Ontario).</p> <p><b>Parent/Family Engagement</b>  Recognizing that parents/families are essential to the successful outcome of their child's plan of care, parents and family members are welcomed partners in the planning and delivery of CTN services, including the development of future plans and directions of the Network.</p> <p><b>Family-Centered Care/Service</b>  Focuses on meeting the needs of both clients and families, where the family is seen as the unit of attention. It recognizes that families are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experts in their child's needs;</li> <li>• Partners in their child and family team; and</li> <li>• The primary decision-makers for their child.</li> </ul> <p>Family-centered care is often described as working with clients and families, rather than just doing to or for them. (Institute for Patient and Family-centered Care). Core concepts of family-centered care include: respect, information-sharing, participation and collaboration.</p>

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<b>POLICY</b>	<p>Children's Treatment Network (CTN) is committed to engaging parents and families through various activities and roles within the Network to deepen and sustain a culture of family-centeredness. CTN will reach out to family members and provide them with meaningful opportunities to share their experiences, influence CTN's day-to-day operations and strategic directions for the purpose of improving the service experience.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of this policy is to support the empowerment of families in the care of their children and youth with special needs by ensuring that families are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcomed, respected and valued as partners in their child's learning and treatment,</li> <li>• Provided with opportunities to be involved, with a full range of choices about how to be involved,</li> <li>• Provided with access to the information required to make the most appropriate decisions for their child and family,</li> <li>• Engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue,</li> <li>• Supported with the information and tools necessary to participate at a level or in an activity most comfortable to them.</li> </ul> <p>Children's Treatment Network will engage families through various types of engagement described in a framework developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. The framework, developed to engage families and communities in enhancing student learning, has been successfully adapted for many other environments.</p> <p><b>Six Keys to Engagement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Parent Education</b> CTN believes in providing families ways to access the information they need to make informed choices about their child and family.</li> <li><b>2. Communication</b> CTN believes in facilitating effective communication between parents and the network - across all partners and settings, and between parents. Multiple ways may be used to communicate with families including in</li> </ol>
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	<p>person conversations, social media, and electronic newsletters.</p> <p><b>3. Volunteering</b>  CTN believes in recruiting and organizing client and family volunteers to support family engagement goals and activities such as family support and mentoring.</p> <p><b>4. Participation</b>  CTN believes in providing opportunities for families to be involved and engaged as an equal partner in their child and family team and the development of their coordinated service plan. In addition CTN supports the participation of families in events and forums, committees, support groups according to their needs and preferences.</p> <p><b>5. Decision-making</b>  CTN believes that families are the primary decision maker in their child's life and their coordinated service plan, with the information they need from their child and family team, and as appropriate to the age and competence of the child or youth as he/she matures. Families are also included as participants in network decision-making representing the interests of all families. CTN believes in developing family leaders by providing various opportunities to be involved such as planning activities and providing feedback on projects and initiatives.</p> <p><b>6. Collaborating with broader community</b>  CTN believes in coordinating resources and services from the community for families, and participating with the broader community to expand knowledge, awareness and capacity for children with special needs.</p>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	<p><b>1. Families participating in Service</b>  Families will be engaged at the level of service as a member of their child/youth's team. To ensure families experience family centered service, a client's family is encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their child/youth's care (with appropriate consent) including the following:</p>



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- Discussion of strengths and how the team can help to support and build on the child's and family's strengths
- Sharing of information about their child and family as the expert on this information
- Identification of unmet needs
- Sharing of past successes and discussion of possible solutions from their perspective and next steps
- Setting of visions and goals and participating in all team meetings and case conferences
- Identification and carrying out of specific activities as outlined in the plan
- Decision making on behalf of the client (as appropriate) with respect to all aspects of the service including intervention, referral, transfer, consent and discharge
- Access to information about their child, the coordinated service plan and their child's progress
- Access to information that will assist them in their decision making and understanding of future opportunities and challenges
- Setting appointments and intervention schedules that align with other family activities
- Participating in CTN client and family activities that promote connections and the sharing of experiences

**2. Family Advisory Committee (FAC)**

The Family Advisory Committee provides an opportunity for some families to participate in CTN activities and projects in a formalized way. Members of the FAC provide CTN with feedback and raise and address issues related to the service experience. The FAC actively involves families in operational activities such as the review of communication materials, surveys and policies and procedures that directly impact families.

The FAC membership, described in the [Family Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference](#), consists of families and young adults who received or are currently receiving services from CTN, and CTN staff members. Youth and



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	<p>family members are volunteers and are selected for their interest and ability to represent the broader needs of the clients and families.</p> <p>A member of the management team is designated by the CEO to act as a liaison between senior leadership and the FAC. The FAC is accountable to the CEO, and reports annually to the Board of Directors Quality Committee on the year's activities and achievements.</p> <p><b>3. Communication</b> CTN will maintain communication vehicles, such as newsletters, the website, and social media that effectively provide information for families, and facilitate the sharing of information between families.</p> <p><b>4. Evaluation</b> CTN's evaluation activities include the measurement of indicators related to family engagement and family centered service. Evaluation results are used by CTN to focus and refine activities and set priorities.</p> <p><b>5. Volunteers</b> CTN maintains a volunteer program that facilitates the engagement of clients and families in all aspects of CTN, including peer-related programs. The volunteer program is managed in accordance with the Volunteer Policy.</p>
<p><b>References / related documents (LINKS)</b> <i>(internal and external links)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Your Guide to CTN Services</a> (See website, ctnsy.ca)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Client and Family Feedback and Complaints Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Volunteer Program Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Family Engagement CTN Background Document</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Family Advisory Committee: Terms of Reference Sept, 2020</a></li> </ul>