



PARENTING WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS: PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES



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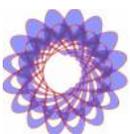
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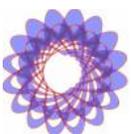
This guidebook is intended to be a work-in-progress, and will be updated annually as new information and programs come to our attention. We welcome any suggestions or information on additional programs, and hope you find this guidebook helpful.



Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act, the Supreme Court Olmstead Decision and the President's New Freedom Initiative have established community integration as a right for people with psychiatric disabilities. We define community integration as the opportunity to live in the community, and be valued for one's uniqueness and abilities, like everyone else¹. Community integration is a right of all people and encompasses the following life domains: housing, employment, education, leisure/recreation, social roles (parenting, intimate relationships, friendships), peer support, health and well-being, citizenship, self-determination, and religion/spirituality. Community integration (or, the opportunity to live like everyone else) should result in community presence and participation of people with psychiatric disabilities similar to that of others without a disability label. Most people have a variety of social roles in their life, whether they are a parent, a romantic partner or a friend. Valued social roles, such as being a parent, give meaning and purpose to one's life. Parenting can enhance one's quality of life, be a source of happiness, and can increase one's opportunities for community involvement; all of these can lead to a greater state of well-being. Parenting is a major issue in the lives of families touched by mental illnesses. By reducing barriers and providing supports people with mental illnesses can have the same opportunities to be parents like everyone else.

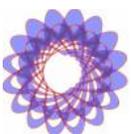
The number of parents living with a mental illness in the United States is estimated to be in the millions. Almost half of the men and women in the country report experiencing a mental illness at some point in their lifetime², and 65% of these women and 52% of these men are parents³. These parents experience the same challenges that all parents face, but are confronted with additional barriers such as discrimination and stigma, problems related to their symptoms, lack of parenting skills, or lack of environmental and social supports. Further, these parents are at a greater risk of losing their children. Research has shown that mothers with a serious mental illness were almost three times more likely than mothers without a serious mental illness to have been involved in the child welfare system or to have lost custody of their children⁴. Despite these challenges, parenting remains extremely important to these individuals and has been identified as a strong motivating factor for treatment^{5,6}.



Although parenting is one of the most highly valued social roles, service providers often ignore this role when working with clients. Providers sometimes assume that parenting is a stressful role that is not highly valued by their client⁷, and may not even ask about a client's family roles and responsibilities⁸. Failure to address this important role results in missed opportunities to support parents with mental illnesses. This guidebook offers tips and suggestions that can be used as a starting point to better support parents.

There is clearly a need for programs specifically tailored to the unique needs of parents diagnosed with mental illnesses, yet most programs for parents have been developed on a small, local scale with limited funding^{9,10}. This guidebook was developed as a comprehensive resource to help parents, providers, and advocates find information about possible programs in their area. We also hope it will be a useful source of information for administrators and providers who are beginning their own initiatives to support these parents. As awareness of this important issue increases, we hope to see the number of programs designed specifically for parents with a mental illness will increase throughout the country, as well.

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Programs

Ashbury House

Progress Foundation – Innovative Mental Health Services

Location: San Francisco, California

Contact: Michelle Tolle

Phone: (415) 861-0828

Email: mtolle@progressfoundation.org

Website: <http://www.progressfoundation.org> or
http://www.progressfoundation.org/directory_of_services.html

Description: The Ashbury House is a Transitional Residential Treatment Program which provides 24-hour treatment, rehabilitation, and parent education to homeless women who are at risk of losing or have already lost custody of their children because of their mental illness. Its goal is to help each family develop the skills and supports needed in order to live independently in the community. The program provides a variety of counseling and structured activities such as individual counseling, group therapy, parent education, substance abuse education and treatment, and pediatric and women's health education. Other services include case management, advocacy, and vocational programming.

The Infant-Parent Program

Location: San Francisco, California

Contact: Betsy Wolfe, Ph.D.

Phone: (415) 206-5270

Website: <http://www.infantparentprogram.org/>

Description: This program is a mental health program for families with infants or toddlers under three years of age. Its goal is to promote the positive relationship between parents and their children. Families are seen individually, and services offered include assessment, treatment, and consultation.

The Family Support Collaborative

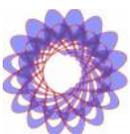
Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis, Inc.

Location: New Haven, Connecticut

Phone: (203) 624-2600 x300

Website: <http://www.cccnh.org/programs/index.html#rights>

Description: The Family Support Collaborative works to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen families by providing services to parents with a mental illness, cognitive limitation, addiction, homelessness or other challenge. Services provided include home-based parenting skill education, supportive housing, and intensive case management.



The Parenting Support and Parental Rights Initiative

Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis, Inc.

Location: New Haven, Connecticut

Phone: (203) 624-2600 x300

Email: info@cccnh.org

Website: <http://www.cccnh.org/programs/index.html#rights>

Description: In an effort to promote personal empowerment, family stability, and recovery, the Initiative helps parents with psychiatric disabilities gain knowledge about their parental rights, maintain custody of their children, make informed choices around their children's care, and develop temporary guardianship plans. Important components of the program include individualized and home-based services, parenting skills training, legal advice and advocacy, group support, and peer mentoring, among others.

Community Connections, Inc.

Maxine Harris, Ph.D. and the Parenting Workgroup

Location: Washington, DC

Phone: (202) 608-4735

Email: info@ccdcl.org

Website: <http://www.communityconnectionsdc.org/>

Description: This agency has developed a training manual for implementing non-traditional parenting interventions, especially designed for parents who have experienced early trauma in their own lives and/or for those who are parenting from a distance. Community Connections has developed three parenting group interventions: The Impact of Early Trauma on Parenting (14 sessions), Parenting at a Distance (10 sessions), and A Trauma Informed Approach to Parenting Skills (11 sessions).

Thresholds Mothers' Project

Thresholds Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centers

Location: Chicago, Illinois

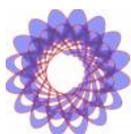
Phone: (773) 537-3290

Email: thresholds@thresholds.org

Website: <http://www.thresholds.org/mothers.asp>

Description: The Thresholds Mothers' Project helps women with a mental illness become better mothers, build stronger families, and gain the skills to live independently. There is a wide variety of services available to parents, including case management, parent coaching, individualized counseling, and specialized housing for families, in addition to parental skill building services. Infants and children are served in the program's therapeutic nurseries.

The program also offers several unique services: (1) homeless families outreach program, (2) a Parenting Teens program for mothers ages 17-21, and (3) the Parenting Assessment Team, which evaluates the parenting capacity of parents with mental illness.



Family Support Services/PACE (Parents, Advocacy, Coordination and Education)

Mid-Eastern Iowa Community Mental Health Center

Location: Iowa City, Iowa

Phone: (319) 338-5293

Website: <http://www.communitymentalhealthcenter.org>

Description: The Family Support Services/PACE program offers support to families with minor children in which one adult has a mental illness. Staff provides services such as counseling, education, advocacy, and crisis intervention.

Friends

MHA of Louisiana

Location: Louisiana

Phone: (225) 201-1930

Website: <http://www.mhal.org/programs.htm>

Description: The Friends Program provides volunteer services to parents with mental illnesses who need help with everyday parenting activities and who want to keep their families intact. Friends educates clergy and lay leaders on mental health issues, and then works with these leaders to recruit congregation members as volunteers to aid families in need.

Family Initiatives

Employment Options, Inc.

Location: Marlborough, Massachusetts

Phone: (508) 485-5051

Email: options@employmentoptions.org

Website: <http://www.employmentoptions.org>

Description: Employment Options currently offers a continuum of three programs for parents with mental illness and their families. The *Family Options Program* reflects an integration of the strengths-based, recovery and empowerment-oriented principles and evidence-based practices, of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and wraparound in children's systems of care. The program has a fundamental commitment to understanding and responding to recovery as a family experience and provides direct service, advocacy, and training. The *Family Project* provides support for building and maintaining family relationships for non-custodial parents, including supervised visitation. The *Clubhouse Family Legal Support Project* offers legal advice and representation for parents working toward increased contact with their children, and effective use of their custodial rights: as well as training for attorney's statewide about the legal issues of parental mental illness.

Parent-Child Centers

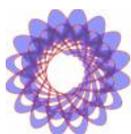
Riverbend Community Mental Health, Inc.

Location: Concord, Hillsboro, Franklin, Penacook, & Pittsfield, New Hampshire

Home: (603) 226-7510 ext. 4325 Concord, Hillsboro, Franklin, Penacook, & Pittsfield

Website: <http://www.riverbendcmhc.org/programs/pcc.php>

Description: The Parent-Child Centers offer services to both children and parents once a week. While parents participate in a parenting support and education group, children participate in their own program that involves playtime activities, stories, and art. The services that parents receive include: a structured schedule of discussions focused on parenting and family issues, parenting courses, and guest speakers.



Consumer Parent Support Network

MHA in Passaic County

Location: Clifton, New Jersey

Contact: Rebekah Leon

Phone: (973) 478-4444

Email: : rleon@mhapc.com

Website: <http://www.mhapc.com/programs.htm>

Description: The purpose of the Consumer Parent Support Network is to support parents diagnosed with a mental illness in their parenting efforts and to promote the healthy functioning of the family unit. Services provided include: case management, one-on-one support from other consumer parents, referral and linkage to other services, parenting education workshops, education about mental illness, and advocacy for services. Participants are given the opportunity to choose from a variety of support services. Services are provided in both English and Spanish, and are free of charge.

Jewish Family Life Education

Jewish Family Service of Atlantic County

Location: Margate City, New Jersey

Contact: Adria Light

Phone: (609) 822-1108

Email: alight@jfsatlantic.org or counseling@jfsatlantic.org

Website: <http://www.jfsatlantic.org/services/support.html>

Description: This program is dedicated to strengthening families through preventative programs. It offers a variety of programs and presentations, including parenting classes.

Supported Living Program

Peanut Butter and Jelly Family Services

Location: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Satellite Office – Bernalillo, New Mexico

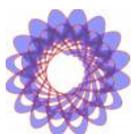
Phone: (505) 877-7060

Satellite Office – (505) 867-2356

Email: info@pbjfamilyservices.org

Website: <http://pbjfamilyservices.org/homebased.html>

Description: The Supported Living Program serves families in which at least one parent has a developmental disability and/or a mental illness. Families participate in weekly group sessions and focus on parenting support and life skills, and are also provided with therapeutic home-based intervention.



Children and Parents Together (CAPT)

Family Service League of Suffolk County, Inc.

Location: Bayshore, New York

Contact: Mary Sidoti

Phone: (631) 666-2149

Website: <http://www.fsl-li.org/services-behavioral-capt.html>

Description: The CAPT Center is both a community support program for parents with a mental illness and an early intervention program for their young children. Parents are offered groups that provide the opportunity to learn more about parenting and discuss other issues and concerns. Children participate in structured and educational activity programs. Staff members include a pediatric nurse practitioner, professional educators, certified social workers, and child care workers. This program also offers assessment and referrals, crisis intervention, and help with transportation when possible.

The Emerson-Davis Family Development Center

Institute for Community Living

Location: Brooklyn, New York

Phone: (212) 385-3030

Website: <http://www.iclinc.net/reunification.html>

Description: Emerson-Davis is a supportive apartment program that specializes in the reunification of single parent families who have been separated due to a parental mental illness and homelessness.

Partners in Parenting (PIP) Community-Based Programs

Mental Health Association in Westchester, New York

Location: Elmsford, New York

Contact: Patrice Monaghan

Phone: (914) 683-2559 x421

Email: help@mhawestchester.org

Website: <http://www.mhawestchester.org/mhatreatment/pip.asp>

Description: The Partners in Parenting Program provides home-based psychotherapy and parenting skills training to adults who suffer from a mental illness and who are raising children. This includes mothers, fathers, grandparents, and others who have responsibility in caring for children and adolescents. Therapists visit families in their homes, and provide individual therapy, family therapy, and parenting skills training. Medication therapy is also available through a psychiatrist at the Northern Westchester Counseling Center. Other staff members help participants find other services, including child care and vocational training.

The Invisible Children's Project (ICP)

MHA in Orange County, NY

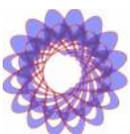
Location: Goshen, New York

Phone: (845) 294-7411 ext. 244

Email: mha@mhaorangeny.com

Website: <http://www.mhaorangeny.com/linkspage/programsandservices/invisiblechildren.htm>

Description: The Invisible Children's Project offers family case management for adults with a psychiatric disability and their children. It provides training, educational supports, and 24-hour crisis intervention.



Parent Infant Program

Department of Behavioral Health

Location: New York, New York

Contact: Anna Heffler

Phone: (212) 238-7337

Description: The Parent Infant Program offers intensive treatment for parents and their children up to age 4^{1/2}. The program tries to foster healthy mother-infant/child interactions, to stabilize the parents' emotional or mental illness, and to stimulate the emotional and cognitive development of the child at risk.

Emerge

Mental Health Association in Dutchess County, Inc.

Location: Poughkeepsie, New York

Contact: Marge Chianelli

Phone: (845) 473-2500 ext. 321

Email: mhadc-emerge@libertybiz.rr.com

Website: <http://www.mhadc.com/agencyprograms.htm>

Description: Emerge seeks to help parents with a mental illness to establish and work toward parenting goals that will improve the quality of life for their family. This program offers services that include education, advocacy, respite, and support groups.

Better Beginnings for Parents and Children

Catholic Charities

Location: Syracuse, New York

Contact: Ruth Kay

Phone: (315) 424-1840

Description: Better Beginnings Program is a mental health primary prevention project provided in community and home-based settings and makes use of home day care; developmental, medical and psychosocial assessments; individualized treatment plans; multidisciplinary teams; psychotherapy; nondidactic parental guidance; case management; and outreach. To be eligible to participate in Better Beginnings, parents must have a chronic mental illness and children from birth through age 5.

Crisis Nurseries and Respite Care Services

Youth Services Inc.

Location: Philadelphia, PA

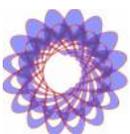
Phone: (215) 844-6931 – Sally Watson House or

(215) 386-0251 – The Baring House

Website: <http://www.ysiphila.org/crisis-care.html>

Description: Crisis Nurseries and Respite Care have free, voluntary programs offering short-term care for children newborn to 5 years old* who are at risk of abuse or neglect, or whose parents need a safe place to temporarily leave their children during an illness, hospitalization, job search, or for respite from the stresses of parenting. Services include: 24 hour emergency care for children ages newborn to 5 years, a hotline for referrals and support to parents in stress, counseling and role modeling on parenting issues, and developmental assessments of children.

*Short-term Crisis/Respite Care for children ages 6 to 12 is available in West Philadelphia in host homes on a limited basis. For information or to arrange for care, call (215) 386-0251.



Training and Education Center (TEC)

MHA of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Contact: Edie Mannion

Phone: (215) 751-1800 x233

Email: emannion@mhasp.org

Website: <http://www.mhasp.org/services/tec.html>><http://www.mhasp.org/services/tec.html>

Description: TEC strives to promote hope and recovery for adults with mental illness and those who care about them by disseminating training and education programs to family members of adults with mental illness, parents with mental illness who have minor children, and service providers who work with adults who have mental illness. TEC offers the following services and tools: An interactive web site for youth growing up with mental illness in the family and those who care about them at <http://www.mhasp.org/coping>, a manual for facilitating parenting classes for parents with mental illness, a manual for facilitating a psycho-educational workshop for children of ages 7-10 and their parents/caregivers, a manual for facilitating a spouse and partner workshop that includes information on well spouse coping and helping children cope, manuals for facilitating consultation and workshops for family members of adults with mental illness, workshop curriculum and support group guidelines for adult children of parents with mental illness, and a training curriculum for child welfare staff on understanding and engaging parents with mental illness and their children.

Invisible Children's Program

MHA of Wisconsin

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

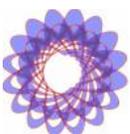
Contact: Kristina Finnel

Phone: (414) 276-3122

Email: kristina@mhawisconsin.org

Website: <http://www.mhawisconsin.org/support/icp/>

Description: The Invisible Children's Program provides support and advocacy services to parents with a chronic mental illness. A primary goal is to improve parenting skills and strengthen family relationships in an effort to keep children with their parents. The program serves both parents and their children, and offers the following family assistance: treatment education, mentoring, advocacy, parent education, mental health education, support groups, family outings, youth enrichment and entertainment activities, hygiene and personal grooming education, and prenatal and early identification prevention for pregnant women.



Preservation of the Family

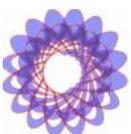
Parents and service providers alike can take proactive steps to ensure the protection and preservation of families.

Tips for Parents:

- ◆ Take a parenting skills course
- ◆ Attend a parenting support group
- ◆ Develop a strong social support system of family and friends that can provide increased stability for the family.
- ◆ Create a wellness plan or an advanced directive to outline the coping strategies that should be used in the event of a crisis, and go over your plan with your child/ren
- ◆ Use open, honest, and age-appropriate communication with your child about your mental illness
- ◆ Remember that you are the parent, and that your child needs you to be the primary caregiver. Do not force your child to take on a care-giving role for which he or she is not prepared.

Tips for Service Providers:

- ◆ Ask if your client has a child
- ◆ Find out where there is low-cost childcare in your area
- ◆ Pull together a list of legal resources
- ◆ Make people aware of respite programs
- ◆ Discuss parenting issues as part of treatment
- ◆ Support parenting and parental rights
- ◆ Encourage the development of support services specific to parents
- ◆ Discuss available supports for parents, such as mainstream parenting resources and self-help groups.



Resources

For Everyone:

“Parenting with a Mental Illness” Fact Sheet Series

UPenn Collaborative Community Integration Tools

- “Child Welfare & Custody Issues”
http://www.upennrrtc.org/resources/view.php?tool_id=36
- “Positive Parenting and Child Resilience”
http://www.upennrrtc.org/resources/view.php?tool_id=37
- “Understanding Child Abuse & Neglect in Pennsylvania: A General Guide that can be Adapted for Parents in Other States”
http://www.upennrrtc.org/resources/view.php?tool_id=118

“Strengthening Families” Fact Sheet Series

Mental Health America

<http://www.nmha.org/go/information/get-info/strengthening-families>

“Critical Issues for Parents with Mental Illness and Their Families”

SAMHSA’s National Mental Health Information Center

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/KEN-01-0109/default.asp>

Parenting Well

Resources for Healthy Families

<http://www.parentingwell.org/>

“Parents with Mental Illness: Their Experiences and Service Needs”

Judith A. Cook, Ph.D. & Pamela Steigman, M.A.

<http://www.psych.uic.edu/UICNRTC/Parents.PDF>

“Invisible Children’s Project: Resources”

Mental Health America

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/index.cfm?objectid=EE20FC04-1372-4D20-C8F2139A82D23A21>

The Invisible Children’s Project (ICP) - Toolkit

MHA in Texas

<http://www.mhatexas.org/mhatexasMAIN/InvisibleChildrensMainPage.htm>

“When a Parent has a Mental Illness: Serious Mental Illness and Parenting”

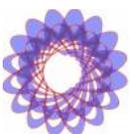
MHA of Franklin County

<http://www.mhafc.org/pwmi-parenting.htm>

“Nurturing Families When Parents Are Coping With Mental Illness”

A power point presentation by the MHA of New York

<http://www.mhanys.org/programs/pwpc/Nurturing%20Families.ppt>



“I Love You Like Crazy”

A video by The Mental Illness Education Project, Inc.

<http://www.miepvideos.org/lovedis.html>

“Through The Looking Glass”

(TLG) is a nationally recognized center that has pioneered researched, training, and services for families in which a child, parent or grandparent has a disability or medical issue. TLG is a disability community based nonprofit organization, which emerged from the independent movement.

<http://www.lookingglass.org/legal/>

“The Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health”

The Center is dedicated to promoting effective community-based, culturally competent, family-centered services for families and their children who are, or may be affected by mental, emotional or behavioral disorders.

<http://www.rtc.pdx.edu>

For Parents:

“Parenting Well When You’re Depressed: A Complete Resource for Maintaining a Healthy Family”

A book that provides a complete tool kit of strategies, action plans, and resources that parents with depression can use to encourage and support the healthy development of their children while managing their illness.

<http://www.parentingwell.org/book.html>

“Out of the Darkened Room”

When a Parent is Depressed: Protecting the Children and Strengthening the Family

A book by William R. Beardslee, M.D.

“Postpartum Support International”

<http://www.postpartum.net/>

“Depressed Parents”

Online support community on LiveJournal

http://www.livejournal.com/userinfo.bml?user=dep_parents

“Parenting with a Mental Illness”

Parentbooks: a selection of resources

http://www.parentbooks.ca/Parenting_with_Mental_Illness.html

“Selected Readings Pertaining to Mothers with Mental Illness and Their Children”

National Research and Training Center on Psychiatric Disability

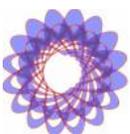
University of Illinois at Chicago

<http://www.psych.uic.edu/UICNRTC/Readings.PDF>

“Making Time to Talk: Advice for parents with mental illness”

NSF Scotland

http://www.nfscot.org.uk/uploads/attachments/1101732018__MakingTimetoTalk.pdf



For Teens

“I’m Not Alone: A Teen’s Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has a Mental Illness”

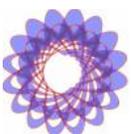
I'm Not Alone focuses on living with a parent who has schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.

<http://www.seedsofhopebooks.com/im-not-alone.html>

Finding My Way: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has Experienced Trauma

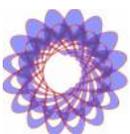
Finding My Way examines the teenager's experience of having a parent who has endured trauma—ranging from military combat to domestic violence to 9/11 to natural disasters.

<http://www.seedsofhopebooks.com/finding-my-way.html>



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