



North Carolina Families United, Inc.

Supporting families and responding to young adults with emotional and behavioral health needs

Research shows that one of five children and adolescents aged 9 to 17 years experience symptoms of mental health problems that cause some level of impairment in a given year. However, fewer than 20 percent of those who need mental health service receive them. When students experience mental wellness issues, they often struggle to attend school, have difficulty completing assignments, and fail to obtain their high school diploma; many are incarcerated. North Carolina Families United is a family advocacy organization supporting and uniting the voices of children, youth, and families with mental health concerns to educate, support and advocate for improved services and lives.

The organization was incorporated in 1997 as an operating 501C3. Until September of 2007, NC Families United was under the fiscal operation of the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center of North Carolina. In 2007 NC Families United separated itself from the fiscal agent and moved state corporate offices to UNCG- Center for Youth, Families and Community Partnerships (UNCG-Center) in Greensboro, NC. NC Families United has taken substantial action to be a family focused leader in the state of North Carolina in developing strong family and youth networks that support families and youth who are struggling with mental illness.

Supporting Parents:

To ensure that families feel supported and confident when working with child serving agencies to get what they need for their families success, the Parent Supporting Parents workshop was developed by family members as a resource. The Parents Supporting Parents workshop is offered to family members by family members throughout the state. As added support to parents, North Carolina Families United, NFFCMH has facilitated Family Partner Development meetings. A Family Partner is defined as a caregiver/parent of someone who has received services and therefore has firsthand experience within the child and family system, or who has gone through the system themselves. A Family Partner may advocate, train, mentor or serve as a coach to a primary caregiver who has a child struggling with mental wellness issues. For more information, contact Libby Jones, Family Support Director and Lead Family Partner Coordinator at: 336-380-7274 or email: ljones3@bellsouth.net.

RENEW stands for Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education and Work! RENEW is an evidence-based model that dates back to the late 1990's in New Hampshire. The model was co-founded by the Executive Director of North Carolina Families United, Gail M. Cormier who was the first to implement RENEW outside of grant funding. The model is a nationally recognized approach for working with young adults struggling with severe emotional disturbance and/or co-occurring issues within a system of care framework. RENEW is guided by four goals (high school completion, competitive employment, post-secondary participation, and positive community inclusion) and four principals (self-determination, competency-based service, unconditional care, natural supports and community inclusion).

Planning Strategies for success include:

- Personal Futures Planning
- Flexible Education Services
- Naturally Supported Employment
- Interagency Collaboration (CFT's)
- Transition Mentoring
- Social Skill Building (Young Adult Leadership) and
- Flexible Fund Development

As in New Hampshire, RENEW-NC has shown promise and evidence of success for young adults in North Carolina. Since 2008, Damie Jackson-Diop, Youth Transition Program Director with North Carolina Families United has mentored and re-connected young adults throughout the state to appropriate mental health and transition-related services and facilitated the development of youth guided/directed child family teams. Attached you will find a one page referral form and a brochure outline the scope of transition mentoring services. In addition to educational resources, North Carolina Families United train youth leaders of tomorrow today!



Responding to Young Adults:

North Carolina Families United hosts a Leadership series geared to youth ages 14-21 who has struggled with mental health issues. Some topics include: Public Speaking, Conflict Resolution, and Advocacy for Self and Others, Cultural Diversity, and Job Skills. Participants receive training on How to Choose a Provider and Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), which teach participants recovery and self-management skills, and strategies for dealing with mental health within the context of work, school and their everyday lives. Youth who have had mental health or behavioral challenges are encouraged to join Youth M.O.V.E (Motivating others Through Voices of Experience) our statewide youth leadership group.

North Carolina Families United is happy to help link families to Link families to State and community partners for the purpose of improving the lives of children, youth, and families with emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs. Feel free to call our office at: 336-217-9712 for more information on any offerings mentioned in this article or visit our website at www.ncfamiliesunited.org. You can also join our Facebook page at: North Carolina Families United, NFFCMH, Inc. These projects are made possible through a grant awarded to North Carolina Families United, the Statewide Consumer Network by the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services Block Grant Funds.