



Family Peer Support

WHAT ARE FAMILY PEER SUPPORTS?

Family peer supports, commonly called Family Peer Specialists or Parent Peer Specialists is a parent-to-parent approach to support and empower families. They are parents/caregivers who have years of actual life experience, or “lived experience”, in raising a child(ren)/youth with emotional or behavioral health challenges.

Family Peer Specialists utilize their personal lived experiences and the extensive training they receive to offer authentic support to parents. They listen and support parents without shame, blame, or judgment. Family Peer Specialists share a strong connection and encourage parents/caregivers to learn how life experiences have shaped them as individuals.

“Nothing About Us Without Us” - It is important to families that Family Peer Specialists empower them and not speak on their behalf without them being present.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Family Peer Specialists may be available for parent(s), guardian(s), and/or custodial caregivers who are caring for children, youth, and young adults with emotional and behavioral health challenges.

HOW DOES FAMILY PEER SUPPORT HELP?

Family Peer Support is individualized to each family and is based on the needs and goals of the youth and family. The Family Peer Specialist can:

- Provide supports and mentor families to support them in learning how to navigate the system and empower them, in a way that is genuine and authentic.
- Understand each other as parents with similar life experiences.
- Increase family acceptance and resiliency factors.
- Help the family achieve a higher level of well-being and feel a sense of community.
- Reduce stress, improve mental health and well-being, increase self-awareness, increase social supports and treatment engagement.

HOW TO ACCESS FAMILY PEER SUPPORT

Call G.E.A.R. Parent Network if you need support, information or resources for your child and family.

For more information about Family Peer Support in Maine visit: <https://gearparentnetwork.org/get-help/ramp/>