Family Peer Specialists (FPS) are parents, family members, or caregivers who have or had responsibility parenting a child across the lifespan or as a primary caregiver for another family member experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. They can speak about and use their lived experience to support other families to advocate for their child’s or family member’s well-being, supporting them in navigating systems, and offering other necessary resources.

**Why Family Peer Specialists Are Essential**

**Peer Support**

FPS have the unique ability to connect with family members to:

- reduce isolation
- normalize lived experiences
- encourage hope
- share successes
- offer resources

This allows providers to focus on direct services.

**Well-Being Strategies for Family Members**

FPS offer families strategies that can reduce their need for additional services, including:

- self-care
- positive parenting
- conflict resolution
- crisis prevention

**Systems Navigation**

FPS assist families in accessing support from child, adult, and family serving systems.

Increased use of FPS can lead to more effective systems collaboration and increased family well-being.

**Family-Driven Approach**

FPS support families to become confident advocates for family-driven systems.

When families' voices are heard during decision-making and evaluation, systems evolve to become more effective—resulting in satisfied families reaching their goals.

Visit [www.ffcmh.org/certification](http://www.ffcmh.org/certification) to learn more.