

The model of PST practice operationalizes the Family Driven Paradigm. This article talks about why Family Driven is a good idea-outcomes improved when family and youth are active participants in their own treatment.

Making the case for Family Engagement: Research Evidence

Research evidence demonstrates that outcomes improve when family and youth are active participants in their own treatment (Morrissey-Kane & Prinz, 1999; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Furthermore, commitment to treatment increases when youth and families are given leadership roles in making their own clinical decisions (Manteuffel, 2010). The evidence base for family involvement in mental health care is influenced by many disciplines including early childhood development, education, mental health, physical health, child welfare, and juvenile justice to name a few. Family involvement is critical to improving school outcomes, mental health outcomes, and reducing mental health disparities (Osher, Osher, & Blau, 2008). Osher, et al., (2008) described two threads of rationale for parental involvement in mental health care.

- The first is that parents have special knowledge that can enhance the design of interventions and treatments (Osher et al., 2008, 47). Parents frequently have more intimate contact with their children than mental health care professionals and as a result they can help with observations of symptoms and treatment efficacy.
- Parents also share cultural knowledge with their children, making their input critical in contextualizing interventions (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Hospital Care, 2003). Hence, parents may be the best resource for designing, adapting, and monitoring culturally appropriate interventions.
- The second point offered by Osher et al. (2008) is that parents can promote healthy development, can prevent problems from developing or exacerbating, and can implement effective treatment protocols and educational interventions (p. 47). Families are often the most immediate context of child development, giving parents the ability to promote healthy development and reduce or eliminate risk factors.
- Parents also have frequent contact with their children, making it possible to implement and reinforce a child's established treatment plan. Research has shown that parents are more likely to support a treatment plan that they feel is effective (Spoth & Redmond, 1993, 1995; Spoth, Redmond, & Shin, 2000).
- Parental involvement in interventions is dependent on many factors. These include knowledge about the intervention, openness to suggestions about behavior change, and comprehension and retention of these suggestions (Osher et al., 2008). The relationship the professional forms with the parents is also critical in that it can impact parents adherence to preventive and treatment activities (Prinz et al., 2001).