

September 2023 | Vol. 7

IN THE LOOP

The official newsletter of the Family Satisfaction Team (FST) at HopeWorx Inc.



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We are the Family Satisfaction Team (FST). We hope you enjoy our issue of *In the Loop*. In this issue you will find *Back to School* resources, results from our *Family Based Services Satisfaction Survey*, as well as other news, opportunities, and resources.

Email us any suggestions at familystatisfactionteam@hopeworxinc.org

WHO WE ARE

What is a "Family Satisfaction Team"?

The Family Satisfaction Team (FST) is a state-mandated survey team that is responsible for gathering feedback from families regarding their experiences using behavioral health services that are provided by the county through PA HealthChoices in Montgomery County. We want to make sure your voice is heard by the county and providers so that services reflect families' needs in the county. Montgomery County's FST is housed within HopeWorx Inc. HopeWorx Inc. also houses the adult survey team, Community Satisfaction Team (CST).

Back to School Resources


Click the links below for more info

Academic/Educational Resources for Youth

Find your local library!

Pottstown Regional Library Youth Services Department

Virtual SAT Practice Test: Saturday September 23, 2023
10 AM - 12 PM



Power Library: Statewide database of library catalogs, accessible from a single website on the Internet for all residents of Pennsylvania

Mental Health Resources

Mental Health America's 2023 Back to School toolkit

133 Mental Health and Learning Resources for Kids and Teens

Getting Ready For School Again: What It's Like For LGBTQ Young People Trevor News

How to Cope with Back-to-School Anxiety

Katie Hurley

FamilyWorx

Family Peer Support & Advocacy Program

Family members sharing information, support, and advocacy services with Montgomery County Families whose children or youth are facing behavioral health concerns. All services at FamilyWorx are provided free of charge.

WHAT WE DO

- Support families when navigating the child serving systems- including education, juvenile justice, behavioral health, and more
- Assist parents and caregivers in understanding their child's rights and responsibilities
- Help families prepare for and attend school and community meetings
- Provide information, referrals, training, and support to families and community partners



ORGANIZATION



http://

CLICK HERE

Visit our page on the HopeWorx website
www.hopeworxinc.org

CONTACT INFO

For more information please contact:

Lisa Radcliffe

Program Supervisor

lradcliffe@hopeworxinc.org

610-618-2059

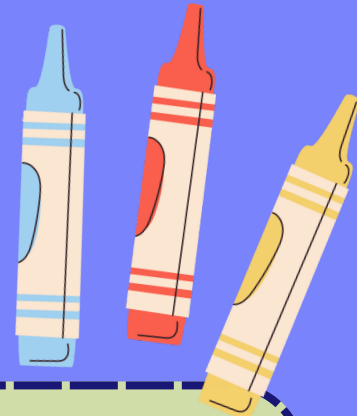
Clare Higgins

Program Director

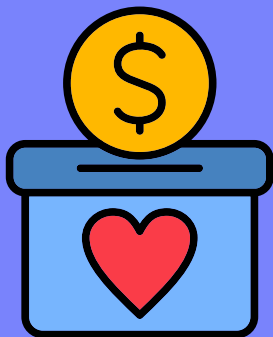
chiggins@hopeworxinc.org

484-672-1446

FAMILYWORX



BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE



The FamilyWorx team at HopeWorx organized a Back to School Drive to help families offset the cost of Back to School supplies, food, and clothing.

How they did it:

First, the Family Satisfaction Team (FST) sent out a needs assessment survey to all active families supported by FamilyWorx. Families identified what they needed most in their responses and FamilyWorx made connections with donors to help source as many of the requested items as possible. FamilyWorx created an Amazon Wishlist where interested donors could purchase items families requested. FamilyWorx also received donations online. FamilyWorx peer support partners delivered the items to families' home in time for school. FST send out thank you cards to all donors.

\$1350 in donations

across **39 YOUTH**

710 Individual School Supplies
78 Variety Packs (food/drinks)
29 Gift Cards

What families said:

"Thank you and your team for the support and resources."

"This box of supplies is **AMAZING!** Thank you so much!"

"The kids liked all of them [supplies] and are very happy. We are so grateful for all the **HUGE** hearts who helped with the supplies."

WHAT HAPPENS TO FST SURVEYS?

AFTER THE SURVEY



If you or a family member have completed a survey with FST, you might be wondering what happens to survey data once it is collected. Below is a brief overview of the process FST follows to share survey feedback with providers, the county, and community stakeholders.

Your
VOICE
MATTERS

STORING DATA

- Your survey responses are stored securely until data collection closes.
- FST checks to make sure no identifying information (names, descriptions, locations) are included in comments. We do this to make sure that no one can identify a family by their responses.

ANALYZING

- FST looks for themes across families' comments
- Calculates percentages & averages in quantitative data.
- FST compares data across providers, across parents and youth, and across previous years' survey data (if available).

MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- A summary infographic is prepared
- An report of findings across all providers for that particular service is shared with the county
- FST prepares individual provider reports highlighting strengths and areas for improvement
- FST also prepares PowerPoint presentations for providers with recommendations based on YOUR feedback as well as state and national guidelines for behavioral health services.

CLOSING THE LOOP

- FST devotes a part of provider presentations to the final step in the county's QI process called *Closing the Loop*.
- Providers have two weeks to fill out a form identifying what they did well, AND a goal plan to incorporate family feedback from the survey. Providers identify how long it will take for them to achieve this goal & the county and FST stay updated on progress.



2022/2023 FAMILY BASED SERVICES (FBS) SURVEY

The Family Satisfaction Team (FST) conducts satisfaction surveys with youth aged 14-18 (and their parents/caregivers) about their experience with mental health services provided in Montgomery County. Family Based Services (FBS) are a 32-week intensive in-home and community-based therapy program for children and youth at risk of out-of-home placement and higher levels of care due to behavioral health concerns. The aims of FBS are to divert out of home treatment and strengthen family dynamics through therapeutic intervention, crisis planning, coping skills improvement, and building supportive networks in the community.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

259
ELIGIBLE PARENTS

117
ELIGIBLE YOUTH 14+

10
ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

Montgomery County youth (aged 14-18) with PA HealthChoices as either their primary or secondary insurance who received FBS from one of 10 county-designated providers for at least 6 months between May 1, 2021 and November 1, 2022 were invited to participate in this survey. Parents and caregivers of children up to age 18 who met above criteria were also eligible to participate.

84 PARENTS/ CAREGIVERS **10** YOUTH (AGED 14-18)

Detailed sample demographic data are available upon request.

FINDINGS

FST analyzes survey responses under the guiding framework of SAMHSA's Trauma-Informed Care Principles (listed below). We're not only interested in family satisfaction, but also to what degree families felt the service delivery model reflected trauma-informed care principles.

- SAFETY
1
- TRANSPARENCY + TRUST
2
- PEER SUPPORT
3
- COLLABORATION + MUTUALITY
4
- EMPOWERMENT + VOICE + CHOICE
5
- CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, + GENDER ISSUES
6



CULTURAL HISTORICAL + GENDER ISSUES

100%
Youth felt staff treated them with respect, & respected aspects of identity (e.g., gender).
98%
Parents felt FBS team respected all aspects of identity.



EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, + CHOICE

89%
Parents felt the treatment plan developed using input from their whole family.

100% of youth felt the FBS team talked about their strengths, not just problems or behaviors.

PEER SUPPORT



38% NO
62% YES
Whether parents would find it helpful to be supported by a peer during FBS.
44% youth said being connected to peer support would be helpful.



TRANSPARENCY + TRUST

88% Parents & **70%** Youth
Said FBS team was trusted by family.



COLLABORATION + MUTUALITY

80%
Youth felt their input was included when discussing goals.

OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS

20%
Parents (14) said their child had an out of home placement DURING FBS.
18%
Parents (13) said their child had an out of home placement AFTER FBS ended.

COPING SKILLS

50%
Youth said "Yes" they felt the team helped them develop coping skills.

5 families (38%) who had an out of home placement DURING FBS also had an out of home placement AFTER FBS.

Of these 5 families:
-4/5 parents "Dissatisfied" overall with FBS
-0/5 parents "Satisfied" overall with crisis planning, community support connection, supports to transition out of FBS, preparation for discharge.

FAMILY DYNAMIC



60% Youth felt their relationship with their parent improved because of FBS.

63% parents felt their relationship with their child improved because of FBS.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Parents and youth were asked overall how satisfied they were with the services received.

73% Parents satisfied overall **78%** Youth satisfied overall

CRISIS PLANNING

90% Youth felt the FBS team included their voice/input in the crisis plan.
84% Parents said "Yes" their crisis plan was adequate.
38% Parents said NO crisis experienced DURING FBS.

"They taught me how to deal with coping skills and helped me in situation that could turn bad quickly."

-Youth on "What was helpful during FBS"

"It helped us talk to each other in a less stressful way. It help me talk to my mom and ask for help in better ways"

-Youth on "What was helpful during FBS"

"It was helpful because they were able to come in the house and not just see pretend behavior, they got to see the real behavior and were able to firsthand help us all deal with how we all interact. We had amazing people and they really got to know us, and they shared their own experiences with and just were able to really get us and help us understand each other better."

-Parent on "What was helpful during FBS"



WE ASKED FAMILIES ABOUT COMMUNITY SUPPORTS, DISCHARGE PLANNING, AND WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN MORE HELPFUL DURING FAMILY BASED SERVICES.

WHAT FAMILIES SAID...



COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

The most common selected community supports families wanted to be connected with were:

- Mental health resources (e.g., NAMI)
- Activities in the community
- Peer support for parent/caregiver
- Academic/educational support
- Support group for youth

57% of parents were satisfied overall with the community support connections made to community supports through FBS.



45% of DISCHARGED families felt they had established connections to supports in the community

WHEN ARE COMMUNITY SUPPORTS WANTED MOST?

Families may perceive connections to specific community supports (e.g., family peer support) to be more helpful at specific times during FBS (e.g., during transition out of FBS, during FBS altogether). Connections to family peer are encouraged to reflect when families feel it would be most helpful.

62% of parents indicated they would find it helpful to be connected to family peer support DURING FBS.

HOWEVER ...

ALL parents of the 5 families with out of home placements during & after FBS said "Yes" would have found it helpful to be connected to family peer support DURING FBS.

48% of parents indicated they felt their family had enough support to transition out of FBS.

It helped us all take a step back and understand where everyone else was coming from. Because our family dynamic changed, we had to learn how to navigate that and what that means as a family through compromise and communicate with each other.

-Parent

WHAT WENT WELL...

COMMUNICATION

90% of youth & 88% of parents said the FBS team helped them to understand the purpose of FBS.

76% of parents said they were informed of how to file a complaint/grievance.

They made us talk to each other about stuff
-Youth

FAMILY DYNAMIC

PARENTS SAID:

- 86% said FBS team helped my family to understand how we interact with each other.
- 68% felt their family is stronger now compared to before FBS.

YOUTH SAID:

"They helped us communicate."

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION...

SMOOTHEN DISCHARGE

- Families identified waitlists as a barrier to warm hand offs.
- Families also identified wanting to extend FBS since services and supports may not have been in place at the time of discharge.

"There were no supports or services set up once we were discharged. To go from inpatient and step down to Family Based, to nothing, that lapse of services left [YOUTH] to no longer want to receive services."

- While providers cannot shorten waitlists, they can connect families to community supports and help families feel more prepared for discharge.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

- Parents shared how attached their family had become to the FBS team.

"I don't want to lose them and start with another team. It just won't work, they've been with us for a year and a half, they're like family."

- This also was coupled with wanting the service to be longer.

STAFFING & CASELOAD

- Parents shared how navigating staffing changes throughout FBS impacted the experience for both families and FBS teams.

"I think the caseloads of the teams impacts the service quality. We've had multiple situations where the team's caseloads are so overwhelming that sometimes you would have one therapist or the other. This is the first time we finally had a team where we really had two all the time. It's tough when you have three kids in the home and there's five of us total, it's difficult for one therapist to manage alone."

"Connections to community supports and services and if services are not available continue service until warm hand-off is possible. At the end of eight months there were no services set up and they said there was nothing they could do about it. I wish they could extend the service until something was set up."

-Parent on what could have been more helpful

"If it was longer and they made sure we had resources set up for going forward, especially for crisis situations."

-Parent on what could have been more helpful

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FAMILIES

Recommendations below are derived from what families shared. Recommendations are advanced under guidance of SAMHSA's Trauma Informed Care Principles and the PA CASSP Principles.

RECOMMENDATION

Share Feedback with Staff

HIGHLIGHT STRENGTHS IN COMMUNICATION.

Families were appreciative of the way their family based team interacted with them. Incorporating positive staff feedback in supervision and staff training may help staff continue to interact with families in this way. Staff are excelling at informing families of the complaint/grievance process. FST encourages FBS providers to share with other services within your agency/organization how this information is conveyed to families.

DISCUSS SCOPE & FIDELITY.

It may be beneficial to hold space to discuss the scope of family based services with families periodically throughout the duration of FBS. While staff did an excellent job informing families of the time commitment and expectations at the outset of FBS, families may benefit from revisiting these expectations during the course of FBS. These conversations can also help staff understand families' perspectives. Families also identified varying team sizes throughout FBS. It is unclear the extent to which FBS can be delivered with fidelity during staffing shortages.

RECOMMENDATION

Revisit Discharge Preparation

REVISIT CRISIS PLANNING.

Parents highlighted feeling ill-prepared for the transition out of FBS. Responses suggest that revisiting crisis planning towards the end of FBS may help families feel more prepared to manage crises when they no longer have access to their FBS team or the FBS crisis line. Some families suggest role playing as a way to become more confident with de-escalation and crisis situations.

EXPLORE FAMILIES' SENTIMENT REGARDING LENGTH.

Many families indicated the duration of FBS was not long enough. Coupled with feeling ill-prepared for discharge, navigating waitlists in the behavioral health system, and growing attached to their FBS team's presence in the home, it may be helpful for FBS teams to explore why families are feeling more time is needed. 48% (n = 40) of parents indicated they received FBS 2 or more times (10% received it 4+ times). Holding space to explore the necessity of multiple rounds of FBS may help inform practices with future families.

RECOMMENDATION

Foster Community Partnerships

ACKNOWLEDGE WAITLISTS.

Families are navigating waitlists for services across the behavioral health system. While providers cannot shorten waitlists, they can connect families to supports within the community to help families feel less isolated during this time.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT CONNECTIONS.

62% of parents expressed their team connected their family to appropriate supports within the community. Connecting families to supports within the community can help build a network of resources/supports for families to utilize to keep children in the home and community. Regardless of level of satisfaction, families identified wanting more supports in place, especially during the transition out of FBS.

Families were interested in the following supports for the transition out of FBS: mental health resources (e.g., NAMI), activities in the community (e.g., sports, clubs, events), peer support for parent/caregiver, and academic/educational support.

Facilitating connections to family peer support may help families feel less isolated while navigating the behavioral health system without their FBS team.



Family Satisfaction Team

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY (RTF) SATISFACTION SURVEY

**YOUR
VOICE
MATTERS!**

Our team is independently contracted by Montgomery County to gather feedback regarding families' experience with behavioral health services. With this feedback, the county can provide services in the community that are driven by the needs of families. Our goal is to advocate for families and to amplify the family voice.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your name will **not** be attached to your responses. Anything you share may be shared with the county, providers, and community stakeholders.

Who Can Complete the Survey?

Montgomery County youth age 14-18 & their parents/ caregivers

- + Magellan Behavioral Health as either primary or secondary insurance
- + **Discharged** from a Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) between Sept 2021- Sept 2025



Participants
receive
\$10 Amazon
e-gift card

Questions? Please do not hesitate to contact:
Caitlin Kelley, FST Program Supervisor
ckelley@hopeworxinc.org
(610)-618-6540



**Family
Satisfaction
Team**
HopeWorx Inc.



Calling parents/caregivers to serve on a Complaint or Grievance Panel *Help improve the behavioral health system!*

Who can serve on a panel?

- Members or guardians who have experience with receiving behavioral health care or have children who receive care.
- Are willing to prepare for a panel and to maintain confidentiality. This may require several hours of preparation.
- Are willing and able to listen to statements and comments about the case, prior to the panel meeting.
- Are willing to process and ask questions about the information presented.
- Are willing to engage in discussion and make a group decision about the information presented.

What is it like to serve on a panel?

As a member of a Complaint or Grievance Panel you will be:

- An informed and active participant in the complaint and grievance reviews process for HealthChoices members.
- A part of a team that includes Magellan members, providers, Magellan staff and county staff.
- Provided with information about the complaint or grievance, information regarding guidelines and regulations, and presentations from review participants.
- Able to support the team in understanding the member's/representative's perspective.
- Able to participate in a discussion with the other panel members regarding the information shared.
- Asked to help decide the outcome of the complaint or grievance.

What will panel members receive?

- Training on the processes and information on how to serve on the panel.
- A travel stipend to cover the cost of getting to and from the reviews.



How do I get involved?

**For more information, please contact
John Bottger at 1-877-769-9784**

Students with disabilities can now attend school until age 22

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has issued a surprise directive stating that local educational entities (LEAs) must provide free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students until they turn 22.

note: students must exit on their 22nd birthday, and cannot complete the school year if they turn 22 before it ends.

to learn more:

CLICK HERE 



Please help the Family Satisfaction Team by taking a short survey on what you would like to see featured in future newsletters:

FST WANTS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE!!

CLICK
HERE



YOUR VOICE MATTERS





Pumpkin French Toast



A breakfast perfect for the cozy fall mornings! This Pumpkin French Toast is a delightful twist on a classic favorite that kids will love!

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 6-8 slices of bread (brioche or challah recommended)
- 3 tbsp butter



Instructions

1. In a shallow dish whisk together eggs, milk, pumpkin puree, vanilla, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, and brown sugar.
 2. In a large nonstick skillet or griddle over medium-low heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter.
 3. Dredge a slice of bread in the pumpkin mixture, tossing to coat all sides.
 4. Transfer bread to preheated pan. Cook on each side for about 2-3 minutes.
 5. Serve with syrup, powdered sugar, and/or pumpkin butter.
- Enjoy!

UPCOMING PROJECTS



Currently Surveying:

Inpatient Hospitalization

Youth age 14+ may be surveyed before discharge. Parents/Caregivers are contacted after discharge.

Data collection closes September 30 2023



Residential Treatment (RTF)

Youth age 14+ & their parents/caregivers may be surveyed after discharge.

Data collection closes September 30 2025

Upcoming:

Outpatient

Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS)



More Details:

All data shared with FST by families is de-identified to protect families. All surveys are conducted via telephone, online, and in-person (where permitted). All of our survey respondents receive a \$10 Amazon e-gift card via email or mail. Eligibility criteria varies. If you are interested in responding to a survey or if you have suggestions for survey questions, please contact familysatisfactionteam@hopeworxinc.org

Parent/Caregiver Virtual Support Group

Sponsored by FamilyWorx Family Peer Support & Advocacy Program

Parents and caregivers, you are not alone! Please join us for a virtual family support group for parents/caregivers of children (pre-school to young adult) with behavioral health concerns. There you can connect with other parents who share similar experiences, learn about resources, receive non-judgmental support, and share stories of hope and strength.

All support groups are co-facilitated by Family Peer Support Partners

WHEN:

2nd and 4th Thursday of every month

(excluding holidays)

7:00-8:00 pm

WHERE:

Join us via Zoom from the comfort of your home

* A one-time pre-registration is required for sessions. A Zoom link will be provided in the confirmation email

For more information, please contact:

Lori Warren

Senior Family Peer Support Partner

lwarren@hopeworxinc.org

484-672-1610



Registration is required:

[CLICK HERE](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcOqorzkpHdMKz6O_r0XpVjyi9SAEkNCG)

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcOqorzkpHdMKz6O_r0XpVjyi9SAEkNCG



HOPEWORX TEAMS

Family Satisfaction Team (FST)

-family & youth survey team

FamilyWorx

-family peer support & advocacy team

AdvocacyWorx

-adult peer support & advocacy team

Community Satisfaction Team (CST)

-adult survey team

CommunityWorx

-micro community open 3 days a week

Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q)

-developmental disabilities survey team

Click on the [links](#)
to learn more

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



[Montgomery County Children's Behavioral Health Guide](#)



[Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#)



[Mobile Crisis provided by Access Services](#)

1-855-634-HOPE(4673)



[Teen Talk Line provided by Access Services](#)

**call 866-825-5856, text 215-703-8411 or email
teentalkline@accessservices.org**