

Who We Are

Oregon Family Support Network (OFSN), founded in 1991, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, that began as a grass roots, family-run organization providing support groups, education, and mental health advocacy for families.

OFSN staff members are primarily “family members” - parents (biological, adoptive and foster) or caregivers who have raised a child or several children who have mental health challenges. Having lived through these challenges, our staff is well-positioned to help navigate systems, empathize and understand what families go through raising children with these special needs.

Our Values

- Families are the experts on their children.
- Services are family-centered and family-driven.
- Services are individualized based on youth and family strengths.
- Services are culturally responsive.
- Support is inclusive, unconditional and non-judgmental.
- Involvement of extended family and caregivers of all kinds is encouraged.



**Oregon
Family Support
Network**

Family Partners



Family Partners are available in the following communities: Clackamas County, Washington County, Mid-Valley areas of Polk, Yamhill and Marion Counties.

Clackamas County Regional Director:

(971) 400-0004

Washington County Regional Director:

(503) 784-3004

Mid-Valley Regional Director:

(503) 784-3004



Families and youth working together to promote mental, behavioral and emotional wellness for other families and youth through education, support and advocacy.



**Oregon
Family Support
Network**

Statewide Office:

1300 Broadway Street NE, #403

Salem, OR 97301

(503) 363-8068

www.ofsn.org



What is a Family Partner?

The Family Partner is a parent or caregiver who is a formal member of the family team. The Family Partner's role is to support the family, help them engage and actively participate on their team, and make informed decisions that drive the process to wellness.

Family Partners have a strong connection to the community and are knowledgeable about resources, services and supports for families. Their personal experience with raising a child with emotional, behavioral or mental health needs is critical to earning the respect of families and establishing a trusting relationship that is valued by the family.

The Family Partner can be a bridge between families, agencies and the systems involved. Family Partners ensure each family is heard and their individual needs are being addressed and met.

"I used to feel so lost in my child's disorder and I didn't have options. Now I feel empowered to speak up and advocate for my child as well as others because of the support and involvement with OFSN" - AS

How The Family Partner Supports The Process

The Family Partner asks the family if they desire support with school issues, court issues and physical or mental health appointments. When relevant, the Family Partner provides the family with information about their rights in education, mental health and other systems. They connect families to expert advisors as needed. The Family Partner promotes family-friendly language and attitudes and avoids blaming and shaming the family or anyone else on the team.

"My son's behavior got us kicked out of the last seven places we have lived, which made us homeless three times. I don't know where I or my son would be without Oregon Family Support Network." - KV



Contributions of a Family Partner (FP)

Explore strengths, needs, culture and vision with child/youth and family. As a peer, the FP, in down-to-earth and heartfelt conversations, helps the family begin to think through their strengths, needs, culture and vision so they are ready to contribute useful and valuable information that drives the process to wellness. The FP helps the family find ways to talk about sensitive issues. They help to reframe negative concerns that lead to respectful conversations even when emotions are high.

Contributes to the crisis/safety plan development. The FP can offer support in carrying out the safety plans and suggestions based on how they or other families have used a crisis/safety plan.

Empowerment: the FP coaches the family in their journey towards self-empowerment and independence. They provide support as needed to follow through on action steps.

Celebrate Successes: The FP remembers to acknowledge small steps along the way.

Collaboration: Family Partners coach on framing an issue to facilitate collaboration and patience, while using a strengths-based approach. The FP encourages the family and team to bring issues in the open where they can get support to resolve conflicts quickly.

Natural Supports: Family Partners can work with the family's natural support system.

Advocacy: the FP supports the family's goals and can support the family voice through advocacy.