



TEN TIPS

For Outreach to Families

Family-run organizations have a rich history of connecting with families to share information about services and supports available through their organizations. Experienced family leaders contributed the following tips for effective outreach to families based on their work in communities, regions and states.

1

Community Events

Participate in events at libraries, food banks, health fairs; at school events, music and art events, and pow wows. Set up displays with information and have activities for kids, such as balloons, face painting or coloring, to attract families to the table.

2

Social Media

Utilize social media to reach families through e-newsletters. Create a video on YouTube. Post resources on websites. Send updates on Facebook and Twitter. Solicit input from families through online survey tools and chat lines.

3

Activities

Host family social and recreational activities such as potluck suppers, picnics, holiday parties, craft activities, and back to school events. Combine educational programs with activities that bring families together for social and emotional support.

4

Supports

Offer on-site childcare with licensed providers or stipends for families to pay for childcare. Provide transportation for families that don't drive or own a car. Offer snacks or a light meal. Choose a location that is non-threatening and inviting to families and accessible for individuals with disabilities.

5

Diversity

Understand and respect the community's traditional knowledge and wisdom about how mental health is viewed and treated. Ensure staff and board members reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the families served. Develop materials and trainings in multiple languages. Provide translation services for non-English speaking families.

6

Partners

Develop partnerships with providers, ethnic and cultural groups, advocacy organizations, faith communities, police, child-serving agencies and post-secondary institutions. Share resources and participate on committees or workgroups. Set up a referral process for families.

7

Incentives

Provide gift cards or gift certificates from local merchants or stipends to encourage families to participate. Give away small prizes at the end of the group or program. Give families a meaningful role, such as planning and co-leading the group so they feel valued and can contribute.

8

Promotion

Post flyers and brochures in locations families naturally visit, such as schools, child care centers, grocery stores, barber shops/salons, and pediatricians' offices. Offer to make presentations at agency staff meetings, school events, and conferences.

9

Appreciation

Acknowledge families for their contributions, recognizing their strengths, experience and expertise through special awards, articles in newsletters and pictures on Facebook. Invite families to tell their story at public events.

10

Celebrations!

Celebrate successes with families, milestones for the organization, the beginning of school, the end of school, the seasons, and holidays: Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Ramadan, Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo and any special day of the year.