

Families' Perspectives: What You Need to Know

Written by families for those working with our children

- All families are different and may take different paths in treatment. **Be flexible** and take time to learn my family's history and unique needs.
- Silence is not resistance; I may **not be ready**.
- We live in **fear** we may be judged, shamed, or blamed by our community, providers, neighbors and peers.
- We often **feel powerless** as parents due to fear or threats of DCF involvement.
- A parent's **perspective** is different. Try to see things from our side.
- **Please respect** that I may interpret a particular event or situation differently because of my family's lived experiences.
- It's **strange and uncomfortable** seeing my child in treatment. It feels especially unnatural to spend time with my child across a table in a conference room and have providers in my home.
- Since I **trust** you to care for my child, I would like to know who you are especially more than just your name.
- The hardest thing I ever had to do was **accept** my child's diagnosis. Please don't reduce him or her to just that label. My child is so much more than their diagnosis and is not defined by it.
- I am more than my child's parent. Learn my name and what is important to me and my family. **Be sensitive** to cultural differences and beliefs.
- Please **don't assume** that we speak the same treatment language or that I understand professional jargon. Take time to explain or ask if I understand.
- **Respect** where I am at and how I feel. Ask for clarification without making assumptions.
- I can be a strong parent but **please consider** the impact my life experiences have had on me. I have a right to feel sad, frustrated or defeated at times.
- This is not the first time I had to **tell my story**. Please let it be the last.
- My family's story is not a symptom checklist. Put the DSM down and **listen** to my family's journey.



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