

Family-Centered Care Recommendations for Clinicians of All Disciplines

To advance family-centered approaches as the standard of care, the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association (CFHA) recommends the following next steps for clinicians:

Apply a family-centered lens to all patients: pediatrics, geriatrics, and everyone in between.

- View family as partners/consultants in the patient's care, and in some instances, the unit of treatment.
- Engage with family during care conversations (e.g., eye contact, introductions, asking about their role in supporting a patient's health, inviting their input and perspective).
- Initiate conversations with patients about the importance of sharing health information with family members and/or building a supportive social network.
- Consider resources and challenges in family relationships when promoting health behavior change and supporting management of chronic illness.
- *When in doubt or feeling stuck, expand the system.* Bringing a family member into care conversations can provide valuable information and create more space for change.

Implement standard protocols for FCC.

- Invite family involvement, either in-person or virtually: *"Is there anyone you'd like to join our conversation today?"*
 - Set standard procedures for virtual engagement of family (e.g., family member joining a visit via phone or via embedded video technology in the electronic health record).
- Create condition-specific protocols for family-centered assessment and treatment (e.g., assessing and engaging family support for a whole-family/household approach to diabetes management).

Assess family context and dynamics, formally as part of measurement-based care or informally.

- Screeners:
 - Brief Assessment of Family Functioning Scale [BAFFS; 3 items]
 - Caregiver Checklist [8 items]
 - Family Assessment Device – General Functioning subscale [FAD-GF; 12 items]
 - Family Health Scale – Short Form [10 items]

- Informal assessment questions:
 - “Who supports you in your health care?”/“Who supports you in making these changes?”
 - “How does [family member] support you in managing [chronic condition]?”
 - “What support would you find helpful from your family in managing [condition]?”

Partner with electronic health record (EHR) teams to incorporate family data into patient medical records.

- See our EHR Recommendations for EHR changes that can better facilitate FCC.

Screening Tools:

- Brief Assessment of Family Functioning Scale: 3-item measure derived from the Family Assessment Device
 - Mansfield, A. K., Keitner, G. I., & Sheeran, T. (2019). The Brief Assessment of Family Functioning Scale (BAFFS): A three-item version of the general functioning scale of the Family Assessment Device. *Psychotherapy Research*, 29(6), 824–831. doi: 10.1080/10503307.2017.1422213
- Caregiver Checklist
 - Riffin, C., Wolff, J. L., & Pillemer, K. A. (2025). Development and evaluation of a caregiver checklist for primary care. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 43(2), 277-288. doi: 10.1037/fsh0000937
- [Family Assessment Device](#)
 - Byles, J., Byrne, C., Boyle, M. H., & Offord, D. R. (1988). Ontario child health study: Reliability and validity of the general functioning subscale of the McMaster Family Assessment Device. *Family Process*, 27(1), 97–104. doi: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.1988.00097.x
- [Family Health Scale](#)
 - Crandall, A., Weiss-Laxer, N. S., Broadbent, E., Holmes, E. K., Magnusson, B. M., Okano, L., ... & Novilla, L. B. (2020). The Family Health Scale: Reliability and validity of a short- and long-form. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8, 587125. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2020.587125
 - Weiss-Laxer, N., Platt, R., Crandall, A., Berge, J. M., Wahler, A., Russ, S. A., & Kuo, D. Z. (2025). Provider, staff, and parent perspectives on the feasibility, utility, and implementation of the Family Health Scale in primary care pediatrics. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 43(2), 248-266. doi: 10.1037/fsh0000944

See our FCC Resources and Exemplars page for a list of texts, resources, and research exemplars to facilitate FCC training and implementation.