

Family-Centered Care Recommendations for Behavioral Health Educators

To advance family-centered approaches as the standard of care, behavioral health educators across disciplines should build curricula that incorporates family-centered care into educational goals and clinical training:

Family-Centered Care Educational Goals

- Integrate FCC core competencies into behavioral health training.
 - See [AAMFT's Competencies for Family Therapists Working in Healthcare](#)
- Apply relational strategies and FCC communication skills to engage families in care planning and decision-making.
- Leverage technology to increase family engagement in care.

Recommendations for Family-Centered Care Clinical Training

- Teach family interviewing skills for integrated healthcare settings, including:
 - Family-centered agenda setting
 - Eliciting family members' perspectives on the presenting problem
 - Including family in decision making (e.g., identification of barriers to adherence, family strategies to overcome barriers)
 - Engaging family with the teach-back method
 - Caring for the family as the unit of treatment
- Apply four basic Family Systems concepts to common patient presentations in integrated healthcare settings:
 - Triangulation
 - Circular causality
 - System stability/homeostasis
 - Family shared belief systems
- Train all learners in best practices for conducting telehealth sessions with families as a strategy for increasing family engagement in care and reducing barriers to family engagement.
- Conduct direct observation using the [Family-Centered Observation Form](#) to provide specific feedback on FCC skills.

Additional Family-Centered Care Teaching Resources

- [ACEC Family-Centered Communication Strategies Teaching Strategy](#)

- Comprehensive telehealth training for use with families:
 - [Family Voices Telehealth Academy](#)
 - [Telehealth Family Resource Guide](#)
 - [Understanding Telehealth: Working with Children and Families](#)
- Mendenhall, T., Lamson, A., Hodgson, J., & Baird, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Clinical methods in medical family therapy*. New York, NY: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-68834-3
- Ong, H. S., Fernandez, P. A., & Lim, H. K. (2021). Family engagement as part of managing patients with mental illness in primary care. *Singapore Medical Journal*, 62(5), 213–219. doi: 10.11622/smedj.2021057
- Priest, J. B. (2025). *The Science of Family Systems Theory: Foundations for Effective Clinical Practice*. Routledge.
- Skundberg-Kletthagen, H., Gonzalez, M. T., Schröder, A., & Moen, Ø. L. (2020). Mental health professionals' experiences with applying a family-centred care focus in their clinical work. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 41(9), 815–823. doi: 10.1080/01612840.2020.1731028

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