

Family-Centered Care Recommendations for Medical Educators

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

Family-Centered Care Educational Goals

- Define FCC competencies across learner levels and areas of specialty.
 - See [AAMFT's Competencies for Family Therapists in Healthcare](#) as an example that can be adapted for medical disciplines.
- Embed FCC into clinical reasoning, communication, and workflow training.
- Emphasize the family system as a central unit of care, not only as a support to the individual patient.
- Highlight how family routines, communication patterns, and shared beliefs influence patient health behaviors and clinical outcomes.
- Promote partnerships with families as care team members.

Recommendations for Family-Centered Care Clinical Training

Case Conceptualization Skills

- Identify the role of family dynamics (e.g., caregiving, conflict, avoidance, overprotection) in patients' health and health care.
- Recognize how family interactional patterns influence health behaviors, treatment adherence, and symptom presentation.
- Use of family genograms (see [Rohrbaugh et al., 1992](#)).

Communication Skills

- Assessment strategies for identifying how family members make sense of illness together and how these shared beliefs influence care decisions.
 - E.g., *"Do you talk with your family about your hypertension management? What do they think about managing high blood pressure?"*
- Strategies for engaging family members in:
 - Agenda setting
 - Collecting information (e.g., assessing for cognitive impairment, assessing barriers to diabetes management)
 - Shared decision-making (and eliciting each family member's perspective)
 - Teach-back method

- Delivery of difficult news
- Implementation of FCC observations to assess FCC skills and provide structured feedback.
 - [Family-Centered Observation Form](#)

Operational Skills

- Identify when family involvement improves care quality, safety, and decision-making.
- Integrate systems-oriented clinical reasoning (e.g., how family routines, communication patterns, and caregiving roles shape symptom presentation and management) into everyday clinical practice.
- Recognize when collaboration with behavioral health, nursing, social work, or other clinical team members enhances FCC.
- Navigate consent, confidentiality, and role clarity when involving families in care.
- Use of family-centered screening tools for social drivers of health, caregiver stress, and family support as part of measurement-based care. Examples include:
 - [Emotionally Close Relationships Scale \(ECR-RS\)](#)
 - [Family Assessment Device General Functioning Scale](#)
 - [Family Health Scale](#)
 - [Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory](#)
 - [Social Support for Diet and Exercise Surveys](#)
- Use of technology to engage family in care:
 - Leverage portals, telehealth, and messaging tools to connect with family members meaningfully and support family involvement in care.
 - Demonstrate how telehealth can expand family participation by allowing geographically dispersed members to join care discussions.

Additional Family-Centered Care Teaching Resources

- [AMA Journal of Ethics: Teaching PFCC](#)
- [Family-Centered Rounds Toolkit](#)
- Genograms
 - Butler, J. F. (2008). The family diagram and genogram: Comparisons and contrasts. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 36(3), 169-180. doi: 10.1080/01926180701291055
 - Rohrbaugh, M., Rogers, J. C., & McGoldrick, M. (1992). How do experts read family genograms?. *Family Systems Medicine*, 10(1), 79. doi: 10.1037/h0084972
- McDaniel, S., Campbell, T. L., Hepworth, J., & Lorenz, A. (2005). McDaniel, S. H., Campbell, T. L., Hepworth, J., & Lorenz, A. (2005). *Family-oriented primary care* (2nd ed.). Springer.
- Philibert, I., Patow, C., & Cichon, J. (2011). Incorporating patient-and family-centered care into resident education: Approaches, benefits, and challenges. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 3(2), 272-278. doi: 10.4300/JGME-D-10-00084.1
- [USF Health Mother-Focused Care Toolbox](#)

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