

Family Services and Supports – Objective 7.2 Peer Supports Initiatives

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REPORT – October 2021 through September 2022

Supporting You: A peer-to-peer support network that was developed by our FAC based on their desires to find connections with other parents who had gone through the same or similar life circumstances. This is an informal peer-to-peer program that is designed to offer a verity of opportunities for authentic connections. The system is set up to include expansion for new programs to join the network and offer connections for different populations, each program with a specific target population is referred to as a Network Program and have their own program within the Supporting You network. Network Programs have the option to crossmatch peers that may be a good fit even if they aren't in their network, we encourage open dialog and collaboration between the programs. The system network is constantly undergoing evaluation and system improvements.

Supporting You network user dashboards were created and implemented. Features of the dashboards include program information about how many peers they have and their active matches, a network announcement bulletin, a page to house program documents for easy access, and a match specific messaging option for peers and programs. These dashboards allow better snapshots for programs as well as easier navigation for any person signed up to offer or receive support.

The KS-SHCN program expanded the population for the Supporting You Special Health Care Needs Network by using the Maternal Child Health Bureau definition of “Children and youth with special health care needs (CHSHCN) are those who have, or are at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally” verses the state specific definition as defined in State Statute –KSA 6-5a01 “A child with special health care needs means a person under 21 years of age who has an organic disease, defect or condition which may hinder the achievement of normal physical growth and development”. By broadening the definition to encompass all special need conditions, it provided the program greater flexibility in meeting the support needs of the larger CHSHCN population.

The SHCN network of Supporting You has been undergoing changes along with new KDHE staff coming in to support their program, they have been walking through the onboarding process to ensure their program meetings the needs of their target population. The progress the SHCN team made to review and update their program was slow and was placed on pause shortly after the end of FY23.

The program has been working with [FosterAdopt Connect](#), the current DCF contractor, to create a Supporting You program for foster, adoptive, and kinship families. There was a slight pause on their program development due to staffing changes at FosterAdopt Connect, but it is back up and moving with plans to launch in early 2023.



Systems Navigation Training for Families (SNTF): The Systems Navigation Training for families was halted in 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic but was reestablished in 2022. With the lessening of COVID-19 cases and availability of vaccinations, in-person trainings were able to resume. These fun and interactive one day trainings are designed for parents/caregivers of individuals with special needs to learn how to navigate the various systems of care while also gaining peer-to-peer support. SNTF are led by parents for parents/caregivers. See more information on these trainings in the CSHCN section.

Systems Navigation Training for Youth (SNTY): As part of the Title V focus on transition for adolescents and young adult, the SNTF was used as a model to develop a Systems Navigation Training for Youth with and without special health care needs from ages 16 to early adulthood. Focus groups were held to gain feedback and ideas from youth on what they want to know as they go through the transition process. More information can be found in the CSHCN and Adolescent sections.

PLAN – October 2023 through September 2024

Supporting You: The [Supporting You Network](#) is continuing to grow and expand its Network Program base. This includes adding two new Network Programs each year for the next 3 years (Which started in SFY23 and will go until the end of SFY25) for expansion of the network. New change requests for the online system to increase participation, accessibility, and easier connections are ongoing as needed or desired by the Network Administrator, the Network Programs and/or participants. Additional upcoming enhancement activities for Supporting You include:

- Research in creating a multi-lingual accessible platform for non-English speaking families/communities across the state, and the viability of adding that in.
- Developing a plan for Promotional Partners, including guidelines for what a partnership between two different entities serving the same population would entail in collaboration within the Network.
- Developing a written plan for onboarding a new Program Coordinator for an existing Network Program.
- Add a “quick apply” (shorter application) for Peers to join the network, with the ability to complete detailed information at a later time.
- Create a less overwhelming check box focused Support Peer application.

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- Develop a question/request box for individuals to request specific peer support they are looking for when none of our programs offer what they need. This will serve as suggestions on the next partners we should seek out to add to the network.
 - Add a new page for resources to help connect individuals with other peer supports or programs.

With the continued expansion of the capacity within the System of Supports Team, Title V will be able to expand and strengthen the activities outlined in this objective. Ongoing work to assure that every individual or family has the opportunity to connect with their peers in a variety of ways includes the pregnancy/postpartum peer support work through Postpartum Support International (PSI) and expansion of Supporting You. Additionally, the Women/Maternal FAC Work Group is interested in focusing on peer support as their primary focus area in the coming year. Title V staff will continue to support and promote programs that offer peer-support and connections for individuals, families, and professionals. By building and collaborating with partners to offer peer-to-peer support services we are creating stronger social networks for communities across Kansas.

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