

# CORE COMPETENCIES FOR CERTIFIED FAMILY PEER SPECIALISTS (CFPS)

## Infographics

In this year's Office Hour series, we prepared the Family Peer Workforce for Systems Transformation and Authentic Family Partnership. Learn more below about each of the 5 Core Competencies for Certified Family Peer Specialists.



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# RESILIENCY, RECOVERY, AND WELLNESS

## *Supporting Holistic Well-Being*

The first [Core Competency](#) for Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS) involves implementing self-care and resiliency-building practices to reduce burnout for themselves and teaching these skills and strategies to families.

## Holistic Wellness Approach

Family peers understand that holistic wellness includes physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being and work with families to reach their goals in each health domain. [Person-centered planning](#) is an essential skill for CFPS to master that supports this work.

## Promoting Resiliency & Recovery

Family peers use a person-centered, strength-based approach to assist families in building self-confidence and self-esteem by identifying their strengths in order to make a plan to reach families' goals. CFPS model resiliency by sharing their stories and promote hope through use of the [recovery principles](#).

## Trauma, Burnout, Wellness, & Parenting Skills Education

Family peers have a deep understanding of trauma, burnout, and compassion fatigue—and how they affect wellness and parenting. They offer families training on these topics, using strategies like the [Community Resiliency Model](#), to improve self-efficacy.

## Self-Care & Community Care Strategies

Family peers are well-versed in self-care and community care practices, including mindfulness and holistic wellness strategies. The [Wellness Recovery Action Plan](#) is a tool CFPS often use to assist families in weaving these strategies into their daily lives.

# EFFECTING CHANGE

## *Social justice and advocacy for families*

The second [Core Competency](#) for Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS) addresses the communication, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills necessary to build collaborative partnerships; problem solve; combat prejudice and discrimination while navigating systems; and advocate for a family-driven approach—and support families in building these skills for themselves.

### Use Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Interpersonal Skills

Family peers use [person-centered communication](#) to support families and systems staff in using a [strengths-based](#), family goal-oriented process to [resolve conflict](#), sustain open dialogue, and create authentic partnerships.

### Form Collaborative Partnerships

Family peers share their lived expertise of navigating systems and walk alongside families as they build [collaborative partnerships](#), problem solve, and advocate for family voice and choice at all levels. They use dialogue to identify families' goals and coach families to articulate their goals in various settings.

### Combat Prejudice and Discrimination

As family peers support families in navigating systems, they call out prejudice and discrimination of individuals with mental health and substance use challenges, coach families on how to [assert their and their loved one's rights](#), and [advocate for acceptance](#) in all settings. They offer families resources and education on these topics, too.

### Advocate for a Family-Driven World

Family peers can [tell their story](#) of lived expertise to different audiences—families, systems staff, decision-makers, and more—to affect policy change. They coach families in doing the same, with the goal of [family-driven](#) communities, services, policies, and systems.

# PERSON-CENTERED RESOURCES AND NATURAL SUPPORTS

## Strengths-Based Relationship Building

The third [Core Competency](#) for Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS) addresses the ability of family peers to connect families with person-centered resources; facilitate identification of natural supports, strengths, and goals; co-create crisis and safety plans; and build strengths-based relationships with each other and systems staff.

### Connect Families to Person-Centered Resources

Family peers have a collection of person-centered [resources](#) ready to share with families. These resources include local community-based, [state, and national programs](#) and [funding opportunities](#); [educational materials](#) and [training opportunities](#); and connection to families of loved ones of any age—from youth to transition-aged children and adult children.

### Facilitate Identification of Natural Supports, Strengths, and Goals

Family peers are able to assist families in identifying the family members, friends, and community members that are [natural supports](#); building formal and informal connections to community supports; and articulating families' [strengths and goals](#) across all life domains and a [person-centered plan](#) to achieve their dreams.

### Co-Create Crisis and Safety Plans

Family peers use their lived experience of overcoming crises to support families as they develop [crisis](#) and [safety plans](#). CFPS connect families to resources that prevent future crises, facilitate crisis intervention, and provide families with tools to create a roadmap towards recovery for their loved one and resiliency as a family. CFPS understand the value of directing families to [988](#) when their or a their loved one's safety is a concern.

### Build Strengths-Based Relationships

Family peers make families' [strengths and goals](#) the foundation of relationship-building with systems staff by promoting person-centered, [family-driven approaches](#) and modeling how to [advocate](#) for a loved one's rights. CFPS model [strengths-based, positive relationship building](#) strategies families can use with their loved ones.

# SYSTEMS KNOWLEDGE AND NAVIGATION

## *Family Peer Support Across Systems*

The fourth [Core Competency](#) for Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS) addresses the ability of family peers to guide families through the navigation of various systems, including mental health, substance use, education, justice, healthcare, child welfare, housing, and other family-serving systems; promote caregiver rights and responsibilities within these systems; and share knowledge about treatment options.

### Promote Caregiver Rights and Responsibilities

Family peers understand the concept of [parity](#) and communicate to families that it is their responsibility to [advocate](#) for their loved one's [rights](#). They have a strong understanding of [HIPAA](#), including how HIPAA works for caregivers of [adults](#).

### Share Knowledge about Treatment Options

Family peers are not expected to be experts in all behavioral health diagnoses, but they do understand where to find resources for families about a variety of diagnoses—including [co-occurring diagnoses](#)—and treatment options, such as AACAP's [Diagnostic Resource Centers](#), [Facts for Families](#), and [Parents' Medication Guides](#) and SAMHSA's [FindTreatment.gov](#).

### Navigate Behavioral Health Systems

Family peers use their lived experience of navigating mental health and substance use systems to share [best practices](#) and [advocacy tips](#), and to [support families](#) as they navigate these systems together.

### Navigate Other Family-Serving Systems

Family peers know how to support families as they navigate a variety of family-serving systems, including:

- [Education](#)
- [Justice](#)
- [Healthcare](#)
- [Child welfare](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families](#) (TANF)

# PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

## *Confidentiality, Ethics, Boundaries, and Cultural Congruence*

The fifth [Core Competency](#) for Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS) addresses the ability of family peers to perform basic job skills and follow organization policies, adhere to the CFPS Code of Ethics, keep families' private information confidential, create and sustain healthy boundaries with families, keep up-to-date with current best practices in the field of family peer support by completing professional development, and practice cultural congruence.

### **Perform Job Skills and Follow Policies**

Family peers understand the difference between family peer support and clinical services. CFPSs know and follow their organization's policies related to family peer support work, asking for clarification as needed. CFPSs master basic work skills, including note-taking, completing necessary paperwork, and engaging in supervisory activities.

### **Adhere to the CFPS Code of Ethics**

Certified Family Peer Specialists pledge to uphold the values and principles in the [Code of Ethics](#) in order to live out their ethical commitment as family peers with lived experience. The principles include 1) integrity, 2) safety, 3) professional responsibility, and 4) certification responsibilities.

### **Maintain Confidentiality**

Family peers use their lived experience of navigating mental health and substance use systems to share [best practices](#) and [advocacy tips](#), and to [support families](#) as they navigate these systems together.

### **Create and Sustain Boundaries**

Family peers clearly communicate and maintain necessary boundaries between a CFPS and a family in a support relationship, including refraining from entering into romantic relationships, engaging in direct financial exchanges, and doing for instead of with.

### **Engage in Professional Development**

Family peers regularly engage in [training](#) to understand current research and best practices in family peer support.

### **Practice Cultural Congruence**

Family peers approach each family with [curiosity about their unique culture](#) and meet them where they are.