A Family Navigator's Keys to Successful SAPs

NC InCK
NC INTEGRATED CARE FOR KIDS

Family Navigator:
Shawna Murry
Community Care of North Carolina

> *Stop thinking about how you're going to resolve something and start thinking about how you're going to support somebody. There are some things you can't resolve, but you are still going to be able to get support to [families] in some way or another. It's not all about resolution.* – Shawna Murry

Are you wondering how to approach initial conversations with families?

Shawna says:

- Approach with an open mind, offering to learn things together.
- Start talking first to get the family talking. This build's trust and can help you get a clearer sense of the family's needs. Don't forget that this takes time. Be open to talking through things extensively before approaching a Shared Action Plan (SAP).
- Set yourself up for successful SAPs:
  - **Be prepared:** Before you go into a conversation with the family, make sure you know who you are talking to and bring tangible things you can do to help them. Reviewing the child's providers and health benefits can help you think of ways you can support the child and their family before you talk to them. With this, you can prepare to offer ideas of ways you can support the family if they initially express they have no needs or goals.
  - **Hold off on specific questions:** Express that you are interested in hearing about what the family has to say, and ask them to tell you what is going on in their life.
  - **Listen** to the family's story and pay attention to how you may be able to support them. Remember to listen for goals that may work for other members of the family and care team as well.
  - **Write notes** while you listen to capture the family's story as well as flags for areas that you can help provide support in.
  - **Repeat** what you heard to the family, including potential goals and how you see yourself supporting these goals.
  - **Ask for feedback** to ensure that what you heard are priorities for the family too.
  - **Follow up** after the initial conversation and send the family materials that can help them better understand the Family Navigator role, NC InCK, and the types of people that we collaborate with. This can help with creating a care team later.

Are you overwhelmed by setting goals?

Shawna says:

- **Think about the whole family:** As Family Navigators, we are here to support the whole family, so you should think about the entire family when creating goals. Remember to set goals with and send resources to other members of the family.
- **Reach out to your supports:** If you are overwhelmed with figuring out how best to support a family, remember that the family is living through their own situation. It's going to be overwhelming for them too. Don't forget to reach out to your fellow Family Navigators and Integration Consultants for help.
- **Remember goals for families with children in foster care:** No matter what, there is always at least one goal when a child is involved in foster care: Permanency.
- **Prioritize immediate needs** and **keep notes on additional needs** mentioned or goals that you can circle back to once the child's and family's immediate needs are met.
- **Some goals are systematic:** These goals can be accomplished quickly, and they are easy to include in the list (i.e. Enrolling in the Healthy Helpings Program). Don't overlook these goals when setting goals.

Are you stumped trying to build a care team?

Shawna says:

- **Prepare the family:** Send a copy of the care team flyer, which explains who may be involved in the care team process and who the family should consider including.
- **Present the care team appropriately:** Talk through the purpose of the SAP with the family, emphasizing that the care team is supposed to represent their family's "village".
- **Uplift other supports:** After listening and discussing the SAP and care team with the family, you should have some sense of a child's supports. Be sure to mention their supports while building the SAP, asking if each member should be included on the care team.

Always remember!

Shawna says:

- First things first, build a relationship with the family. It is best not to go in asking specific questions.
- Caregivers may be experiencing varying levels of traumatic stress, so you should be cognizant of their situation and prepared to support them. Offer goals related to their care, well-being, and success that you can assist with too.