Wraparound Gave Me My Voice

Important words from Mom, Tamra, who spent years in an abusive relationship, captivity and drug addiction. She was finally able to escape, only to have CPS step in and place her children in foster care. She was able to get some help, but struggled with the system.

“I felt alone and powerless,” Tamra said. She felt hopeless until Wraparound came to her door. “I thought it was another requirement of the reunification plan—more people to tell me what I was doing wrong.” But instead, Tamra received support. “I kept thinking, ‘this is a dream,’” she said. “I didn’t know how to express my feelings. I didn’t even really know how to be a mom.”

Tamra recalled in the beginning when she was having visitation, she missed a visit with Ania, then age 2. Ania later told her, “Can’t you get it right, Mom?” Tamra said she was devastated. “It was a dark time,” she explained, “and I had a lot of work to do. Wraparound helped me change all that.”

Tamra said the first thing she remembers about the Wraparound experience was when her parent partner (who Tamra says deserves an “above-and-beyond field medal”) began sitting in with her during meetings with the social worker.

“She encouraged me to ask questions and speak up for what I was concerned about. I was not used to that,” she said. “For years, I was told what to do, how to feel. It was hard, but for the first time, I was standing up for myself. I found my real voice.” As the reunification process continued and the kids got closer to coming home, it seemed to Tamra that even more support was there from her team. At first they had weekly meetings as a family, she explained, but she felt as if her Wraparound team members were there for her every day.

“Someone was always helping me or one of the kids,” Tamra said. “It was awesome—and it was a lot of work—but I never wanted to give up for my kids.”

Tamra’s son, Ethan, now age 10, said Wraparound was there for him, too. He was also struggling in care. At first, he explained, they helped him with his foster mom, and then school, and then later when he went back to live with his mom.

“They helped me identify and understand my feelings,” Ethan said. “I was angry a lot and in trouble at school. I now have tools I use to express myself.”

(continued)
Tamara described herself as a sponge, soaking up all new information and tools. She soon was able to set rules. The behaviorist taught her how to engage with Ethan and Ania, how to set goals and follow through with consequences, as well as provide structure and support.

Ethan nodded in agreement. He explained the chores chart hanging prominently on the living room wall.

“I have to do my part, too”, he reported.

Tamara added, “It’s important that everyone has a voice. My kids can tell me how they feel, and we can talk about it.”

Ethan and Ania shared about how to set goals and why they are important.

Tamra, beaming with pride, had Ethan share how he has excelled in the music program and now attends a performing arts school. Ethan said he earned “first chair” recently in the orchestra with his clarinet, and he gleefully accommodated a request to play something. He talked about how he recently played at the county fair and loves performing. Ania has also excelled, and at age 5, she is now reading at the third grade level.

Tamra wants other families to know that she never in her wildest dreams thought she could master any parenting skills, use a reward and point system, set up rules as a family and follow-up with consequences.

“Wraparound not only helped me find my voice but taught and encouraged me to use it,” Tamra said. “Nobody is going to do it for you. But you’ll be amazed at just how meaningful it is.”

Editor’s Column: We Know What Works. We Just Need to Do It

These words have been spoken many times by professionals working with families. And, like many, I also questioned the way children and families were being served. Using common sense, decency and knowledge of how we would want to be treated has led to teaming and, specifically, Wraparound.

Wraparound started as a grassroots practice stemming from conversations among professionals about what works. It spread—taking hold and boldly going where we know we should be: in the homes of children and youth. Wraparound is at the core of the efforts to make sure every child’s needs are identified and every family is supported to do the best they can. While every child and family cannot safely be reunited, we value families as important in the planning and the transparency to identify permanency solutions. Simply put, teaming can change lives.

This year marks California’s 18th year of Wraparound. This month marks the second year of the Title IV-E project with juvenile probation using Wraparound. We now see teaming for infants and young children spreading across the state, and the Continuum of Care Reform has used Wraparound tenets as the foundation for required child and family teams. This will provide an opportunity for each child to have their family, friends, natural supports and key professionals work with each other to create a plan of action supported by a team of dedicated people.

This change is inevitable for Wraparound in California. Why? Because it works! We now have a new wave of challenges, but they are accepted with open arms. Spreading the practice, adhering to fidelity, sharing the successes and documenting the process—I’ll take it! I also challenge each of you to take on these new growing pains as well. You are champions...all of you. Share your knowledge and passion...and continue. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Sincerely,

Jane Tabor-Bane, Interim Director
Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice
Constance Burgess has been entrenched in the Wraparound movement since before it even had a name. But while she helped pioneer the development of Wraparound services and family-centered practice throughout California and across the nation, she struggled with her own personal trauma.

Last December, Constance published her deeply personal narrative, *Missing Frames: Memoir of a Woman Living with Hidden Disabilities*. Among other themes, the book explores the impact of becoming disabled during the prime of her life and career, as well as how a traumatic brain injury actually helped Constance better understand herself and her past.

As a single mother with a Level 14 son in foster care and two other children at home, Constance and her children were one of 10 families invited to pilot Wraparound services at home. This was a brand new concept in the early 1990s. Based on this experience—and her desire to infuse the importance of family voice into children’s systems of care—Constance began training and consulting in 1993 and became one of California’s first parent partners. This involvement in defining, shaping and implementing Wraparound services in California led to an invitation (along with other family members from across the country) to help define the values and principles of Wraparound on a national level through the National Wraparound Initiative. This work included helping to author SB 163, as well as develop Therapeutic Behavior Services.

“Parent involvement is the key to the successful achievement of family goals, and we wanted everyone—families, mental health and social services professionals, public officials—to understand that,” Constance explained.

Over the past two decades, Constance has taught more than 50 workshops and classes for UC Davis Extension’s Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice. She has been instrumental in both developing and delivering curricula to California’s 58 counties in such topics as Wraparound introduction and engagement, Wraparound skill building, strength-based partnering, and family partnering and engagement.

In 2009, in the midst of Constance’s stalwart and transformational work with Wraparound and family-centered services, a fall in a retail store caused a brain injury that changed her life.

“I suffered amnesia and memory loss, so during that time, I had a scattered and sometimes blank understanding of what happened during and after my fall,” Constance said. “After years of struggling, I was able to find my way back by working with a physical therapist and reading my injury case files (to learn the extent of the physical trauma), and working with a psychologist to understand the extent of the mental trauma. And, ultimately, by reaching out to people from my past who could help put the missing pieces back together.”

Constance’s book describes the challenges of trying to live a “normal” life as a disabled person. She courageously writes about the devastating toll a serious injury can have, not only on a person’s physical health, but on their psyche and spirit as well.

“I was having a hard time speaking, balancing and walking. I had nerve damage to my face and eyes. It took four years for me to learn how to regain control of my body, manage pain and become truly healthy in body and mind.” Then she paused and added, “Depression doesn’t like a moving target, so you have to keep moving.”

Constance explained that there are aspects of those with disabilities that most people ignore or don’t take seriously. She says she has learned the importance of looking at people from the whole-health perspective.

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My Experience as a Parent Partner with Olive Crest
By Donna Scott-Hagger, Parent Partner, Olive Crest

I started the journey as a professional helper/parent partner in December 2013. While working as a youth counselor at a group home, I stumbled upon a job opportunity on the Olive Crest website, filled out the application for “Parent Partner” (not even knowing what that was), and then forgot about it. When I received a call for an interview, I initially told myself, well, I already have a job, and so I wasn’t sure if I would even go through with the interview. But I decided not to close the door on myself, so I went in.

It was the most exhilarating interview I had ever had! I was interviewed by Antonio Mejico, the director at the time. I was asked a line of questioning about my past as a foster child. I was excited to talk about being a foster child for eight years and how my experience made me who I am today. My foster mother back in the 70s had only a sixth grade education and wasn’t able to help me with my education, but somehow I managed to get good grades. I was never asked about my life during any other interview. And out of all of the questions, one stood out paramount from the others. I remember Antonio asking me what would be my challenge with Olive Crest in the role of a parent partner. I thought about it for a while and then responded, “My biggest challenge would be that I may not be able to save every child and every family and that some may fall through the cracks.” I will never forget the huge smile that came over Antonio’s face. It was so bright, it was like the sun borrowed from him to shine. These are the “a-ha” moments.

“I’ve always been an empathetic person, but this was the first time I felt I could land employment by being that way, by merely having had experience as a foster child and genuinely caring about others.”

I can put myself in their shoes because I’ve been through a lot myself. I was accustomed to being employed based on my work experience, not my personal experience. When I realized I might get to help another person, my peer, a parent, as they struggle with something I can potentially help them navigate and journey along with them to a solution by building rapport, telling them my story, allowing space for them to tell me theirs and use my...
experience as a person of color, a person of spiritual depth, a person who has experienced grief and loss of loved ones, to motivate, empower and help strengthen a family—I thought, “Sign me up! Show me the dotted line!”

I was so eager to learn about Wraparound principles, what being a parent partner entails and their role as a part of the Wraparound team. And I’m so grateful for the job because this opportunity led me to a particular family: a single mother with five beautiful children. The mother was struggling through the winter months and had an astronomical electric bill. Although Olive Crest helped with finances to assist the family, more was needed. The family was notified that they would have their electricity cut off which meant no heat in the dead of winter. Everyone felt as though there was nothing else to be done.

I immediately went into “do something mode” for this family as I thought about them using every blanket in the house at night and the children shivering in bed. And I imagined and emphasized how mom couldn’t iron clothes for school and had to go to the laundromat to wash clothes (without a working vehicle). I used a strength-based approach and sat with this defeated mother for hours on the phone with the utility commission. We got the run-around and the back and forth and when she began to give up, I motivated her back into believing that something can be done, something will happen. She reluctantly went along with staying in the fight and so, I told her to call her state representative. She gave me such a look as if I had gone completely insane. She asked, in a bewildered voice, “What are they gonna do?” And I replied, “We have to see.”

We spoke to a man at the State Representative Office and explained her story. The man was emotionally compelled to contact the utility commission and the representative of the electric company. After all was done, the electricity was restored. I then went into coaching the mother on budgeting skills, making arrangements with the electric company to make affordable payments to get the $4,000 bill down, and sending the state representative a thank you card. Which she did. Not only was it gratifying for me to see how happy the children were that they would be warm through the winter, but they were also empowered by the notion to never give up and to go into “do something mode” when they are faced with difficulties in life. I was also happy they had lights on their Christmas tree...and that this family didn’t fall through the cracks.

We need you!

California Wraparound Connections helps to spread the innovations occurring in Wraparound throughout the state. No matter what your role in Wraparound is, you have a story worth sharing.

If you are a Wraparound family member, we’d like to hear about what worked for you and your family. If you work in Wraparound, then perhaps you have an idea, an approach or a lesson learned to share.

Ways to contribute

- Nominate a family to be profiled as a cover story. (We come to you! Please share past cover stories, so families understand that we are strength-based!)
- Write a parent partner column (about 500 words). Or, alternatively, volunteer to be interviewed about your selected topic, and we will write the article.
- Write a feature article or short article (1,000 words or 500 words) about a success, lesson learned or innovative practice.
- Submit poetry or other creative endeavors by children, youth and family that reflect Wraparound.

If you are interested, please contact Monica Caprio at macaprio@ucdavis.edu to obtain information on how you can contribute. We look forward to hearing from you!
California
Wraparound
Hub Reports

Northern California Hub
Meeting Notes
The Northern Hub met in Davis on August 4, 2016, and was facilitated by Lauren Crutsinger.
An excellent presentation by Tracy Urban and Rami Chand from CDSS on Continuum of Care Reform (CCR)/AB 403 started the meeting. An overview of current status, provisions, framework and collaboration and implementation process were covered. AB 403 builds on the efforts of SB 933 - Residentially Based Services Reform. The vision is that all children live in committed, permanent and nurturing families. Supports and services should be individualized and coordinated, the system is focused on achieving permanent families or preparing youth for adulthood, and when needed, congregate care becomes a short-term, high quality, intensive intervention available for youth amidst a variety of support services. Beginning January 1, 2017, group homes will be referred to as Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP). An extension process will be in place to help kids transition into lower levels of care (LOC). There will be a thorough reassessment of all youth residing in group home care to understand current and future needs for services and supports. New regulations are being developed for rate structure for the LOC. The CCR implementation framework includes the state and county implementation team along with the stakeholder implementation, advisory committee and partners from the work groups. Partners include probation, social services, mental health, program and licensing, rate structures, training, oversight framework and resource family approval professionals. Guides for counties and FFAs will be available as we move through the changes or start new programs. In preparation, the counties should be looking at their current foster care population and their placements.
Lupe Grimaldi provided additional information from the State Foster Care Rate branch. The stakeholder email regarding Wrap rates and eligibility is coming out from the advisory committee (CWAC). The Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) ACL is also being drafted and will include requirements and guidelines for stakeholders. Successful implementation of the TFC will have a direct impact on the CCR which eliminates the group home rate structure and establishes a new rate structure. Questions can be sent to ccr@dss.ca.gov, and additional information is on the CDSS website: www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/PG4869.htm.
UC Davis followed with announcements, including information from the Partnerships for Well-Being Institute. Feedback by the Hub participants included: staff were incredibly helpful and answered all questions; loved the workshops that were interactive and had concrete tools that could be utilized right away; and other comments. All agreed the array of workshops covered a wide range of topics and there was something for everyone. Several used the interactive APP and thought it worked well. The family panel segment was unanimously supported. Many wanted the family panel participants to have a workshop following their presentation to answer questions. Jarred Vermillion’s workshop with his dad was a favorite as well as the workshop from Jamille Harrell-Sims on CSEC (Commercially Sexually Exploited Children). Everyone who attended felt the CSEC topic should be a regional training. Panel presentations like the one with probation staff was a highlight as well as workshops on management tools, staff motivation and coaching. Comments about the logistics and the venue were generally positive. Regional training requests included: trauma-informed training and CSEC.
The afternoon discussion covered provider updates on CSEC endeavors. Sacramento County has a special committee. Tehama County’s education department is providing training. Marin County faces challenges with limited resources and dealing with most youth who are from other counties. Flight risk makes it impossible to maintain youth in foster homes while investigating yet placing kids in juvenile hall to hold them is not a solution either. Solano County reported difficulty keeping track of kids being trafficked along the I-5 and I-80 corridors. Most youth are not cooperative and give false identities. Butte County reports youth from their county generally migrate to larger cities where they can remain unnoticed. Collecting data about CSEC youth is difficult. Many probation and social service departments are documenting in CWS/CMS. All agree they need more training.
The afternoon concluded with generating a list of training topics for future Hub meetings. The group also said goodbye and many thanks to the Hub support contact, Corrinne Anderson, who is leaving the area. Chelsey Garrett will be the new support and distributor of information and minutes.
The Northern Hub meeting location at Families First in Davis is no longer available and new sites are being researched. The Hub will most likely meet at the Uplift Program in Sacramento. Details will come in follow-up emails.
The next Northern Hub meeting is Thursday, November 3, 2016, location TBA.

Central California Hub
Meeting Notes
The Central Hub met Salinas on July 29, 2016, and was hosted by Rebekah Children’s Services. Hub co-chair Tabitha Baldwin opened with the agenda review and announcements.
The meeting started with training on coping skills provided by Rebekah Children’s Services staff. There were experiential stations set up for the Hub participants to take part in stress-reducing activities such as aroma, art and music therapy. Relaxation exercises invited us to let go of everyday worries. Takeaway handouts included easy activities to do yourself.

CDSS announcements/information included Continuum of Care Reform information and updates on various state work groups. Implementation of the CCR is January 1, 2017. The next CWAC is in Sacramento on October 25.

UC Davis updates included follow-up on resources/information from the Partnerships for Well-Being Institute and feedback about the Institute in general. Highlights included the family panel presentation and the keynote speakers. Other comments included an A+ on the vast array of topics and excellent presentations that included useful tools and takeaways. Favorites included the workshops on CSEC and transgender youth.

Hub participants followed with updates: Aspiranet is the only provider now currently in Kern County. Casa Pacifica has 33 slots and 25 full at this time. There has been an increase in Santa Barbara County, whereas most of the referrals previously had been in Santa Maria. There is a countywide grant for CSEC programs that is used by the Wraparound contracted partners.

Monterey County has a new child welfare director and there is an opportunity for creative partnering. As CCR comes around new policies and how the county conducts business will morph. As programs broaden their scope, other practices like releases will have to be examined. Rebekah Children’s Services currently has 35 slots.

EMQ FamiliesFirst has reorganized all its programs and renamed them to Uplift Family Services. The change is across all counties. In Fresno County, Uplift Family Services has implemented a wellness/discovery program that focuses on improving health. It has 85 out of 125 possible youth in Wraparound.

More providers are implementing Katie A. programs that provide service pre-referrals to formal Wraparound programs. AAP youth have a stronger focus and there are more county probation youth referred than social services youth. In addition, there is a Quality Improvement Project for the CBT called Celebrating Families that has a substance abuse focus. Families in Fresno County have also enjoyed the annual fun events like canoeing trips and picnics. Uplift Programs provides 30-day transitions to youth following discharge.

The next meeting will be hosted by Casa Pacifica in Santa Barbara County on October 14, 2016.

Southern California Hub Meeting Notes
The Southern Hub met in Camarillo on August 22, 2016, and was hosted by Casa Pacifica in Ventura County. Co-chairs Rebekah Cox and Jarred Vermillion facilitated the meeting.

Updates from providers in person and via conference call included the following: Ventura County Casa Pacifica program is at capacity and has a waiting list. There are a lot of family interventions happening, and consistency and communication between supervisors and team members has made a difference. All foster youth are being screened by behavioral health and referrals are being made. Volunteers are being utilized. Ventura County Children and Family Services are moving forward in preparation for the CCR. Uplift Family Services (formerly EMQ) is using respite care and has made an impact in sustaining youth at home.

Santa Barbara County Casa Pacifica is at capacity. Lutheran Social Services in San Bernardino County reported a successful company picnic. Jarred reported an increase in CFTs and that the county is exploring insurance options to pay for services. San Diego County is reporting collaboration with probation, CFS and Behavioral Health, sharing families needing Wraparound. Ester McCoy from Riverside also reported increased collaboration with probation and participation in training seminars.

The UC Davis Resource Center gave updates on the Partnerships for Well-Being Institute held in June and asked for feedback about the conference. All who attended felt this year was well-rounded and appealed to each level of staff and had diverse topics. Other comments included: excellent speakers, great location and the UC Davis staff were extremely helpful. The quality of workshops was mentioned and the highlight was the family panel. No one was turned away from workshops and rooms met presenters’ needs. All of the Institute presenters at the Hub meeting mentioned how well organized the set up was, including materials and technical support.

Updates from CDSS included information on the Wraparound Advisory Committee and Katie A. technical assistance. CCR updates were distributed and discussed. Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) will release a newsletter about billing codes that will be helpful to those billing Medi-Cal. There’s a technical assistance call the first Wednesday of every month for those who have questions or want updated information.

New Hub business included a discussion on SOP and Wraparound. Regional trainings will start, focusing on integration. San Diego and San Bernardino Counties mentioned they have revised their forms to include SOP language with families. They are also using it in unit meetings with staff.

Jarred connected the Hub members with John Osowski (jdo@pdx.edu) for a NWI webinar regarding coaching. He is building a virtual coaching platform. He is looking to gather videos of meetings between a parent and a Wraparound staff member.

The afternoon training was on Parent Child Interaction Therapy and was provided by Heidi Kelly, LMFT, and Katherine Kemp, LCSW, both Casa Pacifica TBS clinical supervisors. PCIT can increase overall positive communication in the home as well as the parents’ confidence in their capability to interact with their child.

The next meeting will be held on November 14, 2016, and hosted by Hathaway-Sycamores in Covina.
Upcoming Hub Meetings—Fall 2016

**Northern California Hub Meeting**  
**Thursday, November 3, 2016, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**  
Host and location: Uplift Family Services, 2100 Fifth St., Davis  
Co-chairs: Nicole Nelson and Lauren Crutsinger from Seneca Family of Agencies  
Email contacts: Nicole_Nelson@senecacenter.org and Lauren_Crutsinger@senecacenter.org  
Support email contact: Chelsey_Garrett@senecacenter.org

**Central California Hub Meeting**  
**Friday, October 14, 2016, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.**  
Host and location: Casa Pacifica- Santa Barbara, Cornerstone Community Room, 705 S McClelland St., Santa Maria (near the corner of Jones St. and McClelland, next to the Discovery Museum)  
Co-chairs: Tabitha Baldwin, LMFT, Clinical Associate Director, EMQ FamiliesFirst Wraparound - Fresno (559) 446-3076  
Email contacts: tbaldwin@emqff.org

**Southern California Hub Meeting**  
**Monday, November 14, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**  
Host and location: Hathaway-Sycamores, 1411 N. Grand Ave., Suite 100, Covina, (626) 388-9050  
Co-chairs: Rebekah Cox, Lead Wraparound Facilitator, Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, Running Springs, CA, (909) 939-0605, and Jarred Vermillion, Director and Lead Trainer, Vermillion Life Circle Consulting  
Email contacts: rcox@lsscommunitycare.org or Jarredvermillion@gmail.com