

The Parent's Journey and Peer Parent Support: Providing Authentic Peer Parent Support, Moving Past Busy



Denise Baker, Associate Director of Training and Innovation at Family Involvement Center

Regina Crider, Executive Director of Illinois Family Alliance and NWIC Certified PPSP Coach in Illinois

Toni Donnelly, NWIC PPSP Coach and Director of Training and Innovation at Family Involvement Center



We're glad
you are here !





Objectives

- Participants will be introduced to the 5 stages of the parent journey
- Participants will reflect on their own story and identify the impact of each of the 5 stages of the parent journey in their own life
- Participants will learn how the framework of the parent journey is used as a model of support that focuses on providing authentic peer parent support



The Parent Journey



Patricia Miles

Two Ways The Parent Journey is Applied



1. Reflecting On Your Own Story
2. Relating Your Story to the Parent You are Supporting



Some Aspects of the Parent Journey



Moves back and forth across stages based on family circumstances:

- If you think you have arrived you probably haven't left
- Movement across time may be experienced differently
- Recognition of the universal stops on the journey while balancing the individual realities
- Creates a sense of understanding and connection rather than assessment and resolution

Why use this framework?



Anchored in the experience of the parent

- Creates space for the PPSP to continue to reflect on their own experience (avoids an us/them mentality)
- Avoids getting “lost” in translation (youth perspective, wraparound practices)
- Validates the importance of peer support to parents
- Provides a framework for the PPSP to know where a parent is in their journey and “meet them where they’re at”
- Creates opportunities for PPSP’s and parents to find their own healing and meaning related to their journey
- PPSP support provided is intentional and purposeful at each stage of the journey

Provides Flexibility

- PPSP work can be nested within other service delivery models or be a stand alone service
- Increase sustainability and adaptability

The Parent's Journey Stage 1: Becoming Defined and Overwhelmed by the Situation



- Recognize the breadth, scope and depth of the situation
- Defined by you rather than the system
- May be different from how others see it
- May last long, may be short
 - From a “whisper” to a “yell”

Stage One of The Parent Journey: Becoming Overwhelmed or Defined by the Event



Activity

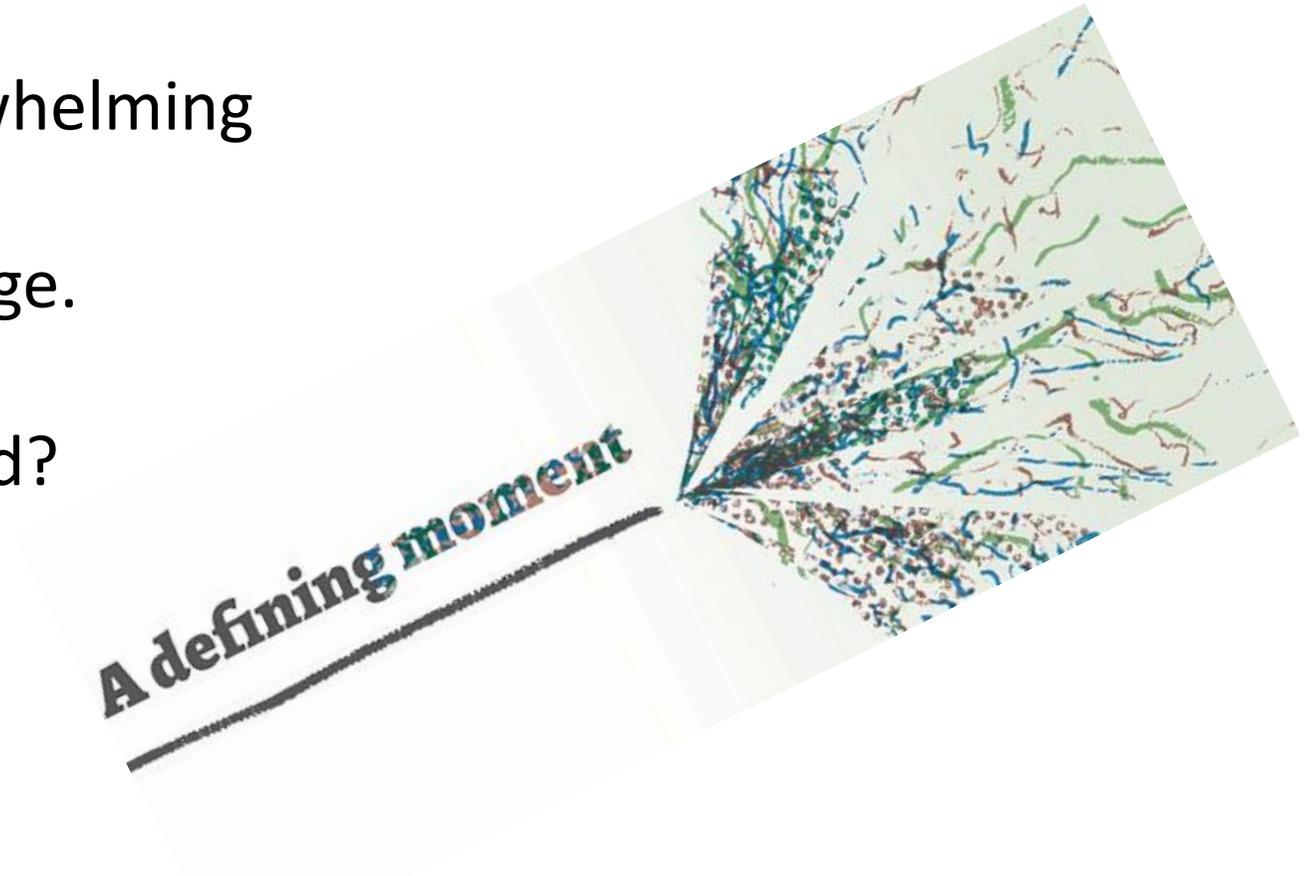
Return to your own defining or overwhelming event and define what happened.

Identify how you got through this stage.

What feelings did you have?

What actions did you take that helped?

Which ones didn't help?



Consider how this will impact your ability to provide peer support to other parents.

Be prepared to discuss.

The Parent's Journey Stage 2 : Recognizing that You are Now Part of a System



- Identifying your context of system involvement
- Build an understanding how first contact and current system contact impacts your future story and sense of self
- Reflects on your own understanding of need at that time
- Builds a frame around your story
- Adjust support to match parent strengths, needs and culture

Stage 2 of the Parent Journey

Recognizing that You are Now Part of a System



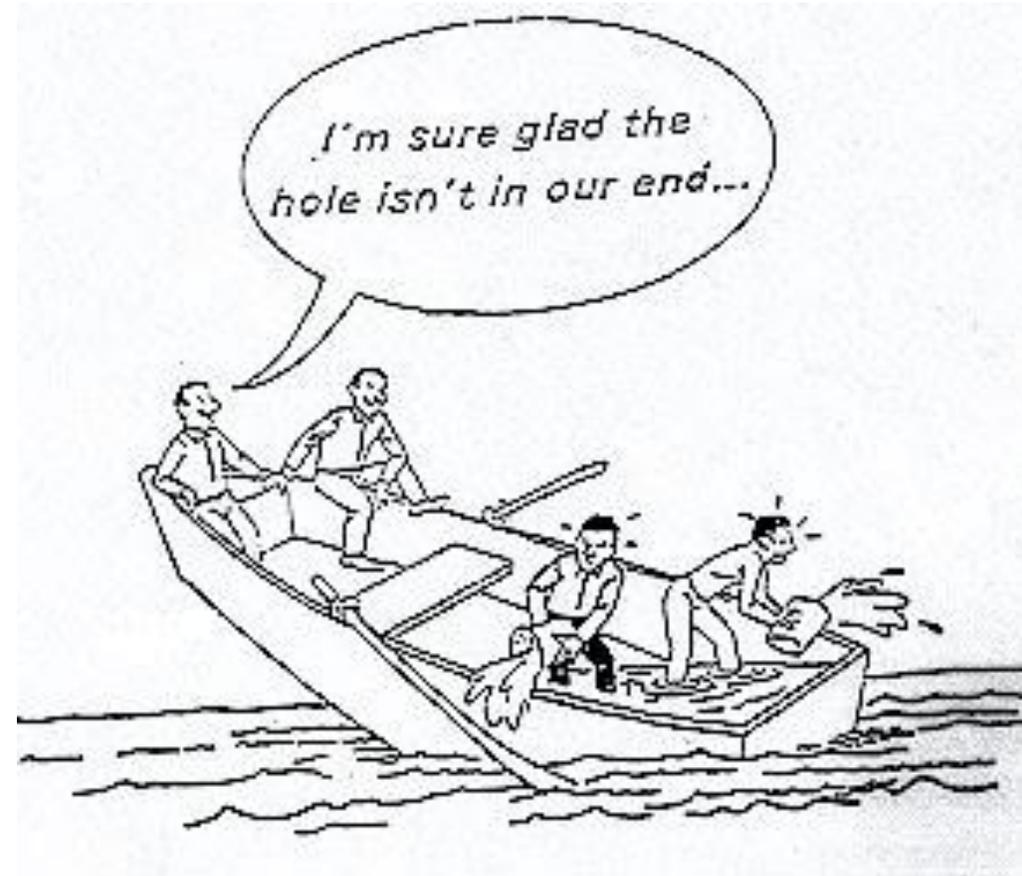
Activity

Review your first awareness of system involvement.

Describe what happened.

Describe how you got through it.

What were your feelings and actions?



The Parent's Journey Stage 3:

Growing Realization that You Must Act to Save Your Family



- Starts with recognizing that the system either won't work for your family or won't work without your involvement
- Often will foster a sense of urgency in terms of time and response
- Recognition of the limitations of system or professional intervention
- A time of activation based on growing realization, insight and connection
- First actions aren't always the right actions but any action is better than none

Stage 3 of The Parent's Journey

Growing Realization that You Must Act to Save Your Family



Activity

Return to your activation stage.

What happened? What were the facts?

How did you go through this? How did you act? How did you feel?

What did you learn?

How will that help with your ability to provide peer support to other parents?

The Parent's Journey Stage 4: Knowing and Seeing the Meaning of Your Experience



- Recognize that each experience has a meaning within the journey
- See that your journey has had struggles but also triumphs
- Reshape the way you value yourself, your situation and your experiences
- Find ways to help your family heal with the meaning you have discovered

Stage 4 of The Parent's Journey

Knowing and Seeing the Meaning of Your Experience



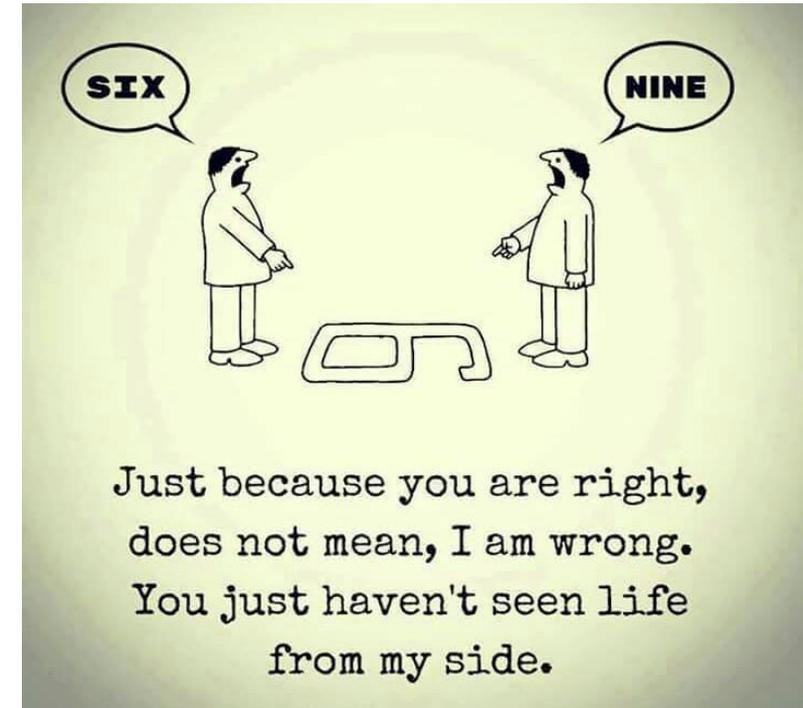
Activity

Return to your own journey.

When did you begin to establish your own meaning rather than having the situation or external feedback define your situation?

What happened? How did it feel?

How will this impact your ability to provide support to peers?



The Parent's Journey Stage 5: Commit to Helping Others with Your Personal Experience



- **Commit** to the deep work of continual *reflection on your own lived experience*
- **Commit** to *learning with* rather than *teaching to*
- **Stay in the lane of peer support** versus professional support, support versus expert
- **Share** your story in service to others including parents and system partners
- **Keep in mind**, some parents may end up doing this in their own communities and never draw a paycheck as a peer parent partner

Stage 5 of The Parent's Journey

Commit to Helping Others with Your Personal Experience

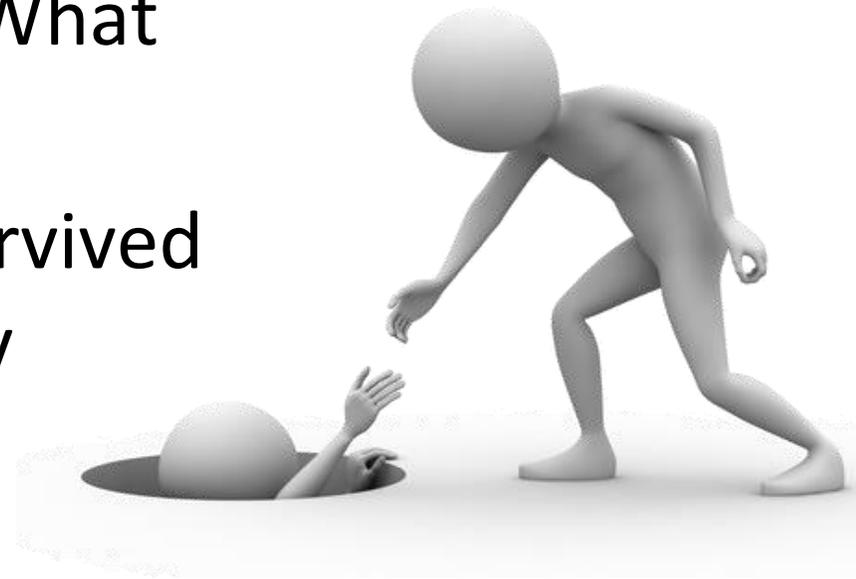


Activity

Reflect and write down what brought you to Stage 5.

What caused you to go after the job? What has changed from when you applied?

How has it changed? How have you survived and thrived even as your personal story continues?



Parent Journey Discussion



Now that you have completed the parent journey activity. Identify:

- Two things you haven't considered about your own story
- What parts of your story are relatable to peers you are supporting?
- What else did you learn from this activity?

Be prepared to discuss your answers.

What might this mean for your work as a Peer Parent Partner?



The Journey to Recover Self

- **First**, seeing through our own eyes rather than the eyes of others
- **Second**, telling what seemed to be shameful secrets only to find out that it is neither shameful or secret
- **Third**, giving names to that which has been nameless
- **Fourth**, bonding with others who share similar experience and
- **Finally**, achieving empowerment

Gloria Steinem



Take-Away Messages

- Recognize the power of your “lived” experience and staying connected to your own story
- Take time to consider how authentic Peer Parent Support can help with outcomes and healing
- Remember how this framework can be utilized to create awareness of where a parent is on their journey and your ability to “meet them where they are”



Questions ?



Email Contacts



Denise Baker: Denise@familyinvolvementcenter.org

Regina Crider: Regina@ilalliance.org

Toni Donnelly: Toni@familyinvolvementcenter.org