

Expanding the Family and Youth Peer Support Workforce within Children's Behavioral Health Services

Presentation to the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee

February 26, 2025

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY BOARD



Project Background

Response to Workforce Strategic Plan
Recommendation #7: Expand the youth and family peer support workforce

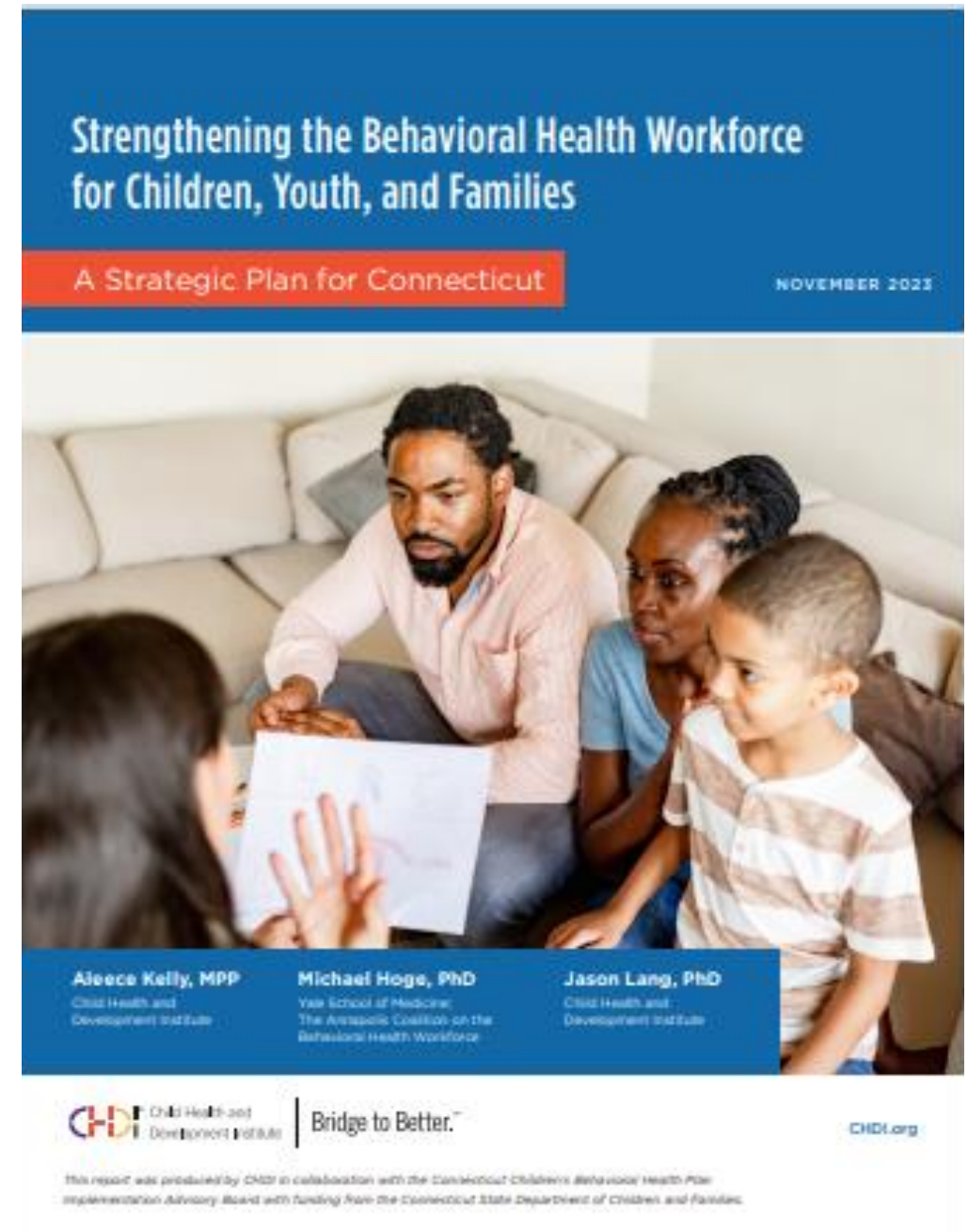
FY 2025 Priority for Children's Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board

TA from SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge (SPARK)

Project Steering Committee

Builds upon prior work completed in Connecticut

Funded by DCF



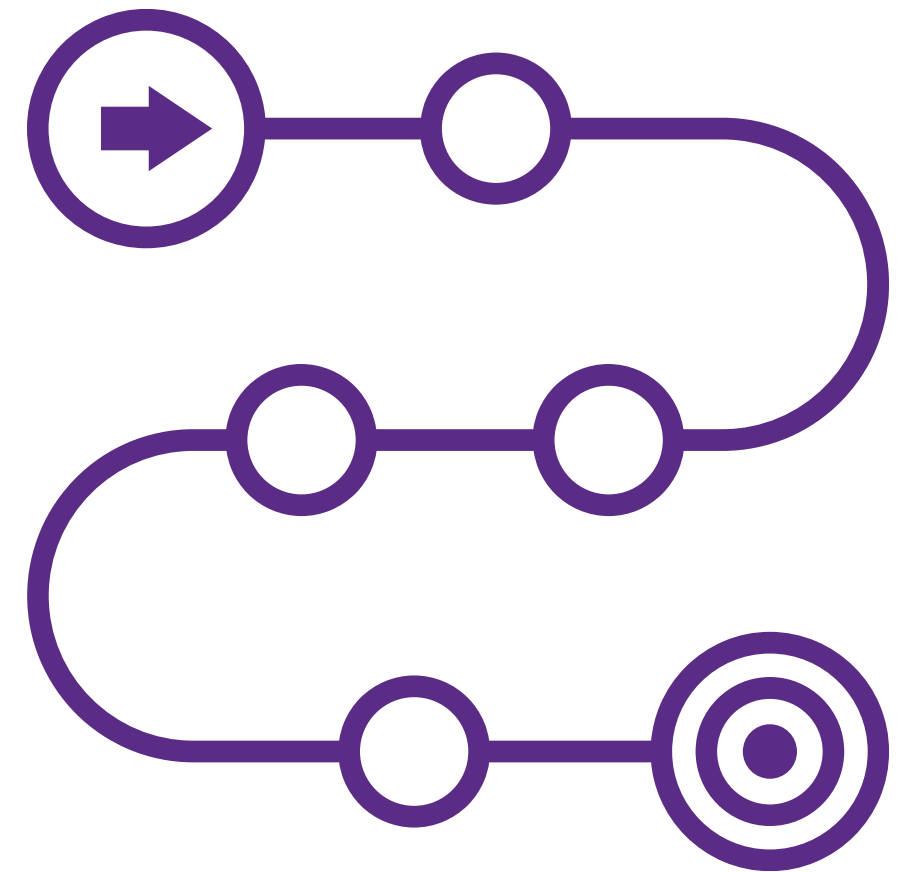
CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN
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Project Background

Goal: Develop recommendations for Connecticut to expand family and youth peer support roles within the children's behavioral health workforce.

Timeline: September 2025



Project Questions

1. What are the definitions and roles of family and youth peer support specialists?
2. What are best practices for integrating, supervising, funding and sustaining family and youth peer support specialists within children's behavioral health?
3. What is the current landscape within Connecticut?
4. How can family and youth peer support specialists be integrated with other members of the workforce?
5. How can family and youth peer support specialists address current challenges within the children's behavioral health system?
6. What should the state do to support the expansion of family and youth peer support specialists within children's behavioral health services?



Topics for Recommendation

Recommendations will address:

- a. Training, competencies, and certification
- b. Roles and scope of practice
- c. Supervision models
- d. Career pathways
- e. Integration within the children's behavioral health workforce (and adult system as relevant)
- f. Readiness of the service delivery system
- g. Expanding diversity of the family and youth peer workforce
- h. Insurance reimbursement and other sustainability strategies
- i. Roles of state agencies and other partners
- j. Opportunities to increase the integration of families and youth with lived expertise (peers *and* non-peers) throughout the system

Topics for Recommendation

Insurance reimbursement and other funding strategies will be critical to implementation and sustainability



Methods

1. Literature review and Landscape Analysis

2. Key Informant Interviews

- a. Local experts
- b. Out of state practitioners

3. Focus Groups

- a. Current CT peer support specialists
- b. Providers
- c. Family members

4. Survey

- a. Current CT peer support specialists
- b. Staff in other non-licensed positions
- c. Youth



Peer Support Within Connecticut

- Both family and youth peer support programs
- Training and certification programs
- Recovery programs
- Young adult services
- Family advocacy services
- Programs embedded within behavioral health services
- LGBTQ+ peer support programs
- Programs requiring specialized experience/expertise
- Cross-system programs



Next Steps

Conduct interviews: March

Hold focus groups: March

Distribute surveys: March - April

Analysis: April – May

Draft report: July 2025

Final report: Sept 2025

