

**TXFVN Meeting**  
**11-21-19**  
**Meeting Notes**

Present

**Family Leaders**

Stephany Bryant  
Jere Newton  
Adrianna Valdez  
Deshaun Ealoms  
Monica Reyes  
Nidia Heston  
Donna Fagan  
Veronica Martinez

**Stakeholder Advocates**

David Grant

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

- Stephany suggested wearing your name tag on the right instead of the left when shaking hands so people would remember your name.
- We all shared a funny story that happened this week to us and selected a toy that represents who we are.
- David Grant introduced himself. He previously was a CPS Social Worker. Now he works on the HHSC Child and Adolescent Unit covering the RTC program and is also the Family Partner.
- Stephany inquired how someone could become a family partner. Funding is a concern for individuals interested in becoming a family partner who are not currently employed. Barbara suggested the person locate a job and the LMHA will pay for the certification training. Nidia provided information that the cost is \$625 plus hotel and travel costs. Donna and Barbara provided possible positions open in the state.

**II. TxFVN Business**

- We've been invited in January to the HHSC all staff meeting for the behavioral health division. They want to have quarterly Equity Series. TxFVN has been invited to kick off the series in January. We are going to have a panel discussion. In talking with them, Barbara asked Stephany Bryant if she can come and share of where we have come from and the integration of family voice in systems. It will be held on January 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am. Then we can go to the Office of Mental Health Coordination to ask for a similar invitation saying we spoke at HHSC and ask to speak with them about integration.
- Similarly, we would continue with the child serving systems. David and Deshaun could be our entry into DFPS. We can check with Tracy Levins, with TxSOC on who to call at TJJD
- Courtney Seals, Lillian and Kisha had a meeting and they are still talking about system of care sustainability. What does that look like? One of the core values is family voice. They have several options, but there is discussion.
- Suggested made for annual lunch where state leaders are invited. One of our meetings needs to be highlighted with that in mind. It was noted that there was an award given at the Rural Mental Health Conference where they did a similar thing called The BAT award, recognizing

champions who have brought us to where we are today. Workgroup will be formed to start looking at that and look at a date.

- Minutes were reviewed. Jere made a motion to accept the notes as written and Stormy seconded the motion.
- Continuing Conversation Calls:
  - In between our in-person meeting, we have had a conference call, the last Thursday of the month. The first two we had 10 or so on the call which was around the CFP policy bill. These last two were follow ups from the meeting. Attendance was lower, having the leadership team plus one other person. Continuing conversations acts as a workgroup extension of the In-person meetings. We've had three series of calls.
  - Nidia suggested we alternate calls between workgroup discussions and special speakers.
  - Julie and Barbara will get together and figure out fourth Thursday of every month. Description of what continuation conversation meetings are.
  - Stephany described a call from another group – liberating structure – leadership development – part of our mission and our vision – a learning opportunity – if you have 10 people on the call you can break out into groups of two or three.
  - Consensus is we will keep the calls going, special topics, workgroup type participation, action items and leadership development.
  - At our last Continuing Conversation call, we developed, “One Wish for Texas Families” – “If we, as the Texas Family Voice Network, had one wish for families whose children have behavioral health concerns, it would be that regardless of which system they start with in the community, there would be equitable access and funding, along with support services, which include resource navigation and family peer support.”
- With the upcoming meeting with HHSC, there was a discussion around TxFVN deliverables. It was noted that we really have no deliverables so what do we have to offer out of to family leaders.
  - Texas has a very closed system and they are apprehensive to include outside input. We need to continue to positively partner with each system, breaking down those walls.
  - Currently, we have two tip sheets for family leaders, one is for self-care and one is for family leadership. Barbara suggested using the same format to start a second set of tips for providers. All we would have to do is change the top descriptor to ‘provider tips’ to create our second category type of tips sheets – one for families and one for agencies. We toyed with some of the titles – “The power of partnering” – reviewed draft – we have until January. Barbara will send out and we will edit.
  - It was suggested we create a companion tip sheet “Tips for Families: Partnering with systems”
- **Membership:** We spent time working toward membership for TxFVN. It has been put on website – individual family member (will do your best to attend meetings) – affiliate members (who want to be a part but can't come to Austin) – stakeholder advocate (broad, anybody – professional stakeholder advocate – family members out of state. To date we have 26 total people who have actually responded to membership through the website.
  - Individual Members so far are: Monica Reyes, Eileene Chappell, Julie Bourne, Stephany Bryan, Laura Warren, Valencia Gensollen, Lisa Puente, Stormy Holifield, Donna Jarma, Barbara Granger, Donna Fagan, Verlyn Johnson, Michelle Brown,

Angelita Garcia, Susan Hickcox, Joann Daxon, Debi Dickensheets, Nicole Rotenberry, Deshaun Ealoms

- It was noted our Distribution list is only for about 50 people. We all have distribution lists which we could all reach out to. Donna suggested that be part of our leadership drive.
- Barbara made an observation that there are people who get onto the continuing conversation calls who are affiliate members. If they are interested to be on a conversation call, should they be an individual member, or should we invite them to become an Individual member. If so, we would need to update our membership definition for Individual member. If not, should the language be changed to include distribution list and conversation call for an affiliate member?
- Nidia – some people might be confused about what kind of member they can be
- Donna stated to change “strives” – “encourages” or “provided the opportunity to attend in person or by call” for an Individual member.
- To increase awareness of TxFVN, the question was posed to David Grant, if someone could come on the CFP call after our In-person meeting to give a brief update, similar to how the CFP Advisory Council has done in the past?
- The question was posed regarding the SOC community leadership’s attendance. Barbara explained there are 4 SOC communities. The first two, LifePath and Burke already have sent leaders: Stormy (LifePath) and Tiffani Byerly (Burke). Barbara has spoken to the two new sites to encourage their family leadership participation.
- Another outreach opportunity is to approach the other SAMHSA funded SOC communities to invite their family leaders;
- Nidia referred back to a statement from our website, “it was identified in 2012 there wasn’t a place for family leaders to come and provide input, today we (TxFVN) are providing input”, TxFVN could be included in their strategic plan. Texas System of Care usually promotes TxFVN. This could be a deliverable for us to offer, helping them strategically build their family voice.
- It was also noted you don’t ask a family member to come to a SOC meeting without mentoring alongside them. TxFVN needs to be thinking about what that looks like for us. Who should be responsible for that? It was suggested that Stormy is our Community Liaison and maybe that might be within her tasks.

- III. **HHSC Family Integration-** Veronica Martinez was invited to speak to us from her new position as TX MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES UNIT at HHSC. She has been a member of TxFVN for several years and now takes that family leadership role to HHSC. As she introduced herself to those who may not know, she has two children, one with an autism diagnosis, which led her to become a CFP. After several years of working directly with families, she took a position, after Hurricane Harvey with what is now Disaster relief. That division transitioned to helping the families with the Sante Fe shooting also. She then took over being Children’s mental health manager, which was Marisol Acosta position and now is the Mental Health manager of both adolescent and adult. She stated she has a talent for being able to operationalize things, where she manage David Grant and Tovah Woodson, who are not new to TxFVN. She enjoys working on the macro level – systems level – in a position that can advocate for family voice. He is open to hearing from us, striving to make things more family-centered. She is on a fast learning curve. She is honored to be advocating on behalf of families and their children, who are near and dear to her heart. She spoke to her insights into the current climate at HHSC and how we integrate family voice into the work already being done.
- There was brief Q and A with her.

- One of the big concerns was on combining the child/adolescent unit with the adult unit. Her response was she felt like it could be a benefit not only with the TAY population, but also the work being done on HB 13 and Early Onset Psychosis that serves both.
- She stated HHSC is in an environment for change, culture change. “Right now is the time we (as family members) are positioned to affect that change. There is a gap, a group to go to “when something lives by those (old) standards”.
- Stephany asked “what is your position on having families included in the development of instead of asking for input” Veronica stated we are right on target for developing a timeline on bills that need to integrate family voice – it’s easier to operationalize if we start early.
- Barbara stated “It’s cool we have an inroad to HHSC – a manager (Veronica) knowing about TxFVN.  
Barbara also mentioned she was approached by Sheila Craig. There were several had several conversations with Sheila on a survey about the state hospitals. Veronica is on the workgroup, with the BH medical director leading the group. The survey wants to investigate what are the gaps to accessing state hospital beds. It was suggested in the workgroup to also survey families but it was unclear how to do that. It is unclear though when the survey will go out. They originally thought end of Nov, but we are not sure when yet. “At least families were brought in – we may just have to work backwards though to get that family piece in.”
- Veronica stated it was more than sending surveys to families for input, bigger question is “How do we get family leaders at the table?”
- We need parents in the state of Texas to champion to take that risk. Dr. Martinez and Colleen Horton of the Hogg Foundations are trying to “sprinkle themselves around” to impact policy.–
- [Veronica.martinez1@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:Veronica.martinez1@hhsc.state.tx.us)
- Nidia asked for clarification of org chart. With the new leadership roster, where does everyone fit? Veronica shared Noah’s division – peer support services are under substance use disorders. Certified Family Partners though are under Veronica. Veronica adult and child/youth (note: LOC TAY is under adult services)
- Where are the coming from? Veronica stated “Trina Ita and Hailey Turner, seen more together, what to bridge the gaps and stop the silos. There is a new, better understanding of system stakeholders and how they are the key.

IV. **Lunch** was provided by the Hogg Foundation.

V. **Family Leadership Curriculum and Trainings**

- Barbara reported there have been 2 Family Empowerment trainings provided this past quarter that mirrored the content of *The Journey to Leadership*”. One was held in north Texas and the other held in east Texas. The intent is to hold at least two more: one in Houston and one in south Texas. The promotion language was changed from “leadership training” to “empowerment training” as a suggestion from the east Texas CFPs. They felt the term might be scary for families and misunderstand the term. The content was basically the same “how can we use our journey to impact system change”. Barbara was assisted by Valencia Gensollen and Stormy Holifield.
- Stormy reported ‘They really enjoyed the group lessons – I think where we went wrong was in the advertising time. We weren’t able to get a lot of families. The participants stated they would be willing to attend another training. One man attended. He was very, very

engaged, and stated he really got something from it. Another participant stated she would go through it again, maybe as a refresher, It gave her motivation to speak up and be a family leader and a family advocate.

- Barbara: “I sent the invitation to Texoma, Tarrant County to their Family Connection. Yvonne, from Texas, put the flyers in the waiting room. The man saw it and said, “this is something I need to go to.” He lived about 45 miles for him to come. Stormy stated that another lady said “This motivates me to be a part of the governance board for the system of care (east Texas)” Other participants were a lady in McKinney who part of their governance board and Susan Hickock, a family leader, who is a transplant from another state. She plans on attending TxFVN when she does get to come.
- All members at today’s meeting were given a bag which contained the contents given to all the training participants. This contained a Folder, a TxFVN pen, tip sheets, and a notebook (At this time, the Leadership curriculum hadn’t been printed). Each member today though was also given a *The Journey to Leadership* hard copy.
- Stormy also stated that an empower “survival kit” was included in the participants folders. This was created by Lynne Friese, a family leader out of Hill Country and a CFP. This “kit” used the acrostic E.M.P.O.W.E.R. to describe what empowerment means. In the future, we may want to change it up a little, *Stars* – shining star, *Penny* – meaning and informed decisions, *Heart* is to remind you of your passion when advocating for your child, *coffee bean* – (came from a story of “carrot, the egg and the coffee bean”. It describes how boiling water changes each of them –carrot changed to mush, the egg hardened or do you become like the coffee bean that changed in the water.
- Barbara stated from a trainer perspective “it was fun for me to watch their leadership journey (Stormy and Valenica) grow.
- The curriculum is listed under resources on the website – digital version is fillable – print friendly version leaves in the graphics, but takes out a lot of the big stuff ink friendly.
- Every parent can be encouraged to be a change agent.
- Follow up with the participants should take place to see how their journey is being impacted through the training.

**VI. 2020 Work Plan Development** Donna led the group in brainstorming what TxFVN wanted to accomplish in 2020.

- Action Items- Take Always
  - ✓ One Wish on Web page
  - ✓ Call and Meeting Schedule (Discussion pursued on options but was inconclusive. Leadership team will continue to work on it.) It was determined though that our next meeting will be Feb. 27, 2020. It was suggested we have a meeting in April so we could promote Children’s Mental Health Awareness before rather than later in May.
  - ✓ Check into broadcasting meeting on Zoom
  - ✓ Calendar Evite-Gmail
- Continue Educating Legislators on family involvement and engagement (but how?)
- Revisit “One Wish: Define behavioral health, language is stigmatizing—(Explore at next meeting)
- Expand Curriculum audience base to reach broader scope of participants
- Categorize Next Steps by Focus Areas
- Cultural Humility/Responsiveness/Integrity
- Look at what initiatives we want to address and promote
- Decide on the 2020 calendar dates

➤ Leadership rotations as per bylaws

VII. Closing Remarks- Our next meeting will be held February 27, 2020. We will continue planning for the year's focus.