

A Youth Guide to Wraparound Services:

Your Life, Your Future



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Table of Contents

- 2** Acknowledgements
- 3** Wrap-a-what?
- 4** Why Wraparound?
- 6** Do I Have a Choice?
- 7** So, What Can I Choose?
- 8** What If....?
- 10** Exactly How Does This Work?
- 23** Closing
- 24** Wraparound Checklist
- 25** References



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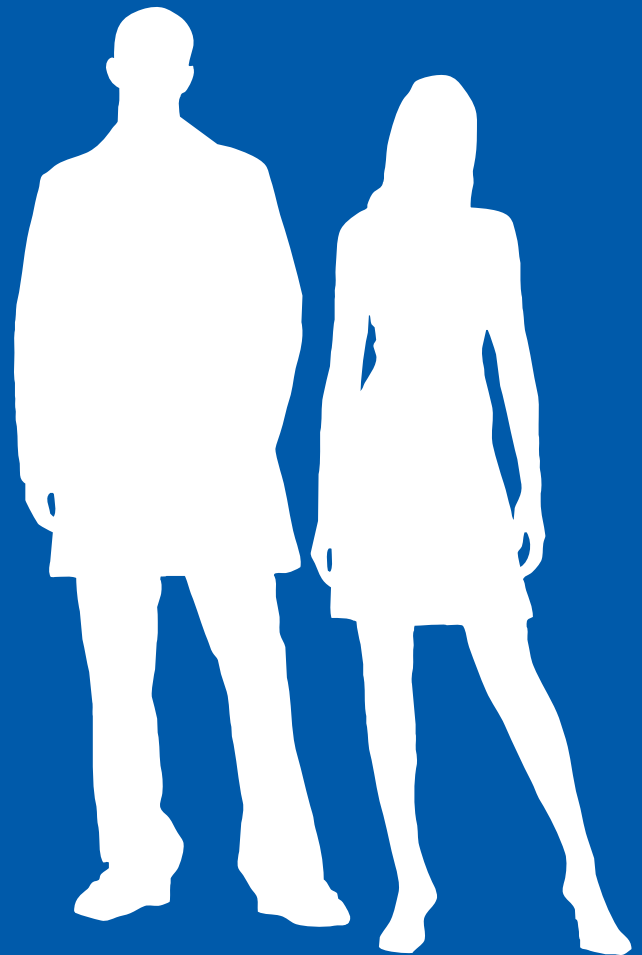
Wrap-a-what?

Someone cares about your life and future. That's why you've been recommended for Wraparound. Funny name for a process that has one goal: supporting you in making positive life choices.

Wraparound provides this support through a team created for you and by you. Some team members will be people who provide you and your family support services, such as counselors and therapists. Others will be people you choose because you care about one another—for example, family members, a good friend, or a favorite teacher.

Team members support you as you figure out what's working in your life and what isn't. Together, you and your team create a plan of action based on your challenges, your dreams, and your life. Your Wraparound plan is unique to you and your situation.

While no two Wraparound plans look alike, teens in Wraparound seem to want the same thing: to feel loved and safe in their families, friendships, and communities. They want to find ways to express themselves to others. Wraparound can help with all that.



Why Wraparound?

Many young people choose Wraparound because they want something in their lives to get better. Maybe it's their family lives, friendships, or grades. Perhaps it's their feelings about themselves and others. Often, it's many things.

Some young people don't choose Wraparound. It is chosen for them, maybe by a family member, a therapist, or even a judge. They may have had problems with the law, drugs or alcohol, and lots of other stuff—food, sex, cutting, skipping school, running away, and more.

However young people come to Wraparound, they all face challenges. Some have been labeled depressed. Others have been told they have anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Some teens take medication to help, while others find medication isn't effective. Wraparound pulls together services that help teens tackle challenges with their feelings and behavior.

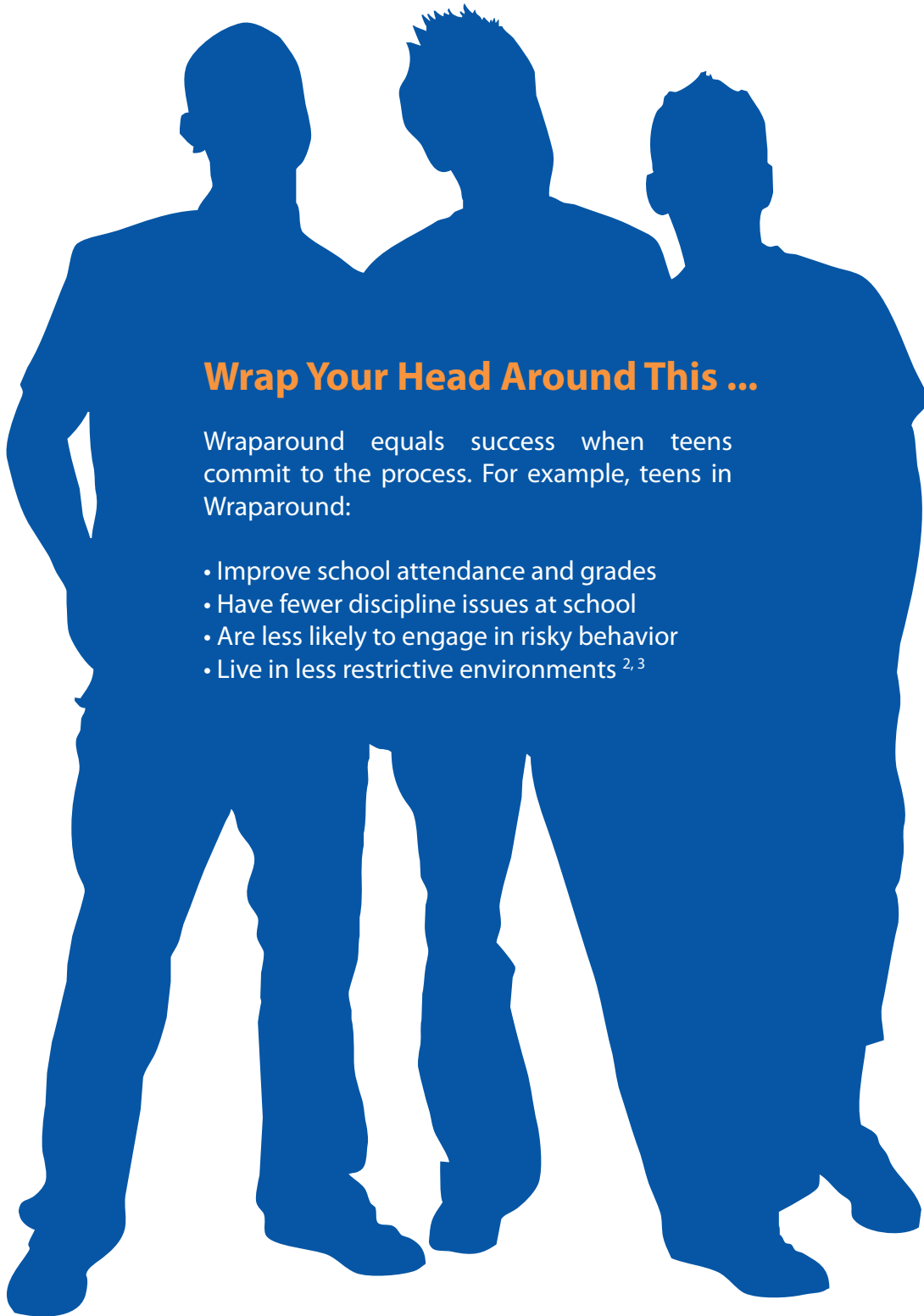


Sometimes young people come to Wraparound because of a medical problem or a disability. They have to deal with breathing machines or communicate by using computers. They need lots of high-tech support to be independent or just to stay alive. Wraparound helps them get what they need, get it working, and keep it up to date.

Other times, parents' problems with alcohol or drug use, mental illness, physical disability, or dangerous or criminal behavior have created serious challenges for their children. Some parents may hurt their children, and some children may hurt their parents.

Wraparound can help keep you safe and help your parents, too. Of course, not all young people have parents to care for them. If you are in this situation, Wraparound will work with you to find other family members or adults who can serve this important role.¹

Whether you have chosen Wraparound or it was chosen for you, you'll soon be part of a team. Your team will support you as you think about what you like and don't like in your life and what you want to be better. Your team will give you the support and skills you need to make good things happen.



Wrap Your Head Around This ...

Wraparound equals success when teens commit to the process. For example, teens in Wraparound:

- Improve school attendance and grades
- Have fewer discipline issues at school
- Are less likely to engage in risky behavior
- Live in less restrictive environments ^{2,3}

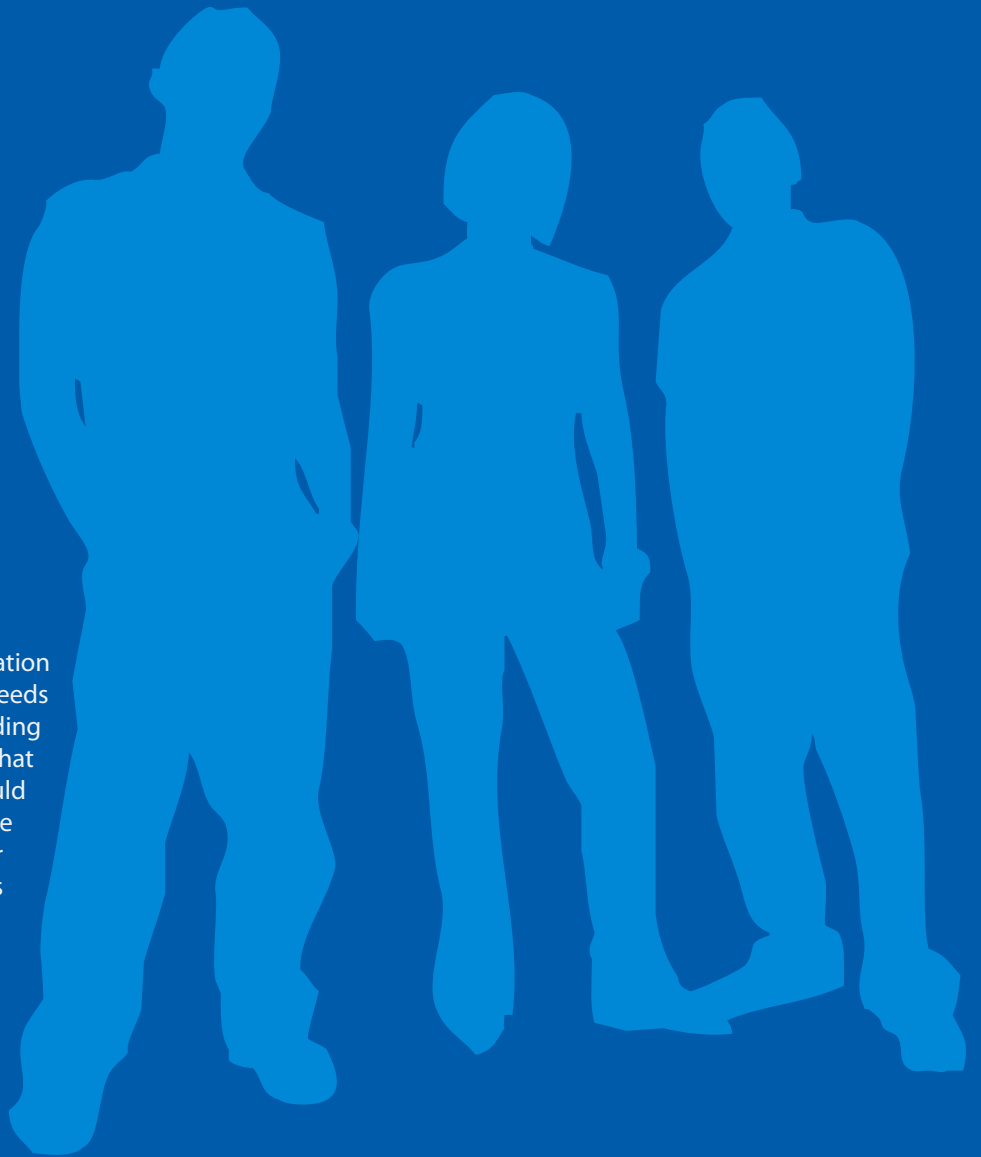
Do I Have a Choice?

Counties across the nation decide who they think needs Wraparound. If you're reading this, you live in a county that believes Wraparound would benefit you. Maybe you've been asked to consider Wraparound as well as other support programs, all of which sound pretty good to you.

Chances are, though, you may be faced with a "forced choice."

This means that you and your parents are required to pick between Wraparound and one or two other options, like lock up or placement in a residential treatment center. Those options would mean living away from home for a while.

And sometimes, Wraparound is not a choice but a legal requirement. Because something risky or illegal has happened in your life or within your family, a legal authority requires you to participate in Wraparound.





So, What Can I Choose?

There's no getting around the age thing: if you are under 18, adults have legal responsibility for your decisions. That said, the point of Wraparound is to involve you as much as possible in choices that affect your life. For example, in Wraparound you will:

- Help pick and guide your support team.
- Create your plan with input from all team members—not just the therapists, doctors, teachers, and other professionals.
- Include activities and interests in your plan that you like—sports, music, you name it. If you want to strengthen a relationship with someone in your family, your Wraparound team will help you do that.

If you have done something illegal or unsafe for you or others, you will have fewer choices in Wraparound. As your actions become safer, you will likely get more choices and make more decisions for yourself.

What If ...



... I've Heard It All Before?

You have probably heard about other “youth programs” and maybe even have been in one or two. While some people call Wraparound a program, it’s really a process.

That process begins with you—by identifying your strengths and challenges—and ends with you—by making positive choices to improve your life. During this process, a team you’ve helped build works with you to be sure you have a plan that gets you where you want to be in life.

Once you’re in Wraparound, you can expect to:

- Be part of a team that includes family or other caregivers and others who support you and your goals.
- Be listened to and treated with respect.
- Be able to tell your story, your way, without being judged.
- Be held responsible for what you do or say you’ll do.
- Hold others responsible for what they do or say they’ll do.

... I'm Angry?

Many young people come to Wraparound angry. Some of them are in trouble at home, at school, and with the law.

They have run out of choices. Other young people have made mistakes, some serious, so other people are deciding what will happen to them. Some just want everybody to leave them alone, but no one will. They are tired of people telling them what to do and who to be.

Some teens are mad at certain people in their lives. They are disappointed and feel people important to them have let them down. Some have deep hurts they have trouble living with. For them, life has been tough.

It’s okay to be mad about this stuff. Nobody wants to be let down, and nobody likes to be forced to do things. Over time, though, anger can get in the way of moving forward.

Whether you have come to Wraparound by your own choice or because you had to, you have been given a chance to honestly look at yourself, your life, and those in it. The people who really care about you will likely be on your team, and that’s a good starting point for moving past anger.

... I'm Ordered To Do Wraparound?

If you are required to be in Wraparound, you need to know this: Something has happened that got the legal authorities involved with you and your family. That almost always means you will lose some choices. This is hard on both teens and adults.

Legal authorities are required to step in when illegal behavior has happened. They have the right to decide what those who broke the law have to do to make things right. If you did something illegal, part of their decision will be based on your track record—for example, how you're doing in school and whether you've been involved with the law before.

If a member of your family broke the law, the same applies to them. Is it the first time or the fifth? Is your relative working? Taking care of you and other children responsibly? All these factors and more will matter a lot when determining what happens next.

A lot of young people think it isn't fair that what happens to them depends on other people in their families, especially their parents and other adult caregivers. However, in a difficult situation like this, Wraparound can help get your family back on track.

IF YOU'VE BEEN ORDERED INTO WRAPAROUND...

... here's how to make the most of it.

- How you act makes a difference in how people treat you. Treat people with respect and good manners and they will often do the same for you.
- Cooperate with Wraparound planning. If you are having trouble, talk to someone on your Wraparound team so you can get help.
- If you have messed up, apologize and ask how you can make up for it. If somebody else messed up, try to forgive the person. Give him or her a chance to change.
- Do some good to make up for anything you did wrong. If you didn't do anything wrong, do something good just to do it! If you need help with this, talk with your team.
- Ask your team to tell you what you have to do so you can earn more choices.
- Ask your team what you should not do and how they can help you not do it.
- If you feel anyone on the Wraparound team is being disrespectful of you or your family, politely speak up or ask someone you trust to speak up for you. Do this when anything is bothering you.

Because Wraparound is unique to you—and your family—it can be very effective. It gathers on one team all the people who can help you tackle your challenges and build a positive future. Most important, your voice and choice matter in Wraparound.

Exactly **How** Does This Work?

Let's talk about what Wraparound really means for you.

As a start, read through the steps that follow before you meet with your Wraparound facilitator. Jot down your thoughts as you're reading. This guidebook is your map for where you want your life to go, so feel free to make notes on how you want to get there.



Meeting With Your Wraparound Facilitator



1.5 Hours for Steps 1-3

Step 1: Getting to Know You

In Step 1 of Wraparound, a facilitator visits you at home—or wherever you're most comfortable—to get to know you. The facilitator also meets your parents or guardian in this visit. Sometimes one or two other Wraparound people also attend this first visit (see *Who Might I Meet in Wraparound?*).

The facilitator tells you more about Wraparound and answers your questions. Of course, if you have questions any time during the Wraparound process, please ask them. Wraparound is about you, and your voice will always be heard.

During this visit, the facilitator wants to learn about your strengths—what's important to you, what you like to do, and what you want your life to be like now and in the future. Your strengths also can include your faith, what inspires you, and your favorite people. And mention any hobbies, special talents, and music you like—these are also strengths.

So, share your strengths, even brag a bit. The more your facilitator learns about you, the more effective Wraparound will be for you.



My facilitator's name is:

Our meeting is scheduled for:

Date

Time

Place

My strengths include...

Favorite Activities

Special Interests

Beliefs / Faith

Hopes / Dreams

**Favorite / Most
Helpful People**

Other Strengths

Facilitators

To facilitate is to coordinate and help meetings and plans go smoothly. Facilitators do the following:

- Assess your strengths, goals, and needs
- Help you develop an initial safety and crisis plan
- Help you build your Wraparound team
- Help you create your Wraparound plan
- Manage meetings
- Participate in your plan
- Follow up on your plan
- Ensure key documents are where they should be
- Get plans and funding approved

Sometimes the facilitator just runs the meetings and other staff do the rest. Other times, facilitators work with you to support every aspect of your Wraparound experience. Facilitators usually are college graduates, and many have advanced degrees.





You can invite family members or other people important to your life to join this first meeting with your facilitator. As long as there's no official paperwork saying you can't see a certain person, you are welcome to include anyone who matters to you.

During this meeting, the facilitator also wants to learn which areas of your life you want or are required to work on while in Wraparound. Often, teens set goals in the following areas, called *life domains*:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> School | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Place to Live | <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Social |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual |

Before, during, and after your first meeting, the words in this list can guide you as you think of areas of your life you want or need to be better. To help you get started, check any of the domains that apply to you.

Do you feel bored or lonely? Try new activities and meet new people by targeting goals in the social domain. Want to pass all your classes? Then focus on the education domain. Maybe your biggest challenge is to get off probation. If so, choose goals in the legal domain.

By meeting your goals you will create positive outcomes. For example, getting grades of C or above would be an outcome of achieving your goal to pass all classes, which falls in the education domain.

Usually, teens in Wraparound want things to improve in several life domains. Perhaps they want something to be different in their family, in how they feel about things, and in how they act. Setting goals in the family, emotional, spiritual, and behavior domains could all be good choices in this situation.

Now picture what your life will look like when things improve in each area you've checked. As a solid next step, make your list of what you need to get to this better life you're working on in Wraparound. Items on your list might fall into such categories as:

- Emotional support—like having love and understanding
- Behavioral support—such as having a mentor to learn good communication skills
- Logistical support—perhaps having a ride to appointments
- Service support—such as having a counselor or tutor

Dare to dream and ask for what you need—it's your life. In the Life Domains Activity chart, write down each life area you checked above. Next, jot down what good things (outcomes) might come from improving that area. Then, record what you think might help improve that part of your life.

LIFE DOMAINS ACTIVITY

Life Domain I Want To Improve	Outcomes If This Domain Improves	What I Need For This Domain To Improve
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family life 	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have no more than three small fights a week. • I can go out with, visit, or have friends over at least three to four times a week. • I will spend one night a week with my Uncle John. 	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful ways to solve arguments • Rules my parents and I agree on • Rides to visit my Uncle John

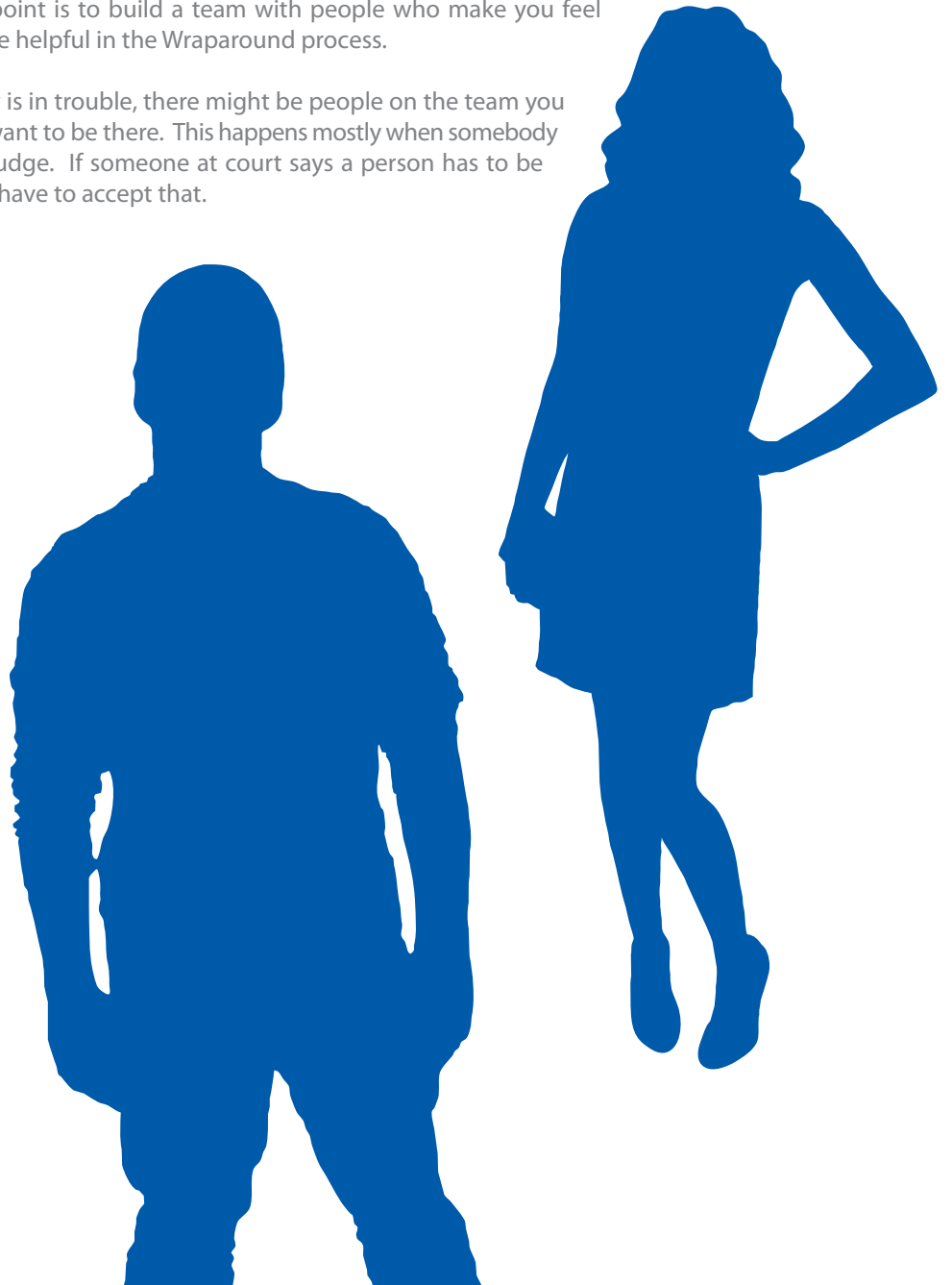
Note: If you do this activity when you first review this guidebook, terrific. If not, please complete it before your first Wraparound team meeting.

Step 2: Building Your Wraparound Team

In your first meeting with the facilitator, you also complete Step 2. This step involves figuring out who will be on your Wraparound team.

Your team will include some professionals—for example, a teacher, therapist, and probation officer—as well as family members, friends, and other people you like and trust. Parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, coaches, people from where you worship—you choose. The point is to build a team with people who make you feel comfortable and who might be helpful in the Wraparound process.

If you or anyone in your family is in trouble, there might be people on the team you and your family do not really want to be there. This happens mostly when somebody is involved with a court or a judge. If someone at court says a person has to be there, teens and their families have to accept that.





Who Might I Meet in Wraparound?

In addition to your facilitator, here are some other people you might meet in Wraparound. Their support and skills can make a good Wraparound experience even better.

Family Specialists

Some Wraparound programs have staff, often called family specialists, who are available to help and keep the process moving efficiently. Family specialists are often very flexible and always prepared to do whatever the Wraparound plan requires. They can work with you and your family on anything—from helping meet your most basic life needs to making friends, getting jobs, and supporting positive life changes during the Wraparound process.

Advocates

Sometimes advocates serve the same role as family specialists. In most programs, though, they're called advocates because they help young people and their families get through whatever they're dealing with—school planning meetings, court, and decisions about what gets paid for or what services families receive. In other programs, advocates have more general roles. They stick up for people who are trying to make important changes in their lives—both teens and their families.

Parent Partners/Family Liaisons

Wraparound is increasingly enlisting parents, grandparents, and other family members of young people who are in or have graduated from Wraparound to support families new to Wraparound. What they do varies from program to program. For example, parent partners/family liaisons may serve as sounding boards or informal counselors or help in assessment and planning. Typically, parents are their main focus, but they also may focus on teens if that makes the Wraparound plan work better.

Youth Coordinators

The role of youth coordinator is new to Wraparound and has been very well received. What parent partners do for adult family members, youth coordinators do for teens. Many youth coordinators needed or have received services like those found in Wraparound. Others have participated in plans for their brothers, sisters, or parents. Their personal experience helps them understand how to effectively reach out to young people. Youth coordinators organize group activities and interact with youth one-on-one. They serve as mentors and coaches. Like parent partners, they are flexible and fill whatever role is needed on Wraparound teams and in Wraparound plans.

Evaluators

Evaluators don't participate in Wraparound but instead measure how well the process is working. Talking to you and your parents is one of the most important ways to evaluate its effectiveness. Some evaluators are parents, while others are students or university professors. Whatever their background, evaluators are trained to help you express your opinions honestly about things that matter, to observe Wraparound meetings, and to measure how well your Wraparound plan is working. You will usually meet evaluators before you meet Wraparound people and then see them again as the process continues. Evaluators don't repeat what you tell them unless they think you or others around you aren't safe.

NO TWO WRAPAROUND TEAMS LOOK THE SAME

See what works for some teens.

- Peter's team includes his mom, her best friend, his favorite uncle, his probation officer, his choir director, his social worker, and a court counselor.
- Janni's team includes her grandparents, the Vice Principal at her school, her therapist, her best friend, and her granddad's AA sponsor.
- Juan's team includes his dad and his dad's girlfriend, his mom and her boyfriend, his Big Brother, his faith-based youth group leader, his homeroom teacher from 2 years ago, a family specialist, and the youth coordinator from the Wraparound program.
- Leah's team includes her foster parents, her dad and little brother, her Girl Scout leader, her best friend from the troop, her social worker, her brother's therapist, and her guardian ad litem.
- Sam's team includes staff from the group home he was in, a permanency planning specialist, his psychologist, and his older sister.
- Gabriella's team includes her parents, her sisters, her science teacher, the school librarian, and a Child Protective Services worker.



People I want on my Wraparound team include...

FAMILY	
FRIENDS	
OTHERS	

Step 3: Drafting a Crisis and Safety Plan

The first meeting with your facilitator concludes with Step 3—creating a crisis and safety plan. Your facilitator asks if you or anybody close to you is facing a big change, crisis, or unsafe situation. If these challenges might come up before your first Wraparound team meeting, you need a plan for how to handle them and stay safe.

Together, you, your parents or guardian, and your facilitator create this plan. As things get better in your life or as new challenges arise, you will rework this plan in meetings with your Wraparound team.

Meeting With Your Wraparound Team



1.5 Hours for Steps 4-6

Step 4: Having Your First Team Meeting

About 2 to 4 weeks later, your Wraparound team meets. The meeting begins with everybody saying who they are and why they're there. Next, the facilitator tells the team what he/she learned about your strengths, relationships, and any other information you shared when you met.

The facilitator also mentions your family's strengths and may discuss the rules the team will follow at the meetings—such as treating everyone with respect and not yelling at or interrupting others.

A big focus of this first Wraparound team meeting is creating your Wraparound plan—or at least getting a good start on it. Use the list you came up with for the Life Domains Activity on page 13 to begin.

With your team, pick the areas from this list you want to or need to work on. Also look at the ideas you jotted down for how to make things better in those domains. Share those ideas with your team mates and be open to their feedback.

Together, work on more ideas for how to improve the areas of your life that you and your team agree are important. Someone—you or a team mate—should write down all the ideas the team mentions.

Some of the ideas suggested may be pretty general (Example: To feel good about myself.) Other ideas might be more detailed (Example: To feel better about myself by attending all sessions with my social worker and going out for the track team.)

Don't worry if some ideas are more detailed than others. The important thing is to think of and write down as many ideas as possible.



Step 5: Creating Your Wraparound Plan

After all ideas are listed, you and your team focus on the details of steps toward improving areas of your life you want to get better. Try to be as specific as possible. Think about exactly what needs to change for an area of your life to get better as you do the *Activity: Turning Ideas Into Strategies*.

Once you've finished this activity, you'll have the foundation for a strong plan that will work for you. Then, turn to pages 20-21 for a sample plan and space to record your own plan.

If you need ideas to help you get started on your plan, check out page 22 to see what's worked for some teens. And remember—ask your team mates if you have any questions during this process. This is a team effort, but it's YOUR plan!

Examples

Ideas for What I Want to Change	Strategies for How to Make Change Happen
Live with my family, go to my neighborhood school, and have better relationships with my parents, brothers, and sisters	Stop hitting people in my family, get no grades worse than a C, and make two friends who aren't in trouble at school or anywhere else
Be safe at home and make good decisions about how I treat people	For my parent: Stop using drugs and alcohol For me: Express myself in words when I'm angry and stop running away or leaving where I'm supposed to be without permission
Feel as well as possible and stay out of trouble	Finish probation successfully by taking my medication, attending school as required, passing random drug tests, doing 200 hours of community service, and not doing anything illegal

My Ideas and Strategies

Ideas for Change	Strategies for Change

My Wraparound Plan

Life Domain I Want To Improve <small>[from page 13]</small>	Outcomes If This Domain Improves <small>[from page 13]</small>	What I Need for This Domain To Improve <small>[from page 13]</small>	My Strengths <small>[from page 11]</small>	Strategies for Change <small>[from page 19]</small>	Who Can Help (Any Team Members?)
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Sample Plan

<p>School! I flunked a course last semester and need to make up those credits somehow. This semester, I'm struggling in English.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will get enough credits to move to the next grade. • I won't have to do summer school. • I will graduate on time. 	<p>I need more academic credits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm pretty musical. I sing and play the piano and guitar. • I'm good at writing song lyrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to get credit for the guitar class I teach at the after-school program • Find out if writing lyrics can count toward my poetry unit in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Guidance Counselor and Music teacher • My English teacher
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My Plan

Need ideas for your Wraparound plan? Check out these plans.

- Kelly's plan lets her call her grandma from school when she feels anxious and arranged for her to take piano lessons.
- Carlos' plan got him a mentor to help him research what soldiers promise to do and what they are not allowed to do and then turn what he learns into a personal code of behavior.
- Tammy's plan got her dad rides to AA meetings, arranged for her to volunteer with abandoned animals at the Humane Society, and helped her find and join a religious study group.
- Darrell's plan helped him get a website design job, got him a tutor for the GED, and helped him make restitution for what he stole.
- Peshali's plan helped her mom get a cosmetology license, got her and her sister into the Boys and Girls Club, and arranged for her to teach dance classes at the community center.
- George's plan helped his family find a place to worship, got him help with his anger, and got him into a communication skills group.
- Sari's plan got her baby brother into preschool, arranged for her to sleep over at a relative's home twice a month, and helped her family get the electricity and cable turned back on.
- Russell's plan got him the right doctor and medicine, found him a lawyer, and helped him change his class schedule at school.
- Maria's plan helped her learn about respect by watching her favorite movies with a counselor, got her a social skills teacher, and helped her learn to make friends.
- Anton's plan got him a guitar and music lessons, found a parenting coach for his parents, and got him into an after-school program with lots of musical activities.



Remember—no two Wraparound plans are alike. Your plan should fit your life—your strengths, your challenges, your needs. It should use strategies that draw on your strengths to meet your challenges and needs. Wraparound is about your voice and your choice. So, be heard, make choices, get feedback from your team, and build a plan that works for you.

Step 6: Refining Your Crisis and Safety Plan

Next, it's back to crisis and safety planning and figuring out how to handle big changes in your life. Your first crisis and safety plan was a draft, made when you and the Wraparound staff didn't yet know each other very well and your team wasn't in place.

In Step 6—with the support of Wraparound staff who now know you better and team members you have chosen—you adjust your crisis and safety plan. It's important to fine tune this plan to fit your challenges and possible crises and to keep you safe. This plan is a key part of your overall Wraparound plan.

Let's face it: Stuff happens. When a crisis you and your team planned for happens and you use the plan, you will probably talk about it at your next team meeting. Remember: Every time you face a challenge, you and your team will learn something. Each challenge is an opportunity to think about what worked and what didn't. In time, you'll figure out how to handle and even avoid crises.

Working With Your Wraparound Team

Step 7: Living Your Plan

Your Wraparound team will meet regularly, perhaps twice a month. Throughout this process, you and your team will adjust your plan to fit your life. If challenges come up, they'll be taken care of in your plan. And when good things start to happen, your plan will reflect that too. Better still, good choices and outcomes usually mean more choices in more areas of your life.

Although the timing is different for everyone, at some point you and your Wraparound team will realize that you don't just have a plan—you're living your plan. This means that you are safe and have good skills for handling challenges. It also means you've made changes in areas of your life you wanted to get better.

When that day arrives, give yourself a huge pat on the back. Thank those who believed in you. Together, you and your Wraparound team pulled together to make some good things happen in your life. You are ready to graduate from Wraparound.

Closing

Please give Wraparound a chance to help you and your family. It has worked well for many young people and those who love them. It can work for you. To keep the steps of the Wraparound process straight, you might find the Wraparound Checklist helpful. Always ask your questions and always state your choices. Remember—in Wraparound, your voice and choice matter.



Wraparound Checklist

► Meeting With My Wraparound Facilitator

- Meet with _____, my Wraparound facilitator, on _____.
- Invite _____ to be at this meeting.

Step One

- Share my strengths, interests, and beliefs.
- Identify people I'd like to be on my Wraparound team.
- Talk about what areas of my life I want to get better.
- Discuss what I need for those life areas to get better.
- Do the Life Domains Activity.

Step Two

- Build my Wraparound team.

Step Three

- Draft a crisis and safety plan.

► Meeting With My Wraparound Team

Step Four

- Have my first Wraparound team meeting.
- Share with my team what I want to improve in my life and how.
- Get my team's feedback on the ideas I shared with them.
- Write down all ideas—mine and those suggested by my team.

Step Five

- Look at all ideas for areas of my life to be improved.
- Think about ways—strategies—to make changes in those areas.
- Do the Turning-Ideas-Into-Strategies Activity.
- Create my Wraparound plan.

Step Six

- Adjust my crisis and safety plan.

► Working With My Wraparound Team

Step Seven

- Meet regularly with my team (usually every 2 weeks).
- Adjust my plan as things improve in my life or if new challenges come up.

► Graduating From Wraparound

- Congratulate myself!
- Thank my team!





References

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