

Session Handout

Support, Not Stigma:

Breaking the chain of multi-generational substance use disorders and CPS involvement

Washington State Prevention Summit
Advancing Prevention: Connection & Hope
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Part 1: The problem

Parents who are striving to overcome poverty and substance use disorders face overwhelming challenges, including more stigma than support from existing systems. This is especially true for BIPOC families.



Substance use disorders are often multi-generational. There are many contributing factors:



- Families face stigma and shame
- Financial insecurities create barriers to support
- Accessing resources is challenging; services are siloed, and navigating them is complex, even with support.
- Parents are generally not able to get treatment with a child
- The bond between parent and child is not protected

Reflection: What supports did you have in your life? What protected you?

The bond between parents and infants is vital and not protected. For example, in 2017, 144 infants entered the child welfare system in Snohomish County, WA. Virtually all were from low-income homes, and 98% were due to substance use disorders.

The harmful impact of separation on children is well documented and can include the following:

- Developmental delays
- Learning disabilities
- Higher delinquency
- More likely to enter the criminal justice system
- More likely to experience a substance use disorder

It is preventable.

Part 2: What is Homeward House?

Through Homeward House, families find a central source for a network of specialized wraparound services they need to conquer those challenges and build strong, healthy bonds with their children.

Services include a parent-ally mentor providing individualized support throughout their journey, enriched parent/child visitation in a home-like environment at our visitation center, assistance with basic needs, help from an infant mental health specialist, and assistance with education and employment. The goals are:

- Safe placement for parent and infant during crisis and treatment
- Preserve the parent-child bond
- Permanency
- Confront inequities

Part 3: The Approach

Replacing stigma with support and preventing separation

Critical Elements

- Specializing in the prenatal-postnatal period
- Supporting the parent-child bond
- Leadership from parents with lived experience
- Collaborating toward collective impact



Parent-Ally Mentors

Parent-ally mentors who have overcome similar challenges and are now living healthy, productive lives are at the heart of our services. They build relationships with parents and support them step-by-step in utilizing the services available to them in their journeys to recovery and reunification. Each parent is matched with a parent-ally mentor to meet them where they are, build trust with the family, and provide a variety of services, including:

- Warm handoffs to service providers
- Advocating for them with CPS
- Attending court
- Safety planning
- Setting-up enriched visitation
- Supporting treatment and recovery
- Assisting with basic needs
- Empowering parents to reach their goals on their journey to recovery

Infant Mental Health Support: Building resiliency and protective factors.

- Dyadic therapy
- Asset-based intervention
- Multi-gen support
- Parent groups to build community and skills
- Creative solutions



Impact

Infant-Caretaker Living Situations for Families in Infant Mental Health Support

76% of removals prevented, reunited, or with plan to return home

- **47.6%** - Team prevented removal
- **19%** - Children reunited after removal
- **4.8%** - Plan for parent and baby to live together with a supportive adult
- **4.8%** - Foster care with the plan to return home

Other:

- 14.3% - Kinship care with no plan to return home
- 9.5% - Foster care with no plan to return home

Racial equity

Black and Indigenous families are overrepresented in the child welfare system, which is indefensible. Marginalization and oppression are embedded in systems for many different groups and populations. As a collaborative, we are taking responsibility not to perpetuate inequities and to work to dismantle them.

A Collaborative Approach

Anchored by members with lived experience, Homeward House partners are from five different domains and are collaborating toward making a lasting collective impact.

We are all the hope for the future.

Homeward House Collaborative

homewardhouse.org

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Take the bond between
parent and child seriously.

We do.

There is
HOPE
for families
facing
crisis, 
treatment,
and recovery
in Snohomish
County



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Homeward House Collaborative: Preventing and reducing the multigenerational harm of substance use disorders

Parents who are striving to overcome poverty and substance use disorders often face overwhelming challenges and are unable to keep their children.

Homeward House exists to provide these parents with the support they need to conquer those challenges and to build strong, healthy bonds with their children.

We welcome families with newborns or infants up to one year old (as well as those who are expecting), who are living at or below the federal poverty level and have an active substance use disorder.

Through the Homeward House Collaborative, families find personalized support from parent ally mentors and central access to a network of critical wrap-around services from a range of local resources.

Certified parent ally mentors — parents who have overcome similar challenges and are now living healthy, productive lives — build relationships with parents and support them step by step.

Services include enriched parent/child visitation, assistance with basic needs, support from an infant mental health specialist, and assistance with education and employment — all at no cost.



www.homewardhouse.org