Team - A Bouquet You Give Yourself

A team means belonging

Jacqueline Janssen

September 30, 2025

Mental illness is truly the whole family's sorrow. One mother said, "I can't do it all. I'm exhausted." Some refer to this as decision or compassion fatigue; moms call it Monday.

I had to deal with police to get my loved one with mental illness and anosognosia, the care he needed. A friend listened to my fear and despair. My sister was there as I dealt with the hospital. A NAMI mother heard my angst fighting the HIPAA policy I didn't understand. A police officer helped me search encampments. When I missed holidays, my friends and family called me wanting to help.

I didn't call them a team, but it was. If I had known, I would have found out how to be a team and let them help me. I would have learned how to call the team together when I needed it, and keep it going for these last 22 years of fears, tears, and cheers.

Each of them wanted to know how to help. At that time I knew very little (See What I Wish I'd Known)
I didn't have time to keep them up on it when I had to speak with them individually.

Now I know, I could have gotten them together; they would have felt needed and known they mattered, and would have loved celebrating small successes and recovery, together. What matters most is not titles but trust and the same goal: helping the whole family. This the team members learn and get stronger. We all heal.

It is also best, when our loved one can, that they be part of the team.

Because a team is where no one is singled out and no one is left out. A team is a way our loved ones know many care. It's a way they see that they belong. Our loved ones realize we are proud of their road to health. It is proven that then, and when the clinicians support the team, estrangement and homelessness are less likely.

In a team we learn together about what is available, what is possible and what works.
Recovery takes care strong enough to hold the whole family who loves them. A team is built intentionally to widen the possibility of recovery.

A team replaces isolation with partnership. It allows clinicians to practice true treatment, families to regain their voice, and individuals to receive steady, coordinated care rather than fragmented interventions.

A team can grow and change over time, as needed. It is a different bouquet for each family and might include:

- A clinician, social worker or case manager who includes the family.
- A NAMI or peer-support group member.
- An advocate who knows the system.
- Faith or community allies.

- Family members to offer meals, visits, transportation, paperwork, technical assistance with TVs, social media and telephones, and keeping in touch.

How to Create a Team

1. Start where you are. Reach out to one person today. Reach out to one person who helped you and tell them, “You are part of my team, and I need you again now.”
2. Collaborate with clinicians. Appreciate them. Ask how to share your loved one’s history, timelines, patterns, allergies. Give them information about the value of families. (See documentation here): https://jacquelinejanssen.com/wp-content/uploads/Family-Involvement-Accelerates-Recovery.-v1.pdf
3. Build a plan together: what to do if symptoms appear, how to prevent burnout for caregivers, ground rules and when to meet.
4. Make meetings easy and satisfying, honest and open. Use language of collaboration, not blame, and healing. As peers say, “Nothing about me without me.”
5. Schedule brief check-ins, and keep adjusting as needs change. Meet not only when things fall apart. Celebrate all progress, Share successes with the clinicians.

The team itself will feel the healing. Families feel less alone. Clinicians witness real partnership and they are healed from burnout through recovery they know they supported.

With a team, loved ones will rediscover family and belonging, the best medicine our culture has. The beauty of a bouquet.

Reprinted from Substack: https://everyhomelesspersonhasamother.substack.com/p/team-a-bouquet-you-give-yourself
»»»
Clinician Family Collaboration - A New Model for Mental Health Care. Recording: Here
National Shattering Silence Coalition’s Protalk
Every Homeless Person Has a Mother - Publication 2025