

# WRAPAROUND

*Adapted from OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support.<sup>1</sup>*



Wraparound is a philosophy of care consisting of a defined planning process designed to build constructive relationships and support networks among students and youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities (EBD) and their families. It is community-based, culturally relevant, individualized, strength-based, and family-centered. Wraparound plans are comprehensive and address multiple life domains across home, school, and community. This includes a student's living environment, basic needs, safety, and social, emotional, educational, spiritual, and cultural needs.

Another defining feature of wraparound is that it is unconditional. If interventions are not achieving the outcomes desired by the team, the team regroups to rethink the configuration of supports, services, and interventions to ensure success in natural home, school, and community settings. In other words, students do not fail, but plans can fail! Rather than forcing a student to fit into existing program structures, wraparound is based on the belief that services and supports should be flexibly arranged to meet the unique needs of the students and their families.

Wraparound distinguishes itself from traditional service delivery in special education and mental health by focusing on connecting families, schools, and community partners in effective problem-solving relationships. Unique implementation features include (a) family and youth voices guide the design and actions of the team; (b) team composition and strategies reflect unique youth and family strengths and needs; (c) the team establishes the commitment and capacity to design and implement a comprehensive plan over time; and (d) the plan addresses outcomes across home, school, and community through one synchronized plan.

## WRAPAROUND

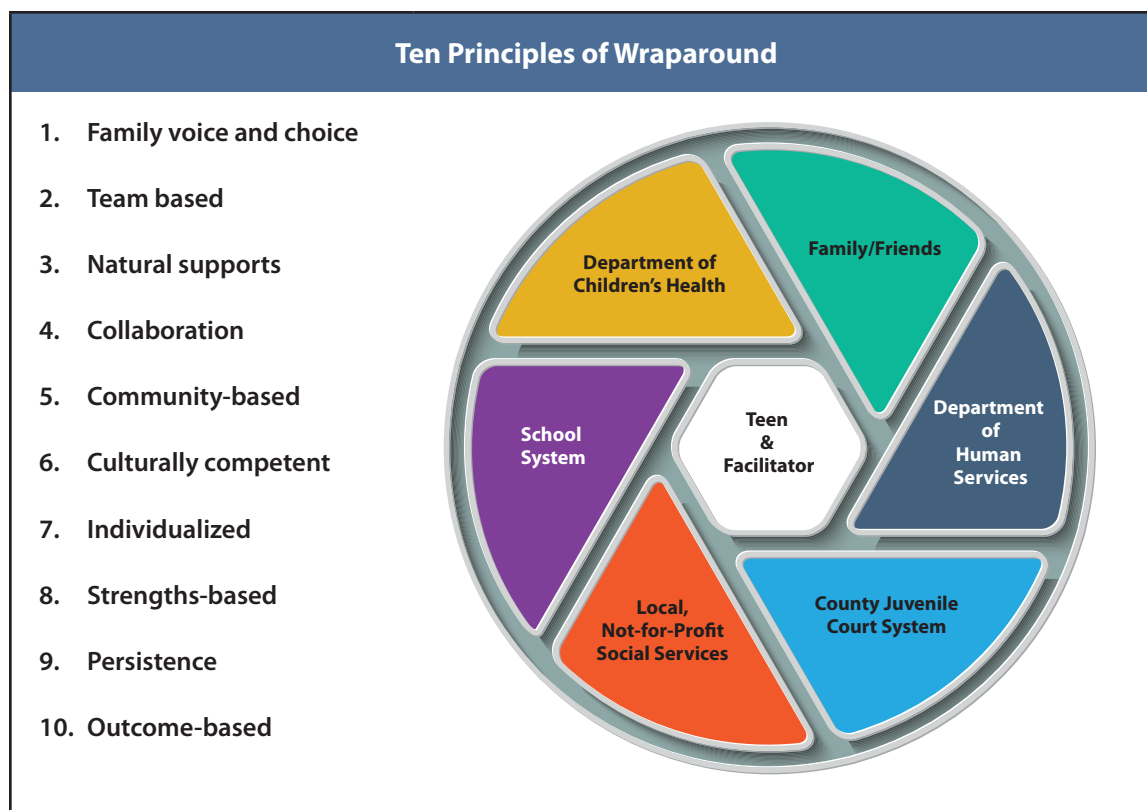
Although on the surface wraparound may appear similar to the typical special education or mental health treatment planning process, it goes much further by dedicating considerable effort to building constructive relationships and support networks among the youth and his or her family. This is accomplished by establishing a unique team, including each student and the student's family, that is invested in achieving agreed-upon quality-of-life indicators. Following a response to intervention (RtI) model in which problem-solving methods become increasingly more refined for smaller numbers of students, these more intensive techniques for engagement and team development are needed to ensure that a cohesive wraparound team and plan are formed.

The concept of wraparound has been operationalized in numerous forms. In fact, the absence of an established theoretical framework has contributed to a lack of consistency regarding procedural guidelines for wraparound. Nevertheless, two theories are most compatible with wraparound: *ecological systems theory* and *environmental ecology theory*. Both of these theories stress the influence of various systems (e.g., schools, health care) on the level of functioning for children and their families.

Two related theories reflect the family-centered, strengths-based approach of wraparound. First, the consistent underlying philosophy of wraparound is a change from "expert-driven" models as it places the family, not a mental health agency or the school, in the leadership role within the team process. Second, services are identified and designed based on the needs of the families and youth rather than on what the system has available and is experienced with providing. The ultimate goal is success for the youth within the context of their families and their home schools. These characteristics are what make wraparound a unique, family- and community-based process that is often experienced as antithetical to traditional mental health treatment planning or IEP procedures.

## The Ten Principles of Wraparound<sup>3</sup>

- 1. Family voice and choice.** Family and youth/child perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences.
- 2. Team based.** The wraparound team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to them through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships.
- 3. Natural supports.** The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support.
- 4. Collaboration.** Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members' perspectives, mandates, and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team member's work towards meeting the team's goals.
- 5. Community-based.** The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible, and least restrictive settings possible; and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life.
- 6. Culturally competent.** The wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of the child/youth and family, and their community.
- 7. Individualized.** To achieve the goals laid out in the wraparound plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports, and services.
- 8. Strengths-based.** The wraparound process and the wraparound plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child and family, their community, and other team members.
- 9. Persistence.** Despite challenges, the team persists in working toward the goals stated in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer required.
- 10. Outcome-based.** The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly.



Adapted from National Wraparound Initiative.<sup>2</sup>

## Wraparound Procedure and Components

Adapted from the OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports.<sup>4</sup>

A key component in the wraparound process is the development of a rich and deep strength profile that identifies very explicit strengths across settings (e.g., home, school, community) and life domains (social, cultural, basic living skills, academics, etc.). “Big needs” in wraparound may be defined as follows:

- The needs are so great that it will take a while to achieve the relevant goal, such as “James needs to feel respected at school!”
- There is more than one way to meet the need; for example, “Hector needs to feel competent/able about learning” vs. “Hector will complete his assignments.”
- The need will motivate the family to participate on the team. For instance, Maria’s mother needs to feel confident that Maria will get treated fairly at school.
- If met, the need will improve quality of life for the youth or those engaged with the youth on a regular basis (e.g., the family, the teacher).

## WRAPAROUND

The wraparound process includes specific steps to establish ownership and, therefore, investment of the people who spend the most time with the student (i.e., family, teacher). This creates an environment in which a range of interventions, including behavioral supports, is more likely to be executed with integrity. For example, a wraparound team may solicit involvement from the community to assist a family with accessing stable housing and other basic living supports as parents may be better able to focus on a home-based behavior change plan for their child if stress about being evicted from an apartment is alleviated. Other examples include teams facilitating transportation, recreation opportunities, and social supports.

Teams can also tailor supports for teachers who may be challenged with having to meet the unique needs of a student. For example, a plan to change problem behavior at school may be more likely to succeed if the teacher is supported by a trusted colleague of choice, who models the instruction of the replacement behavior or how to naturally deliver the reinforcement in the context of the classroom.

The wraparound process delineates specific roles for team members, including natural support persons, and detailed conditions for interventions, including specifying roles each person will play in specific circumstances. The role of a designated team facilitator is critical for ensuring that the process is adhered to and that the principles of the strength-based person-/family-centered approach are held fast.

### ***Phase I: Engagement and Team Preparation***

The wraparound facilitator, often a school social worker, counselor, or school psychologist, guides the team through the phases of wraparound, ensuring a commitment to “remain at the table” despite challenges and setbacks, until the needs of the youth and family are met and can be sustained without the wraparound team.

During Phase I, the facilitator works closely with the family, student, and teacher to build trust and ownership of the process. The first step is to reach out to the family and arrange a time and place to have an “initial conversation” to hear their story and begin to build a relationship and a team.

## WRAPAROUND

The family is encouraged to tell their “story” by articulating their perception of the strengths, needs, and experiences of their child and family. This initial contact should be a low-key conversational discourse with the goals of:

- Developing a trusting relationship;
- Establishing an understanding of the process and what they can expect; and
- Seeking information about potential team members, strengths, and big needs.

### ***Phase II: Initial Plan Development***

During Phase II, the facilitator moves from engagement and assessing strengths and needs with the family and other potential team members to guiding the team through the initial wraparound meetings. This shift into team meetings should occur as quickly as possible, typically within two weeks from the Phase I conversations. Baseline data reflecting youth, family, and teacher perception of strengths and needs are shared and used to guide team consensus on and commitment to quality-of-life indicators (the big needs).

During Phase II, facilitators share the strengths and needs data with the team. Needs are prioritized, and action planning begins as the facilitator guides team members to brainstorm strategies to increase strengths and meet needs. As strategies are developed, tasks and roles for all team members are clarified. Finally, a safety plan for school or home is developed if team members feel this to be an imminent need.

### ***Phase III: Ongoing Plan Implementation and Refinement***

During Phase III, data-based progress monitoring serves as a means of reviewing initial plans and revising interventions in response to ongoing efforts. The facilitator ensures adherence to a regular meeting schedule for the team and continuous data collection and review of results so that data inform the team when things are/not working, thus sustaining objectivity among team members.

### ***Phase IV: Transition From Wraparound***

The final phase of the wraparound process marks the formal point of transition when frequent/regular meetings are no longer needed. During this phase, accomplishments are reviewed and celebrated, and a transition plan is developed. The family may elect at this stage to share their experience with other families who are participating in the wrap-around process.

### **Wraparound and School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)**

*Adapted from the OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support.<sup>5</sup>*

Wraparound can be integrated into school-based planning for students with special needs, regardless of special education label or agency involvement. Families, friends, and other natural support persons can be brought together with teachers, behavior specialists, and other professionals involved with the student and family at the first indication of need. The wraparound approach is a critical part of the SWPBS system as it offers a means for schools to succeed with the 1-2% of students whose needs have become so complex that starting with an FBA/BIP process for one selected problem behavior is not efficient, effective, or adequate to improve quality-of-life issues for all those affected.

The benefits that SWPBS offers to the highest level of support on the continuum (wrap-around) include applying a problem-solving approach and using data to guide decisions. Also, full implementation of SWPBS at the universal level provides a solid base of lower-level interventions (e.g., primary and secondary) to build on and more effective and supportive environments in which to implement wraparound plans. Within a three-tier system of behavioral support, students who need tertiary-level supports also have access to and can benefit from universal and secondary supports. Each level of support in SWPBS is “in addition to” the previous level. In other words, no student only needs wraparound, as the wraparound plan, with its multiple life-domain and multiple-perspective focus, often makes the universal and secondary supports available in the school effective for the student.

### **References**

- <sup>1</sup> OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. (n.d.). Wraparound [Webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.pbis.org/school/tertiary-level/wraparound>
- <sup>2</sup> The National Wraparound Initiative. *Ten principles of wraparound*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children’s Mental Health, Portland State University.

- <sup>3</sup> Bruns, E. J., Walker, J. S., Adams, J., Miles, P., Osher, T. W., Rast, J., VanDenBerg, J. D., & National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group. (2004). *Ten principles of the wraparound process*. Portland, OR: National Wraparound Initiative, Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, Portland State University.
- <sup>4</sup> OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. (n.d.). Wraparound [Webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.pbis.org/school/tertiary-level/wraparound>
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Resources

- **Ten Principles of the Wraparound Process**  
[http://nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/Chapters/Bruns-2.1-\(10-principles-of-wrap\).pdf](http://nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/Chapters/Bruns-2.1-(10-principles-of-wrap).pdf)
- **PBIS–Wraparound**  
<https://www.pbis.org/school/tertiary-level/wraparound>
- **National Wraparound Initiative**  
<http://nwi.pdx.edu>
- **National Wraparound Initiative Resource Guide to Wraparound**  
<http://nwi.pdx.edu/NWI-book/index.php>
- **Institute on Disability (IOD)**  
[http://iod.unh.edu/Projects/renew/renew\\_main.aspx](http://iod.unh.edu/Projects/renew/renew_main.aspx)
- **RENEW Youth Portfolio**  
[http://nextsteps-nh.org/wp-content/uploads/RENEW\\_YouthPortfolio\\_103112.pdf](http://nextsteps-nh.org/wp-content/uploads/RENEW_YouthPortfolio_103112.pdf)