



A Youth Guide to Wraparound Services

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What is Wraparound?

Wraparound is a planning and problem-solving process that helps you and your family find solutions to your challenges. Teams of family members, friends and professionals come together to “wrap” you with the supports you need to set goals, take action and make choices that will help you build a better life.

Why Wraparound?

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 mixed up together.

Some youth have been labelled depressed. Others have been told they have a disorder—anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Some young people take medication that helps, while others find medication isn’t effective.

Sometimes parents’ problems with alcohol or drug use, mental illness, physical disability, or dangerous or criminal behaviour have created serious difficulties for children and youth in the home.

No matter what the challenges, Wraparound pulls together supports and services that help children and youth deal with them. Your team will help you determine what you like and don’t like in your life and what you want to be better. Then your team will give you the support and skills you need to make good things happen for you and the people around you.

Heard it all before?

You’ve probably heard about “youth programs,” and maybe you’ve even been involved in one or two. While some people call Wraparound a program, it’s really better described as a process. This process begins with you identifying your strengths and challenges, and it ends with you making positive choices to improve your life.

During this process, a team you’ve helped build works closely with you to be sure you have a plan that gets you where you want to be.

Once you’re in Wraparound, you can expect all of the following things to happen:

- You’ll be part of a team that can include family, friends, and others who support you and your goals.
- You’ll be listened to and treated with respect.
- You’ll be able to tell your story, your way, without being judged.
- You’ll be held responsible for what you do or say you’ll do.
- You’ll be able to hold others responsible for what they do or say they’ll do.

Do I have a choice?

The point of Wraparound is to involve you in the decisions that affect your life—so, yes, your voice and your choice is very important. During the Wraparound you will be empowered to make all sorts of choices:

- Help pick and guide your own personal 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, such as sports or music.

Wraparound doesn't force people to fit into existing program structures. Instead, it's based on the belief that services and supports should be flexibly arranged to meet the unique needs of youth and their families.

And to be clear, when we say “youth and their families” in this document and throughout the Wraparound section of the YSB website, we don't mean that you can't access our services on your own. We offer support to individuals as well as to families. Whatever works best for you.

How does Wraparound work?

Wraparound gathers on one team all the people who can best help you tackle your challenges and build a positive future. Although each Wraparound team is unique, they each follow the same seven-step process.

Meeting with your Wraparound Facilitator

Step 1: Getting to Know You

First, you will be assigned a Wraparound facilitator—the person who will help keep the process on track. Over the course of the process, he or she will:

- Assess your strengths, goals and needs
- Help you build your Wraparound team
- Help you develop a draft safety and crisis plan
- Help you create your Wraparound plan
- Manage meetings
- Participate in your plan
- Follow up on your plan

First things first: the facilitator and perhaps one or two other Wraparound people will visit you at home—or wherever you're most comfortable. The purpose of this visit is for the facilitator to get to know you, but you can invite others to this initial meeting, too.

Strengths assessment

Your facilitator will want to learn all about your strengths—such as what’s important to you, what you like to do, and what your dreams for the future are. Your strengths also can include your faith or beliefs, what inspires you, and your favourite people. Mention any hobbies or special talents you have—these are also strengths. Talk freely about yourself ... even brag a bit! The more your facilitator learns about you, the more effective Wraparound will be for you.

Life domains activity

The facilitator will also want to learn which areas of your life you want or need to work on while in Wraparound. Often, young people set goals in the following areas, called *life domains*. These words can guide you as you think of areas of your life you want or need to be better.

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

Do you feel bored or lonely? Maybe you will target goals in the *social* domain. Want to pass all your classes? Then focus on the *education* domain. Is your biggest challenge to get off probation? If so, choose goals in the *legal* domain. Young people in Wraparound usually want things to improve in several life domains. That’s just fine. You’ll check off as few or as many as you like.

Next, you’ll picture what your life would look like if things improve in each area you’ve checked and you’ll make a list of what you think you’ll need to get to this better life. Items on your list might fall into such categories as:

- Emotional support—like having love and understanding
- Behavioural 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 counsellor or tutor

Step 2: Building Your Wraparound Team

This step will involve figuring out who will be on your personal Wraparound team. No two Wraparound teams are the same. Unless the courts say that you must include certain people, such as a probation officer or protection services worker, the team composition is entirely your choice.

You’ll be encouraged to look to people who will support this process—parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbours, coaches. Your team might also include some professionals you like and trust, such as a favourite teacher or a helpful guidance counsellor. The point is to build a team with people who make you feel comfortable and who might be helpful in the Wraparound process.

See what works for some young people.

- Peter's team includes his mom, her best friend, his favourite uncle, his probation officer, his basketball coach, his social worker, and a court counsellor.
- 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, and her brother's therapist.
- 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.

Step 3: Drafting a Crisis and Safety Plan

This final task of the initial meeting with the facilitator is to create a Crisis and Safety Plan. Your facilitator will ask if you or anybody close to you is facing a big change, a potential crisis, or a safety risk. If these challenges might come up before your first Wraparound team meeting, you'll need a plan for how to handle them and stay safe.

You, your parents or guardians, and your facilitator will work together to draft 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

Step 4: Having your first team meeting

The first Wraparound team meeting will begin with everybody saying who they are and why they're there. Then the facilitator will tell the team about your strengths, relationships, and any other information you shared when you met.

The facilitator will also discuss your family's strengths and may review 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. Referring to the list you came up with during the life domains activity, you and your team will discuss the areas you want to or need to work on. You'll share your original ideas with your team members and write down any new ideas for how to improve the areas of your life that you and your team agree are important.

Some of the ideas suggested may be pretty general—for example, “To feel good about myself. Other ideas might be more detailed—such as, “To try out for the track team.? 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 gathered and recorded, you and your team will focus on the details. What specific actions will it take to improve the areas of your life you want to get better? By turning your ideas into strategies, you’ll build a list of concrete actions you can take to overcome your challenges. Once you’ve made that list, you’ll have the foundation for a strong plan that will work for you.

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 behaviour.
- 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, and helped him make restitution for what he stole.
- 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 favourite movies with a counsellor, 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. 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. 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, you and your team will adjust your 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. In time, you'll figure out how to handle and even avoid crises. Fine-tuning your Crisis and Safety Plan is a key part of your overall Wraparound plan.

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 create 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 made 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 for those who love them. It can work for you, too. Remember—in Wraparound, your voice and choice matter.

For a quick overview of the Wraparound process, see the attached checklist.

Wraparound Checklist

Meeting With My Wraparound Facilitator

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

Step 1

- 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 2

- Build my Wraparound team.

Step 3

- Draft a Crisis and Safety Plan.

Meeting With My Wraparound Team

Step 4

- 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 5

- 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 6

- Adjust my Crisis and Safety Plan.

Working With My Wraparound Team

Step 7

- 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!