

## Ways to engage families at different levels of your community network

Uniting around the issue of youth suicide requires that **all key team-players are present** at each stage of the game. To maximize your success, include families' voices throughout all levels of your community mobilization initiative. This tool provides you with different ways to do exactly that.

### At the individual level

- Seek, consider and incorporate the **opinions** and **feedback** of families at every step of an intervention.
- Recognize families as **experts** in the role of parent/family member.
- **Inform** families of intervention options and outcomes in a way that is meaningful by consulting and collaborating with them in determining intervention plans, goals and outcomes.
- Involve families in **supporting** their child throughout intervention.
- Consult families **before decisions are made** with regards to intervention.
- Engage families in their child's **needs assessment**, as well as their own.
- Create **environments** for open and honest communication, free from judgment.
- Consider the family's **social support network** as part of the treatment circle.

### At the service or program level

- Seek, consider and incorporate the **opinions** and **feedback** of families regarding community programs and initiatives.
- Involve families in the **design** and **implementation** of programs, quality improvement processes and evaluations.
- Provide opportunities for families to plan, facilitate and/or provide training for **family-operated groups** (e.g.: peer-to-peer support group).
- Provide opportunities for families to **develop resources** (educational, advocacy or other).
- Involve families in the **recruitment of staff**.

### At the community level

- Seek, consider and incorporate the **opinions** and **feedback** of families in decision-making and community policy.
- Provide opportunities for family members to participate in **task forces, workgroups or councils** that affect policy.
- Consult families regarding **language of communication** within the community network.
- Provide opportunities for families to **review** and **write** policy.
- Involve families in **gathering evidence** about best practices.