

Marketing a Parent to Parent Program

We planned, designed and worked to get our parent to parent efforts up and running. We have parent mentors trained and ready...and no calls or requests are coming in....

Avoid frustration and disillusionment by paying attention to marketing the parent to parent initiative right at the beginning. Start early and keep efforts ongoing to engage key people and get the word out. If people don't know what the program is or how to get in touch with parent mentors, it won't be seen as useful or valuable.

Remember these helpful hints:

- **Develop a promotional packet.** Design a variety of materials that highlight the intent of the program, the role of parent mentors, how and to whom referrals should be made, the geographical boundaries of the initiative (and designated population), and the sponsors. Materials could include:
 - Flyer or brochure
 - Informational bookmark
 - Public Service Announcements
 - Outline for presentations to groups
 - Post Cards
- **Make personal contact.** It is the best approach to reach people. It is always easier to remember an initiative that has a face and name attached to it. Meet face-to-face with people in key positions and with those who are connected to a naturally occurring positive social network:
 - Teachers and principals
 - Nurses and personal care attendants
 - Social workers
 - Doctors and clinic administrators
 - Directors of agencies and programs
 - Community movers and shakers
- **Develop an ongoing cycle of outreach.** Keep talking to people. Never assume that once a brochure has been sent, a presentation made or information shared that the outreach is complete. Staff changes, people forget, lives are busy and connections need to be continually reinforced.
- **Highlight the need.** Share the impact of a parent to parent connection from the perspective of parents as well as professionals in the service system.
 - Write articles in newsletters and newspapers.
 - Highlight the effort on radio stations.
 - Speak at local parent/school gatherings.
 - Offer presentations to county commissioners, service clubs, boards, etc.
- **Keep recruiting potential parent mentors.** As efforts grow, the need for more parent mentors will emerge. Be ready to offer ongoing training, support and connections.

