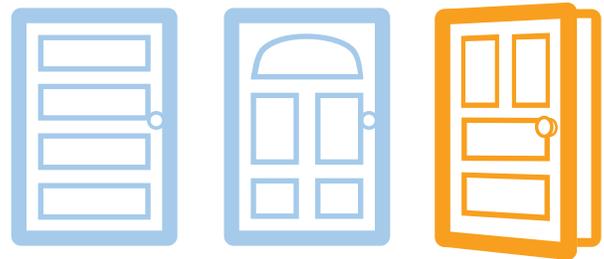


A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE on SYSTEM OF CARE

Olivia's Family

Olivia didn't want to accept that her son was experiencing mental health issues. He was doing well in school and he played on an elite competition soccer team that competed throughout the U.S. She had no idea how serious his problem was until he was arrested for drug possession and placed in detention. While visiting her son in detention, Olivia learned he had begun hallucinating and exhibiting additional symptoms of psychosis. She was frantic with worry and this was intensified by the fact that she speaks limited English and had difficulty communicating his need for medical care.

During this time, Olivia was confused and frustrated. She felt she was not being included in the court's decisions, no one was talking to her, and she didn't understand her son's behaviors or why he was placed in foster care. After being court ordered into foster care, her son was diagnosed with schizophrenia and finally started getting treatment to address his mental health needs. She needed someone to advocate for her, but felt completely overwhelmed and alone until she was referred and accepted into the Department of Human Services' new System of Care program. Everything changed when she was assigned a bilingual, bicultural family support specialist and System of Care manager in August.



Finally she had a voice in the process, her son's diagnosis was explained in detail to her, and she feels that the cultural barriers are coming down because she is able to communicate more effectively through her translator. Olivia's former husband was also very frustrated and had difficulty understanding his son's mental health diagnosis, which added to the disruption the family was already experiencing. The family support specialist educated him with details on the severity of his son's illness, and helped him understand how he could support his son. As a result, both parents and the rest of the family are working together to make sure their son is complying with his treatment plan and therapy. Through family voice, her System of Care team understands more about Olivia's culture and the family's vision for their son.

It's been a long hard journey for Olivia and her family, but her son is now back home experiencing success and stability with his medications and participation in therapy. He plays in several soccer leagues, works full time in a job he loves, and is exploring the possibility of going to college, and learning Portuguese. He's on probation, done with proctor care, and there is a court hearing scheduled to terminate DCFS' custody. The bonus for this family is that even though Olivia's son is now 18, he and his family will still be able to receive the support and services of the System of Care program until he is 21, giving them ample time to reinforce and strengthen the family structure, and giving him a better chance at long-term success.

About Utah's System of Care

System of Care is a coordinated approach to service delivery for children, youth and families with complex behavioral, medical and mental health needs. This collaborative approach strives to keep children and youth safely in their homes, schools and communities through service delivery that is family driven, youth guided, strength and community-based, trauma informed and culturally competent. System of Care is implemented in the western region (Juab, Millard, Summit, Utah and Wasatch Counties) and will be fully implemented in the northern region (Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Morgan and Weber Counties) by June 2016. System of Care will be implemented statewide by June 2017.