

Basics: What Makes it So Unique?

Basics is a free, six-session course for parents and other primary caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness. The class is taught by parents or other primary caregivers who have lived similar experiences with their own children. The class provides learning and practical insights for families and includes information on:

- the trauma of mental illness for the child and family
- the biology of mental illness and importance of getting an accurate diagnosis
- the latest research on the medical aspects of illness and advances in treatment
- an overview of treatment options
- the impact of a child's illness on the rest of the family, caregivers and siblings
- an overview of the systems involved in caring for children and teens and the importance of record keeping.

A recent study in the [Journal of Child and Family Studies](#) (August 2011) has shown that;

- Parents and caregivers who participated in the study reported improvements in self-care and empowerment, based on information and about resources, parenting strategies and self-advocacy.
- Participants "also experienced a reduction in inflammatory communications," through control of anger, preemption of problems, and being highly specific about expectations.
- Participants did not report changes in "affirmational communications" within the family. However, this may simply reflect the emphasis of the curriculum.

What is WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)?

WRAP is a self-management and recovery system developed by people who have struggled with a variety of psychiatric symptoms for many years and who are working hard toward recovery. It is designed to:

- Decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors
- Increase personal empowerment
- Improve quality of life
- Assist people in achieving their own life goals and dreams.

WRAP can help you reduce, modify or eliminate distressing symptoms by using planned responses, including how you want others to respond when you are unable to make decisions, care for yourself or keep yourself safe. The person who experiences symptoms is the one who develops their personal WRAP. The **WRAP** system was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland of the Copeland Center.