King County
Parent to Parent
Helping Parent Training
The Arc

Our Mission
Advocating the right of children and adults with developmental disabilities to live, learn, work and play in the community -- improving the quality of life for us all.

Our Vision
A world where children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities thrive as equal, valued and active members of the community.
Our Services
Advocacy & Leadership Training
Information and Referral
King County Parent Coalition
Parent to Parent
Representative Payee & Support Services
Senior Family Caregiver Support Project
Supported Living Program
Family Support 360
People First Language
Sharing the Journey
Coming along side to offer:
Your Support
Your experience
Information
The Purpose of Parent to Parent

To match trained helping parents with parents who families who are experiencing a time of crisis, such as new diagnosis or seeking information.
Helping parents are:

Parents or family members of a child with a disability.

Have attended the helping Parent training.

Offer encouragement, emotional support and information on an informal and personal basis.

Serve as a peer model to help families adjust to their new diagnosis.
Helping Parents are NOT:
Counselors or therapists
Advisors, especially medical advisors.
Parent to Parent:

Is a nationwide network

Has programs in every county in Washington
No Longer Alone

No longer alone, No more apart,
We find that we are of one heart.
As we reach out across the land
We join each other hand in hand
The sorrow and joy in which we share
Provides a bond of loving care.
We search to find a better way...
The promise of a brighter day...
No more apart, No longer alone,
The seeds of togetherness have been sown.

Kathy Hunter
You are not alone!
The Journey Begins
The Slap
By Michele Lehosky

What do you do when reality slaps?
Slaps you so hard that your knees collapse

Do you run and hide until you feel the warmth of the sun?
Do you stand and face it and work until you’re done?

It’s a cycle that’s called Grief
What do you do to find relief?

It’s a finishing line without an end
When you think you’re through it slaps you again

You are not alone
Others too have been hit by this wave
Only with support I can stand and be brave

Knowing others have survived its wake
It’s the strength of the human heart even when it breaks
Welcome to Holland
Welcome to Mars
“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear”

~C.S. Lewis
Shock and Denial

Anger and Guilt

Bargaining

Tears and Fears

Adjustment and Acceptance

Despair and Resignation

The Grief Cycle
Emotional Responses
Bob Perske’s, Hope for Families

The Drags - Tired, depressed, distracted.
The Hurts - Actual pain, sorrow, and grief over loss.
The Escapes - Wishing that you or baby would not wake up
The Blocks - Hard to believe, ears don’t hear, eyes don’t see
The Hates - Displaced anger toward spouse, professionals, and others, “It’s not fair.”
The Guilts - All the amazing fantasies parents can create about why they have a child with a disability
The Greats - God has chosen them because they are so great!
The Speeds - Someone has wound your spring too tight. So much to do, so many places to go, people to see. Read everything on disability.
THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Everyone responds differently
All feelings are ok
There is no right or wrong way to grieve
Everyone’s timeline is different
There is no “end” point in the grief cycle
The Art of
LISTENING
......listening from a place of knowing without judgment, without advice, and with the intention of compassionate understanding.
When we listen, we offer with our attention an opportunity for wholeness. Our listening creates a sanctuary for the homeless parts within the other person. That which has been denied, unloved, devalued by themselves and by others. That which is hidden.

In this culture, the soul and the heart too often go homeless. Listening creates a holy silence. When you listen generously to people they can hear truth in themselves, Often for the first time. An in the silence of listening, you can know yourself in everyone. Eventually, you may be able to hear, in everyone and beyond everyone, The unseen singing softly to itself and to you.

Naomi Remen
BE A GOOD LISTENER!

THE LISTENING LADDER

Look at the person speaking to you
Ask questions
Don’t interrupt
Don’t change the subject
Empathize
Respond verbally and nonverbally
Active Listening

Be Attentive
Be impartial
Reflect back
Listen for feelings
Summarize
Asking Questions

• Ask open ended questions
• Ask questions that follow the speakers lead
• Be thoughtful and sensitive
Before Giving Advice

- Am I offering a solution before I know the real issue?
- Do I have all the information?
- Is the person ready to work on a solution or are they still working through feelings?
- Will it prevent the person from developing their own ideas?
- Will they feel patronized?
Instead of Advice...

• Find out more information
• Offer your own experiences
• Help them think through the problem
• Be quiet!
• Simply say “I don’t know”
• End the conversation at an appropriate break point
• Refer them to a professional
STORIES
Special Circumstances

Second diagnosis
When a child dies
Prenatal diagnosis
Take Care of Yourself

Do something that makes you feel happy

Talk to someone

Call if you need to debrief or need support
DREAMS
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deRF9oEbRso

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwgL0xZjk9Q
DREAM OF A BIG LIFE
NUTS AND BOLTS
Helping Parent Duties

- Be a family member of a child with a disability
- Complete the training
- Complete the P2P helping parent self assessment and review with coordinator
- Demonstrate good communication skills
- Demonstrate a nonjudgmental attitude
- Commit to volunteer for one year
- Maintain confidentiality
- Make initial and follow up contact with referred parents
- Follow up with the coordinator
Referral Process

Coordinator receives initial referral and does an intake.

Coordinator matches with appropriate Helping Parent.

Coordinator contacts Helping Parent
Helping Parent contacts the family

After contact is made, Helping Parent debriefs with the Coordinator.
Follow up calls

Make at least one additional contact with the family. This could be from several days or up to a month later.

If you don’t hear from them, call back, they may not feel comfortable calling you.

You may want to take and keep notes about your conversation.
A Supportive Helping Parent

- Assumes competence and adequacy
- Makes the parent feel competent and in control
- Fosters independence
- Is understanding when a parent doesn’t want or think they need help
- Encourages parents to do for themselves
When a family needs more than a helping Parent

- Overly dependent on you.
- When they seem stuck or obsessed with an idea or an emotion
- Continued isolation
- Lack problem solving skills
- Talk about giving up.
- Strangely irrational
- Talk of hurting themselves or others
- Failure to bond with the child
- Continued depression

**TRUST YOUR INSTINCT!**

- Call Parent to Parent Coordinator ASAP
Resources
Guidelines for Telephone Contact

• Call as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.
• Review the information about the family
• Identify yourself as a Helping Parent.
• Make sure the time is convenient for the family
• Ask the parent about himself/herself, and the child, sibling and the adjustment experiences. Be ready to offer support.
• Focus on how the parent is feeling and coping rather than problems solving. Reassure them all feelings are normal.
• Ask if the parent is taking care of themselves.
• Share your own experiences as appropriate.
• Use broad-based open-ended questions. Avoid asking questions beginning with “Why”.
• Not the parents concerns, questions and requests for information. Share resources as appropriate- or offer to find out for them.
• Let the parent know he/she can call you and/or you will be calling them again. Give them your contact information only if you choose to do so.
• Try to end the conversation on a positive note or with words of encouragement if appropriate.
Helping Parent Supporting Role

To provide initial emotional support and resource information to a parent of a child with a disability and/or special needs.
Cultural Competence
The Four Stages of Adaptation

- Surviving
- Searching
- Settling In
- Separating