



New Jersey Peer2Peer Program: *EnlightenMENT*

PEER2PEER OVERVIEW AND GOALS:

The New Jersey Peer2Peer Program (NJP2P), also known as EnlightenMENT, provides young people ages 14-21, in the care of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P), with peer support through trained professional staff and credible messengers with lived experience in NJ's child welfare system. The NJP2P program delivers supportive services that offer advice, guidance, and empowerment strategies that support young people to navigate and thrive while involved in NJ's foster care system.

The goal of NJP2P is for Peer Navigators to help increase a youth's ability to articulate and work toward their goals, interact with professionals, and be able to initiate connections to resources on their own.

POPULATION TO BE SERVED:

Young people, ages 14-21, that are in out of home placement for less than 18 months in the following counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Union.

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

Frequency and duration of services are flexible to meet the needs of the youth. On average, Peer Navigators and youth have contact twice a month. Contacts can vary as the youth moves through the program and can be as frequent as once per week. On average, youth are in the program for one year; however, services can be extended based on need and goal status.

THE PHASES OF THE MODEL INCLUDE:

- 1. Engagement:** The Peer Navigator reaches out to build a positive healing relationship with youth. The Peer Navigator can build an empathetic and trusting relationship with youth based on the understanding that they have walked in the same shoes as the youth who is in or has been in foster care.
- 2. Empowerment:** The empowerment process is strength-based, and youth driven, with Peer Navigators listening to the youth's priorities and focusing on building and strengthening the skills they need to work on. During this phase, the Peer Navigators help model behaviors with the youth through role play and positive reinforcement, preparing them for meetings with professionals and family members that help the youth achieve their goals.
- 3. Connections:** During this phase, the youth will make their own connection to appropriate individuals and organizations in the community with resources that correspond with the youth's goals.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES:

1. Youth have increased their social connectedness, perceived self-esteem, confidence to advocate for their future care, ability to maintain formal and informal assistance, and perceived level of collaboration with professionals in their lives;
2. Youth have achieved positive developmental outcomes;
3. Youth have increased resiliency; and
4. Peer Navigators will have increased self-awareness

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