



# Your Life, Your Future

## A YOUTH GUIDE TO WRAPAROUND



Lookout Mountain Care Management Entity  
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A Youth Guide to Wraparound Services: Your Life, Your Future

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# Your Life, Your Future:

## A YOUTH GUIDE TO WRAPAROUND

Wrap-a-what?

Someone cares about your life and future. That's why you've been recommended for Wraparound. Funny name for a process that has one goal: supporting you in making positive life choices.

Wraparound provides this support through a team created for you and by you. Some team members will be people who provide you and your family support services, such as counselors and therapists. Others will be people you choose because you care about one another—for example, family members, a good friend, or a favorite teacher.

Team members support you as you figure out what's working in your life and what isn't. Together, you and your team create a plan of action based on your challenges, your dreams, and your life. Your Wraparound plan is unique to you and your situation.

While no two Wraparound plans look alike, teens in Wraparound seem to want the same thing: to feel loved and safe in their families, friendships, and communities. They want to find ways to express themselves to others. Wraparound can help with all that.

## Why Wraparound?

Many young people choose Wraparound because they want something in their lives to get better. Maybe it's their family lives, friendships, or grades. Perhaps it's their feelings about themselves and others. Often, it's many things.

Some young people don't choose Wraparound. It is chosen for them, maybe by a family member, a therapist, or even a judge. They may have had problems with the law, drugs or alcohol, and lots of other stuff—food, sex, cutting, skipping school, running away, and more.

However young people come to Wraparound, they all face challenges. Some teens find it difficult to deal with challenges they face due to behavioral health needs. These teens may experience anger they feel they cannot control, feel sad often, have thoughts of hurting themselves, or worry a lot. Some teens take medication to help, while others find medication isn't effective. Wraparound pulls together services that help teens tackle challenges with their feelings and behavior.



Other times, parents' problems with alcohol or drug use, mental illness, physical disability, or dangerous or criminal behavior have created serious challenges for their children. Some parents may hurt their children, and some children may hurt their parents.

Wraparound can help keep you safe and help your parents, too. Of course, not all young people have parents to care for them. If you are in this situation, Wraparound will work with you to find other family members or adults who can serve this important role.

Whether you have chosen Wraparound or it was chosen for you, you'll soon be part of a team. Your team will support you as you think about what you like and don't like in your life and what you want to be better. Your team will give you the support and skills you need to make good things happen.

## Do I Have A Choice?

Many communities across the nation chose Wraparound because of the way it helps youth and families. If you're reading this, you live in a community that believes Wraparound would benefit you. Maybe you've been asked to consider Wraparound as well as other support programs, all of which sound pretty good to you.

Chances are, though, you may be faced with a "forced choice." This means that you and your parents are required to pick between Wraparound and one or two other options, like lock up or placement in a residential treatment center. Those options would mean living away from home for a while.

And sometimes, Wraparound is not a choice but a legal requirement. Because something risky or illegal has happened in your life or within your family, a legal authority requires you to participate in Wraparound.

## So, What Can I Choose?

There's no getting around the age thing: if you are under 18, adults have legal responsibility for your decisions. That said, the point of Wraparound is to involve you as much as possible in choices that affect your life. For example, in Wraparound you will:

- Help pick and guide your support team.
- Create your plan with input from all team members—not just the therapists, doctors, teachers, and other professionals.
- Include activities and interests in your plan that you like—sports, music, you name it.
- If you want to strengthen a relationship with someone in your family, your Wraparound team will help you do that.

If you have done something illegal or unsafe for you or others, you will have fewer choices in Wraparound. However, as your actions become safer, you will likely get more choices and make more decisions for yourself.



# What If...

## ... I've Heard It All Before?

You have probably heard about other “youth programs” and maybe even have been in one or two. While some people call Wraparound a program, it’s really a process.

That process begins with you—by identifying your strengths and challenges—and ends with you—by making positive choices to improve your life. During this process, a team you’ve helped build works with you to be sure you have a plan that gets you where you want to be in life.

Once you’re in Wraparound, you can expect to:

- Be part of a team that includes family or other caregivers and others who support you and your goals.
- Be listened to and treated with respect.
- Be able to tell your story, your way, without being judged.
- Be held responsible for what you do or say you’ll do.
- Hold others responsible for what they do or say they’ll do.

## ... I'm Angry?

Many young people come to Wraparound angry. Some of them are in trouble at home, at school, and with the law. They have run out of choices.

Other young people have made mistakes, some serious, so other people are deciding what will happen to them. Some just want everybody to leave them alone, but no one will. They are tired of people telling them what to do and who to be. Some teens are mad at certain people in their lives. They are disappointed and feel people important to them have let them down. Some have deep hurts they have trouble living with. For them, life has been tough.

It’s okay to be mad about this stuff. Nobody wants to be let down, and nobody likes to be forced to do things. Over time, though, anger can get in the way of moving forward.

Whether you have come to Wraparound by your own choice or because you had to, you have been given a chance to honestly look at yourself, your life, and those in it. The people who really care about you will likely be on your team, and that’s a good starting point for moving past anger.

## ... I'm Ordered To Do Wraparound?

If you are required to be in Wraparound, you need to know this: Something has happened that got the legal authorities involved with you and your family. That almost always means you will lose some choices. This is hard on both teens and adults.

Legal authorities are required to step in when illegal behavior has happened. They have the right to decide what those who broke the law have to do to make things right. If you did something illegal, part of their decision will be based on your track record—for example, how you're doing in school and whether you've been involved with the law before.

If a member of your family broke the law, the same applies to them. Is it the first time or the fifth? Is your

relative working? Taking care of you and other children responsibly? All these factors and more will matter a lot when determining what happens next.

A lot of young people think it isn't fair that what happens to them depends on other people in their families, especially their parents and other adult caregivers. However, in a difficult situation like this, Wraparound can help get your family back on track.

Because Wraparound is unique to you—and your family—it can be very effective. It gathers on one team all the people who can help you tackle your challenges and build a positive future. Most important, your voice and choice matter in Wraparound.

### IF YOU'VE BEEN ORDERED INTO WRAPAROUND

...here's how to make the most of it.

- How you act makes a difference in how people treat you. Treat people with respect and good manners and they will often do the same for you.
- Cooperate with Wraparound planning. If you are having trouble, talk to someone on your Wraparound team so you can get help.
- If you have messed up, apologize and ask how you can make up for it. If somebody else messed up, try to forgive the person. Give him or her a chance to change.
- Do some good to make up for anything you did wrong. If you didn't do anything wrong, do something good just to do it! If you need help with this, talk with your team.
- Ask your team to tell you what you have to do so you can earn more choices.
- Ask your team what you should not do and how they can help you not do it.
- If you feel anyone on the Wraparound team is being disrespectful of you or your family, politely speak up or ask someone you trust to speak up for you. Do this when anything is bothering you.

## Who Might I Meet in Wraparound?

### Care Coordinator (CC)

Your Care Coordinator is the person who will facilitate the wraparound process. This means they will coordinate and help meetings and plans go smoothly. CCs do the following:

- Help identify your strengths, goals, and needs
- Help you develop an initial safety and crisis plan
- Help you build your Wraparound team
- Help you create your Wraparound plan
- Manage meetings
- Participate in your plan
- Follow up on your plan
- Ensure key documents are where they should be

### Family Support Partners (FSP)

Your Family Support partner will work with you and your family on anything—from helping meet your most basic life needs to making friends, getting jobs, and supporting positive life changes during the Wraparound process.

### Lead Family Contact (LFC) & Youth Engagement Specialist (YES)

The Lead Family Contact and your Youth Engagement Specialist work with you and your family to ensure “Family Voice and Choice” and help you gain the skills you need to become stronger advocates for yourselves.

They also support families by organizing activities and developing leadership opportunities

### Evaluators

Evaluators do not participate in Wraparound but instead measure how well the process is working. Talking to you and your parents is one of the most important ways to evaluate the effectiveness of Wraparound.

# Your Life, Your Future: EXACTLY HOW DOES WRAPAROUND WORK?

## Step 1: Getting to Know You



In Step 1 of Wraparound (Intake), a Care Coordinator visits you at home—or wherever you're most comfortable—to get to know you. The CC also meets your parents or guardian in this visit. Sometimes one or two other Wraparound people also attend this first visit (see **Who Might I Meet in Wraparound?**).

The CC tells you more about Wraparound and answers your questions. Of course, if you have questions any time during the Wraparound process, please ask them. Wraparound is about you, and your voice will always be heard.

During this visit, the CC wants to learn about your strengths—what's important to you, what you like to do, and what you want your life to be like now and in the future. Your strengths also can include your faith, what inspires you, and your favorite people. Mention any hobbies, special talents, and music you like—these are also strengths.

So, share your strengths, even brag a bit. The more your CC learns about you, the more effective Wraparound will be for you.

You can invite family members or other people important to your life to join this first meeting with your CC. As long as there's no official paperwork saying you can't see a certain person, you are welcome to include anyone who matters to you.

During this meeting, the CC also wants to learn which areas of your life (or Life Domains) you want or are required to work on while in Wraparound. Life Domains are the specific parts of your daily life that are needed to help you and your family be healthy and successful.

Life domains include things like: safety, school/work, health, social/fun, a place to live, legal issues, culture, behaviors, emotions, transportation, and finances. You and your CC, and later your team, will often talk about these areas of your life when identifying needs for your plan

Do you feel bored or lonely? Then you and your team may set goals like trying new activities and meeting new people, which would fall in the Social Domain. Want to pass all your classes? Then focus on the education domain. Maybe your biggest challenge is to get off probation. If so, choose goals in the legal domain.

By meeting your goals, you will create positive outcomes. For example, getting grades of C or above would be an outcome of achieving your goal to pass all classes, which falls in the education domain.

Usually, teens in Wraparound want things to improve in several life domains. Sometimes they want something to be different in their family, in how they feel about things, and in how they act. Setting goals in the family, emotional, spiritual, and behavior domains could all be good choices in this situation.

*"Wraparound is about you, and your voice will always be heard."*



## Your Life, Your Future: EXACTLY HOW DOES WRAPAROUND WORK?

Usually, teens in Wraparound want things to improve in several life domains. Sometimes they want something to be different in their family, in how they feel about things, and in how they act. Setting goals in the family, emotional, spiritual, and behavior domains could all be good choices in this situation.

Now picture what your life will look like when things improve in each area you have selected. As a next step, make a list of what you need to get to the better life you're working on in Wraparound. Items on your list might include things like:

- Emotional support—like having love and understanding
- Behavioral support—such as having a mentor to learn good communication skills
- Logistical support—perhaps having a ride to appointments
- Service support—such as having a counselor or tutor

*Dare to dream and ask for what you need—it's your life.*

### Step 2: Building Your Wraparound Team

In the first meeting with the Care Coordinator (CC), you also complete Step 2. This step involves figuring out who will be on your Wraparound team.

Your team will include some professionals, or Formal Supports—for example, a teacher, therapist, and probation officer—as well as Natural Supports, like family members, friends, and other people you like and trust. Parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, coaches, people from where you worship—you choose. The point is to build a team with people who make you feel comfortable and who might be helpful in the Wraparound process.

If you or anyone in your family is in trouble, there might be people on the team you and your family do not really want to be there. This happens mostly when somebody is involved with a court or a judge. If someone at court says an individual has to be at your meetings, your team will have to include them. Your team will work with you and your family in meeting this requirement.



### Step 3: Drafting a Crisis and Safety Plan

The first meeting with your Care Coordinator (CC) concludes with Step 3—creating a crisis and safety plan. Your CC asks if you or anybody close to you is facing a big change, crisis, or unsafe situation. If these challenges might come up before your first Wraparound team meeting, you need a plan for how to handle them and stay safe.

Together, you, your parents or guardian, and your CC create this plan. As things get better in your life or as new challenges arise, you will rework this plan in meetings with your Wraparound team.

# Your Life, Your Future: EXACTLY HOW DOES WRAPAROUND WORK?

## Meeting With Your Wraparound Team

### Step 4: Having Your First Team Meeting

About 2 weeks later, your Wraparound team meets. The meeting begins with everybody saying who they are and why they're there. Next, the Care Coordinator (CC) tells the team what he/she learned about your strengths, relationships, and any other information you shared when you met.

The CC also mentions your family's strengths and may discuss the rules the team will follow at the meetings—such as treating everyone with respect and not yelling at or interrupting others.

A big focus of this first Wraparound team meeting is creating your Wraparound plan—or at least getting a good start on it.

With your team, pick the Life Domains you want to or need to work on. Also,

think about the ideas you shared with your CC for how to make things better in those domains. Share those ideas with your teammates and be open to their feedback.

Together, work on more ideas for how to improve the areas of your life that you and your team agree are important. Someone—you or a teammate—should write down all the ideas the team mentions.

Some of the ideas suggested may be pretty general (Example: To feel good about myself.) Other ideas might be more detailed (Example: To feel better about myself by attending all sessions with my social worker and going out for the track team.)

Don't worry if some ideas are more detailed than others. The important thing is to think of and write down as many ideas as possible.

### Step 5: Creating Your Wraparound Plan

After all ideas are listed, you and your team focus on the details of steps toward improving areas of your life you want to get better. Try to be as specific as possible. Think about exactly what needs to change for an area of your life to get better as you and your team begin to create your plan

Don't be afraid to ask your team mates if you have any questions during this process. This is a team effort, but it's YOUR plan!

Remember—no two Wraparound plans are alike. Your plan should fit your life—your strengths, your challenges, your needs. It should use strategies that draw on your strengths to meet your challenges and needs. Wraparound is about your voice and your choice. So, be heard, make choices, get feedback from your team, and build a plan that works for you.

### Step 6: Refining Your Crisis and Safety Plan

Next, it's back to crisis and safety planning and figuring out how to handle big changes in your life. Your first crisis and safety plan was a draft, made when you and the Wraparound staff didn't know each other very well and your team wasn't in place.

*"So, be heard, make choices, get feedback from your team, and build a plan that works for you."*

## Your Life, Your Future: EXACTLY HOW DOES WRAPAROUND WORK?

In Step 6—with the support of Wraparound staff who now know you better and team members you have chosen—you adjust your crisis and safety plan. It's important to fine tune this plan to fit your challenges and possible crises and to keep you safe. This plan is a key part of your overall Wraparound plan.

Let's face it: Stuff happens. When a crisis you and your team planned for happens and you use the plan, you will probably talk about it at the next team meeting. Remember: Every time you face a challenge, you and your team will learn something. Each challenge is an opportunity to think about what worked and what didn't. In time, you'll figure out how to handle, and even avoid crises.

### Step 7: Living Your Plan

Your Wraparound team will meet regularly, generally once or twice a month. Throughout this process, you and your team will adjust your plan to fit your life. If challenges come up, they'll be taken care of in your plan. And when good things start to happen, your plan will reflect that too. Better still, good choices and outcomes usually mean more choices in more areas of your life.

Although the timing is different for everyone, at some point you and your Wraparound team will realize that you don't just have a plan—**you're living your plan**. This means that you are safe and have good skills for handling challenges. It also means you've made changes in areas of your life you wanted to get better.

When that day arrives, give yourself a huge pat on the back. Thank those who believed in you. You and your Wraparound team worked together to make some good things happen in your life. You are ready to graduate from Wraparound.

### A Final Word about Wraparound

Please give Wraparound a chance to help you and your family. It has worked well for many young people and those who love them. It can work for you. To keep the steps of the Wraparound process straight, you can always refer back to this guide. Always ask your questions and always state your choices.

**Remember - in Wraparound, your voice and choice matter.**



Working With Your  
Wraparound Team

