**Individualized Family Support is Key by Lori Roeleveld**

Many families encounter stresses, challenges, or some form of hardship as they raise children in an ever-changing world. Every family needs support and most have a system of relatives, friends, and community helpers to whom they can turn.

Sometimes though, especially when stress is high, there can be barriers to accessing help from our support systems, even in times when we need them most. This is when it can be helpful for someone to come alongside us with understanding and respect to help create a plan for mobilizing help from the people in our lives and community partners.

When reaching out for help keep three things in mind:

1. **You are the expert in your own family**. You know what works and what doesn’t. You know your family culture, values, and resources. You want help from people who respect that and it’s okay to ask that they do. Look for good listeners who take the time to understand what’s important to you and what help you’re seeking.
2. **Everyone needs help sometimes.** We’ve learned during the pandemic that hardships can arise unexpectedly. Today you may need help but at other times, you’re helping your friends and neighbors. Accepting necessary support is a strength and can be an important lesson we model for our children.
3. **Resources in your community are ever-changing**. It can be a huge help to have someone in your corner who is up to date on what’s available and can facilitate connections for exactly what you need. There are people whose job it is to connect families with appropriate resources. You’re not imposing! They’re eager to connect with you!

In Rhode Island, we have a program that’s been active for over a decade full of experienced providers eager to partner with families to address a variety of needs. Family Care Community Partnership (or FCCP) provides a wraparound service that respects your family’s strengths and culture. We take the time to listen. We’re regional so we know what help is available in YOUR community. We have Family Support Partners with lived experience similar to yours. And we’re only a phone call away.

If you would benefit from someone coming alongside you, find the FCCP for your area by going to this website: [Family Care Community Partnerships](http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/fccps/) and then call the independent agency covering your town. Individualized support is a reality in Rhode Island!