

RESEARCH SUMMARY:

Study Identifies Steps Critical for the Success of Family Navigation as an Intervention to Improve Access to Care for Children With ASD

Family navigation is a potential method for improving access to care for children with chronic conditions. Navigators are individuals who share some life experiences (language, culture, chronic condition) with the families served, and they are trained in problem solving strategies. They work with the family to support family participation in care and address family goals.

As part of the study of family navigation to help children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) access care, experts in family navigation were interviewed and surveyed to identify the factors likely to be most important to the success of the intervention. Sixty-six steps for implementing family navigation were identified. The five most crucial steps for success were: 1) knowledge of and partnership with community-based services; 2) ability to make initial contact with the family; 3) initial training of the navigator; 4) supervision of the navigator and ongoing training; 5) attending medical appointments with the family.

Family navigation is a complex process requiring multiple steps. Groups developing family navigation interventions should pay particular attention to their plans for initial training and ongoing training and monitoring of the navigator, as well as strategies to engage families in the intervention.

Reference:

Broder-Fingert S, Qin S, Goupil J, Rosenberg J, Augustyn M, Blum N, Bennett A, Weitzman C, Guevara JP, Fenick A, Silverstein M, Feinberg E. A mixed-methods process evaluation of Family Navigation implementation for autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*. 2019; 5(July); 1288-1299. PMID: 30404548.