

# Family Group Conferencing FAQ'S

- **What is a Family Group Conference (FGC)?**

A Family Group Conference is a meeting for your family to sit down together and talk about the positive things about your family and what concerns you see in your family. It is your choice to participate in FGC. The understanding of FGC is that no one knows your family better than you do. It is important to include family members in making decisions about what is best for their own family. A FGC can bring together family members, as well as agencies, to determine what the most important concerns are and how to create the best plan possible so that the family can be successful.

- **What is a Coordinator and what do they do?**

- A coordinator is an assistant to your family
- A coordinator will spend time preparing your family for the meeting.
- Ask the family who the best people within the family to attend so that the meeting will be a success.
- Find a place in the community where everyone feels safe and a time that works best for everyone to be able to go to the meeting.
- The Coordinator will try to help the family bring out possible topics of discussion that may come up during a meeting.
- The Coordinator will also make contact with all people what may have worked with the family and prepare them to give their strengths of the family and their concerns for the family.
- A Coordinator will make sure everyone at the meeting is dedicated to making the family's plan a success.

- **What is a Facilitator and what do they do?**

A Facilitator is a person who guides the family's discussion at the family meeting. A Facilitator will ask questions such as 'What is good about your family' also 'What concerns you may have for your family?' The Facilitator will make sure everyone has the chance to say what they feel. While the members of the meeting talk about what is on their mind, the Facilitator will write down things the family says on big sheets of paper. These papers will then be hung around the room so that people in the meeting can come together and see what was said about their family. The Facilitator will also make sure that everyone is comfortable at the meeting and that they feel safe to say what they think.

- **What is the meeting like?**

At the start of the meeting, some families will begin with a tradition, for example, a song or prayer. Then the guidelines of the meeting are talked about with the family by the Facilitator. The Facilitator will begin asking the family to share what is good/strengths about their family. If people who work with the family are invited to the meeting they

may also give strengths they see. Soon after the strengths are given, the Facilitator will ask the family what the concerns/worries may be about their family. After all of the conversation, your family will have the chance to enjoy a meal together. Then the Facilitator will announce Private Family Time. After private family time is over, a member of the group will get all workers to come and join them to review the family plan.

- **What is Private Family Time?**

Private Family Time is the time where the professionals will leave the room and only family members will stay to discuss how they are going to help change the concerns they have talked about. The family's plan must sort out all the concerns mentioned by the family and the people that work with the family. It is important that the family plan have nothing illegal in it. The Agency will approve the plan created by the family as long as it includes solutions for the concerns.

- **Who's going to be invited to the meeting?**

It is the family's choice as to who they would like to come to their meeting as long as everyone remains safe. The family meeting it just that, the Family's Meeting. As long as there are no harmful threats to anyone at the family meeting, it is best to have as many family members present at the meeting as possible including children. It is important for you to feel safe and comfortable during the family meeting and you may sit wherever you feel most comfortable whether that be with your brother or sister, a friend, a parent, or anyone else.

- **Can I invited my friends and other people I feel close to?**

Yes, 'family' can also mean someone who has close relationship to your family through friendship, church, or other activities. You may also have family members who are not blood-related who would be willing to help and want to see your family succeed. Having someone you feel will support you, like a friend or therapist, during the meeting is encouraged.

- **How long will the meeting be?**

The first family meeting will usually take three to five hours. Any meetings after that will usually not be as long.

- **Are my brothers and sisters going to be there?**

Yes, your brothers and/or sisters may attend the meeting. The Coordinator will help to make this possible, as long as everyone feels safe at the meeting.

- **Can I have a say in what happens in the meeting?**

Everyone will have a chance during the meeting to say what they think and how they feel in a healthy and respectful way.

- **What happens after the meeting?**

As long as the family's plan provides solutions for the concerns and has nothing illegal in the plan, the Agency will approve the plan. If your family is involved with the Court, the Court will be asked to give their final approval of your plan.

- **What if I don't agree with what's decided?**

If someone does not agree with the plan, then the family will be asked to continue to work on the plan until everyone is in agreement.

- **What if my family fights during the meeting?**

It is important for you and your family members to feel safe during the family meeting; however, with certain topics of discussion it is understood that some people may become upset. It is expected that people will disagree respectfully without hurting each other. The Facilitator will always be near by if needed.

- **What if my family blames me for our family's situation?**

One of the rules of the FGC is that there will be no shaming or blaming of anyone present. Everyone came together for the purpose of seeing your family succeed in their goals. Remember that the Facilitator is always available if you would need them.

- **What happens if my family's plan does not work?**

Any person from the family meeting can contact the Agency to set up another meeting to talk about possible changes in the family plan. FGC is a process. This means that for most families, one meeting is not enough and they may need more meetings to talk about concerns.