



**207:  
Introduction to Family  
Group Decision Making (FGDM):  
Part I**

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Training Program**

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# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

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# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

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# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **An Overview of the Curriculum**

#### **Rationale:**

It is important to educate and involve communities and child serving systems in FGDM because this practice has a positive impact anywhere it is implemented. This practice changes the way individuals, agencies and entire systems do business. For most of the participants of this training, the content will provide a new outlook or fresh look at what is best for families. In addition, this training will provide participants with another tool to use in successfully engaging families and to assist in safety planning. Across numerous systems in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, there is a shift to have strong family involvement in the development of care and service plans. FGDM is an opportunity for a family to come together to make decisions for themselves. The responsibility for child safety, well-being, and permanency is returned to the individuals who are the experts and know their families the best.

Being introduced to FGDM will familiarize participants with a cross system practice that builds on the strengths of families while planning for and ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children; familiarizes participants with the values and beliefs of FGDM; teaches participants about what is involved with implementing the practice; familiarizes participants with the roles involved in the FGDM Process; and gives participants an understanding of what is involved in hosting an FGDM Meeting. Participants will know that this one day training is clearly an overview and that additional training and information is needed to implement the practice.

#### **Competencies:**

207-4 The Child Welfare Professional can use assessment data to collaboratively develop an appropriate, culturally competent case plan with the family, and can develop and link supportive family and community resources.

#### **Learning Objectives:** Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Define Family Group Decision Making.
- ✓ Identify the FGDM values and beliefs.
- ✓ Recognize the advantages that FGDM has for children, families, communities and helping professionals.
- ✓ Determine what makes FGDM unique among other interventions.
- ✓ Describe the key steps for implementing FGDM.
- ✓ Ascertain the critical partners necessary for successful implementation of FGDM.

#### **Length of Workshop:**

6 hours

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **An Overview of the Curriculum (continued)**

#### **Materials Needed to Present Workshop:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ 2 Easels and pads
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ Overhead projector and screen
- ✓ Beans
- ✓ Television and VCR
- ✓ Name Tents
- ✓ Sign In Sheet
- ✓ Curriculum with Overheads

#### **Target Audience:**

The target audience is Child Welfare Professionals and anyone else invited by the sponsoring agency and interested in learning more about, or becoming involved with, Family Group Decision Making.

#### **Summary:**

This one day overview introduces the foundations of the FGDM practice and prepares participants to begin planning for implementation and participate successfully in FGDM. It describes the process, the steps of an FGDM Conference, how to prepare participants for meetings, and how to establish FGDM in the community. It is important to stress that this one-day training alone is not sufficient to implement FGDM successfully. This practice emphasizes family empowerment. Families should be given the opportunity and responsibility to make decisions for themselves. This workshop introduces participants to a new way of doing business that challenges the dominant practice, but results in lifetime benefits for the families with whom they work.

#### **Expectations of the Trainer:**

The trainer must have extensive knowledge of Family Group Decision Making, its history, (including basic concepts), how to implement FGDM, the different phases of an FGDM Conference and the basic components of the FGDM process. The trainer must have significant experience with implementing FGDM including but not limited to: coordinating, facilitating, co-facilitating, liaison, and/or administrative experience. The trainer will have a strong understanding of family empowerment models and how they differ from more standard practices. The trainer must have a good understanding of CFSR outcomes, best practice standards for child welfare and general human service systems knowledge. The trainer must believe in FGDM and understand its advantages and effectiveness.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

## **An Overview of the Curriculum (continued)**

### **PA Standards:**

- II. Service Planning; Outcome: Safety and Permanence, A, B, C, G, H
- III. Service Delivery; Outcome: Safety, Permanence and Well-being, N, Q, R, L

### **CFSR Issues:**

Outcome S2: Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate, Item 3

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations, Items 6, 7, 8

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children, Item 14, 15, 16

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, Item 18

### **Interactional Skills:**

Tuning in to Self  
Tuning in to Others  
Questioning

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

### **Agenda for Full Day Curriculum on Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Part I**

<b>Estimated Time</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
30 minutes	Section I: Welcome and Introductions	5
45 minutes	Section II: What Is FGDM?	8
60 minutes	Section III: FGDM Beliefs and Values	15
30 minutes	Section IV: The Benefits of FGDM	18
60 minutes	Section V: The FGDM Process	21
45 minutes	Section VI: Understanding the Roles	28
45 minutes	Section VII: How To Implement the Practice	32
45 minutes	Section VIII: Wrap-Up and Evaluation	38

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section I: Introduction**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

30 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the purpose of the workshop and understand the learning objectives.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, Individual and Group Discussion, and Activity

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart for Parking Lot
- ✓ Overhead Projector/Screen
- ✓ **Overhead #1 (Agenda)**
- ✓ **Overhead #2 (Learning Objectives)**
- ✓ **Overhead #3 (Introductory Exercise)**
- ✓ **Handout #1 (Idea Catcher)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda)**
- ✓ **Handout #3 (Learning Objectives)**

#### **Resources Used:**

None

#### **PA Standards:**

None

#### **CFSR Issues:**

None

#### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section I: Introduction**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer will arrange the seating and prepare the training room by placing name tents, markers, and candy on the tables. The trainer will put out any resources and organize any handouts and equipment needed for the training day. The trainer will arrange the two flip charts on either side of the overhead projector.

- ✓ Welcome participants to the workshop
- ✓ Introduce trainer and qualifications
- ✓ Review the guidelines of the Child Welfare Training Program
- ✓ State the rationale for the workshop
- ✓ Review and Discuss:
  - “Parking Lot”
  - **Overhead #1 (Agenda)**
  - **Overhead #2 (Learning Objectives)**
  - **Overhead #3 (Introductory Exercise)**
  - **Handout #1 (Idea Catcher)**
  - **Handout #2 (Agenda)**
  - **Handout #3 (Learning Objectives)**
- ✓ Engage participants in the Introduction Exercise

**Trainer Note:** The training room should be set up to accommodate the specific size of the audience to ensure that individuals can have optimal viewing throughout the training. Before participants enter the room, the trainer should have individual posters of the Parking Lot and the following Key Points and should post the Key Points around the room for use in Section III.

- Families have strengths and can change.
- Empowering people is preferable to controlling them.
- Family Members know their family best.
- Children are best raised in families.
- Mistakes are opportunities for growth and development.

#### **Step 1:**

As participants enter the room, trainer should have each participant sign in and take 10 beans from a container sitting next to the sign in sheet.

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer should introduce self, provide a brief explanation of their background and experiences with FGDM, and welcome participants. The trainer will then review the guidelines for the PA Child Welfare Training Program (i.e. 15 minute rule, sign in sheet and evaluation).

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section I. Introduction (continued)**

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer will note that **Handout #1 (Idea Catcher)**, has been provided for participants to record thoughts or ideas that they gain from the training that will benefit the implementation of FGDM in their community.

The trainer will put up and review **Overhead #1 (Agenda) and Overhead #2 (Learning Objectives)**. In addition, the trainer will refer participants to **Handout #2 (Agenda) and Handout #3 (Learning Objectives)** to ensure participant understanding. Also, the trainer will briefly discuss the rationale and purpose for the training. The trainer will answer any questions, as necessary, and indicate to participants if their questions relate to a topic that will not be discussed during the training. Any questions that will not be answered throughout the course of the training should be posted on the Parking Lot. Trainer will note that s/he will be available during the two breaks to further explore those questions or to provide additional resource information.

#### **Step 4:**

Using **Overhead #3 (Introductory Exercise)** as a guide for participants, the trainer will engage the participants in an exercise that has them get to know each other and identifies who and what service entities are represented at the training. Individuals will pair up and interview each other asking (a) their name, (b) occupation, (c) agency/county and (d) one interesting fact about themselves or their family. The trainer will give participants about 10 minutes to complete this part and then will ask participants to introduce individuals from different services areas. It will take 20 minutes or less to complete the entire exercise.

**Trainer Note:** If the group is too large for this exercise, the trainer may want to have participants raise their hands and share if they are with Children and Youth, Juvenile Probation, Mental Health, Education, Drug and Alcohol, Faith-Based Community, Parents, Community Members, or any other area the trainer can identify.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

45 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Define Family Group Decision Making and its impact on families and communities and systems
- ✓ Describe what FGDM means and how to involve cross systems partners
- ✓ Recognize the unique features of FGDM

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, Large Group Discussion, Small Group Activity

#### **Material Needed:**

- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Overhead Project/Screen
- ✓ **Overhead #4 (Bean Exercise Questions)**
- ✓ **Overhead #5 (Jim Nice Quote)**
- ✓ **Overhead #6 (What is Family Group Decision Making?)**
- ✓ **Overhead #7 (History of Family Group Decision Making)**
- ✓ **Overhead #8 (The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice)**
- ✓ **Overhead #9 (Unique Features of FGDM)**
- ✓ **Handout #4 (Jim Nice Quote)**
- ✓ **Handout #5 (History of Family Group Decision Making)**
- ✓ **Handout #6 (The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice)**
- ✓ **Handout #7 (Unique Features of FGDM)**

#### **Resources Used:**

Buford, G., Pennell, P., and MacLeod, S. (1995) Manual for Coordinators and Communities: The Organization and Practice of Family Group Decision Making. Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Social Work, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Helping a Family Prepare for a FGDM Conference, Evans, P., Nice J.

Graber L., Nice J (1997). The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Nice, J. (2006) FGDM: An Introduction to Family Group Decision Making. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Nice, J. (2003) FGDM Coordinator and Facilitator Competencies and Learning Objectives. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making (continued)**

#### **Resources Used (continued):**

Nice, J. (2003) FGDM Family Group Decision Making: Coordinator / Facilitator Workshop 1. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

#### **PA Standards:**

II. Service Planning; Outcome: Safety and Permanence

#### **CFSR Issues:**

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations, Items 6, 7, 8

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children, Item 14, 15, 16

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, Item 18

#### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- ✓ Introduce and define Family Group Decision Making, the cross-system nature of this approach and its uniqueness in comparison with traditional practice.
- ✓ Conduct an activity using **Overhead #4 (Bean Exercise Questions)**
- ✓ Define Family Group Decision Making and its impact on families, communities and systems using **Overhead #5 (Jim Nice Quote)** and **Overhead #6 (What is Family Group Decision Making?)**; and **Handout #4 (Jim Nice Quote)**
- ✓ Discuss how FGDM differs from standard practices using **Overhead #7 (History of Family Group Decision Making)**, **Overhead #8 (The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice)**, and **Overhead #9 (Unique Features)**; and **Handout #5 (History of Family Group Decision Making)**, **Handout #6 (The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice)**, and **Handout #7 (Unique Features of FGDM)**
- ✓ Describe what FGDM is and how to involve cross systems partners
- ✓ Describe how FGDM is different and unique as a practice

#### **Step 1:**

The trainer will ask participants to get their beans and place them all in their right hand. The trainer will share a list of ten different ways that a family could get involved in “the System.” If the participants have had that circumstance or situation in their family, they are to transfer a bean from their right hand to their left hand. By the end of the exercise, very few individuals will have all their beans in their right hand. The purpose of this exercise is to assist participants in understanding that any family can become involved in the system, thereby creating a sense of commonality between participants and the families with whom they work. Below is the list of questions that the trainer will ask the participants. The trainer can refer to **Overhead #4 (Bean Exercise Questions)** that has these questions listed being sure to read them slowly, giving participants a chance to think about their family.

Has anyone in your immediate and/or extended family (example brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent, etc.) ever:

1. Had a teenager that was unruly or participating in unsafe activities?
2. Had a child or teenager that refused to go to school for an extended period of time?
3. Gone a little overboard disciplining their children, especially in public?
4. Left a child in the car while going into the corner store?
5. Had a younger child with an unexplainable bruise or injury?
6. Had an argument that could be heard by a neighbor?
7. Had difficulty parenting their child?
8. Been overwhelmed with trying to take care of their children?
9. Had a couple drinks and driven home with children in the car?
10. Frequently consumed alcohol or used drugs?

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making (continued)**

#### **Step 1 (continued):**

The trainer will ask participants what they believe is the purpose of this exercise. The trainer will also ask a few participants to share how their family coped with one of the situations represented by the beans in their left hand. The trainer will get feedback and then share that the purpose is to have participants realize that the families who go through the FGDM experience are often very similar to their own families. The trainer will share that all of these questions are ways that a family could get involved with child welfare services. The trainer should connect how the participants dealt with their family situation to the process of widening the circle. For example, the trainer could state, “unlike the participants who just shared their experiences, the families with whom child welfare works are often disconnected from their families. FGDM provides them an opportunity to reach out to their family members for assistance in planning for the safety, permanency, and well-being of their children.”

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer will present that FGDM is an alternative method for developing the Family Service Plan and that the best way to describe FGDM is with the following quotes using **Overhead #5 and Handout #4 (Jim Nice Quote)**. The trainer will explain **Overhead #6 (What is Family Group Decision Making?)**, which states that Family Group Decision Making is a practice, which recognizes the role and the long tradition that families have in the understanding and the care taking of their members. This differs from traditional practice in many ways, one of which being that in traditional practice, families are often expected to attend agency meetings where service providers recommend a level or type of service. The family is then expected to follow all agency recommendations. When utilizing FGDM, the quote below shares the emphasis on the family’s ownership and how it is an honor for a family to choose to invite a professional to their family meeting. The trainer will share that Family Group Decision Making encourages family empowerment and family involvement including extended family, friends, neighbors, community supports. FGDM respectfully encourages the family to come together as the best people to make short and long term decisions for its members. The trainer will share that one of the principles from the Kinpower in New Zealand is “Your own family as your best guide”. The trainer will invite participants to think about their own family, struggles and life experiences. Trainer will state a quote from Jim Nice “*I have never met anyone in the helping profession who would prefer that a caseworker and an agency make critical decisions about someone they care for within their own family*”. Family Group Decision Making speaks to the simplistic and innate way families come together to take care of their own.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making (continued)**

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer will explain that FGDM attempts to widen the circle and to identify much more than just the nuclear family as participants. The family decides who will participate and who they want involved in helping create their plan, except for the child welfare worker, who must be present at the conference and must accept the plan. When this occurs, the family is empowered to make the decisions for its members.

**Trainer Note:** The trainer may want to use a drawing on flipchart paper to illustrate the widening of the circle.

#### **Step 4:**

In addition to family, FGDM involves numerous systems when it is implemented (i.e. child welfare, probation, drug and alcohol, mental health and school districts). This practice can be utilized in numerous settings and systems (i.e. working with issues for families, children, church and elderly). Since many children and families are involved with more than one system, FGDM offers the opportunity for the family to have one plan that all systems support them in accomplishing. Therefore, participants should understand that to implement FGDM successfully, many of these systems should be represented from the beginning. A great deal of energy has to be put into educating these separate systems and bringing them together to have a voice in implementing FGDM. It is essential that this work is completed in the beginning or it will be difficult to educate these systems and have them participate effectively in the practice once it is being implemented.

#### **Step 5:**

The trainer will give a brief history of FGDM using **Overhead #7 and Handout #5 (History of Family Group Decision Making)**. The trainer will explain that Family Group Decision Making first became known internationally when it became law of the land in New Zealand, with the 1989 Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act. This act established federal legislation that made it mandatory for all serious child welfare and juvenile justice cases to participate in the FGDM Process. The indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maoris, played a central role in this practice, when they presented “PUAO-TE-ATA-TU” (DAY BREAK) to the Department of Social Welfare. In this report, they made 13 recommendations which were the foundation of the Maori project, New Zealand’s first efforts at Family Group Conferencing. This practice spread from New Zealand to Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, Europe, Canada, and the United States. Around the same time, Larry Graber, a manager in Oregon’s Children Services, created the Family Unity Model and with the help of Jim Nice and other associates introduced FGDM in Oregon and other states. Since the practice was introduced in the United States over 15 years ago, it has gradually grown and is currently being implemented in over 35 states and hundreds of counties across the United States.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making (continued)**

#### **Step 6:**

The trainer will break participants into small groups of 4-5 individuals and ask them to compare their understanding of FGDM to their current case practice. What is different? What is the same? The trainer will ask each group to record their responses on flipchart paper.

When the small groups have completed their discussion, the trainer will facilitate a large group discussion on traditional practice. The trainer could expect the following responses:

- Worker develops the plan in the office with little input from the family
- Worker only has one or two family members involved in developing the plan, etc.

The trainer will record key concepts on flip chart paper and gain group consensus on what Traditional Practice looks like.

After this discussion, the trainer will describe the FGDM planning process using **Overhead #8** and **Handout #6 (The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice)**:

- The meeting and decision making belong to the family in FGDM
- Broad definition of family – trainer should include example of who usually attends a planning meeting held at the agency vs. who attends an FGDM meeting
- Private family time and plan development
- Family expertise vs. agency worker expertise
- Family follow through on plan completion

The trainer will tie the comparisons into the next section, which will discuss the unique features of FGDM.

#### **Step 7:**

The trainer will refer participants to **Handout #7 (Unique Features of FGDM)** and highlight the Unique Features that make FGDM different using **Overhead #9 (Unique Features of FGDM)**. The trainer will discuss how typically in helping agencies, the family's issues or problems typically create the content and context of the meeting. In FGDM, the concentration is first on the strengths and then on the concerns that can be addressed using those identified strengths of the family.

Paul Sivak, (University of California, Stanislaus) first presented that FGDM is transformational, because FGDM requires individuals and entire systems to change their thinking and to change how they do business. FGDM challenges some contemporary ideas and how certain agencies do business. Many human services see that their role is to direct and educate a misguided and uninformed family.

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

### **Section II: What is Family Group Decision Making (continued)**

#### **Step 7 (continued):**

FGDM sees the family as the best resource for themselves: the formal supports act as a small piece of the larger picture. FGDM challenges communities to build partnerships and create bonds that may not have previously existed. It takes a lot to change an entire system's way of thinking, but that is just what happens when FGDM is implemented.

In addition to the previously shared material, FGDM offers the unique concept of speaking in the language of concerns. The trainer will distinguish concerns from problems by sharing that concerns are things that people are worried about, that they would like to see addressed. Problems are defined, by the American Heritage College Dictionary, as a situation, matter, or person that presents perplexity or difficulty. Utilizing the term concern is more proactive and solution focused. Also, speaking in the language of concerns allows people to talk about how they feel in an appropriate manner.

**Trainer Note:** Share an anecdotal story that illustrates the difference between problems and concerns.

The trainer summarizes the unique features by stating that FGDM is a process. Emphasis must be put on how extensive the process is and how much preparation is involved in implementing, as well as preparing, participants for a FGDM Conference.

**Trainer Note:** This may be a good time to take a 10 - 15 minute morning break. Trainer will stress that s/he will be available during the breaks for any questions.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section III: FGDM Value and Beliefs**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

60 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the values and beliefs of FGDM
- ✓ Identify why there needs to be a shift in values and the importance of this shift.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, Large Group Discussion

#### **Material Needed:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ Overhead Projector/Screen
- ✓ **Overhead #10 (Values and Beliefs of FGDM)**
- ✓ **Handout #8 (Values and Beliefs of FGDM)**

#### **Resources Used:**

Graber L., Nice J (1997). The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Nice, J. (2006) FGDM: An Introduction to Family Group Decision Making. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

#### **PA Standards:**

None

#### **CFSR Issues:**

None

#### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section III: FGDM Value and Beliefs**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer will engage participants in a discussion pertaining to the values and beliefs of FGDM. This discussion reaffirms family empowerment and how much influence a family has on its members. This discussion will connect to the next session, which discusses the actual family group decision making process.

- ✓ Review **Overhead #10** and **Handout #8 (The Values and Beliefs of FGDM)**
- ✓ Discuss and identify the origin of these values
- ✓ Participate in a large group discussion pertaining to the values of the practice
- ✓ Discuss the shift in values and how to get participants to embrace this shift

#### **Step 1:**

The trainer will explain that now that we have an understanding of what FGDM is; let us explore the values and beliefs that are inherent to this practice. The trainer will present and review **Overhead #10** and **Handout #8 (The Values and Beliefs of FGDM)** and give participants the opportunity to process through each point and look for validation for different values and beliefs. The trainer will emphasize that these are the backbone of the practice. These values and beliefs shape the practice and make it possible for those who implement it to believe in it and allow it to transform their agency and how they do business. The trainer should explain that the list of values of FGDM comes from Kinpower Associates, Jim Nice of the Family Unity Project and the PA FGDM Leadership Team. The trainer will stress the following Key Points:

FGDM believes that:

- Families have strengths and can change;
- Family Members should be the primary decision makers for their family;
- Empowering people is preferable to controlling them;
- Family Members know their family best;
- Children are best raised in families and these families should be respected;
- Mistakes are opportunities for growth and development – *Kinpower Associates, New Zealand*;
- Families have the greatest investment in seeing their children safe and successful and that all families have the ability to come together and solve family concerns; and
- Families have resources they can count on in times of need.

**Trainer Note:** Trainer will make sure that the five Key Point posters are still posted around the room to facilitate the next activity “Taking a Stand.” The trainer was instructed to post these in Step 1 on page 7.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section III: FGDM Value and Beliefs (continued)**

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer will review the Key Points posters that are posted around the room and explain that these five were chosen because they represent the heart of FGDM. When the Key Points have been reviewed, the trainer will ask each participant to rise and stand by the Key Point that is most compelling to them at the present time.

As participants choose and stand by a Key Point, the trainer can stand by one that has few or no one there. Give the participants about 5-10 minutes to explain the significance of that Key Point to each other in their small groups. Then in a large group process, the trainer goes from principle to principle, asking the participants to explain the significance of that principle to them. This activity recognizes that FGDM values and beliefs are universal, and has participants share how they relate to their values and beliefs. It is very rare that an individual does not identify with any of the FGDM convictions. If they do not, they will remain at their table. If this happens, the trainer can say that “it gives me an opportunity to demonstrate acceptance that we can be different”.

**Trainer Note:** The trainer will need to be mindful of time as the group moves through this activity.

#### **Step 3:**

Once everyone has returned to their tables, the trainer engages the larger group in the following discussion:

- How are these values present in your agency?
- Referring back to **Overhead #10 (The Values and Beliefs of FGDM)**, the trainer will have participants compare the values with current practice in their agency.
- The trainer will ask them to identify some shifts that could be made within their organization to further embrace the FGDM values in their daily work.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section IV: Benefits of FGDM**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

30 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the benefits of FGDM to families, communities, and workers.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, large group discussion

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ Overhead Projector/Screen
- ✓ **Overhead #11 (Benefits of FGDM)**
- ✓ **Handout #9 (Benefits of FGDM)**

#### **Resources Used:**

Graber L., Nice J (1997). The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

American Humane Association (1999). Outcome Report Summary. Englewood, CO:  
American Humane Association.

Burford, G. & Pennell, J. (1994) Manual for Coordinator: The Family Group Conference. Memorial University of Newfoundland, School of Social Work; St. John's Newfoundland.

Burford, G., & Pennell, J. (1998). Family Group Decision Making: After the Conference-Progress In Resolving Violence And Promoting Well-Being; Outcome report (Vol. 1). St. John's Newfoundland; Memorial University of New Foundland, School of Social Work.

Walter R McDonald & Associates, Inc. (2000) Santa Clara Family Conference Model: Outcome Evaluation. Santa Clara County Social Services Agency. Department of Family and Children's Services. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc. (2000) The Santa Clara County Family Conference Model: Outcome Evaluation. Sacramento, CA: Author.

#### **PA Standards:**

- II. Service Planning; Outcome: Safety and Permanence, G, H
- III. Service Delivery; Outcome: Safety, Permanence and Well-being, L

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

### **Section IV: Benefits of FGDM (continued)**

#### **CFSR Issues:**

Outcome S1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect

Outcome S2: Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate, Item 3

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations, Items 6, 7, 8

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children, Item 14, 15, 16

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, Item 18

#### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section IV: Benefits of FGDM**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer will address what benefits FGDM can offer to communities, workers and families. These rewards should be discussed and dissected to give participants a true perspective of the benefits of implementing this practice in their community.

- ✓ Explain the benefits of FGDM to families, communities and workers.

**Trainer Note:** The trainer will have resources for research available for individuals who may want access to this information. Benefits that are stated as statistically significant are findings from studies that are cited from Santa Clara Family Conference Model: Outcome Evaluation and can be found in the bibliography. This section would be a good place for the trainer to add anecdotes to further illustrate the material.

#### **Step 1:**

Now that the group understands what FGDM is and the associated Values and Beliefs, the trainer will ask the group to identify some of the benefits of FGDM. The trainer should record the group's responses on flipchart paper for comparison with the overhead. After this discussion, the trainer will present and review **Overhead #11** and **Handout #9 (Benefits of FGDM)**, emphasizing the following information:

- ✓ Family is invested in the plan. The family has a say and are more likely to follow through with a plan they helped to create;
- ✓ California Study compared Caseworker Family Service Plans and FGDM Family Plans and found families were often more strict on themselves and more detailed in their planning than providers;
- ✓ Often creates more stable living arrangements by keeping children in their family unit and decreasing hostility;
- ✓ Creates better futures for our children by decreasing their involvement in formal systems and decreasing repeat offenses;
- ✓ Increases family ownership by having family and extended resources take over the decision making and bring accountability back to the family;
- ✓ Opportunity to strengthen families and to have families resolve concerns in a safe environment;
- ✓ Cost neutrality/Savings;
  - Decreased court involvement both in frequency and duration
  - Reduced Restrictive Placements
  - Decrease in intensive and emergency services
- ✓ Can reduce the amount and length of time a referral source works with a family;
- ✓ Brings Systems together; and
- ✓ Children remember meeting as a significantly positive event in their life.

During this discussion, the trainer should use anecdotes to further illustrate these key points.

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): Part 1**

### **Section IV: Benefits of FGDM (continued)**

#### **Step 2:**

Once these benefits have been reviewed, the trainer will ask the group to identify any additional benefits.

<b>Trainer Note:</b> This may be a good time to break for lunch.
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# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section V: The FGDM Process**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

60 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Recognize that FGDM requires extensive preparation
- ✓ Identify the basic components of each phase

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, Small Group Discussion, Large Group Activity

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ Overhead Projector/Screen
- ✓ **Overhead #12 (The Four Stages of FGDM)**
- ✓ **Overhead #13 (Pre-Conference)**
- ✓ **Overhead #14 (The FGDM Conference)**
- ✓ **Overhead #15 (Guidelines for FGDM)**
- ✓ **Overhead #16 (Concern Questions)**
- ✓ **Overhead #17 (Keys to Successful Private Family Time)**
- ✓ **Handout #10 (The Four Stages of FGDM)**
- ✓ **Handout #11 (Pre-Conference)**
- ✓ **Handout #12 (The FGDM Conference)**
- ✓ **Handout #13 (Guidelines for FGDM)**
- ✓ **Handout #14 (Concern Questions)**
- ✓ **Handout #15 (Keys to Successful Private Family Time)**

#### **Resources Used:**

Buford, G., Pennell, P., and MacLeod, S. (1995) Manual For Coordinators and Communities: The Organization and Practice of Family Group Decision Making. Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Social Work, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Graber L., Nice J (1997). The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Nice, J. (2006) FGDM: An Introduction to Family Group Decision Making. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Nice, J. (2003) FGDM Coordinator and Facilitator Competencies and Learning Objectives. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

## **Section V: The FGDM Process (continued)**

### **Resources Used (continued):**

Nice, J. (2003) FGDM Family Group Decision Making: Coordinator / Facilitator Workshop 1. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

### **PA Standards:**

II. Service Planning; Outcome: Safety and Permanence, A, B, C, G, H

### **CFSR Issues:**

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations, Items 6, 7, 8

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children, Item 14, 15, 16

### **Interactional Skills:**

Tuning in to Self

Tuning in to Others

Questioning

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section V: The FGDM Process**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

The Trainer will share that the information in this section is an abstract for what is covered in part two of this training (a 3 day session). The trainer's main emphasis is to give the participants a good overview of what an FGDM Conference consists of and what the experience looks like.

- ✓ Recognize that FGDM requires extensive preparation.
- ✓ Understand how those unable to attend can have their voice heard.
- ✓ Identify the three phases of an FGDM Conference.
- ✓ Identify the basic components of each phase.

#### **Step 1:**

The trainer will re-engage the class by having all participants stand up. The trainer will ask each person to share one thing that they remember from the morning that was meaningful for him/her and then sit down. Once all participants have been seated, the trainer will recap previously learned information from Sections II, III, and IV as a segway into the next portion of the training. The trainer will share that Section II defined Family Group Decision Making by stating that it is a family gathering that encourages family decision making and empowerment. In this section, a brief history was discussed, FGDM was compared to traditional practices and the unique features were discussed. Section III discussed the values and beliefs of FGDM and Section IV discussed how FGDM benefits participants and the families that are involved in their services.

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer will explain that there are four stages to the FGDM process using **Overhead #12** and **Handout #10 (The Four Stages of FGDM)**. The trainer will briefly describe the referral process, being sure to emphasize the importance of the referral source having hope for the family.

The trainer will then solicit volunteers from the large group. The trainer may opt to request specific volunteers from CYS, JPO, and Private Providers. The trainer will ask the volunteers to think of their current caseload and identify a family that they might refer for an FGDM Meeting and why they would refer that family.

The trainer will ask for other volunteers to identify a family on their caseload and compare/contrast the referrals. Some questions to consider would be:

- How might the purpose differ from different agencies?
- How would you explain the practice to a family?

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section V: The FGDM Process (continued)**

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer will explain that once a referral is accepted, the next stage is preparation. The trainer will remind participants of the discussion earlier in the morning regarding “widening the circle” and ask them to consider the family from their caseload and identify what they know about the family. For example, do they know the father’s location; are they aware of other family members, etc?

#### **Step 4:**

The trainer will explain that the next step in preparation is the Pre-Conference Meeting with service providers. The trainer will review **Overhead #13** and **Handout #11 (Pre-Conference)** highlighting the following key points:

- Discuss the purpose of the FGDM Conference
- Review the roles of each participant
- Identify bottom line concerns.

The trainer will ask the following questions of the volunteers, “Keeping the family you selected in mind, who are the service providers involved; what other systems are involved; what information should be shared with them; and what information should be gathered from them?”

**Trainer Note:** The review of the bottom line concerns may occur at the Pre-Conference or may be reviewed with the referral source independently. Also, the pre-conference meeting may look different if participants have attended a conference before.

#### **Step 5:**

The trainer will share that the final step of preparation is to really solidify, with the referral source, the bottom line concerns. The trainer will ask the participants to consider the family they identified and share some potential bottom line concerns. What would they look like and are they motivational? The trainer should give some examples to assist the participants.

**Trainer Note:** The trainer should indicate that in some counties an additional pre-conference meeting occurs between the coordinator and the facilitator(s), if they are separate individuals.

#### **Step 6:**

The trainer will share that the third stage in the FGDM process is the actual FGDM Conference. Using **Overhead #14** and **Handout #12 (The FGDM Conference)** the trainer will explain that Phase One of the conference begins with introductions.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section V: The FGDM Process (continued)**

#### **Step 6 (continued):**

To this end, the facilitator and co-facilitator will introduce themselves and the facilitator will welcome participants and thank them on behalf of the family. The facilitator then identifies the purpose of the meeting and makes sure all participants agree to this purpose. Using **Overhead #15** and **Handout #13 (Guidelines for FGDM)** the trainer will explain the importance of these guidelines in setting the tone of the conference during the introductory phase. Once the guidelines have been agreed upon, the trainer will explain that the facilitator invites the family to open the meeting with their family ritual (ex. prayer, song, poem, etc.)

#### **Step 7:**

The trainer will share that Phase Two involves discussing strengths and achievements. These strengths set the positive and supportive tone for the remainder of the meeting and can be anything including: individual accomplishments, something the family is doing well, or any other characteristics that are positive. All these comments are documented on the flipcharts by the co-facilitator. The trainer will emphasize the importance of strengths in the process. The strengths will be used as the foundation to assist the family in addressing the concerns and creating their family plan. The trainer should give multiple examples and ask participants whether or not they are strength-based (some examples should be clearly strength-based, some unclear and some that are clearly not strength-based). The trainer will ask participants to reflect back on their families and identify strengths.

#### **Step 8:**

The trainer will then explain what concerns are, making sure to emphasize that concerns are the areas that individuals and the family would like to see the family address. The concerns will create the content of what the family plan will look like. The trainer will share that the tendency of Social Workers is to identify problems and tell families how to fix them. The trainer may want to use Jim Nice's example below to illustrate the fallacy of identifying and fixing problems:

*"Think of your spouse, significant other, or someone else in your family whom you love; when you leave this training, go to that person and using your best Social worker skills, identify all of the problems that person has; next using your best thinking, share with the person all the ways that the problems can be fixed; and then call tomorrow and tell me how your evening went."*

The trainer will explain that the task of the concerns portion of the meeting is to make sure that all of the concerns have been identified. To do this, it is sometimes necessary to explore the concerns under the concerns.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section V: The FGDM Process (continued)**

#### **Step 9:**

At this time, the trainer will introduce an activity to help participants look below the surface of concerns. The trainer will divide the participants into small groups. They will brainstorm a list of questions that could be used to tune into others and understand the deeper concern they need to address. The trainer will emphasize that this is a skill that is necessary to effectively facilitate an FGDM Conference. Each group will be given a sheet of flipchart paper on which to write their questions. Once the groups have generated their lists, the trainer will give each group a chance to share their questions with the larger group. This activity should take about 10-15 minutes. Once the group has shared their lists, the trainer can use **Overhead #16** and **Handout #14 (Concern Questions)** to provide any additional questions that the group did not identify.

#### **Step 10:**

The trainer will share that the Non-Negotiables or Bottom Line Concerns are presented as the final portion of the concerns section of the FGDM meeting.

**Trainer Note:** The trainer will stress that not every conference will have bottom line concerns (i.e. youth transition, aging population or family self referrals) that are addressed above.

#### **Step 11:**

The trainer will state that all families are provided resources before they enter private family time. It should be stressed that these are options or suggestions and not requirements for the family. This may also be the time when a guest speaker would present information on a possible resource or on a particular concern the family is addressing such as mental health, drug and alcohol, or possibly Domestic Violence issues (once counties begin working with these cases).

#### **Step 12:**

The trainer will explain that prior to entering private family time; families are asked how they would like to share their meal. The sharing of a meal is a critical component of the FGDM conference. Families are asked if they would like to share the meal with the service providers, referral source and the facilitators or if they would like to eat while they begin discussing their plan in private family time. The trainer should ask for a few volunteers to talk about the significance of food in their family (i.e. a special dish that only grandma makes or a special meal that is prepared for a holiday or some other example that the trainer has).

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section V: The FGDM Process (continued)**

#### **Step 13:**

The trainer will discuss (Phase Two) Private Family Time. This is the time to talk in private and come up with a plan that addresses the concerns that were identified earlier in the meeting. The trainer will note that the facilitator will be available to answer any questions. The trainer will review and discuss **Overhead #17** and **Handout #15 (Keys to Successful Private Family Time)**:

- ✓ Ensure the family understands the expectations of Family Private Time.
- ✓ Ensure that privacy of the room is maintained.
- ✓ Ensure the providers do not discuss the family outside of the room.
- ✓ Ensure the service providers know they are free to leave except for the referral source and that they will receive a copy of the plan.
- ✓ Ensure that participants complete satisfaction surveys before they leave the conference.

#### **Step 14:**

The trainer will discuss (Phase Three) Plan Presentation. This is when a family representative presents the plan in its entirety to the referral source. The referral source is given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification, but cannot re-write the plan for the family. If there appear to be bottom line concerns that were not addressed, the family may be asked to return to private family time to finish their plan. Once they have addressed all the concerns and the referral source understands the family's plan, the referral source agrees to the Family Plan in its entirety and confirms willingness to support the plan. This becomes the plan of record with the agency and with the court. Everyone who participated in the conference receives a copy of the plan.

#### **Step 15:**

The trainer will discuss Follow-up Conferences and monitoring of the plan. These meetings can be requested by any participants. They help the family and their resources monitor the plan and update the plan to increase its longevity. Whether or not the family chooses to have a follow-up conference, the referral source must continue monitoring the family's progress. Some families identify a contact person for the referral source who will report on the family's progress. Regardless of whether a family is having success with implementing their plan or not, the PA FGDM Leadership Team highly recommends follow-up conferences to ensure a families success. Anybody that was invited to the FGDM Conference can be invited to any Follow-up Conferences.

**Trainer Note:** Depending on how the training progresses, the trainer may need to take a break for the afternoon sometime during this section or upon completion of the section.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VI: Understanding the Roles**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

45 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the Role of Family Members
- ✓ Understand the Role of Role of Referral Source
- ✓ Understand the Role of Coordinator
- ✓ Understand the Role of Facilitator
- ✓ Understand the Role of Co-Facilitator
- ✓ Understand the Role of Service Providers

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, Small Group Activity

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ **Overhead #18 (List of FGDM Tasks)**
- ✓ **Handout #16 (Roles of FGDM)**

#### **Resources Used:**

Buford, G., Pennell, P., and MacLeod, S. (1995) Manual For Coordinators and Communities: The Organization and Practice of Family Group Decision Making. Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Social Work, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Nice, J. (2006) FGDM: An Introduction to Family Group Decision Making. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Nice, J. (2003) FGDM Family Group Decision Making: Coordinator / Facilitator Workshop 1. The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

Graber L., Nice J (1997). The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

#### **PA Standards:**

None

#### **CFSR Issues:**

None

#### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VI: Understanding the Roles**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer will review the roles involved in the FGDM Process. The trainer will emphasize that this is an opportunity to have a broad view of these roles and that the roles will be discussed in greater detail in the second part of the training. This discussion is meant to introduce participants to the practice of FGDM.

- ✓ Discuss the roles involved in the FGDM Process.
  - Role of Family Members
  - Role of Referral Source
  - Role of Coordinator
  - Role of Facilitator
  - Role of Co-Facilitator
  - Role of Service Providers
  - Role of Support Person
- ✓ FGDM Roles and Tasks Exercise

**Trainer Note:** Before starting this lecture, inform participants that they will receive this information on a handout at the end of the section, which will have the roles, and the main tasks on it.

#### **Step 1:**

The trainer should emphasize that the major role of the family is to be the primary decision maker throughout the process. The family decides who will be invited to the conference, where and when it will be, what the meal will be and the ritual to start the meeting. The family has the power and the accountability throughout the process and when decisions are being made; the family members are the only ones participating. The trainer will explain that family is identified as *a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of parents and their offspring, yet may also include extended family or anyone with a significant relationship to the family that the family would like to classify as a family member*. Extended family members and resources have the responsibility of supporting the family members and working with them to create a plan that will address the concerns addressed at a FGDM Conference.

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer will share that the referral source introduces the Family to FGDM. The referral source is usually the first person that shares the FGDM Process with the family. The referral source is also responsible for completing the paperwork or whatever process is established to get the family connected with the FGDM Coordinator, if the family agrees to participate. The referral source should support the family and be prepared to support the plan that the family creates. During the conference, the referral source should be prepared to present the strengths of the family, the concerns, including bottom line concerns, and identify resources that the family can choose to utilize. The referral source will be ready to accept and support the family plan, assuming the bottom lines are met.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VI: Understanding the Roles (continued)**

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer will share the significant role that the coordinator plays in the FGDM Process. The coordinator has an extensive list of duties throughout the process and many of these will be discussed in more detail in part two of the training. The trainer should use the following quote, which summarizes the importance of the coordinator: The Coordinator's role is central to the success of the conference. (Merkel-Holguin, Nixon and Burford, 2003) The Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- ✓ Obtain a consent form to contact the persons on the invitation list
- ✓ Explain their role in the conference
- ✓ Secure/expand the guest list
- ✓ Ensure that all persons can participate safely
- ✓ Explain the concept of a support person
- ✓ Explain the concept of a guest speaker
- ✓ Explain the purpose of the meeting
- ✓ Secure location and food for the meeting
- ✓ Identify the family ritual

Finally, the trainer will emphasize that research indicates that 22-35 hours is the standard preparation time for a conference.

#### **Step 4:**

The trainer will stress that the key role of the facilitator is to be a neutral party that helps guide the meeting. The facilitator monitors the group dynamics and keeps the participants focused. The facilitator assures that all participant's have their voice and views heard and that all participants remain safe.

#### **Step 5:**

The trainer will stress that the co-facilitator is to write down views of participants and make sure that their point of view is clarified and documented. The co-facilitator is the scribe that documents in the language of the family. The co-facilitator will often clarify what the family and participants have said by saying things back for confirmation. The co-facilitator will also help monitor the group dynamics and share any observations or concerns with the facilitator.

#### **Step 6:**

The service provider's most important role is to support the family throughout the process and to be ready to present the strengths and concerns of the family. The service providers also must be ready to present resources the family can choose from to utilize during their family private time. A note should be shared that only pertinent information relevant to the purpose of the conference should be presented by the service providers.

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

### **Section VI: Understanding the Roles (continued)**

#### **Step 7:**

Any family member who feels as though they need a support person can have one. Children under the age of 16 in particular are encouraged to have a support person to provide them emotional support, ensure that their voice is heard and speak for them if needed.

#### **Step 8:**

The trainer will introduce an exercise that will have participants identify with which role each task belongs. Using **Overhead #18 (List of FGDM Tasks)** the trainer will share one statement at a time with the group and ask them to identify the role associated with that task. If participants disagree on a particular task, have them discuss their opinion and then provide the correct answer. Once all the tasks have been assigned to roles, the trainer will refer participants to **Handout #16 (Roles of FGDM)**.

**Trainer Note:** The trainer may want to set this activity up as a competition among participants, offering a prize to the participant who identifies each statement first and gets the most correct answers.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VII: How to Implement the Practice**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

45 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the extensive community preparation that is needed to implement FGDM
- ✓ Identify Critical Partners
- ✓ Describe the composition and purpose of an Implementation.
- ✓ Identify the importance of Policies and Procedures in implementing FGDM
- ✓ Identify resources that are available nationally and for the state of Pennsylvania.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, Small Group Activity

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ **Overhead #19 (Best Practice FGDM Implementation)**
- ✓ **Overhead #20 (Identifying Critical Partners)**
- ✓ **Handout #17 (Best Practice FGDM Implementation)**
- ✓ **Handout #18 (Identifying Critical Partners)**
- ✓ **Handout #19 (Key Decision Making Matrix Outline)**
- ✓ **Handout #20 (Action Plan)**
- ✓ **Handout #21 (FGDM Resources)**
- ✓ **Handout #22 (Bibliography)**

#### **Resources Used:**

American Humane Association: National Center of Family Group Decision Making (2000). Key Decision Point Matrix for the Implementation of Family Group Decision Making. Englewood, CO: American Humane Association.

Buford, G., Pennell, P., and MacLeod, S. (1995) Manual For Coordinators and Communities: The Organization and Practice of Family Group Decision Making. Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Social Work, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Graber L., Nice J (1997). The Family Unity Model. Dallas, OR

#### **PA Standards:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):** **Part 1**

## **Section VII: How to Implement the Practice (continued)**

### **CFSR Issues:**

None

### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VII: How to Implement the Practice**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer will start the discussion of how to implement FGDM by discussing how the practice has been rolled out in Pennsylvania. The trainer will shift the discussion to the extensive community preparation involved in FGDM. Many counties have taken up to a year to implement FGDM before a single conference is conducted. Important parts of this community preparation are addressing key implementation issues, identifying the individuals that need to be involved and bringing together the FGDM Implementation Team to oversee the development of the practice.

- ✓ Describe the extensive community preparation that is needed to implement FGDM
- ✓ Identify Critical Partners
- ✓ Group discussion on how critical partners may participate in the implementation of FGDM
- ✓ Describe the composition and purpose of an Implementation
- ✓ Identify the importance of Policies and Procedures in implementing FGDM
- ✓ List resources that are available nationally and for the state of Pennsylvania

**Trainer Note:** The trainer may have to tailor this section pertaining to the county level of implementation. The following steps are for a county that is in the beginning stages of implementation. If the trainer is training in a county that has one or more years of experience, some of this material may not be relevant and should be tailored for these counties. The trainer has to make this determination by evaluating the level of the participants present.

#### **Step 1:**

The trainer will discuss how Family Group Decision Making has been rolled out in Pennsylvania. In 2002, twelve (12) counties participated in a pilot project with the Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Department of Public Welfare. This partnership provided initial start up money for implementation of FGDM. Subsequently, a county driven State Wide Implementation Team was established and other counties were invited to participate. This has resulted in over half of the counties in Pennsylvania being involved in and / or implementing FGDM.

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer will refer to **Overhead #19** and **Handout #17 (Best Practice FGDM Implementation)** and share with participants that the PA FGDM Leadership Team believes that this is the best way to implement FGDM. The trainer will explain that the process of implementing FGDM is complex, involving numerous steps. The agencies that will be involved in implementing FGDM have to prepare their staff because FGDM requires individuals and entire systems to change their thinking and to change how they do business. This is a process and a philosophy that has to be carefully implemented within these agencies.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VII: How to Implement the Practice (continued)**

#### **Step 2 (continued):**

Gradual changes to bring the agency and staff around to the philosophies of FGDM are essential. If the implementing agency can not get a portion of its staff to believe in FGDM, it will be very difficult to implement the practice throughout the entire county. Within the implementing agency, individuals have to be identified to lead FGDM. Experience has indicated that the key positions within FGDM (i.e. Liaisons, Directors, Administrators, and Coordinator) should have proper time allotted in order to complete the tasks necessary in the implementation process. These individuals will be involved in educating the community and identifying which individuals and/or agencies should be involved to make FGDM successful in the community.

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer will emphasize that when preparing a community a great deal of education has to take place to introduce FGDM to the categorical partners. The categorical partners are the representatives from the systems that will be impacted by FGDM (i.e. Family Members, CYD, JPO, D/A, Mental Health, Education and Community Members). These individuals have to be educated and to understand how FGDM will benefit them and the individuals with whom they work. The trainer will discuss some ways of identifying critical partners. The trainer should pose the questions from **Overhead #20** and **Handout #18 (Identifying Critical Partners)**: Who will be the main individuals that will spearhead FGDM in your community? Who are the individuals or agencies that should be involved to make FGDM successful in your community? The trainer will stress that identifying the critical partners is an important part of the implementation of FGDM. The process to identify these individuals should be brainstormed and a team should decide what characteristics they are looking for in these individuals.

#### **Step 4:**

The trainer will explain that communities that support FGDM will develop a county implementation team. This is an advisory board made up of key community partners who will guide the implementation of Family Group Decision Making. Often the Implementation Team meets at least monthly in the beginning of implementation. Key community members and agencies should be identified and invited to be part of the implementation of FGDM. The trainer should emphasize the strong integrity that should be adhered to when implementing FGDM. Experience has demonstrated that without proper program development and implementation, the integrity of the practice can be jeopardized. Trainer will discuss the importance of extensive community preparation. Communities often take 8-12 months to prepare before having conferences and there is extensive planning by community representatives.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VII. How to Implement the Practice (continued)**

#### **Step 5:**

The trainer will introduce a topic for group discussion. The trainer will have participants divide into groups of four or five and have individual groups come up with ways that they would get individuals in their community involved in FGDM. The group should identify who they are targeting and what they plan to do to in FGDM.

The groups will have 5-10 minutes to discuss this. The large group will then summarize the ideas and concepts. This exercise should take about 20 minutes.

#### **Step 6:**

The trainer will discuss **Handout #19 (Key Decision Making Matrix Outline)** which includes the key planning areas that need to be addressed in order to successfully implement FGDM and the American Humane Association's Key Decision Making Matrix. This is a planning tool developed by the National Center on Family Group Decision Making to address 42 key issues and decisions that a community should consider when developing and implementing Family Group Decision Making including: building community partnership, policies and procedures, staffing, infrastructure and training and administrative issues. These are broken down even further to include:

- Initial Implementation
- Referral Process
- Coordinator Contact
- Involving Children
- Family Plans
- Staffing Issues
- Community Education
- Management Support
- Evaluation
- Costs
- Recommends establishment of a process that involves a child welfare agency and external constituencies

#### **Step 7:**

The trainer will summarize how this tool can be used to create policies and procedures, which will help standardize protocol for the implementation team and the FGDM staff. Many communities have had their implementation team divide into subcommittees to develop policies and procedures. These subcommittees address other issues as well as establishing a referral process, creating training protocol, getting parent input throughout the process and how the practice will be evaluated.

## **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): Part 1**

### **Section VII. How to Implement the Practice (continued)**

#### **Step 8:**

The trainer will ask participants to develop an action plan for implementing FGDM in their county by using **Handout #20 (Action Plan)**. If there are participants whose counties have been implementing for a while, the trainer will have them review the list of critical partner on the action plan and determine if all are involved and, if not, how they would get them involved.

#### **Step 9:**

The trainer will review **Handout #21 (FGDM Resources)** that shows what resources are available nationally and for the state of Pennsylvania.

#### **Step 10:**

The trainer will refer participants to **Handout #22 (Bibliography)** for additional resources and information.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VIII: Wrap-Up and Evaluations**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

45 minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Gain an understanding of FGDM from the family's perspective.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Large Group Discussion

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Color Markers
- ✓ Flip Chart
- ✓ Blue tape
- ✓ TV/VCR
- ✓ Family Voices Video

#### **Resources Used:**

Family Voices Video

#### **PA Standards:**

None

#### **CFSR Issues:**

None

#### **Interactional Skills:**

None

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

### **Section VIII: Wrap-Up**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- ✓ Introduce Family Voices Video
- ✓ Summarize key learning points
- ✓ Solicit feedback, questions, and comments based on content presented
- ✓ Reconcile learning needs and learning that occurred throughout the training day
- ✓ Determine effectiveness of Day I content and methods

#### **Step 1:**

The trainer will introduce the video: Family Voices. This 18-minute video discusses FGDM from the family's perspective. The trainer will place the video in the VCR and press play. The trainer will share that participants should look for how the family perspective correlates with what they have learned about FGDM throughout the overview.

#### **Step 2:**

The trainer will facilitate a discussion about the Family Voices Video and summarize the key areas of the video. The trainer will share how the families address the paradigm shift with the "oh you want to help me" and the "who died" comment. The trainer will also discuss outcomes, the range of purposes, and the advice given by the family members. They will ask participants if they have any thoughts on what the video provided for them that they did not receive from the content of the overview.

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer will summarize key learning points from the day and get participants' feedback on the content of the presentation. The trainer will also give participants the opportunity to ask questions. The trainer will answer questions, validate comments, and thank participants for participating in the training. Trainer will ensure that all participants complete evaluations before they leave.

# **207: Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM):**

## **Part 1**

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