

Why are we evaluating FGDM?

We are doing a state-wide voluntary research evaluation in order to ensure the FGDM model is being implemented in a safe, respectful manner and to measure the impact of family group decision-making on families who are referred to it. This is not a new process. We have been evaluating the fidelity of FGDM in Pennsylvania for several years.

The model of FGDM calls for professionals to make changes in the way they do things. Such innovation requires study and evaluation. Given the levels of collaboration that are essential, the use of this model will predictably raise a lot of feeling in professionals and families. Careful attention needs to be paid to making sure it is being practiced with integrity in regards to its basic principles and design. This is NOT a test. There are no consequences for “bad” evaluations from participants. In the 5 years that we have been evaluating FGDM, the results have been overwhelmingly positive.

Why did we change the form? What are the advantages? I liked the old one?

- The old form was long, and had many open ended comments that were never analyzed because it was too time consuming to do so.
- The evaluation subcommittee of the FGDM leadership team decided that we needed to continue to make sure that FG was being implemented in a safe and respectful manner using a measure that has some science behind it. This measure was used by The North Carolina FGC project.
- There are three subscales within it—(1) was the group held in a way that felt right to the family group and was safe; (2) was the community involved; (3) was the family empowered?
- In using this form, we can look at the results for each of these subscales and we can compare our results to those obtained in the North Carolina Project. The other advantage is that one form is used for family members AND professionals.

Why do we have this “bubble form”

Over 30,000 surveys are distributed and completed every year and each one of those surveys had to be entered by hand. The volume was overwhelming. This form allows us to scan the information quickly and reduces error. While we realize that it isn't as “friendly” as the previous form, we could not continue to collect information in the same way.

When do I distribute the FGDM Conference Fidelity Survey? How do I distribute it?

- The best time to distribute the fidelity survey is immediately after the meeting.
- Bring to the meeting: pens, pencils and a large envelope. Completed surveys are to be placed in the envelope. Do NOT fold the surveys.
- If a participant cannot read the survey then ask if they would like to have the survey read to them or if you can contact them on the phone to read it to them.

How do I talk to families about the survey? Are there any tips?

When distributing the fidelity survey, you could say something like the following (key concepts to convey are underlined):

"At the end of every Family Group Decision Making Meeting, we ask the participants to complete a survey. We are evaluating FGDM to make sure that it is being implemented in a safe and respectful manner. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. The survey asks for your opinion about how you were prepared for the meeting, how the meeting was organized, if the right people were here and how you feel about the meeting. There is no right or wrong answer. If you do not understand a question, please ask me. If you don't have the information to answer the question, it is ok to put "don't know" as your answer. Your participation is voluntary, and your name or identification is not on this survey—it is private information.

This is a new form -- please take a few minutes to look it over before filling it out. Each statement is worded in a positive way and then the options are strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree.

If you are having problems reading it, please let me know and I can help you. Please use a pencil or a black or blue pen. When you are done with the survey, please put it in the brown envelope. Thanks for your help in this important work."

What if someone does not understand a question on the survey?

- First ask them what they think that it means. Sometimes people want to have their perception verified.
- Remind them that it isn't a "test".
- If there is a word that is unclear e.g. they need a definition, you can define the word. Try to avoid interpreting the question for them e.g. this question means...If they cannot answer it, then leave it blank.

What happens to this information?

The survey is scanned and the information is stored in a file held by the Child Welfare Training Program. Twice a year, reports are sent to counties that participate in the evaluation, summarizing the information from the survey.

What if English is not the participant's first language?

We are working to translate the survey into Spanish. Until that time, if you have a translator, ask them if they could translate into Spanish and assist the participant in completing the survey.

What happened to the open-ended questions?

The open-ended questions were not included on the new form because it is very time consuming to analyze them and then create a report. However, you can still collect this information and use it for your own purposes. It is recommended that you have a plan for how you will use this information before asking family members to complete additional questions.

Attached to this FAQ sheet are some questions. These are suggested questions for those who wish to include additional items. *Please do not send them to the CWTP—they are for your own use.*

Dear FGDM participant

Now that the family group conference is over, we are interested in finding out your views on how the group went.

This information is to help us improve how we serve families and children. Please help us by taking a few minutes to answer these questions.

What was the family group conference like for you?

What did you think about the coordinator (name)?

What did you think about the facilitator (name)?

What did you think about the co-facilitator (name)?

How could the family group conference have been planned and organized better?

Do you have any concerns about the conference?