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PA Child Welfare Resource Center

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

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**Section I: Welcome and Introductions**

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**Agenda**

- Welcome and Introductions
- What is Family Group Decision Making?
- Family Group Decision Making Values, Beliefs, and Benefits
- The Family Group Decision Making Process
- Wrap-Up and Evaluation

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### Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
  - Describe the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) process
  - Identify values and beliefs that drive the FGDM process
  - Identify concepts involved in the FGDM referral process
- Competency
  - 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



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### Introductory Exercise

- What is your name?
- What is your occupation?
- What county/agency do you represent?
- Share one interesting fact about you or your family.
- Share whether you referred a family to/attended/coordinated/facilitated a Family Group Decision Making meeting?
- Share what you want to get from this training (What's In It for Me?)



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

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Bean Exercise Questions

- Has anyone in your immediate and/or extended family ever:
- Had a teenager that was unruly or participating in unsafe activities?
- Gone a little overboard disciplining their children, especially in public?
- Left a child in the car while going into the corner store?
- Had a younger child with an unexplainable bruise or injury?
- Had difficulty parenting their child?
- Been overwhelmed with trying to take care of their children?

Blank lines for notes



Bean Exercise Questions

- Has anyone in your immediate and/or extended family ever:
- Had a couple drinks and driven home with children in the car?
- Frequently consumed alcohol or used drugs?
- Had an adult or aging family member who required assisted living arrangements?
- Had a relative who has lived in a home with domestic violence?
- Had mental health issues?
- Been incarcerated?

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What is Family Group Decision Making?

Family Group Decision Making is a term used to describe a practice, which recognizes the role and the long tradition that families have in the understanding and the care taking of their members.


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### History of Family Group Decision Making

- Stems from the Maori Tribe
- "PUAO-TE-ATA-TU (DAY BREAK)
- 1989 Children, Young Persons, and their Family Act
- Spread to Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, and U.S.A.



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### The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice

<p><b>FGDM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family meeting</li> <li>• Process is voluntary</li> <li>• Families are broadly defined</li> <li>• More family representatives</li> <li>• Meeting is held in the community</li> <li>• Meeting begins with strengths</li> </ul>	<p><b>Traditional Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency meeting</li> <li>• Families are mandated</li> <li>• Families are narrowly defined</li> <li>• More agency representatives</li> <li>• Meeting is held in the agency;</li> <li>• Meeting is problem-focused</li> </ul>
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### The Practice of FGDM vs. Traditional Practice

<p><b>FGDM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Family Time</li> <li>• Family members are the experts</li> <li>• Family creates the plan</li> <li>• Family is responsible for follow-through</li> </ul>	<p><b>Traditional Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency representatives present for entire meeting</li> <li>• Agency representatives are the experts</li> <li>• Agency representative creates the plan</li> <li>• Agency monitors family compliance with the plan</li> </ul>
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### Unique Features of FGDM

- Emphasis is on strengths
- Strengths are the tools to solve concerns
- Communicating in a language of concerns
- Addressing problems in a different way that might minimize arguing and fighting
- Making the family the primary decision-maker



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### Unique Features of FGDM

- An extensive family gathering
  - The Family:
    - Defines who family is
    - Decides who attends
    - Reaches out to all who care
    - Identifies positive supportive resources
    - Chooses the site at which to hold the meeting
- Not an agency meeting



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### Unique Features of FGDM

- FGDM is transformational because it:
  - Is not a program, it is a process
  - Challenges dominant practices
  - Requires building partnerships
  - Is a practice/way of thinking



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### Section III: Family Group Decision Making Values, Beliefs, and Benefits

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### The Values and Beliefs of FGDM

- Families have strengths and can change
- Strengths resolve concerns
- Strengths are discovered through listening, noticing, and paying attention to people (Graber, L. & Nice, J., 1997)
- Family members are the primary decision makers for their family
- FGDM teams work toward empowering families
- Families know family best
- Families are the experts

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### The Values and Beliefs of FGDM

- Children are best raised by their families
- Families should be respected
- Mistakes are opportunities for growth and development
- All families are invested in seeing their children safe and successful
- All families have the ability to come together and solve family concerns
- All families have some resources they can count on to help them in times of need
- Families should choose which relatives, friends, and providers will attend their conference

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### Benefits of FGDM

What do you believe are likely benefits of FGDM?

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### FGDM in Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Leadership Team remains committed to the evaluation of FGDM statewide
- In 2005, the FGDM Leadership Group began efforts to evaluate the implementation and impact of FGDM in Pennsylvania
- The FGDM evaluation committee leads this work and the Resource Center implements the evaluation
- Participation in the evaluation is voluntary and can vary from year to year

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### FGDM in Pennsylvania Cont.

- The evaluation captures an array of information regarding the FGDM practice
- Evaluation focuses on:
  - Participants' experiences with FGDM
  - Adherence to the FGDM model
  - Impact on child outcomes

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## Section IV: The Family Group Decision Making Process

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### FGDM Practice

(Statewide FGDM Evaluation, 2015)

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### Stacking for Success

\*\*Adapted from J. Nice, Family Unity Project. Design by P. Evans

- 1: Do you have hope for the family? Do you believe the family has the ability to come together and be successful in creating a family plan?
- 2: Is the family voluntarily participating and have they agreed to participate in the FGDM process?
- 3: Is the purpose clear and understandable? Does it motivate everyone to attend?
- 4: Can the people invited accomplish the purpose?
- 5: Are you willing to attend the meeting and consider the family plan?
- 6: Are you willing to help the family with follow up?

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Presenting FGDM to Families

- Briefly describe the practice. In doing so:
- Reinforce the agency's belief in family ownership/empowerment
- Reinforce the emphasis the agency places on the family's voice in decision making
- Secure consents to release information
Discuss the potential purpose/participants for the FGDM meeting
Connect the family with the FGDM Coordinator



Horizontal lines for writing notes.

A Purpose Statement Should...

- Address safety, permanency, well-being, and/or balanced and restorative justice
Motivate everybody to attend
Be significant enough to have all the family invested in attending
Be mutually agreed upon by all who attend the meeting
Be clear and understandable



Horizontal lines for writing notes.

Pre-Conference

- Held prior to the FGDM meeting
Involves FGDM staff and Service Providers
Purpose is to discuss the purpose/goals of the FGDM meeting and any safety concerns
Typical Agenda for an FGDM Pre-Conference Involves:
- Introductions
- Explaining the paradigm shift
- Discussing the roles
- Reviewing the purpose
- A brief overview
- Discussing strengths
- Discussing concerns:
 \* Familial
 \* Bottom-line
- Identifying resources

Horizontal lines for writing notes.



Who Attends FGDM Conferences?

Both natural and professional supports attend FGDM conferences. Natural supports may include biological parents, step parents, relatives, children, and youth.

Professional supports may include child welfare professionals, JPO, school professionals, and behavioral health providers.

Based on the family driven nature of FGDM, it is preferable for there to be more natural supports than professional supports.

(Statewide FGDM Evaluation, 2015)

Horizontal lines for notes

Phase 1: Welcome & Introductions

Family Ritual Roles Purpose Guidelines

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Phase 2: Information Sharing

Strengths Concerns Family Concerns Bottom-Line Concerns Resources

Horizontal lines for notes



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# Phase 3: Private Family Time

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## Keys to Successful Private Family Time

- The facilitator will ensure that:
  - the family understands the expectations of Private Family Time
  - the privacy of the room is maintained
  - providers do not discuss the family outside of the room
  - service providers know they are free to leave the conference (except for the referral source)
  - service providers know they will receive a copy of the plan



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## Plan Documentation

- Concern (The "Why?")

Who?	Will Do What and How?	When?

(June Fisher, MSW, 2011. Used with Permission.)

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## Phase 4: Presentation of Family Plan and Acceptance

Family Ritual	Conclusion
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## Section V: Wrap-up and Evaluation

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### Best Practice FGDM Implementation

The essential components of Pennsylvania's FGDM model consist of:

- Hope for the family
- Family decision making in the planning
- Safety for everyone
- Voluntary practice
- Cultural competence
- Trained neutral coordinators and facilitators
- Use of a neutral venue
- Adequate preparation for all those involved

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Best Practice FGDM Implementation

The following steps must occur in the implementation of Family Group Decision Making:

- Coordination and Preparation for the family
- Pre-Conference meetings
- Sharing of strengths
- Sharing of concerns
- Offering resource options
- Coaching family for Private Family Time
- Allowing for mealtime
- Private Family Time
- Evaluation
- Follow-up

Horizontal lines for notes

Best Practice FGDM Implementation

The following items are flexible in the implementation of FGDM:

- How workers express hope for the family
- How the Pre-Conference meeting proceeds
- Who facilitates meetings
- How you ensure safety
- Specific location
- How to facilitate a strengths discussion
- How to facilitate a concerns discussion
- Mealtime menu, time, participants
- How to offer resource options
- How follow-up occurs
- How to conduct the evaluation

Horizontal lines for notes

Questions and Answers



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