

LESSON PLAN/NARRATIVE

Day 3

Module 3: Family Team Meetings

Time 2 hours

Rationale: There is strong support in child welfare to increase the involvement and responsibility of families in addressing the risks to children in the family. Research has shown that the greater a family's involvement in finding solutions to risk factors, the greater the likelihood of maintaining safety, permanency and well-being of children in their care.

Learning Objectives:

1. Define family team meeting
2. Identify steps and strategies for planning and facilitating a family team meeting
3. Clarify other terms for family team meetings

Outline of Activities:

1. Explain basic purpose and steps of Family Team Meeting
2. Facilitate role play of Family Team Meeting for Smith Family
3. Review common elements of similar models (Family Unity, Family Group Decision Making, etc.)

Materials:

1. Smith Family Case Scenario
2. Steps for Family Team Meeting handout

Glossary of Terms

- Family Team Meeting
- Family Group Decision Making
- Family Unity
- Goal Consensus

Trainer's Instructions

1. **Introduce the module by presenting the purpose and objectives.**
2. **Distribute Steps for CFS Family Team Meeting handout. Explain the purpose and basic steps of CFS Family Team Meeting using the following as a guide:**

This is meant to provide you with a brief introduction to family team meeting concepts. This does not equip you to be a facilitator of Family Group Decision Making meetings or other models. There are separate trainings for these approaches.

CFS Family Team Meeting is a generic term used to describe a family-centered, child-focused, strength-based facilitated decision making process which may bring children, parents, extended family members, and service providers together to develop a plan for the care, protection and self-sufficiency of vulnerable family members.

A CFS Family Team Meeting is held to address concerns in a family's life, concerns that may prevent safety, self-sufficiency, optimal child development and well-being, permanency or stability. Concerned providers gather around the family to support the family's decisions on how to make the positive changes in their lives. An important part of the planning process for the family is to specify how the plan will be monitored and what action steps will be taken if the plan is not working. The family and the Agency representative review the plan together and together make any necessary changes. Private family time may or may not be built into the meeting.

The various family team meeting models are solution focused and draw upon the family's history of solving problems, in order to determine time periods when the family was able to solve their problems, and the models develop the family's vision for a preferred future. They can work to provide long-term solutions for issues related to safety, self-sufficiency and permanency.

Under the best circumstances, the CFS family team meeting should be the meeting where the case plan is developed. However, if the plan was developed prior to the CFS family team meeting, the social worker should meet with the family to revisit the plan, discuss progress, barriers and permanency issues. The social worker should assist the parents in identifying any person that has a significant stake in the outcome of the child. The meeting should include foster parents (if applicable), service providers, spiritual leaders, family or friends and other support people. The agency should arrange child care if needed and remove barriers to attendance. Consideration should be given to include the children, if over 12 years of age and appropriate, and the Guardian Ad Litem or other support persons of the child. The social worker should give the family the opportunity to discuss their feelings about each family member or others to be invited to the meeting. A family member may need to be excluded if it is felt that it would be unsafe for the child, or in cases of parental domestic risk. It is important to remember that inclusion rather than exclusion is desired when conducting the meeting

The social worker should develop and distribute a letter of invitation to the selected persons. The invitation should include the purpose, date, time and location of the meeting and the importance of the participants' presence.

The meeting should be held in a room that is as friendly and personal as possible. Prepare name tents prior to the meeting. Place a name tent with the child's name in the center of the table to remind members why they are meeting. Drinks and snacks should be offered if possible.

Prepare flip chart with the following pages:

- *Meeting outline*
- *Meeting outcomes (desired)*
- *Ground rules*
- *Closure*

Now we are going to review the steps of the meeting. See your handout to follow along. The steps of the meeting include the following:

- *Housekeeping*

- *Consent to participate form signed (if possible, sign as they come in)*
 - *Provide drinks/snacks*
 - *Supply flip charts, markers, pens, paper*
 - *Introduction*
 - *Facilitator introduces self, welcomes all*
 - *Each introduces self in relation to child/family*
 - *Family opening ritual (if pre-determined)*
 - *Goal Consensus*
 - *Affirm “Big Picture” goal. It will directly relate to the case plan goal in common terms.*
 - *Affirm everyone’s interest and commitment by presence*
 - *Predict portions may be uncomfortable—even irritating*
 - *Affirm rights and responsibilities of family making its own decisions*
 - *Affirm ability of family to make plan satisfactory to all parties (family, DCBS, court, etc.)*
 - *Overview*
 - *Explain the basic flow of meeting and specifically explain the family planning time and their role to develop a solution*
 - *Explain role of non-family members. Clarify who stays.*
 - *Participants may ask questions of anyone presenting information.*
 - *Encourage creativity in solutions.*
 - *Read any prepared statements.*
 - *Review of Strengths/Exceptions*
 - *Use flip chart and list strengths to accomplish goal.*
 - *Model by naming, writing first strength.*
 - *Open to group for other strengths. Solicit if necessary.*
 - *Post flip chart list in front.*
 - *Summary of Needs to be Resolved*
 - *Write FLO and ILO prior to conference or issue to be resolved—by agreement with family prior to meeting.*
 - *Present needs (FLO and ILO) to be resolved.*
 - *Statement of Concerns*
 - *Participants share concerns that are influencing the needs.*
 - *Family Planning Time*
 - *Family is given private time to resolve needs.*
 - *Make sure note taker is established.*
 - *Documenting Solutions*
 - *Affirm work and solutions.*
 - *Address and glaring oversights or circumstance.*
 - *Discuss self-monitoring and communication among family on progress.*
 - *Closing*
 - *Thank family and affirm.*
 - *Closing ritual if pre-determined.*
- 3. Have group break into their own teams and role play a Family Team Meeting for the Smith Family. Before group breaks into teams, have them brainstorm who should be included in this team meeting for this case. Write answers on flip chart. As teams role play, walk around the room and provide feedback/coaching on skills/steps.**

4. Discuss the various terms for CFS Family Team Meeting and common elements of each:

You may have heard a number of names for CFS Family Team Meetings. These names include Family Unity, Family Group Decision Making, Facilitated Staffing and others. Some of these names represent different models or approaches, but all of these approaches share some common features. These features include:

- *Building consensus on objectives*
- *Generating interest in multiple family members*
- *Increasing or improving the family's support network*
- *Engaging internal family resources*
- *Developing internal family monitors*
- *Laying the groundwork for future permanency decisions if necessary*

5. Discuss frequent barriers and successes of Family Team Meetings. Write ideas on flip chart and discuss how to address barriers.

6. Complete Implementation Strategies Worksheets for this day of training and/or individual modules.