

CHILD AND FAMILY TEAMING

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

Three most important responsibilities for the facilitator:

1. Building the team
2. Guiding the team process
3. Honoring the family voice
4. Ensuring that strengths and needs are addressed
5. Reaching consensus
6. Resolving differences

Ways to carry out the above responsibilities:

Building the Team:

- Help each participant in the meeting to see the value and worth of each team member
- Encourage team members to be honest and open with each other
- Ensure team members demonstrate respect for each other
- Make sure the team has a common purpose and goal
- Express empathy for the pain and concerns communicated
- Use solution-focused questions to keep participants viewing opportunities for change
- Help the team work through differences

Guiding the Process:

- Encourage participants to talk directly to one another
- Cue the group so its efforts develop a plan that will work for the family and team
- Use reflections to let the family and team know what is being expressed both verbally and non-verbally
- Refocus discussion toward the positive, toward the task and toward solutions
- Use interruptions only to maintain ground rules and when necessary to bring the group back to task
- Use summarization purposefully to focus the group and reinforce agreement
- Use solution-focused questions to draw out options and help the team use solutions that have worked in the past
- Add key points of information if the family member forgets
- Offer support

Resolving Differences:

- 1) Assess and decide if all family and team members should discuss the conflict or differences. To make this decision some questions to consider are:
 - Does the issue involve the whole team
 - Does the issue need the whole team to solve it
 - How might this conflict impact the development and implementation of the family's plan
 - Does this conflict influence the ability of the team or family to assure greater safety, well-being and permanence for the child
 - Do you need help or support from someone who is not a participant in this conference to resolve this issue
- 2) Use strategies to build consensus such as:

- Clarifying the areas of agreement and disagreement
- Helping participants lay out options and then see their choices
- Identifying higher principles that members can agree on

3) Use skills and techniques for conflict resolution such as:

- Clarifying what the real disagreement is about
- Finding the common goal
- Generating as many alternatives as possible
- Focusing on points of agreement

PREPARATION INTERVIEW: KEY STEPS

The preparation interview is one of the most important events in the family team process. It is during the preparation interview that a working agreement is established. Here the facilitator helps family identify its outcomes and define their team; helps the team members determine if they are ready, willing and able to participate on the team and what role they will play in the team process; and identify any barriers to contributing toward outcomes. The preparation interview enables team members to participate and contribute fully by helping them: 1) focus on strengths as well as on needs; 2) explore any potential conflicts and discover ways to manage emotions positively; and 3) Respect the family voice.

KEY STEPS IN THE FAMILY PREPARATION INTERVIEW

1. Engage the family genuinely, with empathy and respect.
2. Describe the meeting process and explain purposes of the meeting.
3. Explain that the focus is on strengths and needs.
4. Explain that family will have the opportunity to tell their story.
Invite the family to summarize their experience to help them prepare to discuss it with other team members.
5. Define and come to agreement on the goals for the family.

6. Identify potential team members. Explore what the team member can contribute toward the outcomes.
7. Determine if there are any potential conflicts (relationships, legal, etc.).
8. Discuss time and place and work toward resolving any conflicts.
9. Explore alternatives for input if some team members cannot attend.

STEPS OF THE FAMILY TEAM MEETING

- Welcome
- Purpose
- Outcomes
- Non-negotiables and Confidentiality
- Ground Rules
- Family Story
- Functional Strengths to Achieve Outcomes
- Identification of Individual and Family Needs
- Brainstorm How to Meet Needs
- Develop the Plan (services/supports matched to needs) and Assign Responsibilities
- Assessing What Can Go Wrong With the Plan
- Closing

