

# CHILD & FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS

## SUMMARY

Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings are a cornerstone intervention in Safety Organized Practice. CFTs are the process of bringing together the family and their network for a specific purpose in order to develop a plan to address worries and next steps.

## ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

- Supervisors play a critical role in ensuring consistent, meaningful use of Safety Organized Practice Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings. This includes:
  - Promoting the value and importance of CFT meetings with staff.
  - Ensuring staff hold CFT meetings for safety mapping, case planning, placement changes, return home, case closure, and other key case decision points.
  - Modeling meeting facilitation for staff.
  - Attending CFT meetings and ensuring the worker is direct, honest and clear about the safety concerns that led to the involvement of CWS.
  - Ensuring staff conduct family finding and build safety networks with the family and their natural supports.
  - Making sure the voice of the child/youth is included in CFT meetings.

## COMMON BARRIERS FOR STAFF

- Social workers often feel anxious about facilitating CFT meetings and need modeling, encouragement and support to facilitate their first meeting.
  - It is recommended that once staff attend meeting facilitation training, they try facilitating a meeting within the first week after the training.
  - You can use the “see one, scribe one, do one” model to have staff observe a CFT, then scribe while someone else facilitates, then scribe themselves. Be cautious of staff getting stuck in the “see” or “scribe” phase where they are too anxious to try actually facilitating. Practicing facilitation is the only way to develop a level of comfort with it.
- Some social workers struggle to be completely direct and transparent with families about the harm, danger and worries that brought the family to the attention of CWS. Be sure you attend CFT meetings regularly with your staff, and use coaching strategies to provide feedback on their strengths and areas for growth after the meeting.
- Staff typically cite time as a barrier to CFT meetings. It is important to help them understand that CFTs replace, rather than adding to, much of the work they are already doing, by saving time that would have been spent on multiple meetings or phone calls. The family’s network can also assist with many case-related tasks that the social worker otherwise would have had to do.

## GETTING STARTED

- Talk with your worker about CFT meetings.
  - What do they like about CFT meetings?
  - What worries or questions do they have?
  - How will they work with the family to develop their network?
  - Are they willing to try facilitating a meeting? If not, what are the barriers and what strategies are needed to overcome them?
  - On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable do they feel facilitating? What would it take to move up one?
- Discuss how the worker will use a trauma-informed approach in CFT meetings. This includes being transparent about the process, giving the family choices whenever possible (such as letting the family sit first and determine whether to start with Worries or Working Well), observing meeting participants for possible trauma responses, and providing closure at the end of the meeting.

## GOAL SETTING & COACHING

- Have the worker identify one family with whom they will conduct a “kitchen table” CFT within the next week (i.e., a mapping with just the parents or the parents and one or two support people). Discuss in supervision:
  - How was the process for the worker?
  - Were they able to engage the family in identifying worries, working well and next steps?
  - What did the worker do in the meeting that they are proud of and would do again next time?
  - What is something they wish they had done differently? What are their ideas to try next time?
  - On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable is the worker now with facilitating their next CFT?
- Have the worker identify a family with whom to conduct a more formal CFT within the next week, with the extended network present. Discuss in supervision the same questions listed above.
- Have the worker document the CFT meeting in CWS/ CMS; review their contact note and provide feedback.
- Have the worker use information received in the CFT meeting to create a behaviorally-based safety plan or case plan. Discuss:
  - What do they think they did well in using the CFT to create the safety plan or case plan? What is one thing they would change for next time?
- Have the worker incorporate information from the CFT meeting into a court report. Discuss:
  - What do they think they did well in incorporating the CFT into the report? What is one thing they would change for next time?