

Systems of Care

A way of thinking differently that leads to doing things differently.

First Family Team Meeting Guide

Confidentiality

While the goal of the Family Team Meeting is to be able to share information openly and respectfully, the family or youth may not be comfortable with the Team openly sharing information about them during the meeting, or there might be information that would be harmful to share during the meeting. This should be checked out with the family and youth, as well as with other Team members, before the meeting and handled privately as makes most sense for the particular situation.

A first Family Team Meeting, as described here, is usually held when there is not an Intensive Care Coordinator working with the family. An Intensive Care Coordinator would meet with the youth and family, collect all the background information, start a strengths-based assessment, and work with the family to pull together a Team. So, without an Intensive Care Coordinator, the Family Team may use this meeting to bring everyone to the table, share information, begin planning with the youth and family, and divide the work.

This is meant to be a general guideline for how to run a first Family Team Meeting, but every situation is unique and the way the meeting is run should be flexible and responsive to each family situation.

It is helpful to have large self-adhesive newsprint sheets to stick to the wall so that the meeting facilitator can write down everyone's ideas as they are discussed.

Purpose of the first Family Team Meeting:

1. To create a Team of family members, support persons, and service providers to plan together how to best support the youth and family for success.
2. To create a strengths-based, family-focused service plan for the youth and family.
3. To divide and share the work across the whole Team, and to keep all the members of the Team informed.
4. To name a "point person(s)" for the Team to accomplish specific tasks.

Who is on the Team?

- ✓ Parents/guardians
- ✓ Youth – as he or she is old enough and able
- ✓ Family support persons, as requested by the family (e.x., aunts/uncles, neighbors, clergy, past service providers, etc.)
- ✓ Current service providers (e.x., school personnel, Social Services, therapists, mentors, probation officers, etc.)



Inside

SCHEDULING MEETING	2
MEETING SCHEDULE	3
FAQ	4

SCHEDULING MEETING

Helpful Hints

- ✓ Communication with and including the school is critical.
- ✓ If the child is in a residential facility having someone from the facility present, in person or by phone, is extremely helpful.
- ✓ Sharing information before the meeting is ideal, but not critical. Have everyone bring copies of their background information to the first meeting.
- ✓ Have the youth present if at all possible; ultimately it's his or her plan!
- ✓ Be alert for difficult issues that might come up in the meeting and talk with people ahead of time.
- ✓ Visit the CCF Systems of Care website for helpful documents and weblinks <http://www.ccfinfo.org/NewPages/soc.html>

Before the meeting...

Anyone can request a first Family Team Meeting. That person does the following:

- Asks the family and youth if they would like a Family Team Meeting
- Gets permission from the family to talk to service providers to get any background information and invite them to the meeting
- Requests a facilitator (if needed)
- Invites people to the Family Team Meeting (including support persons requested by the family)

During the meeting...

As described below, the facilitator starts with the youth and family, asking about their strengths, resources, goals, and needs. The meeting is used to get common understanding and find agreement among all Team members regarding a plan for going forward. The next meeting is scheduled.

After the meeting...

The point person takes the newsprint lists from the meeting and types them up and sends them out to everyone on the Team, being sure to note everyone's assigned jobs and the due dates.



MEETING SCHEDULE



Introductions

10 minutes

Team members introduce themselves and the goals of the meeting. Confidentiality issues are reviewed.

Inventory Youth and Family Strengths and Resources

15 minutes

Be sure to include family bonds, family supports (include names), community support network/close friends (include names), interpersonal skills, abilities, likes, preferences, resourcefulness, resilience, motivation, confidence, spirituality, church/temple/mosque community/support persons (include names), past accomplishments, physical resources (housing, food, transportation, child care, employment), and health (physical and mental health, health insurance).

Identify Goals

10 minutes

Goals are different from needs in that they describe where the youth/family wants to be when services are completed, including living arrangements, education, job, aspirations, etc.

Share Information

15 minutes

(1) What has been this youth's/family's history and what has been tried before? (2) How do people understand the problems the youth and family are having – what are the reasons for the difficulties? This might include sharing diagnoses (be sure to explain them to the family!).

Inventory Youth and Family Needs

20 minutes

What does the youth, family, and other Team members think the needs of the youth and family are – what is getting in the way of achieving their goals? This list includes everything from practical things like safe housing to emotional things like being free of depression. Be sure to pay close attention to what the youth and family say first, this is often the most important thing to them.

Identify Planning Needs

5 minutes

During this time, the Team should decide what types of plans are needed today: transition plan, service plan, and/or crisis plan. Service providers, especially the schools, might have needs that must be met in order to serve the youth/family too.

Do the Planning

30 minutes

Encourage the Team to think creatively and create wish lists of ideal services. The Team may need to create several plans (e.g., transition plan, on-going service plan, and/or crisis plan) depending on the specific needs of the youth and family. If the whole plan(s) cannot be written, get a good start on an outline and make sure immediate and crisis needs are addressed (including housing and transportation).

Create a Job List

10 minutes

Elect a Team "point person" or "point persons" to complete specific tasks, assign jobs/homework to everyone at the table, and schedule the next Team meeting. Make sure everyone leaves knowing exactly what they are supposed to do by what date. It is OK to leave some things for later, as long as all jobs needing to get done before the next meeting are given out.

FAQ

What do you do as a member of the Team?

Every Team member works to help the whole Team come up with the best plan to support the youth and family, they share background information, work on the service planning, and help provide services. Team members are open, honest, and straightforward with each other—if there is a problem, Team members talk it out. Team members work to make sure they stay in contact with each other, and make sure that everyone on the Team has a clear role and responsibilities.



What does a “point person(s)” do?

One or more people on the Team should be named “point person” to do specific tasks. Important tasks include: scheduling meetings, leading meetings, writing and sending out meeting notes, being an information hub (or the meetings can be the place for information sharing), being a central contact person for the family, and creating a Team contact list. The point person(s) is not the “boss” of the Team or the person who does the most work. The Team works together to figure out how to divide the work in a way that makes sense.

What does it mean to be strengths-based?

Youths’ and families’ strengths, values, and natural resources are central, and are fully understood, written down, and used in the service planning. Strengths and accomplishments are celebrated at the beginning of each Family Team Meeting. Problems, difficulties, and stresses are seen as aspects of a whole person/family.

What does it mean to be family-focused?

Youth and their parents/guardians are full partners in service planning and delivery. The rest of the Team supports the family to come up with their strengths, resources, goals, and needs, and then works with the family to develop a service plan that meets those needs and is acceptable to them. Families are respected for knowing their children best, and their culture and values are understood and respected.

Need Consultation, Facilitation, Information?



Albemarle County Office Building
1600 6th Street Extended
Suite C
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families

Maryfrances Porter, PhD
Intervention Team Leader
Office 434/872.4546
Email mporter@albemarle.org

Website www.ccfinfo.org

Charlottesville/Albemarle Systems of Care Website:

<http://www.ccfinfo.org/NewPages/soc.html>