

Child and Family Team (CFT)

Pathways to Mental Health Services

Key concepts regarding the CFT

- ✓ The CFT is a team of people that is comprised of the youth, family, natural supports as identified by the family, child welfare, behavioral health, and all of the ancillary individuals who are working with the family toward their mental health goals and their successful transition out of the child welfare system
- ✓ The team process begins *with the initial interactions between the child welfare worker and the youth and family*. The team expands to include other members as necessary and appropriate
- ✓ **The CFT is not a meeting** – a meeting is simply one way the CFT members will communicate with one another
- ✓ The members of the CFT have a shared vision and may communicate with one another or with the whole team in various ways, such as phone calls, conference calls, and/or emails
- ✓ Team membership is dynamic and flexible. At a minimum, youth and families involved with both child welfare and mental health should have the child welfare worker, their behavioral health service provider and whatever family and/or other community supports the youth and family identify on their CFT
- ✓ In order for CFTs to operate efficiently and effectively, they need to meet together in person to enhance engagement, build familiarity and trust, integrate their work, develop service plans, monitor results, create accountability and deal with changing situations and transitions
- ✓ When team members meet, meetings should be structured so that they are both effective and efficient, demonstrating respect for the participants
- ✓ The composition, meeting frequency, and/or use of a specially trained facilitator for meetings should be based upon the youth and family's needs. Children and families with less complex needs may have more informal team meetings
- ✓ All team members may not need to be present in person at all meetings, but the “working together” aspect of teaming, with the focus on partnership with the youth and family team members should always be evident in real time and in the documentation of service
- ✓ All team members participate in the development of the care plan and are responsible for supporting the child/youth and family in attaining their goals.