CA Symposium 2016
Session #6
Functional Family Probation Services: A Relational Strategy in a Probation Context

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What Good Probation Supervision Should Do...

- Engage and motivate youth/families to participate in probation and in referred services
- **Use Assessment to identify interventions and/or target change**
  - The best intervention for right youth at right time...
  - Not constantly ‘re-inventing wheel.’
- **Effectively link youth/families to appropriate and effective interventions and sustain their involvement**
- Support youth/families and monitor for attendance/participation/compliance
- When intervention ends, help maintain change, ensure youth/family end supervision in positive way.
FFP context

Youth / Family

- Multi system/program involved (Child Welfare, Justice, Mental Health, etc)
- Long history; multiple failed interventions
- Multi problem (co-occurring MH, behavioral, drugs, child welfare, gang involved, school, etc)
- Lacking resources
- Frustrated, anxious, fearful – they often don’t want our services and distrust us.
- Parents may want us to take over parenting
- Difficult to get family involved and keep involved (and often their participation is critical)
- Other family members may have MH, DA, Corrections; involvement
Initial risk with these clients...

- Early Dropout
  - Discouraged
  - Blamed
  - Hopeless
- Low motivation
- High discouragement
- Lack of family support
- Lack of balanced alliance w/ interventionist
Principles from which FFP developed

- Family Focused; Respect based
- Consideration/respect for differences
- Focus on engagement and motivation
- Guided by research evidence

Scientific Foundation

- FFP philosophy works in various settings with various types of youth and families
- FFP has successful multiple small and large scale dissemination sites
- Tested change mechanisms and positive evaluations

Change process based

- Change is a developmental process, with the outcomes from each phase having a cascading effect on processes and outcomes at subsequent steps. That is, outcomes build on one another over time.

Specific goals, objectives, process and outcomes

- Know what to do, what to do next, and what comes next
- Specificity of “process” of change.. “pathway to follow”
- FFP is systematic and structured, but also highly responsive and flexible to the unique qualities of each family
Super Summary of the FFP Model and “FFP Attitude:”

- A Philosophy / Belief System about people which includes a core attitude of Respectfulness; of individual difference, culture, ethnicity, family form
- A family focused intervention involving alliance and involvement with all family members (Balanced alliance) with casemanagers who do not “take sides” and who avoid being judgmental.
- A change model that is focused on risk and (especially) protective factors – “Strength Based”
- With interventions that are specific & individualized for the unique challenges, diverse qualities, and strengths (cultural, personal, experiential, family forms) of all families and family members.
- And an overriding Relational (versus individual problem) focus
Successful FFP workers see whole person (the sum total)
- “noble intent” behind all behavior
  - Respectful
- Basis for working “with” (“empower”)
- Rather than working “on” (“manage”)
MATCHING (a philosophy as much as “a technique”) is a fundamental requisite for effectively engaging and changing families

“Match to” clients:
We do what it takes for them to feel you are working hard to respect and understand them, their language, norms, etc.

Especially during E & M it is “about them”
Resistance

indicates that one or more members do not experience that the current process will benefit them
We consider case management to consist of a series of steps, each of which involves a set of intervention processes (assessment and implementation of specific techniques) and relevant outcomes.
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Relational, structuring and organizing skills to identify, maintain, and help families use community contacts and resources

Identify resources needed to maintain pos. change
Structure activities that maintain changes
Relapse prevention around successful changes
**Challenge: Working w/ families**

- **Philosophical/systemic challenges.** It’s the youth’s problem/offense AND so the youth’s to solve—
  - probation and supervision conditions focus mainly on the youth
  - a stance often supported by parents who want juvenile justice staff to ‘fix’ or parent their child

- **Need for additional skill-sets...** Family dynamics can feel overwhelming & complicated very quickly—staff can quickly feel lost. *PLUS* feeling if work w/ families then we may be involved forever. How do you “patch up” if you “open anything up.”

- **Logistical challenges...**
  - Schedules
  - Time constraints: other agency activities more highly valued
  - Safety
  - Can be difficult to get family together, exp when they don’t want to meet
  - Other work activities are more highly valued by administrators and supervisors.
In FFPS we...

- Meet w/ families (vs. working with the youth alone)
- Work relentlessly to understand and to respect youth and families on their own terms, to both understand (assess) and to create a working relationship
- Use skill set to create motivation based on alliance (vs. fear)
- Work hard to create a balanced alliance with everyone in the family (vs. supporting one party over another)
- Strive to create credibility (vs. exercising authority)
In FFPS we...

- Relationally understand strengths/challenges (vs. *focusing on one person’s problems*)
- Work hard to uncover hope/strengths and family challenges (vs. *finding problems*)
- Are immediately responsive to family negativity (vs. *allowing or ignoring it or taking sides*)
- Match to families (vs. *the families matching to the worker*)
- Understand that families are uniquely organized (vs. *all the same*)
- Use assessment (vs. *leaning only on experience*)
- Try to understand of goals/activities in phasic way—first things first (vs. *static goals/activities throughout*)
- Work to sequence interventions (vs. *applying many interventions at once*)
FFPS Phase 1:
Engagement-Motivation
Engagement to increase positive family participation. Involves PO building relationships based on trust, respect and a balanced alliance.

Motivation for families to participate in meetings, services and follow through with specific referrals designated by the PO or courts.
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| **Skills** | **Structuring Skills**: Provide direction/focus during family meetings  
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**Relationship Skills**: Trust, warmth, trust, humor, non-blaming, individual respect |
FEAR BASED
- Relies on Power
- Distrustful
- Requires external control
- "Respect" =
  - Fear retribution
  - Feel "less than"
  - Feel vulnerable
  - Seek ways to change 1-down position

ALLIANCE BASED
- Relies on Relationship
- Goal is to develop trust
- Relies on internal control
- "Respect" =
  - Feel esteem for
  - Feel valued by
  - Feel safe when complying
  - Seek ways to continue positive relationship
Interpersonally.... Alliance assumes...

- Letting probation youth think we “care.”
- Being “patient.”
- Listening.
- Working hard to “understand” each person.
- Going beyond describing consequences of behavior.
- Being committed to changing behavior.
- Maybe feeling “responsible” if things don’t work out.
- Giving “short term” / “bridging” information to enhance likelihood that the youth/family will take the next step – safely and positively.
- Altering our style and approach to better match to youth and families.
You’ve met and are meeting with “all” of them
There’s a working relationship
No one feels you’re on a side
Everyone feels heard and understood
You’re finding links between people, thinking how those links are motivating and how they might be used
You’ve potentially helped navigate relational tensions/hostility and misunderstanding, using reframing and themes that impacted negativity, reinforced a family focus, a sense of we’re in this together, and that gave a sense of hope.
The same goals apply in coming ‘back in.’ Except now it’s mediated by your history with them (for better or worse)
FFPS - Linking to Services
Local probation offices as ‘experts’ in their various communities around *both* resources and resource acquisition.

Line staff, sups and administrators should have many contacts and relationships across numerous communities.

BUT… resources and community contacts don’t just *appear*.

Locating and securing resources takes conscious, concerted, on-going and organized effort.

*At a minimum,* it requires networking, relationships, research, and outreach to identify services, programs, individuals, groups, resources, funding, etc. within a community.
LINKING...

NECESSARY TO FIRST...

- Know the community
  - Have current list of providers/agencies
  - Know the transportation system
  - Know the school system/contacts

- Use contacts and constantly develop new ones...
  - have specific referral persons in agencies (schools, mental health agencies, YMCA, boys/girls clubs)
  - Relationships, relationships, relationships...
  - Credible presence in the community
How can we make our expectations more realistic and still feel we’re + impacting ‘public safety’?

Consider what is more readily changeable.
What is obtainable for this youth/family?
(eespecially with time we have working w/ a youth).
So how a service or referral begins...

How helpful the PO is in making sure the intervention gets off on the right track, can make all the difference: if only in assisting w/ transportation or making initial introductions, doing a clean ‘hand off’ to a program or resource.

- Anticipate logistical obstacles (transport; scheduling; etc)
- Anticipate programmatic barriers (culture, match to, etc).
- Remember: resistance indicates one or more members do not experience that the current process will benefit them.
What comes first... Or, with so much to work on, what do we choose? In other words, how do we narrow the field?

Use FFPS e/m to create a motivational and informational base prior to linking

SEQUENCING INTERVENTIONS

FFPS

Family Tx

D/ A ind.

School/ Work Crew
WHAT change is obtainable for this youth/family? W/ time we have working w/ a youth?

With so many things to work on, what do we choose? In other words, how do we narrow the field?

What comes first (sequence of interventions)

When is more interventions just more (how can we make our expectations more realistic and not risk ‘public safety’)

When do we act upon the basis of public safety? What is public safety? Is it Probation condition violations? What might hit the paper? Gut instinct?
Use Relational Assessments

- To consider a provider, program or intervention that matches the youth/family.

- To consider what your role, style, and assistance might be most effective in making the most effective hand-off.
Influence…

Community

FAMILY

YOUTH
Weak social ties; Anti-social delinquent peers; Gang membership

Poor parent-child relations; Anti-social parents; Family conflict; Low parental involvement

Psychological-restlessness; Aggression

Poor attitude toward/performance in school; Neighborhood disorganization/crime
Proposed Protective Factors (2001)
(from Surgeon Gen’l Report on Youth Violence, 2001)

- **Individual**
  - Intolerant attitude t/w deviance
  - High IQ
  - Female
  - Positive Social Orientation
  - *Perceived* sanctions for transgressions

- **Family**
  - Supportive relationships with parents / other adults
  - Parent’s positive evaluation of peers
  - Parental Monitoring

- **Schools**
  - Commitment to School Recognition
  - for/involvement in conventional activities

- **Peer Group**
  - Friends who engage in conventional behavior
Be Creative...

- Identify examples of how a PO might increase these protective factors by using non conventional community resources (i.e. not a treatment provider/program)

Protective Factors (NIDA):
- Strengthen and increase positive family bonds;
- Parental monitoring of children’s activities and peers;
- Clear rules of conduct that are consistently enforced within the family;
- Involvement of parents in the lives of their children;
- Success in school performance; strong bonds with institutions, such as school and religious organizations
- Adoption of conventional norms about drug use.
FFPS Phase 2 Support/Monitor
Support/Monitor Change
goals & activities

Goals:
• Move to less active role
• Support family and change agent
• Ensure program has effective change process and element
• Eliminate barriers

Activities:
• Monitor and support change
• Structure supportive activities
• Encourage and reinforce family members (and providers?)
• Be an advocate of effective services/programs
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When we monitor we often have the youth/family *match to* our style without necessarily considering if our style will best achieve the goals of monitoring.

What are the essential goals of monitoring/support:

- Give the change program the best chance for success.
- Monitor probation conditions— purpose: not to commit crimes.
Family service plan is implemented
Family follows-through with recommendation/s
No drop out or lapses in intervention
  • Proactive work to ensure logistics of getting there handled
  • Knowing when miss (from family, provider?)
  • Working with provider and family re. plan to not happen again
Ongoing communication provider/PO
  • Set up expectation of frequency of contact.
  • Set up expectations of what prompt communication outside of usual contacts (i.e. misses session)
MONITORING: FFPS Phases

An effective change program...

- Matches **Goals** to Youth & Families: Goals developed must be culturally, contextually, & individually tailored
- Matches to **Each Family Member** (respects language, norms, etc)

How we monitor youth/families is a choice—Use relational assessments to consider how best to monitor youth/family
Monitoring Youth

- Provide a structure around when, how family contacts you, and with what information.
- If trying to control # of contacts, give parent a schedule for contacting, have them use voicemail, etc.
FFPS Phase 3: Generalization and Positive Termination
Generalization Positive Termination Phase...

**Goals:**
- Become active again
- Reinforce positive change
- Help generalize change

**Activities:**
- Use the community
- Maintain/use community contacts
- Family case manager role
- Target generalization change based on relational assessment

**Focus:**
- Relationships between the family and community
- Using assessment knowledge
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Generalization activities

- Still matching to...
- Talking about possible other resources that enhance or continue or follow-through on recommendations...
- Helping family set those up, or augmenting so they’ll last
- Identify longer term goals
  - Ask family what worked differently... Help family incorporate changes for the long haul... Be creative in thinking about how to continue changes
- Recognize progress—identify successes.
  - Help the family own the changes. -- you can help reinforce their confidence/ success in navigating systems and making changes
  - Identify how to continue it.
  - Apply what learned elsewhere

RP
- Offering to remain to a resource