

--- Networks for Girls ---

The Family Group Conferencing Process

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is a restorative justice model program that recognizes the systemic cause and effect of juvenile crime by bringing together young offenders, their family members, victim(s), and other community members in order to engage in a facilitated discussion about the offense and its impact, as well as formulate a plan of action to repair the harm caused by the criminal act or behavior as well as prevent future offenses.

CDR volunteers with a demonstrated education and/or relevant experience working with families and youth will be trained to conduct Family Group Conferences.

Once volunteers are trained in the model FCG process, the CDR will begin receiving referrals from the Greene County Juvenile Office. Referrals to this program will fit the following criteria:

- Be a female living in Greene County
- Be under the age of 17
- Have committed a non-sexual offense upon her own immediate or extended family members, or a delinquent act (such as a status offense, e.g., running away, truancy, etc.)
- Be experiencing difficulties in the home as a result of conflict, communication, or dysfunctional family issues

FGC facilitators will meet with the parties in each case to help prepare them for the face-to-face dialogue that will take place at the FGC. Part of this discussion will be an exploration of the criminal or delinquent act, the harm caused, and what can and should be done to repair that harm and prevent future contact with the juvenile justice system.

At the FGC the young offender will have the chance to describe her offense, explain what led up to it, and also share how it has affected her life. The other participants will also be given time to share about the impact of the offense on their lives and community. All parties will have the opportunity to ask questions of one another and engage in a mutually respectful dialogue. After everyone has shared about the incident and its impact, the facilitators will invite the family members and any other participants, to discuss what the young offender can do to repair the harm including, but not limited to, community service, financial restitution, letters of apology, or other actions such as improving school attendance or changing behaviors at home. These plans of action will be written down by the facilitators, and all parties present will sign the agreement.

Following the FGC, the facilitators will submit the signed plan of action to the program coordinator at the CDR. The coordinator will review the plan, send copies to the case participants, and supervise the youth's completion of the plan via periodic phone calls and other check-ins as needed. The program coordinator will provide monthly reports to the Juvenile Justice Center detailing each program youth's progress on her plan of action.

After completing the initial FCG, program youth will take part in the Girls Circle process. After graduating from that program they will have the opportunity to meet again for a second FGC to check-in on how the girl's plan of action is progressing and what, if any, changes should be made.

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