



Yellowhead Community Services Society
Family Group Conferencing
Program Handbook



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1. *Determining Eligibility for Services & Support*

Yellowhead Community Services provides the Family Group Conferencing program to eligible families based on a contractual arrangement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The family group conference coordinator and the program manager are responsible for determining the eligibility for the support and services provided by the program.

Outcomes

- Access to the Family Group Conferencing (FGC) program is fair and equitable.
- Services are provided efficiently and effectively to the appropriate population.

Standards

1. The FGC program applies consistent criteria to determine program eligibility.
2. The FGC program informs all families of other supports and services available in their community.

Procedures

Referrals

- The FGC program accepts referrals from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).
- The FGC coordinator collects information from the MCFD referral source to determine if the referral is appropriate and to confirm that the family meets the eligibility criteria.
- The FGC coordinator reviews all referrals to determine the need for services.
- As needed, the FGC coordinator advises referral sources of other resources more appropriate for the family's needs.
- The FGC coordinator confirms with the MCFD referral source that the family is aware of and in support of the referral before contacting the family.

Determining eligibility

- The FGC program is intended for families who meet the following criteria:
- A referral can be made to the FGC program anytime during involvement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and is available to families that reside in the North Thompson Valley:
 - **When** a social worker has assessed that there are worries about the safety of a child or youth.
 - **And** the social worker and parent agree that a family group conference would be the appropriate way to plan for the child's safety.
 - **Then** the social worker makes a referral to a family group conference coordinator.
- The FGC coordinator conducts an initial visit with the family at the YCS office.
- During the initial visit, the FGC coordinator:
 - Completes intake forms.
 - Provides information about the program, including its purpose, services, and target population.
 - Describes other services available in the community.
 - Informs the parents that the FGC coordinator works closely with other community professionals, both internally and externally, of YCS (i.e. counselling services, MCFD, and Child & Youth Mental

- Health).
 - Informs the parents of their rights and responsibilities.
 - Begins to explore support networks and identify FGC participants.
 - Completes participant FGC preparation questions.
- Obtains the parent(s) informed consent to participate in the FGC program, including a Release of Information form to identify other supports and professional involvement, and begins FGC planning.
- A review takes place following the initial visit to:
 - Confirm eligibility for the FGC program.
 - Determine the need for additional services.
- If the review determines that the family is not eligible for the FGC program, the family and MCFD referral source are informed of the reasons why and the family is referred to an alternative program.

Written consent

- The parent provides written consent to participate in the FGC program (Consent to Participate).
- The parent provides written consent for the FGC program coordinator to exchange relevant information about the family with other service providers and identified FGC participants to facilitate collaborative practice. This consent has a specific expiry date (Release of Information).

Informing families of other support and services

- All families served, regardless of their eligibility, are informed of – and linked to as appropriate – other supports and services for which they may be eligible.

2. Family Group Conferencing Program Supports and Services.

The Home Visiting Program provides a range of services to meet the individual needs of families served.

Outcomes

- Families achieve one or more of the following service outcomes:
 - Families have an enhanced capacity to care for their children.
 - Extended families and communities are actively engaged and caring for children.
 - Children and youth are healthy and have a sense of well-being.
 - Children and youth are free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
 - Children and youth experience stability and permanence in their family and alternative family environment.
 - Children in care are engaged and successful at school and experience positive outcomes.
 - Children in care transition successfully to adulthood through appropriate support and supportive relationships.

Standards & Procedures

1. The FGC coordinator organizes and coordinates the Family Group Conference.

Family preparation meeting

- The FGC coordinator reviews the FGC purpose, process, coordinator role, FGC structure, gathers information about the topics to be planned for, maps with parent(s) their support network and creates a list of attendees. After the conference participants have been agreed on, the coordinator sets up a meeting

with each participant.

- FGC coordinator and family will explore current supports, topics needing further explanation and/or questions the family may have of MCFD. FGC coordinator also discusses with family the meeting day/time and food preferences.

Participant preparation meeting

- FGC coordinator discusses with each participant what family group conferences are all about, and to prepare them for the day of the conference. After gathering all participants availability, a date, time, and location is set and all participants are notified by the FGC coordinator.

Family Group Conference Outline:

Opening:

- Welcome/housekeeping/cultural considerations and/or traditions
- Sign-in Sheet
- Purpose of the meeting
- Process – what to expect
- Timing – any restrictions?
- Neutral/impartial/productive language
- Breaks
- Collaborative, family focused, and confidential
- Recording during the meeting – who will record? Copies for those involved

First part of meeting:

- Sharing of information
 - What is working well? Strengths?
 - What are we worried about?
 - Topics to plan for....
 - Services and supports that are available
 - Questions/clarification

Second part of meeting:

- Family planning time/creating a plan

Third part of meeting:

- Family agreement on plan
- MCFD approval (edit plan if needed)
- Finalize plan and sign
- Participant survey

3. Determining Priority Supports and Services

The FGC Program determines priorities for service provision when resources are insufficient to fully meet the requirements for service in the community.

Outcomes

- The process of determining priorities is administered in a professional and ethical manner.

- Decisions are objective and defensible.
- Allocation of supports and services to families is fair and equitable.
- The same principles and criteria for determining priority and managing requests for service are to be followed by all programs, providing a consistent approach.

Standards

1. The FGC Program has a consistent and transparent process to prioritize referrals.

Procedures

- The FGC program uses a single, comprehensive document to track all referrals.
- The program aims to not hold a waitlist. Consideration for priority is primarily based on the date of referral, however, shifts to service levels for current families on caseload may occur to provide an allocation of services to new referrals based on the following factors:
 - Family circumstances
 - Risk of family instability without prompt FGC intervention. Availability of other services and supports
 - Other relevant factors, including those families who have been receiving services in another community and have moved to a new community

4. Supporting Transitions and Making Referrals

- The FGC Program provides support to eligible families through key transition points.

Outcomes

- Families experience seamless transitions to other support services, and within the program itself.

Standards:

1. The FGC program supports families experiencing transitions within the program or leaving the program.

Procedures

When a new FGC coordinator is assigned:

- The family is given reasonable notice of staff changes and, when possible, the transition between staff is gradual.
- The organization ensures that files and reports are up-to-date.
- The incoming staff person is familiar with the files and any relevant information that pertains to other services/professionals involved.

Leaving the FGC program:

- The FGC coordinator provides information about – and facilitates referrals to – appropriate, relevant services and resources to the family when the Family Group Conference is complete.

5. Administration of FGC Program

YCS ensures effective program management, integrity, and accountability.

Outcomes

- The program is administered in a professional and ethical manner.

Decisions are objective and defensible.

Standards

1. YCS has a Code of Ethics policy (YCS Human Resources Policies & Procedures) that identifies and addresses potential conflicts of interest for staff.
2. The FGC program promotes ongoing professional development and performance enhancement for staff.
3. The FGC program provides access to regular /ongoing consultation/supervision with a supervisor.
4. The organization has a transparent and consistent process for managing complaints and appeals (YCS Client Handbook; YCS General Program Policies & Procedures).
5. The organization adheres to a quality assurance framework that includes continuous quality improvement (YCS Performance Measurement Plan).

Procedures

Conflicts of interest

- Conflicts of interest are identified and either eliminated or managed in an open and transparent manner.

Financial management

- The financial management system provides financial oversight of the day-to-day operations and is embedded in the contracted agency's overall financial system.
- The program has a risk management plan that identifies and addresses the risks associated with dispersing funding for extra staffing supports.
- The FGC program prepares and adheres to an annual operating budget that best meets the needs of the families served, with regular reviews of expenditures against the budget in order to maximize the utilization of resources.

Professional development and support

- FGC coordinator has access to resources regarding best practices and current trends in collaborative planning, group facilitation, conflict resolution, and family finding. Resources include, but are not limited to:
 - Print materials
 - Electronic materials
 - Peer-to-peer networking
 - Training opportunities
- YCS provides supervision to FGC coordinator.

Complaints and appeals

- The FGC coordinator informs families who are not eligible for the program of the reasons why they are not eligible and of the process by which the eligibility decision may be appealed.
- The organization informs families of the process by which the decision to provide a certain level of services may be appealed.

Quality assurance

- The FGC coordinator identifies desired outcomes for the program and completes annual evaluations to measure achievement of these outcomes. These evaluations include feedback from FGC participants

through a survey at the end of the Conference.

- The FGC coordinator develops performance measurement reports based on the findings of the annual evaluation and review of annual statistical information.
- The FGC program maintains program statistics for quality assurance purposes and for reporting to MCFD:
 - The program gathers demographic information from families, such as their language preference, and when volunteered, culture, faith, etc., as needed in order to provide responsive services that best meet the families' needs.
 - The program maintains records of the number of families deemed eligible and ineligible and notes the reason(s) for ineligibility, along with statistics pertaining to types and levels of services provided.

6. Service Delivery and Management

Reference Guide for FGC Program Case Management

- All referrals received are to be recorded electronically on a Client Tracking Form located on the FGC coordinator's secure flash drive.
- All contact with the family will be recorded in a client file - sample files and orientation to documenting service delivery & client contact will be provided by the program manager.
- Caseload and service delivery statistics are required to be submitted to your program manager on a monthly basis. Expectations, deadlines and statistical information required will be provided by your program manager upon orientation.
- FGC coordinator must read and become familiar with the FGC Policies & Procedures during orientation. FGC Policies & Procedures are reviewed annually as part of staff annual Personal Planning & Review.
- The FGC coordinator will receive supervision support from manager on an ongoing basis.

Reference Guide for FGC Service Delivery

Referral process

- Receive completed referral form from MCFD, phone MCFD Social Worker to discuss the referral and complete preparation questions.
- Following referral, complete the Program Screening Tool. If eligibility criteria are met, set intake visit. If not, refer to other services/programs and document on Client Tracking Form.

Intake process

- Provide family with Intake Package (to include: FGC Business Card, Program Brochure, YCS Handbook).
- Complete intake forms: Service Agreement, Release of Information form, and Participant Preparation Questions.
- Determine if there is a need for assistive technology and/or accommodations in order to deliver service to the family (e.g. communication devices, materials in the family's primary language, etc.). If yes, have the family complete an Accessibility Form.

Post intake process

- With consent from family (Release of Information) call supports and explain FGC and ask preparation questions.

- Set a date and prepare the logistics of the FGC (transportation, room booking, food, technology, meeting outline, blank FGC plan, participant list).
- Coordinate the FGC, follow the outline, survey, and at the end discuss follow-up actions with the family, supports, and MCFD staff.
- Complete follow-up actions (for example a follow-up FGC and/or 1-month phone call).
- Complete closing summary.

Archive

- Following completion of a post-exit phone call (optional), complete a file review form and archive the file in the file room.

