



About Family to Family

Family to Family includes principles, strategies, and tools to confront the real problems faced by child welfare systems. These include:

Strengthening the network of families available to care for abused and neglected children in their own communities;

Building partnerships with at-risk neighborhoods toward that end; and

Tracking outcomes for children and families, so that child welfare systems can better learn from their experiences.

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Change as a Constant

Scott Burdick, MFT, Family to Family

If there is one thing that I have learned in my nine years with the County, it is that the one constant is change. The Family to Family initiative represents a dramatic shift in both the community as well as the social worker's role in Child Welfare, and will have a tremendously positive impact on the children and families that we serve. But every change, no matter how positive, results in a domino effect. The change that had the most impact to date has been the integration of our Dependency Intake and Emergency Response Units. This alteration was necessary to enhance the continuity of services to families including incorporation of Team Decision Making Meetings.

However, any change also brings with it some concerns. Orange County's Emergency Response workers take great pride in providing thorough and immediate services to the children and families they serve. The addition of the intake function requires the worker to file a petition and report with the Court within 48 hours from the time that a child is brought into custody. Workers report that this change has not only increased anxiety levels as it requires additional knowledge and expertise in the area of Court report and petition writing, but it also reduces the flexibility of the workers in the days immediately following bringing a child into custody. In addition, workers may not

have to write these reports on a frequent basis, and the lack of repetition makes this all the more difficult. Numerous meetings have transpired, resulting in additional changes to facilitate this process, staff continues to work on meeting this challenge.

The commitment to children and families is unwavering and the implementation of Family to Family reaffirms this commitment. Our dedicated staff continues to adapt to changes to ensure the continued safety and well being of the children and families that we serve.



Community Forum A Success!

Veta Stock, MFT, Senior Social Services Supervisor

On July 22, 2004 the Orange County Child Welfare Redesign Planning Council, Children and Family Services and the Probation Department sponsored a community forum at the Los Angeles Times Building in Costa Mesa. The purpose of this forum was to provide community stakeholders with information regarding the results of the Orange County Self-Assessment. The Self Assessment, a process mandated for every

California county, included solicitation of input from Orange County stakeholders regarding practice and systemic issues as they affect outcomes for children. As a result of the information gathered, two areas of practice were selected for improvement: decrease the time it takes to reunify a child with his or her parents, and decrease the number of placements a child experiences while in out of home care.

A panel of Orange County leaders in service provision to children and families participated in the forum, providing feedback regarding their experience with the Self-Assessment process. Panel members' comments overwhelmingly endorsed the process as a positive step forward in building a more cohesive and comprehensive system of services, with the

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Family to Family Forms a New Collaborative

Manual Ballesteros, Teacher, Pio Pico School, Santa Ana

The Family to Family Program has formed a new collaborative with the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana and Pio Pico Elementary. The goal is to apply for a mentoring grant. After several meetings with representatives of the Boys & Girls Club, Pio Pico Elementary School and Family to Family program, it was decided that a task force would be created. The task force would provide input for a grant application that is being submitted to the US Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools.

The grant proposal borrows from Pio Pico's successful academic mentoring program

in order to expand the school's core mentoring program and deliver services to students at risk of being removed from their homes due to neglect or abuse.

Working against a July 7th deadline, the task force is working with Pio Pico staff to provide data that will support and give funding priority to the application. In addition to providing academic mentoring to selected students the grant proposes to a) recruit and pre-screen families interested in providing foster care; and b) create a family support network for foster families. The scope of this project is being made manageable by identifying a target area in Central Santa Ana where it is

believed there is high priority for this type of service.

The amount of the grant application is estimated to be between \$175,000 and \$200,000 per year and will provide funding over a three-year period. Two important features of the proposed project will be a Program Council, composed of different stakeholders that will perform an oversight function; and an evaluation component that will be used to measure the efficacy of the proposed project. This assessment will be conducted by an outside evaluator with expertise in these types of social and academic interventions.

TDM Feedback

"I really enjoyed this meeting. It helped to clear a lot of the concerns I had about where my children were placed. I feel a lot more informed and at ease now after going to the T.D.M."- Birth Parent



TDM Milestones

Scott Burdick, MFT, Senior Social Services Supervisor, Family to Family

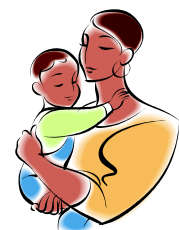
Orange County began conducting Team Decision Making Meetings (TDM) on March 6, 2004. On June 3, 2004 we completed our 100th Team Decision Making Meeting. Initial data on TDM (see back page of newsletter) has been extremely encouraging as TDM's have been effective in preserving placements whenever possible, while continuing to ensure the safety of the child. Initially TDM's were going to be mandated for all initial

placement decision cases in the cities of Santa Ana, Orange, Anaheim and Garden Grove on May 1, 2004. Due to internal changes that were required prior to this implementation, the date was moved to July 1, 2004. On August 1, 2004 TDM's were implemented county wide on most initial placement decision cases and potential placement cases. To date, there have been over 200 TDM's completed. The success of the initial

TDM's has been encouraging and we are confident that TDM's will continue to have a positive impact on the children and families that we serve.

TDM Feedback

" I finally felt that my issues were heard and not negated! Thank You!!"- Foster Mother



Community Forum (cont. from page 1)

goal of achieving better outcomes for Orange County's children.

As the next step in the self-assessment and system improvement process, information was gathered from community members attending the Forum

regarding future directions for child welfare services in Orange County. This information has been incorporated as goals and strategies into the Orange County System Improvement Plan.

Due to the success of the

Forum and the anticipated benefit to children and families, additional community forums are being arranged to ensure community input in the future. The Self-Assessment can be viewed at: http://www.family2familyoc.com/Statistics/CSA_Report/CSA_Report.htm

TDM Feedback
"I felt that the meeting was useful because it involved all parties"-
FFA Social Worker

Family to Family Updates

Mary Harris joins Prop 10 Commission- After many years working with Children and Family Services Deputy Director Mary Harris, has joined the Children & Families Commission of Orange County. Mary was involved in many parts of the agency including the development of the Wraparound Services Program and the Family to Family Initiative. While Mary's day to day contributions will be missed, she continues to be involved with the Family to Family Planning Council. Deputy Director Mike Ryan assumed many of Mary's duties. We all wish Mary the best of luck in her new assignment.

Family to Family Website

Goes Online-After Months of development, the Family to Family web site was launched on July 19th. Our new site can be visited at www.family2familyoc.com

Self Evaluation Team Begins Bulletin Distribution- The Self Evaluation Team has recently begun to develop and distribute data bulletins, which consist of a concise and easy to read format to distribute to staff and our community partners. The first of these bulletins is published on the back page of this newsletter.

Upcoming Family to Family Training Dates- Orange County's Training and Career Development continues to offer Family to

Family Training for Community Based Organizations, Foster Parents and Staff. Upcoming dates are:

August 19th and September 22nd from 8:30 am-11:30 am. These trainings will be held at Orange County's Training and Career Development Center, which is located at 1928 S. Grand Avenue, Santa Ana, Room 110. To register call (714) 435-7200.

Newsletter Gets a New Name! - After reviewing all of the submissions to name the Family to Family Newsletter, The Family to Family Reporter was selected. Thank you to all of you who submitted ideas!



TDM Feedback
"I feel this was a good opportunity for all to voice their opinions and feel a calm while leaving this office"-
Step Parent

Send in your e-mail "Straight From the Line"

Christine Smith, Senior Social Services Supervisor

The Strength Based Practice Task Force has created a way to open up communication with staff and the Children and Family Services Deputy Directors. A CFS email account has been created to

allow staff to send messages to the Deputy Director's and have their questions, thoughts, & concerns be heard. Once reviewed, the Deputy's would respond to the messages based on

themes. The Strength Based Practice Task Force would like to encourage staff to send inquiries to the StraightFromTheLine@ssa.ocgov.com.

Contact Us

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Family to Family Data

Team Decision Making (TDM) is a process whereby child welfare staff, family members, providers of services and neighborhood representatives meet and collaboratively address the safety needs for children. It is a model that focuses on building upon family strengths as opposed to fixing deficits. The goal of TDM is to ensure the safety of children and improve the agency's decision-making process whenever the following events in a case occur:

- An initial placement is considered
- A placement move is being considered

Since CFS began TDM on March 8, 2004 and as of May 31, 2004, the following meetings and results have occurred:

- 88 Total Meetings
 - 23 To consider initial placement
 - 65 To consider a placement move

More up to date data will be available in future newsletters!

