

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

FFT is a highly successful, family-based prevention and intervention program that treats at-risk youth and youth already involved in the juvenile justice system. Unique to FFT is its systematic yet individualized family-focused approach to juvenile crime, violence, drug abuse and other related problems.

FFT provides therapists with specific goals for each family interaction. Although systematic, each phase is guided by core principles that help the therapist adjust and adapt the goals of the phase to the unique characteristics of the family. In this way, FFT ensures treatment fidelity while remaining respectful of individual families and cultures and unique community needs.

FFT is a nationally recognized Blueprints for Violence Prevention program and one of the only intervention programs named by the U.S. Surgeon General as an appropriate treatment for seriously delinquent youth. Additionally, FFT's high rate of effectiveness has been acknowledged by:

- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

- **Center for Substance Abuse Prevention**

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- **National Institute on Drug Abuse**

Although commonly used as an intervention program, FFT is also an effective prevention program for at-risk adolescents and their families. Whether implemented as an intervention or a prevention program, FFT may include diversion, probation, alternatives to incarceration, and/or reentry programs for youth returning to the community following release from a high-security, severely restrictive institutional setting. FFT is also used to serve adolescents within the child welfare system and school settings.



FFT at Community Solutions Inc.

Community Solutions' Home-Based Youth Services Division is widely acknowledged for its strict adherence to model fidelity and successful outcomes for youth and families.

- Community Solutions developed its own multi-phase screening, hiring and training protocols for home-based therapists, which have resulted in a very high therapist retention rate and excellent satisfaction ratings among FFT therapists.

- FFT is currently offered in the following Florida counties: Flagler, Orange, Osceola, Putnam, St. Johns and Volusia.

2009 FFT Awards

During the 2009 FFT Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Community Solutions was recognized for having the second highest performing team in the state of Florida. The FFT team in Daytona, Florida was presented a performance award.

Community Solutions was also honored for having the highest performing therapist in all three FFT categories. The therapist is a member of the Orlando-based team and was acknowledged for longevity in the model and an unyielding positive attitude.

Home-Based Youth Services

Intensive community services for youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems



How Does FFT Work?

FFT is used for youth ages 11 to 18 and their families. Problems may include conduct disorders, alcohol and/or substance abuse and violent behavior. These families tend to have limited resources, histories of failure, a range of diagnoses and various complications impeding their ability to address the issues at hand.

- Treatment is typically provided, on average, through eight to 12 one-hour sessions over three to four months. Up to 30 sessions of direct service may be needed to address more difficult situations.
- Treatment is conducted both in clinical settings as an outpatient service and as a home-based model.
- FFT is provided through specific phases, which organize intervention in a coherent manner, thereby allowing clinicians to maintain focus in the context of considerable family and individual disruption.
- Each phase includes specific goals, assessments, specific techniques of intervention and therapist skills necessary for success.

FFT Intervention Phases

- Engagement, designed to emphasize factors that protect youth and families from early program dropout.
- Motivation, designed to change negative emotional reactions and beliefs, and increase alliance, trust, hope, and motivation for lasting change.
- Assessment, designed to clarify individual, family system, and larger system relationships, especially the interpersonal functions of behavior and how they related to change techniques.
- Behavior change, which consists of communication training, specific tasks and technical aids, basic parenting skills, contracting and response-cost techniques.
- Generalization, during which family case management is guided by individualized family functional needs, their interface with environmental constraints and resources, and the alliance with the FFT therapist/family case manager.



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