

Evaluating family group decision making: Strengthening practice through measuring and monitoring fidelity

**Panel Presentation at the National Child
Welfare Evaluation Summit**

August 29-31, 2011

Washington DC



NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Panel Objectives

- **Assist those attending to consider the value as well as the necessary strategies for measuring and implementing the assessment of fidelity to family group decision making in their agency, county or state.**



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CENTER FOR FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Achievement of Family Group Conferencing (FGC) Objectives: Survey Development

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FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCEING

What is it?

- Family group = natural + formed group
- Voluntary group process
- Participatory decision making
- Intervention to widen circle of support

What it is NOT?

- Group therapy
- Mediation between parties
- Legal proceedings



FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE

What are its stages?

- **Referral**
- **Preparation**
- **Conference**
 - Opening
 - Info sharing
 - Family private time
 - Plan finalization
 - Closing
- **Plan implementation, monitoring, and revision**



MODEL FIDELITY: WHAT IS IT?

What is it?

- Extent to which practice stays true to the model's essential features
- Model Fidelity \neq Participant Satisfaction
 - *Participant Satisfaction*: I liked where the conference was held. (a service output)
 - *Model Fidelity*: The conference was held in a place that felt right to the family group. (an immediate outcome)



MODEL FIDELITY: HOW TO MEASURE?

Were the main steps carried out?

- **Planned activities versus actual outputs**
- **Check list of preparation tasks for FGC coordinators/facilitators:**
 - Discussed family with referring worker
 - Contacted family representative and explained FGC process
 - Developed invitation list with family
 - etc.



MODEL FIDELITY: HOW TO MEASURE?

If the intervention is to be flexible and creative, cannot adhere rigidly to intervention steps

Therefore, need for a flexible approach guided by key principles and practices

- Henggeler et al., 1998, p. 22



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW DEVELOPED?

Based on Newfoundland & Labrador FGDM Project (Canada)

- 1993-1995, 3 culturally diverse sites: Inuit, rural, and capitol
- Funded by Canadian government, co-sponsor Labrador Inuit Health Commission
- Focus on family violence
- FGDM premises, e.g.,
 - All persons ought to be secure and supported
 - All family members ought to take part in decisions that concern their lives
 - Pennell & Burford, 1994



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW SURVEY DEVELOPED?

North Carolina FGC Project

- 1998-2001, in 13 counties
- Funded by NC Division of Social Services (prime US Children's Bureau)
- FGC training and technical assistance
- Evaluation of process and outcomes
- Multiple measures of model fidelity
 - Conference observation
 - Interviews and focus groups
 - Achievement of FGC Objectives survey



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW SURVEY DEVELOPED?

FGC PRINCIPLE

**Have the
conference
belong to the
family group**

RELATED PRACTICES

**Give reasons for
conference that family
group and professionals
agree with**

**Hold conference in place
and way that fits family's
culture**

**Invite more family group
than service providers**



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW SURVEY DEVELOPED?

PRACTICE

**Hold conference
in place and way
that fits family's
culture**

SURVEY ITEMS

**The conference was held in
a place that felt right to the
family group.**

**The conference was held in
a way that felt right to the
family group (ex., the right
food, right time of day).**



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW SURVEY DEVELOPED?

- **on pre-conference and conference**
- **25 items in original survey**
- **positively worded**
- **4-point Likert scale**
 - Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW SURVEY DEVELOPED?

Survey completed by 151 respondents from 30 conferences

- 60% family group, 23% FGC coordinators, 16% research observers
- Interview with family group on average 1 month after conference
- FGC coordinators and research observers completed on own
- Little missing data, especially by family group
- Overall agreement on achieving objectives but areas of disagreement, e.g.,
 - >30% disagreed that plan had steps to evaluate if plan working
 - 18% disagreed that different sides of family invited



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: HOW SURVEY DEVELOPED?

Factor analysis

- Identified 3 underlying factors, incorporating 14 items, resulting subscales had Cronbach Coefficient Alphas near 0.8
- *Cultural Safety, Community Partnerships, Family Leadership*

Canonical correlation analysis of survey with conference participant satisfaction form

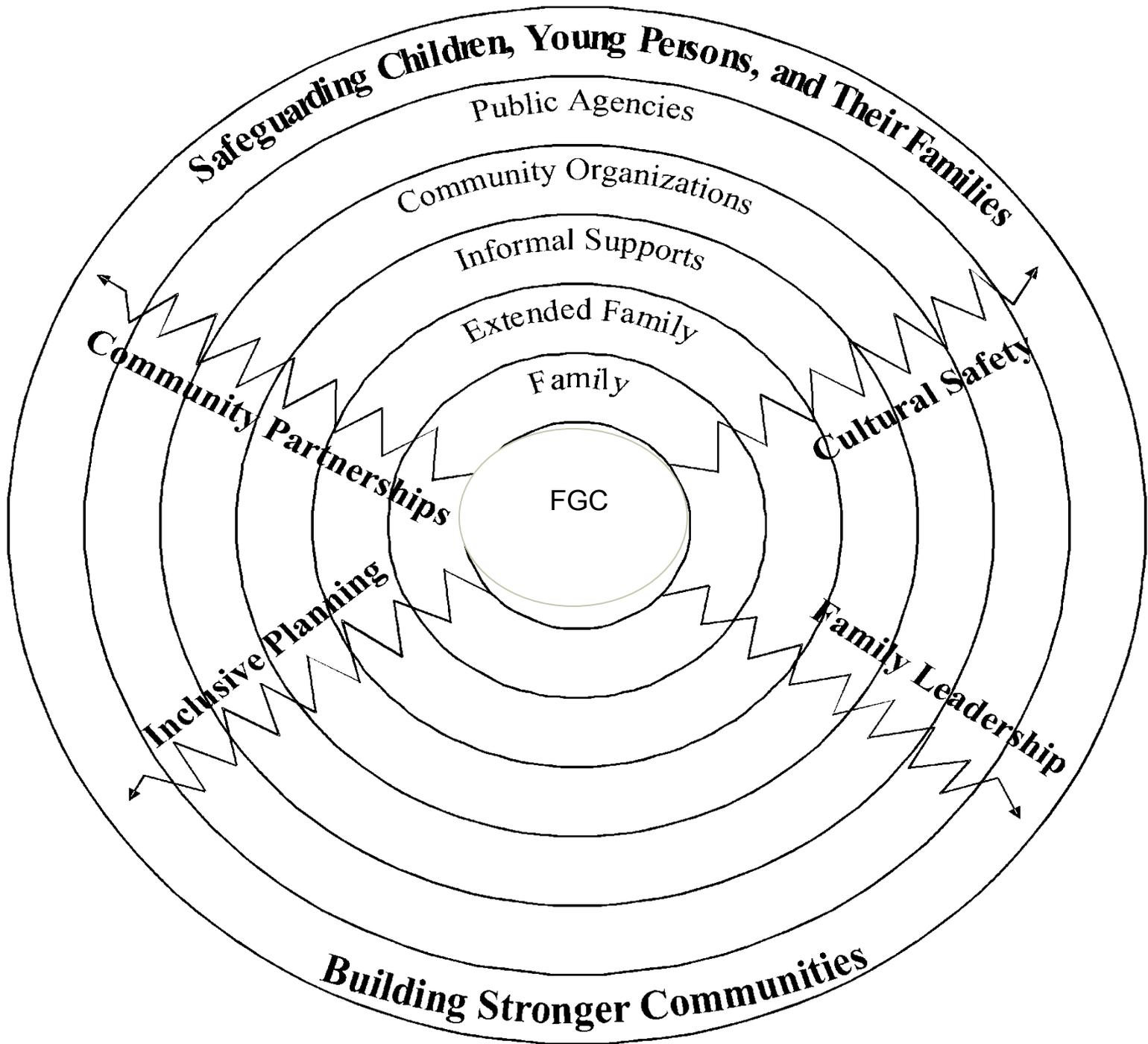
- just family group
- 73 matches between 91 Achievement of FGC Objectives and 165 feedback forms
- from 21 conferences
- canonical correlation of .899
- identified 4th subscale *Inclusive Planning*



ACHIEVEMENT OF FGC OBJECTIVES: DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS?

Canonical correlation analysis of survey with conference participant satisfaction form

- **obverse relationship between findings on two instruments**
- **values on satisfaction form increasing as values on survey decreasing**
- **sense of effective planning at end of conference**
- **but month later realizing important people left out of deliberations**
- **see need for greater inclusivity in planning**



CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Evaluating family group decision making:
Strengthening practice through measuring and
monitoring fidelity**

Measuring fidelity to FGDM in Pennsylvania

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8.30.2011

National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit
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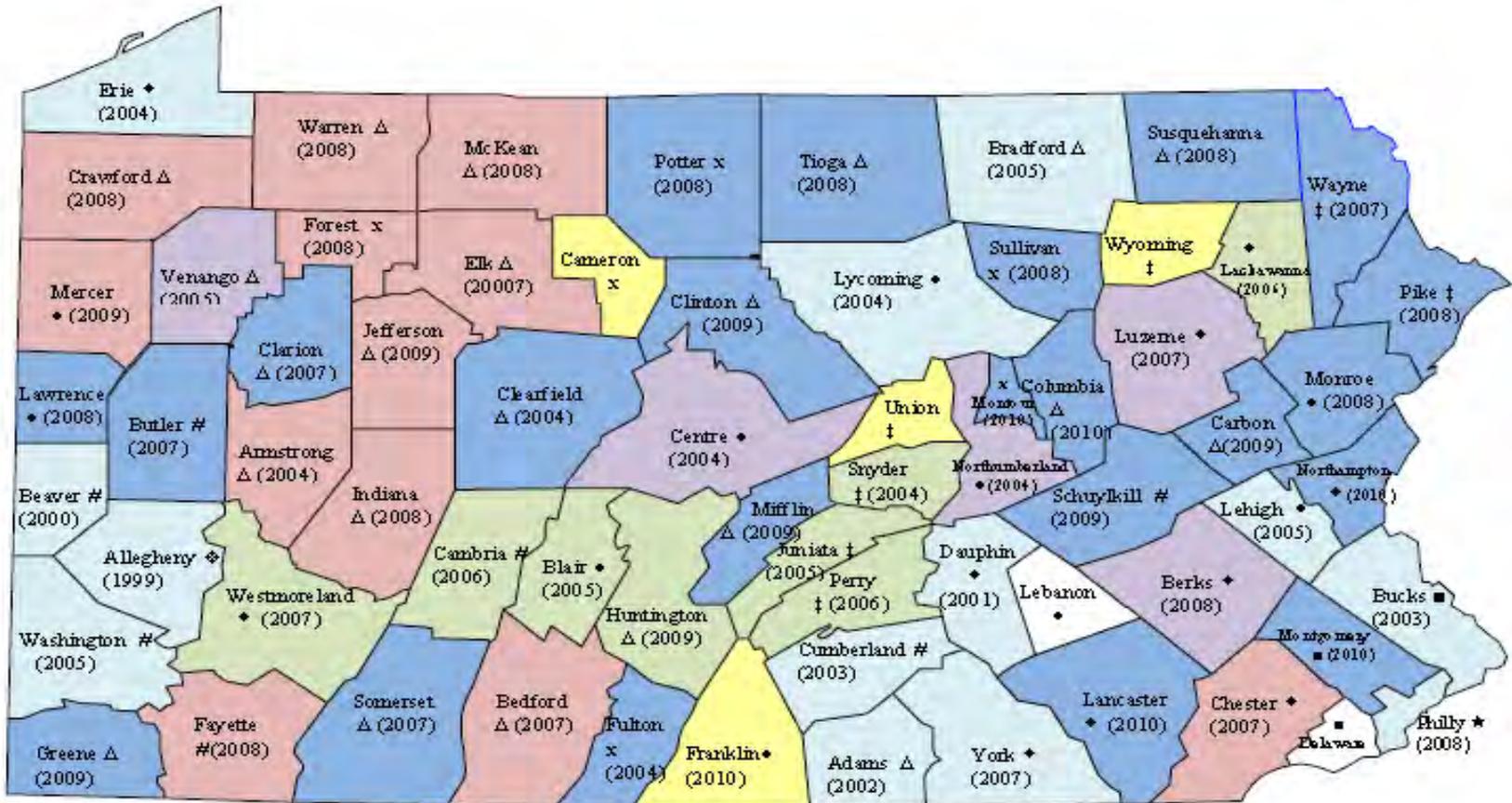


Pennsylvania Model

- **Based on the Family Unity Model and the Family Group Conferencing process established in New Zealand**
- **Decentralized or “grass roots” approach to adoption and implementation rather than legislative or financial mandate**
- **As of 2010, 65 of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania are implementing Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)**



CONFERENCES SINCE COUNTY FGDM IMPLEMENTATION,
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION & COUNTY CLASS SIZE,



1-24 conferences	25 - 49 conferences	50-99 conferences	No information available
100 - 199 conferences	Over 200 conferences	Implementing no conferences	

Class 1 ★	Class 2 ♦	Class 2A ■	Class 3 •	Class 4 #
Class 5 •	Class 6 Δ	Class 7 †	Class 8 x	



Fidelity to FGDM Model Measurement Wish List

- Free , brief & self-administered
- Reliable
- Able to be completed by a wide range of individuals
- Good psychometric properties--face and construct validity
- Able to be scanned

Entire process had to be cost neutral –no additional funds or support



We would like your opinion about the conference. Please answer the best response for each question. If you don't know, choose "don't know"; if it doesn't apply, choose "N/A"

OBJECTIVES	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	N/A
1. Each service provider was clear about their role (ex: child protection, counseling)	1	2	3	4	77	69
2. The FGDM facilitator was respectful of the family group.	1	2	3	4	77	68
3. The only job of the FGDM coordinator was to organize the conference. He/she did not have other jobs to do with the family.	1	2	3	4	77	61
4. The family group understood the reasons for holding the conference.	1	2	3	4	77	69
5. The conference was held in a place that felt right to the family group.	1	2	3	4	77	63
6. The conference was held in a way that felt right to the family group (ex., the right food, right time of day).	1	2	3	4	77	69
7. More family group than service providers were invited to the conference.	1	2	3	4	77	61
8. Different sides of the family were invited to the conference (ex., father and mother's sides of the family).	1	2	3	4	77	68
9. People at the conference were relatives and also people who feel like family (ex., old friends, and good neighbors).	1	2	3	4	77	68
10. The family group was prepared for the conference (ex., got enough information on what happens at a conference).	1	2	3	4	77	68
11. The service providers were prepared for the conference (ex., got enough information on what happens at a conference).	1	2	3	4	77	62
12. The conference had enough supports and protections (ex., support persons).	1	2	3	4	77	63
13. Service providers shared their knowledge but they did not tell the family group how to solve the problems.	1	2	3	4	77	65
14. The family group had private time to make their plan.	1	2	3	4	77	61
15. The plan included ways that the family group will help out.	1	2	3	4	77	63
16. The plan included steps to evaluate if the plan is working and to get the family group back together again if needed.	1	2	3	4	77	68
17. Children and youth approved the plans without unnecessary delays.	1	2	3	4	77	62

Additional Comments

• Achievement of Family Group Conferencing Objectives (Pennell)

- 17 items using a 4-point strongly disagree to strongly agree
- Worded positively and all in the same direction
- The “family group” is the object of the rating rather than the individual
- Scan form



Feasibility Problems

- Unanimous dislike of the “look and feel” of the scan form
- Difficulties with object change & language
- FGDM professionals felt that the ordering of responses was not consistent with the values of FGDM
- Providers uncomfortable with how information would be used



Steps

- Held networking conference calls with FGDM coordinators and facilitators throughout the state to gather information & build support for fidelity
- Did cognitive interviewing with family members
- Examined completed surveys & descriptive analyses
- Applied Item Response Theory (IRT) methodology



Cognitive Interviewing

- Focuses on the **cognitive** processes that respondents use to answer survey questions; covert processes that are normally hidden, as well as overt, observable ones, are studied
- Helps to weed out “noise” or responses to un-intended stimuli in items
- Conducted by members of evaluation subcommittee



Results from Cognitive Interviewing with Families

- Questions 3, 7, 8 & 17 confusing
- Format was “test-like” and “overwhelming”
- Didn’t want to answer “don't know” for fear of looking “stupid” or picking the wrong answer, so there was a tendency to endorse “agree”
- “Wanted to get it over with and go home”
- Some challenges with understanding language and terms



Visual Inspection of Surveys & Descriptive Analysis

- “Messy” surveys were not scanning
- 11% of the respondents endorsing the “other” in relationship code or two codes resulting in not being scanned
- Missing data: Item 17 had 25% missing data
- Missing demographic data



Psychometric Properties

- Application of Item Response Theory (IRT)
 - IRT is one approach to establishing correspondence between the observation and the person's location on the latent variable
 - Because items were identified as problematic, we focused on model –data fit assessment (items)





Model-Level Fit Results

- Two fit statistics “INFIT” and “OUTFIT”
- Values from 0.5 to 1.5 are acceptable
- INFIT is sensitive to unexpected responses.
- OUTFIT is sensitive to outlier

Item	INFIT MNSQ	OUTFIT MNSQ
3	2.0	2.51
13	1.46	1.87
8	1.38	1.63
7	1.34	1.53
9	1.09	1.21



Solution

- Revised the fidelity survey and process and piloted it with three counties
 - Moved demographics to the end
 - Added and clarified relationship codes
 - Simplified language e.g. “mother’s family” rather than “maternal”
 - Instructed to prioritize when more than one possible relationship
 - Family friendly instructions
 - Script and instructions for distribution
 - Changed response order starting with “strongly agree”



Changes to Survey Items

- Question 3 changed to reflect that in PA the coordinator and facilitator is the same person.
- Questions 7 and 8 “invited” changed to “participated” (some family members and professionals won’t know who was invited but will know who shows up)
- Q 13 and Q1, “service provider” was changed to “Paid professional”
- Q 17—“CYF approved the plan quickly” changed to “the plan was approved quickly”



• Revised (pilot)

Family Group Date table with columns for Month, Day, Year

Form ID table with columns for County Code, Year, Conference ID#

We would like to know what you observed about the family group conference, and how you feel about the conference. Please fill in square the best response for each question. If you don't know, check DN. If it doesn't apply, check N/A.

Survey table with 17 questions and response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know, N/A

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the conference? Please share them with us by writing them here.

• Non-revised

We would like your opinion about the conference. Please answer the best response for each question. If you don't know, choose "don't know"; if it doesn't apply, choose "N/A"

Survey table with 17 questions and response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, Don't Know, N/A

Additional Comments

Handwritten lines for additional comments



Analysis of the Pilot Data

- What is the internal consistency?
- Does the percentage of missing data improve?
- Does changing the order of the responses (strongly agree to strongly disagree) impact the values?
- Does the factor structure look similar to that found in the North Carolina group?



Pilot Results

- 703 surveys from 98 FGDM conferences
- Alpha coefficient =.93, suggesting good internal consistency
- The amount of missing data slightly improved

	Pilot (n=700)	Study (n=6,765)
Item 3	13%	17%
Item 7	10%	11%
Item 8	10%	13%
Item 17	17%	25%



	County B	County D	County V
Mean Pilot (n)	1.40 (120)	1.43 (532)	1.41 (39)
Mean Study (n)	1.56 (437)	1.60 (1,310)	1.56 (172)
Mode Pilot	1.0	1.0	1.0
Mode Study	2.0	1.0	Multiple modes
Range Pilot	1.0	2.0	1.0
Range Study	2.0	3.0	3.0
SD Pilot	.374	.394	.397
SD study	.387	.488	.502



Factor Structure

- Principle Components Analysis
 - 2 factors extracted using PCA
 - Oblique rotation resulted in the simplest structure
 - Factor 2 had three items that were about family empowerment .
 - Factor 1 had the culture, safety and partnership items.



Future Work

- Implemented the revised survey in the state in 2011
- Analyze the entire group, using IRT & looking at extreme persons, extreme items, item fit and also how it differentiates
- Confirm factor structure but look at different groups e.g. families, professionals, youth

Family Group Survey

Family Group Date: []/[]/[] County Code: [][] Form # Year: [][] Conference ID #: [][][]

The world has billions of people and there are many groups of people who are interested in the same things. Please print the name of the family group you are participating in on the back of this survey. If you do not know, please write "Do Not Know". If there is a typo, please fix it (if applicable).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	N/A
1. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
2. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
3. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
4. The conference was held in a place that is right to the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
5. The conference was held at a time that is right to the family group (i.e., the right time, right time of day).	<input type="checkbox"/>					
6. The conference was held in a place that is right to the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
7. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
8. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
9. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
10. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
11. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
12. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
13. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
14. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
15. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
16. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
17. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
18. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
19. The paid professional(s) who led the conference had good knowledge about the family group.	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the conference? Please write down with it by writing below this line.

Please do NOT write below this line.

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Lessons Learned

- Don't under-estimate the transition to measuring fidelity
- Look and feel is important
- Changes in administration method should be done cautiously
- Cognitive interviewing & IRT were worth the time investment
- Pilot any new measure or change



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Evaluating family group decision making: Strengthening practice through measuring and monitoring fidelity.

*Measuring fidelity to
FGDM in Pennsylvania*

A photograph of a modern, multi-story building with large glass windows and a brick facade. The building is the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. The University of Pittsburgh logo is visible on the building's facade.

Shauna Reinhart, MPA
Child Welfare Education & Research Programs
University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work
8/30/2011
National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit



Making it happen

- Real-world; real-time evaluation.
- 67 counties; ≥ 67 ways to practice.
- Multiple stakeholders; little consensus.
- PA's statewide data collection system
- We can do it; because they believe.





Making it happen

- Real-world; real-time evaluation.
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Making it happen

- Trusting the process.
- Reporting.
- Follow-up & Outcomes.
- They believe; may not be able to do it.
- The “right” questions & “right” report.





Using the data

- From the counties' perspective.
 - Reporting to PA's Office of Children, Youth & Families.
 - Internal CQI.
- From a statewide perspective.
 - Are we widening the circle?
 - Are families leading the process?





Pennsylvania's Practice

FGDM PA's website

<http://www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/FGDM.htm>

FGDM Evaluation Webpage:

http://www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/FGDM_EvaluationPage.htm

FGDM Discussion Board

http://www.ilp.pitt.edu/FGDM_Board/login.asp?target=default.asp

