

**Session 5.07 – Evaluation of Family Group Decision-Making: Strengthening Practice  
Through Measuring and Monitoring Fidelity**

**Panelists:**

Joan Pennell  
Mary Rauktis  
Shauna Reinhart

*Please note: The following is a direct transcription and has not been edited.*

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Mary Rauktis: There are some handouts on your chairs that Joan and Shauna have been passing out. Just to get started, to let you know, this panel obviously, is about evaluating Family Group Decision Making, strengthening practice through measuring and monitoring fidelity. As a reminder, we are being digitally recorded and so if you have questions at the end of presentation we do ask that you use the microphone and know that that will be part of the digital, the audio recording.

All right. First, it's my pleasure to introduce our panelists today. Our first presenter is Dr. Joan Pennell. Joan is a Professor of Social work and Director of the Center for Family and Community Engagement at North Carolina State University. Joan has directed six family meeting studies, one in Canada, five in North Carolina. She has evaluated programs here in Washington DC and is currently evaluating outcomes for a fathering program for men with a history of domestic violence. Joan serves on an international team, studying the evidence for family engagement and child welfare. Joan will be up first. She is discussing her work in creating a fidelity measure and how it was used in her research.

I'm second and my name is Mary Rauktis, I'm from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Training and Research Programs, and I will talk about the fidelity measure that Joan created that we adopted for years in our statewide study of fidelity and about some of the measurement and implementation challenges we encounter.

And third is Shauna Reinhart, Shauna is a Program Development Specialist also at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Program. She is located outside the state capital in Harrisburg and she manages various research evaluation and quality improvement projects, including this one on family group for which I am eternally grateful, because Pennsylvania is a very large state. Shauna will describe how the statewide evaluation was taken to scale for the state of Pennsylvania and she will also provide some contexts so that you can have a better understanding as to how our Counties have used this information.

So just to briefly remind you about our objectives are to help you to consider the value as well as the necessary strategies for measuring and implementing the assessment of fidelity to Family Group Decision Making in your agency county or state. And with no further ado, I bring up Joan to begin.

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Joan Pennell: Thank you, Mary Beth. And it's just really fun for me to be on a panel with Mary Beth and with Shauna, because they are the ones who are going to be talking about bringing this kind of scale – to scale no pun intended. The – what I'm going to talking about really is how the survey instrument was developed in North Carolina and what is really some of the theory behind it in terms of that development.

The – how many of you know what family group conferencing is? Just about everyone here. So I'm going to go real fast on this part. The family group is both that immediate extended family, social family, voluntary, not dictated, participatory decision making and this is really the theory of change, is widening that circle of supports around children and their families. What is it not, it's not group therapy, it's on-decision making, it's not mediation between two parties and if you think domestic violence that just start making your hair go up on end, if that's what it was about. It's not a legal proceeding although it can intersect with the courts.

Stages, again, I know most of you are quite familiar with family group conferencing, referral. Here we are talking about it within a child welfare context, preparation just talking with a native from Virginia about the importance of preparation, the conference itself, the opening in the families' traditions, the sharing of information, the family private time to come up with their plan, finalizing the plan, the closing again in the families' traditions. And then of course the majority of the work goes on afterwards when you are carrying out the plan, monitoring it, revising it and so on. The achievement of FGC objectives, family group conferencing objectives is really just on two of the stages; preparation and conferencing. So keep that in mind as a limitation of the instrument.

Model fidelity, what does that mean? Here defining it in terms of practice staying true to the models essential features. I'm differentiating model fidelity from participant satisfaction, so an example of, and this is from a participant's satisfaction form that we've used in North Carolina. The participant satisfaction would be I'm satisfied with, I like, I got to and so on. Model fidelity is different and that it's about what's happening in terms of the process as a whole. So it's not coming from that individual view point of what it was like for me. And I know that Mary Beth's going to talk more about this. So, in terms of model fidelity there are lots of different ways that you can go about measuring it, one of the things to differentiate is planned activities what you thought you are going to do versus what actually came out, and that's really important to take a look at.

Another that we've used a lot in North Carolina it's a checklist for people that are organized in the conferences on, did I do all these different steps. And this – I don't know how many of you were at the plenary this morning, but one of the important things that was coming from Indian approaches was about respect for culture. So, how are going to keep an intervention flexible and creative so it doesn't adhere rigidly to intervention steps because once you start doing it rigidly for one thing families aren't going to let you go away with it anyhow. But the other is its getting away from what is supposed to be the spirit of family group conferencing, just what I was talking about at the beginning a participatory process needs to be focused within the culture the family

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and so on. And I'm quoting a Scott Hengler here and others on when they were looking at multi systemic therapy, they were really stressing adherence to keep principals and practices and that certainly what the achievement at FGC objectives is about as well.

So, how was it developed? It didn't just come out of the blue. Before I came back to the United States to North Carolina I was up in Canada for a quite a number of years. And worked on family group conferencing, we called it Family Group Decision Making Gilbert, Fred and I were really promoting this within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We wanted to emphasize decision making and that's the reason why at that stage I coined that term.

And we wanted to test it in diverse settings. Now this was really new in Canada at the time there had been one indigenous project in Juvenile Justice. There was some work going on, on the west coast of the United States not family group conferencing, but family unity meetings. So, there were these other things happening they were moving in this direction at the time, the work that we did was funded by the Canadian government. But I think it was also important to point out that it was co sponsored by the Labrador Inuit Health Commission. And I know with our names site, which was the Inuit Community this would have gone flat on its face if we haven't had their sponsorship and their guidance every step of the way. The focus was on not just family violent but very deep end family violent situations. And when I use that term I mean both child maltreatment and domestic violence but also there was other intergenerational violence going on as well particularly against grandmothers.

One of the best things that we did was to develop statement of the mission that laid out the underlying premises and you can see some of them just being listed there. So, one is all persons are to be secured and supported. In that statement there is also a leap of faith that families are including when they are in very difficult situations, can come up with very sensible workable safe plans. So, during that time in Canada it was really helping me figure out what are those principles, what are those key practices, what were the families telling us, what were the workers telling us? So that by the time I got to North Carolina I wasn't just inventing a survey instrument, but instead it was being based of that work up there. It was carried out in 13 counties in North Carolina. We have a 100 counties I'm told that as you go across the country counties get bigger and bigger, obviously they are smaller on the East Coast. And what we were doing was providing training technical assistance but also evaluating process and outcomes. And I almost set process, I was about to go up Canadian *[indiscernible]* [00:10:26]

Now in terms of model fidelity, we were using multiple measures this was new to North Carolina. So, we observed conferences with the permission of the families. We conducted interviews, we conducted focus groups and we used the survey. So I – and I'll just say quickly, all of those sources of information were lining up each other. It wasn't that so one was going in one direction another was going in the other. And so I think that's important in terms of looking at the validity of the instrument.

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So, how was it developed? There was a list of principles, so one of those principles was have the conference belong to the family group then there were related practices to that, give reasons for the conference that family group and professional agree with, hold conferences in a place that in a way that fits the families' culture, invite more family group than service providers and I'm sure you could give other examples of practices that would fit here.

Now, those items that were practices if you are thinking like a researcher they would look like double barreled items. So whole conference in place in way that fits the families' culture became two 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 for example the right food, the right time of day.

Now, this was only looking at model fidelity in terms of the pre-conference, so talking about preparation and during the conference. The original survey had 25 items. You have – and if you sat down in the back why don't you just grab one of the packages, if you haven't already. Because the achievement of FGC objectives you will see there is 17 items not 25. So, it was weeded down. All of them were positively worded and the reasoning on that at the time was that we were having the instrument filled out from youngsters of age 12 up to 85 year olds, we didn't want to confuse people going back and forth. We kept it to a four-point Likert scale. We were doing these administration with families by telephone interviews. So we're trying to keep it as simplified as possible. Now, you can see and this is Mary Beth will talk about this later, the four point likert scale went from strongly disagree through to strongly agree.

Now in North Carolina, it was completed by 151 respondents from 30 conferences. You can see the majority were family group members, also FGC coordinators, research observers. Because a large number of the conferences we did in North Carolina did have a research observer who sat outside of the circle. And therefore he is able to fill out the form afterwards. The interviews with the family group members were a month later. The thinking was that if you do it and this is something to think through. But our thinking at the time was that it should be a month later, people have had a little time to settle after the conference. Often right at the end of an intervention there is kind of this rosy glow, where people more like they've filled things out positively than they are a month later when reality has hit home and some things on the plans are not getting carried out. And I – looking at faces in this room of people who are pretty informed by FGC and there can be disappointments as well as joys.

The – in terms of the FGC coordinators and the research observers they've got some training on how to fill out the form, but then after that they did it on their own and they usually did it fairly quickly right after the conference. In terms of the family group and I think this is notable, there was very little missing data. And think about 12 year olds filling it out now it was done in a telephone interview. It was not done with them sitting down and reading it on their own. There was overall agreement in terms of objectives being achieved, so generally it was positive, but there were areas of disagreement. So for

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instance more than 30% disagreed that the plan had steps to evaluate if it was working out. And you can see it right there it's kind of towards the bottom of the list of items.

Another item that there was a fair amount of disagreement on was that different sides of the family were invited. So, again, think about that so many situations in terms of child welfare once they've come to conferencing, are dealing with historic tensions between different sides of the family, there could have been domestic violence, intergenerational child abuse and so on. All of that might affect who – was put on the invitation list and limit who was present at the conference.

Now, in terms of taking the instrument and its results we carried out a factor analysis to pull out underlying factors with which certain items on the instrument would be associated. And the factor analysis came up with three factors that incorporated 14 of the items on the instrument that you see there. And the resulting sub scales had quite good reliability. There – I did pass out a reference list that has different articles, chapters published in regards to measuring model fidelity in terms of this instrument. And so, the one by panel 2004 would be where I'm reporting on these three factors: cultural safety, community partnerships, family leadership.

If you go to the second page of the instrument, so you got 17 items and then if you turn it over or maybe you are one of the people with a clip together you'll see how those different items coalesced around that different factors. So, cultural safety for instance would have the one on was this in the right place, was carried out in the right way, were the right people there. These are all culturally related variables. And we do have a person, a Kiwi, here is that correct oh, no you just were involved.

Speaker 1: Oh, no I just knew a lot of the people from that...

*[Overlapping conversation] [00:18:02]*

Joan Pennell: Okay. You didn't sound like you had that...

Speaker 1: I lived in Australia, but I spent a lot of time in New Zealand than in the past, I was involved in this.

Joan Pennell: Okay. Well, the term cultural safety comes from New Zealand out of Maori Nursing. So, indigenous nursing that was really saying how medical and health practices are carried out in hospitals other healthcare settings are culturally unsafe, okay. And – so, one of the items on that notice that it also includes whether there's sufficient supports and protections. So, culture was going together with safety, okay.

Now I've done a fair amount of work in terms of domestic violence. The item on different sides of the family being invited didn't turn up in any of these. So, I kind of wanted to see were that fit in this, when on to a canonical correlation analysis that used our participant satisfaction form and this instrument and it came up with two sets that were inversely correlated, so going in the opposite direction. There are 73 matches on

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these two instruments, 21 conferences a canonical correlation of almost 0.9. It identified a four sub scale called inclusive planning. So, that is – was this around being a participatory process that was supported.

Now, one of the things and I'm going to do this pretty hazily, but Panel 2006 was reporting on the canonical correlation analysis, the two instruments going in the opposite direction, the participant satisfaction survey was completed right at the end of the conference. The achievement of it – and by the way we're just doing it all for the family group members. The achievement of adjectives was being done a month later. So, remember it was different time period going on.

Now what we've found is that and it's just the items that had the higher structure of coefficients that were in these two items – excuses me, these two sets of correlations. So, one was really on effective planning that came out of the satisfaction instrument. The other was on inclusive planning that came out of the achievement of the adjectives. So, you would kind of think that effective planning and inclusive planning would go in the same direction they didn't. Remember different time periods, I've already talked though about how, if you are a month later you're starting to realize things one of the things that families were realizing even more so a month later is if we didn't have all the important people in the family there it was harder to carry out the plan. I mean that's just common sense. Even at the time of the conference they were starting to write down that should have been there, more family should have been there. And then a month later they were being more aware of this and seeing the greater need for inclusivity.

The other think I've just going to say real quickly there is not a power point slide on it. You can't count the research observers or the FGC coordinators to know how family is going to rate these. Because when we did it, test of independence, they were not coming up the same way. So, I just wanted – that's another reason for doing this kind of survey is really being accountable to the families, not assuming that we can second guess what they are thinking.

And here is really the overall theoretical framework, widening the circles, so you can see that to safeguard children and their families, built stronger communities and then you see the four pathways, I call them pathways, those are the four subscales on the instrument really moving in that direction.

And I will turn things over to Mary Beth to talk about where they are heading in Pennsylvania with this instrument.

Mary Rautkis: We will have questions at the end, if that's all right with the group, we'll need plenty of time for that. By the way these presentations will be on – this presentation will be on the website so that you – which it includes our contact information. So, this is a picture of the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburg, tallest classroom building I believe in United States, all right.

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So the Pennsylvania model for those of you who are not from Pennsylvania is based on the family unity model and family group conferencing, so it's a hybrid. And Pennsylvania, this has been a decentralized process, the state provides money and the needs based planning process for family group and then counties decide whether or not they are going to do family group. And as over the last year almost all of the counties and we are our county administered state over site state, have decided to do Family Group Decision Making. As a visual, there is a lot going on this picture, but I just wanted to point out that the light blues are counties are those who have done over 200 conferences. So in other words we have people who are very sophisticated and skilled in doing family group and then we have counties who are fixing to get ready, they are implementing but no conferences and a few counties for which we don't have any information.

Now, we've been doing this since about 2000 and it has been a voluntary evaluation in which there was some pre measures collected some post and satisfaction. However, about in 2008 we did a state wide survey where we realized that because this is again, such a large state, so decentralized with some oversight leadership from consortium of providers, counties, the state and the child welfare training program, so there is no real strict monitoring of fidelity. And we realized there were some model drift, because of what we were hearing and then we did a sort of a point in time study. So, the leadership team empowered the evaluation subcommittee of which – on which I sit and Shauna sits to begin to investigate fidelity.

Now, families were satisfied because at the end of the conference they filled out on their own a paper and pencil satisfaction measure. But we decide – and they were very satisfied, but we know that satisfaction is not the same as fidelity and in fact people can report a fairly high degree of satisfaction and yet whatever is being developed – being – I'm sorry, implemented may not exactly look like what it's supposed to be. So we felt this was important. Well, of course there is a wish list in terms of the measurement and it had to be a brief free and self-administered, because we did not have additional resources. In fact, the entire process had to be cost neutral. There were no additional funds to support measurement of fidelity across the state. And when we do our – the satisfaction measure everyone filtered out, family members you see where I believe 10 and older, also the professionals families, whoever was in – was part of the group. So, we had quite – we could have quite a few people.

So as someone who is interested in measurement this is not always the list you wanted to be faced with, but it is the reality of doing this work in the field. So it had to have good psychometric properties from my point of view, but also from the people in the group that had to look good to them. So, it had to have good faith and fidelity. It had to be reliable, so it had to be internally consistent and needed to be completed by a wide range of people. It had to be fairly brief, because remember these were done at the end of the group, because we didn't have the resources to call people at a later point in time.

And most of – and from a practical point of view and Shauna will talk a bit about taking this to scale, it had to be scan able. Our administrative assistant was entering thousands

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of these and she was getting exhausted from the process. So we needed to – and getting carpal tunnel syndrome. So, we needed to move to scannable form.

So I'll show you – so of course what we did was of course look to Joan's work to help us to do this. And this is not a terribly great picture of it, but what we did was we used this is for – if you flash back to your SATs or your PSATs, you're right this is a Scantron or scannable form, which you fill in the bubbles. It was Joan's 17 items as you saw using a four point strongly disagree to agree all of the stems, the word stems were in the positive direction. And the big difference between this and the satisfaction measure, in this case a family group was the object of the rating rather than the individual saying that they were satisfied, but the family group was held in a place they felt comfortable or not I felt comfortable. And as I mentioned it became a scannable form.

Well, relatively quickly we had feasibility problems. In short, they hated it. They felt that the language was difficult and they struggled with the change of the group as the object. They felt that they disagreed to agree format was not in keeping in the value of family group to start with strengths. They didn't really understand why we did this and providers who were part of this were in Pennsylvania often times family group is subcontracted to providers. Sometimes it's also done in-house in the child welfare agencies, but often it is particularly in beginning stages contracted out. So, they were very concerned about how this would be used. And it really lead to a question of should we stay the course or should we go back to satisfaction. And after some discussion at the leadership level and the evaluation subcommittee, we decided to stay the course and continue to monitor fidelity, but they said to us, but you have to do it differently. So, we received our marching orders let's do this but let's do it better. So, we had quite a few steps and I'll go through this pretty quickly and Shauna keep me on time okay, just yell at Mary Beth stop, when its time.

Shauna Reinhart: Okay.

Mary Rautkis: We held networking conference calls with our family group coordinators and facilitators. In Pennsylvania sometimes there are two different people sometimes they are the same person, so we held a series of ongoing conference calls. It's a wide state, as I mentioned, it can take you depending on how quickly you drive eight hours to cross it, six hours if you are Shauna. So, we needed to talk to people and they told us what their problems were. That they felt the language was a little – I felt a little formal for them. There were problems with the demographics at the beginning. They felt they were – I think they wanted a little bit more narrative. They felt that the ordering from strongly disagreed to agree was not in keeping with the culture.

We also did cognitive interviewing with family members. We looked – we did descriptive analysis and we actually looked physically at thousands of surveys and then last but not least we applied rational assists, its item response theory methods. I'm not a rash expert, I know just a little bit to be sort of dangerous, but we did use and it was very helpful.

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Cognitive interviewing for those of you who've ever done cognitive interviewing, what you do is you ask people to fill out a survey and then quickly after you ask them what was in their head when they answered certain questions, are you sort of walked them through it. So it's almost as that tell me what you were thinking about and how did you score that, what were you thinking, why did you do that. And families very quickly told us how they felt about this. It's a great process, it does take time, but I've used in several measurement efforts and I highly recommend it.

Families told us that the format was really test like an overwhelming and they 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, which is a problem with bias. They wanted to get it over with and go home, which is the unfortunate piece of doing at the end of a group rather than a little bit later. But of course, our concern was that this was a point which everyone was in the room and again, with no additional resource to contact people it was sort of the best time to do it. But we knew that this would be a problem.

There were some challenges with understanding some language and terms and they had a lot of confusion about questions 3, 7, 8, and 17, which we suspected were problematic. Because, when we looked at the surveys and we've done scanning with professional in our core training for child welfare workers, we used scannable forms. Professionals are very good at filling out the bubbles, were very well trained that way. But that's not necessarily how everyone else fills out forms and we found that we had the Scantron was very picky, it was kicking out surveys. We found a lot of even with instructions to people; we found a lot of crayons being used magic markers. And unlike what Joan found in her study, we have a lot of missing data. Item 17 had a quarter percent of the surveys with a missing data on that item.

Speaker Two: What's was item 17?

Mary Rauktis: Item 17 was.

Speaker Three: It's in front of you Mary Beth, in front of the deck, okay.

Mary Rauktis: The plan was approved quickly, but it was actually originally worded to IF approves the plan quickly, which was a problem because not always.

Joan Pennell: It's worst in a timely manner.

Speaker Three: Right. Yes. Thank you.

Mary Beth: Thank you. So, there was a problem with that item. Again, it may – I think reflecting some of the differences in Pennsylvania. And we didn't bring the original Scantron, what we brought was the provision that I'm going to talk about, because I'm trying to forget about the original one.

*[Laughter]*

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Mary Beth: All right. Just a little bit about IRT and as I said, I am not an IRT expert. I know enough to be a little dangerous, which is why I'm doing a 15-week course of it, pit in the spring and doing some workshop online. But IRT is great, because what it allows you to do is look at where – if you think of measurement as a ruler it tells you where someone is on that latent variable, which in this case would be fidelity in that particular group.

And in classical test theory, typically you are looking at underlying constructs and here you're really looking at where a person falls on that particular item. The best way to put it is to really – say it tells me for example, our families saying they have more or less of that item opposed to professionals. So, that can be really, really useful in a way that something like factor analysis is not. And I've used IRT on some other measures and I have found that it does differ – it gives item differential statistics. In this case that we were really interested in item fit, really in terms of these items, because we were hearing certain items were a little bit problematic.

So what we did was I looked specifically and if you've ever seen, I don't know if you ever done Winsteps, it gives you so much output that you can get a little bit overwhelmed. So, I really focused on that data fit statistics, looking at in fit and outfit. And the range of values can actually be from zero to infinity, but the general rule of thumb is that values from 0.5 to 1.5 are okay. And so you can see in the bold that for item 3 and particularly for outfit, which really tells you and outfit is really sensitive to outliers. I was having a lot of outliers; same thing for item 13; item 8 was problematic. Not all of the items came up as problematical on this that were identified in the cognitive interviewing, but enough to tell me that we definitely had some problems.

So what we were going to do since we had made this commitment to fidelity. We decided to do a pilot, but we decided to do it better this time around, I did, I should say, because I take for ownership for the movement for sort of driving this. So we revised the fidelity survey with Joan's help, rewording some of these items and we made some other substantial changes. We moved the demographics to the end. We audit and clarified our relationship codes. 'Maternal relatives' was a very difficult term for a lot of people, mothers' family, fathers' family, thank you. Family friendly instructions, scripts were really well articulated so that in passing it out people have clear instructions. We also changed their order starting with strongly agree to strongly disagree, because our stakeholders felt that was more in keeping.

So I will – won't go over all of these but you can see that we did change the wording on some of the items, see why I've approved the plan quickly to the print. So service provider became paid professional. I didn't think these wording changes were all that critical, but as it turned out they were. Also their look and feel turned out to be a little bit different. So you can see the revised pilot looks a little bit friendlier than the original Scantron. And I was focusing on just a few critical questions for us to move forward, is it internally consistent. Joan talked about that in her own work, am I getting – we're seeing

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less missing data. Thus changing the order of the responses really impacted and do I – am I getting a similar factor structure to what Joan had.

So, we had 703 surveys from 98 family group conferences and we have a good alpha coefficient of 0.93. The amount of missing data improves slightly, but not as much frankly as I would like it to have approved, so that is a concern. Just a little bit about this I – everything was recoded – everything is in the same direction but what I did find in our analysis of this and changing the response order from going to go from strongly agree to strongly disagree, we have less variants in the pilot a little bit, which and its – and they are all skewed actually to the highly positive highly agree side anyway but it's even more so when we changed the response order. Just briefly, actually I in the small subset for this pilot, I only found two factors and I used an oblique rotation one which is – because it fit better than the other rotation.

I had two factors, factor one seemed to have the cultural safety and partnership items and factor two had the items about family empowerment. So let me tell where we were going to go in the future. We need – we implemented this entirely. We took the pilots and we – this revision and we rolled it out to the state in January. I'm going to re analyze the whole state data using IRT, but this time looking at extreme persons. I think that families may be filling things out differently than the professionals that I want to see if that's true or not and IRT is great for doing that. And I want to look at the factor structure again, by looking at it for different groups of families, professionals, youth and friends.

Just a few lessons learned, because we're all teachers and we're all learners and I'm always learning. I under estimated the transition to measuring fidelity from satisfaction. I did not realize what people had to loose and I did not communicate it well enough. And I had been doing evaluation for at least 10 years before I did this. So, clearly it was a lesson I had not learned the first time, that the look in the field was important very, very important. The changes in administration method, Joan's was done over the phone, ours was done immediately after the meeting filled out, should be done cautiously.

Cognitive interviewing in the IRT were worth the time investment, because it think it really helped us to have a much better measure and – not better in the sense but a better fit for Pennsylvania. And once again and I don't know why I haven't learnt this, pilot any new measure or change before you roll it out to 67 counties. So this is our contact information and Shauna is going to tell you about how we use this information in the county and then we'll be open for questions at the end of this.

Shauna Reinhart: Thank you, Mary Beth. I just wanted to point out because I know there might be a little bit of confusion when we are talking about the different measures. This measure here that is front and back and not stapled is the measure that we are currently using in Pennsylvania since January 2011. One of the things that we did as Mary Beth said, as we shifted our scanning. We actually purchase different software, altogether we purchased a software called TeleForms and we totaled ditched the SAT Scantron's entirely. And those were a serious issue for our families and as you can see this looks like a word document and most people don't even realize it scanned at all,

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which is really good for families. And the other that is stapled is the measure that Joan was using during her pilot. So I'm going to talk about how we make it all happen in Pennsylvania and oh, my goodness, I set my notes down and now I can't find them, that's kind of embarrassing. Oh well.

Speaker 3: Do you want me to look for them?

Shauna Reinhart: I found them, that's embarrassing and it's being audio recorded too. So making this all happen in reality this is what I manage at the training program is really, real world real-time evaluation. Every family group conference that happens in Pennsylvania that is chosen to participate in the voluntary evaluation completes this survey. Just to give you an idea that's about 15,000 surveys that condo has every year. And that can – and that's kind of on the low end. I actually expect more than 15,000 for the calendar year of 2011.

So we are in a very interesting place in Pennsylvania. As Mary Beth said, it really grew at the grassroots levels with counties doing this and the state is kind of a late comer to the table and to the party so to speak. But in Pennsylvania not only do they use it with children and youth cases, but JPO has also joined the party and is a very vocal player at the table within the counties as well as the state. Pennsylvania has implemented family group with a state wide implantation team that meets and it's kind of the steering committee and then there are some subcommittees that help advance the practice. And the evaluation subcommittee is what has been a advancing this whole practice in the state of Pennsylvania.

And what challenges that presents is 67 counties more than 67 ways to do the practice. Mary Beth alluded to in house facilitators, external conference coordinator, the way a county practices family group can actually change at any point in time based on turnover, based on the budget all sorts of things. So, who is doing family group in Pennsylvania can actually change a lot and very quickly, which is very difficult to keep track of. And the distribution list changes pretty regularly for who gets what. But what this really gives us is multiple stakeholders with little consensus in some ways around what we should be evaluating, what gets – what's measured as what's valued. And it's a very interesting challenge to measure a family group in Pennsylvania. But what also add to that challenge as well is Pennsylvania lacks a statewide data system. So...

Speaker Three: You're getting there?

Shauna Reinhart: We are getting there, yes, but Pennsylvania lacks a statewide data system in which if you wanted to ask us about outcomes for kids and families we don't have strong outcome data at this point in time. However, we as a family group evaluation subcommittee, have started to look at the way we're collecting data to see if you can sort of sneak around in the backdoor and start to collect outcomes on families, because we are doing this with no additional resources, but a lot of support and a lot of belief in Pennsylvania. And we can do what we do, because the practitioners in Pennsylvania strong believe in Family Group Decision Making.

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I kind of use the analogy that they drank the Kool-Aid, I have never seen a group of people who are so dedicated to the belief that family engagement is the way that they should be doing practice as I have with the family group staff that I meet across the state. And that's how we can do what we do as they believe and I think that's really crucial that we move from – to fidelity because people really believe in this and they want to see this become an evidence based practice. They wanted on the California clearinghouse list some day. So they believe it, so I think that we have a lot of traction to move forward with but it's because they believe

And one of the other pieces that has kind of helped to push us in that direction is also Pennsylvania's program improvement plan. One of the strong themes that run through there is family engagement. And the state at, the office of children, youth and families, which is the organization that oversees Pennsylvania's child welfare practice, is really, really supportive of family engagement and practices to strengthen family engagement across the state.

Okay, so how do we make it all happen? First, we've had to build relationships to trust the process and that has not always been easy and as Mary Beth said there have been some false starts. Using the Scantron form, which was the bubble sheet created issues for reporting because it didn't scan things correctly. There was so much missing data that made it really difficult to do good reporting and really tell anybody what was going on with family group. And it would be hours of prep work for those before and then hours of cleaning the data afterwards. So, if you want to know who does a lot of that, it is our – one of the administrative assistants at the training program and I will be horribly sad the day that she retires. But, trusting the process not only with the practitioners of family group, but also some of the internal resources we had to get them to trust this process as well for scanning and moving from satisfaction to more and developing a reporting structure that will meet the needs of counties, meet the needs of the states, as well as utilize already existing resources. So it's been a really important conversations and dynamics and really having some key players there to be a good voice at the table have been really essential for us.

I alluded to the fact that we don't have a statewide data system, but we do, do some outcomes work and some follow-up, however, it is still done pencil and paper and it's still based on reports from the coordinators and the counties. So, we have a little bit that usually at six months we know where everybody is but that falls out after six months and so as we move forward to measuring fidelity we're using alternative conversations to get people to look towards outcomes, because at this point in time they are on board with measuring fidelity and looking for more information about their practice and strengthening their practice in the state of Pennsylvania.

And this is where their belief creates a little bit of rub, sometimes for us for evaluation, is they believe but we might not be able to do it. There are a lot of times when practitioners are saying "you know I'm seeing this, it will be so great if we could do this" or I went to this conference and people talked about this "can we start evaluating that in

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Pennsylvania.” And that can be a really difficult conversation, because everybody wants to move family group forward, but they want to move it forward the same way that it kind of came to Pennsylvania, very grassroots, let’s go this direction, let’s go this direction, let’s go this direction. And so part of the conversation is guiding people to the right questions that can be answered that can advance family group and doing it in the right way with the right type of reporting and the right type of structure to get family group there.

And that is a challenge in itself with 67 ways to do practice in counties, moving them towards this can be a challenge and the more that we see success with fidelity, the more we are seeing an internal push to do outcomes but what we are seeing is leadership is asking for very much a process types of accounts, how many conferences were – how many people were referred for conference, how many conferences made it to conference, and a lot of very process pieces. And when we talked to other members of leadership they say “did this save me any money, basically did this keep this child out of placement.” And that’s what they want to know and if we could tell them that it saved them money they will be happy. I could say yes family groups saves you money and they would be good with that and family group would advance and continue onward forever in Pennsylvania as long as I told them it saved the money.

Anecdotally, there are counties that reporting that family group is saving the money and decreasing their number of placements. However, Pennsylvania as a practice is also using family group with Family Finding and speeding up court reviews through what’s called the Permanency Practice Initiative. So there is a lot of focus on family engagement to move children and families through the system and pushing it all to family group, is not going to makes sense either because there are a lot of factors that could be going on with Pennsylvania too. So, it’s really guiding the right questions and guiding people the right direction to answer the questions that they really want.

So, how do we use the data? Annually we compile reports for every single county in Pennsylvania and a statewide report and it looks at the three factors in the survey scale: cultural safety, family leadership and...

Mary Rauktis: Cultural safety.

Joan Pennell: Inclusive planning was the fourth one.

Shauna Reinhart: Thank you. Inclusive planning, so it looks that those three factors and we give simple statistics for counties to use they see their mean, median and their mode and they are able to look and see how they stack up against other counties in the state when they get their reports. And it’s been an interesting change for them, because this is one of the few places where counties get data back outside of their AFCARS data. And so it’s one place where they are getting some information that they – normally one have to begin with and we’re looking to help them better use that information for planning by better timing our reports with budgeting cycles and so forth. So, that was one piece that counties came back to us and said is please time your reports with budgets so that we can

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better plan for our next year and request money to support these efforts. The state believes it, but they are asking a little bit more from us now and it would be really great if we had this information moving forward.

So, that's where counties are coming at, but they're also using us for internal quality improvement and I find this to be a really interesting conversation for counties. Family group in some places has become more of a service that you get a referral to and you and it's checked off the box, you've sent them through family group and everything will work out well. But what counties are doing is they're looking at their practice and seeing how well are we really doing to the model and where do we need to strengthen our practice. Because there is – these people are saying to us family should be the center of the – center of our practice and we need to get away from the medical model and this data helps me see where we're really at with families, because this survey is completed by everyone in the conference from the professionals to the families to their supports. So they are seeing really a global perspective of their conferences and so they're using that to really strengthen their practice.

Now, as they said the State of Pennsylvania is not asking for anything specifically and we use the phrase 'yet,' because we know that someday this date will come and say we want more statewide information on family group. But what we are looking at to borrow something from Dr. Pannell is are we widening the circle. One of the things that we're seeing is we have almost equal members of family and professionals attending our conferences as a state. We're not seeing more – we don't see that shift in the balance of families really being the bulk of the attendees. And that right now is just a quick look at the data as we've been collecting it, so we're doing some additional work to see if family group really getting families the supports that they need to be successful and move forward. And so we're looking at are we really widening the circle.

And we're also looking at are families really leading this process? The data that we are receiving shows that professionals are ranking family group much higher than the families and the other non-professionals in the room. They have the highest scores of fidelity, it's almost right at the score of 4 for all of them and families are much lower. And there are some – we're batting around some reasons why we think that is. I think it's because professionals have been involved in family group for a long time. They've gone to multiple family group conferences and they see how family group benefits the family and so they believe it, so they say, yes, I agree with these statements, because I know how well this benefits are with my other families.

And for families this is a time that's really emotional and they're being asked to lead something and being told that they have a power to do that and that can be a feeling of really uncertainty that might lead you to answer a question a little bit different than may be you would a month later actually. So we're looking to see our families really leading this process and for our practitioners this is a question that they are really interested in, because they want families to lead the process. But if our practice isn't getting them to lead the process then we need to go back and strengthen our practice. Just an interesting tidbit, as Mary Beth said as was we move to the new form our missing data went down

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dramatically with the TeleForms our missing data has gone down dramatically. Mary Beth is very happy. I've just pulled some of the data recently and with the TeleForms our numbers have gone down extremely and the missing data category.

And Clergy is one group that family group practitioners asked us to not categorize as a family friend or as a paid professional, because Clergy can be there in multiple – wearing multiple hats, sometimes they're there as a professional sometimes they're there as really a family support. And Clergy much like professionals answers questions the same way they rate family group extremely high. They actually in some cases rated higher than the professionals in the room and they're one group where we have no missing data. And so that's a really intriguing piece about everyone that's participating in family group. Their data is showing some really different experiences with the practice than even professionals are having. And so, that's one of the things that I hope to do future work on, granted at this point Clergy is small representative part of the population out of the 15,000 participants in the family group in the state of Pennsylvania in a year. Clergy is not a huge number but they are showing some really differences in comparison to everyone else.

And I'm betting Mary Beth's about to tell me I should start wrapping up. So I will do that. Pennsylvania's practice, like we said looks a little bit different with the involvement of juvenile probation and in some ways you will see our survey has dropped the word children, youth and families or CYS and has become more generic, because JPO families didn't know how to respond to some of these questions. But their experience was just as important, because often times in Pennsylvania you could be a case where we have shared case responsibility between juvenile probation and children and youth. And so, those cases often times come to with multiple people overseeing their plan.

So we have – I wanted to share with you some more information about how family group is done in Pennsylvania. And so you can see our website where we have a lot of tools for family group and a lot of the information from our evaluations are posted there, along with our statewide report. So if you wanted to see how we're stacking up as a state, you can see that there. And as part of our efforts to support Family Group Decision Making at the university, we actually have a discussion board where anyone can go and register to become part of the discussion board and post questions and respond to questions from practitioners. And this has been a really good opportunity for us to actually enlarge the conversation around family group and get more of voices into how our practice is shaping up in Pennsylvania.

And that's all I have. So I'm going to turn it back over to Mary Beth for questions.

Mary Rauktis: Thank you Shauna.

Unidentified Speaker: Sure.

Mary Rauktis: Sure. Our – again, the presentation will be on the summit website. We didn't – we're trying to go with the – be green theme. We did not bring additional copies

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of it, but it will be on the website for the summit. But yes this is – and please there is a lot of resources on the website for Family Group Decision Making in Pennsylvania. And I'd love it if people would get on the discussion board and talk about evaluation, because I'm always the only person posting questions, saying anyone out there anyone, anyone like the Ferris Bueller movie, anyone out there. So, if you'd like to ask questions we need people to begin discussion.

So, we left a lot of time for questions, because we really wanted – since this is a panel but we've really wanted to have a dialogue and we're a small enough group. So my job is to simply sort of to make sure that we all just ask questions one at a time. So questions about anything that we've presented or thoughts, observations anything, anything.

Speaker: I've a question.

Mary Rauktis: Sure. Would you mind, sorry to bother, since we're recording and they asked us for people to go to the mic or you could just pass the mic, you don't have to stand.

Speaker: I speak louder.

Panelist: No you need the microphone.

Speaker 2: You need to the microphone.

Speaker: At what point and time throughout the child welfare continue, are you using the Family Group Decision Making.

Mary Rauktis: Well, that's a really good question and one I'm getting trying to get handle one, because it's used the different parts in the service pathway, which makes a big difference. Sometimes it used for diversion out of child welfare and it is often used that way actually in what I call the epicenter of family group in Pennsylvania, which is Dauphin County. They use family group as a diversion. It's used for placement change. We were talking about the difference between this and team decision making. Team decision making is often used when – it's used when there is a placement change, but in Pennsylvania it's also used for that. It can be used when youth – or older youth are transitioning out of child welfare, it's also used when youth are transitioning out of residential care. In other words, it can be used at multiple places. And so in – as we have – and I have learned my lesson in this work. We don't do anything abruptly or without a lot of input. And so we have revised our forum so that what we have – is that format yet Shauna?

Shauna Reinhart: Yes, it is.

Mary Rauktis: Yes. What we have tried to do is get people to identify when this group is happening. It took us about – and this is not an exaggeration, eight months I believe to reach some consensus about that, but that is very – and again, this is a process and you

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have to honor the process. I really don't know but I needed – we needed a lot of input and buying from people so that when we go out with this data we can say that this isn't something that we just came up with that this drop down list really reflects to the best of our knowledge, what's happening in 67 colonies. So now we're doing that and that with this round of data as we're collecting fidelity and now with this new forum we're going to be able to look to see does fidelity look different for different groups based on what part of the pathway that they are in.

I wanted to do that about three years ago, but again, as I said I learned we need to honor the process of this and not do anything. This is owned by all of these people who are well on the scene before any of us came. So, they really need to be the people who have a big say in how we ask the questions. Do you have some ideas about how you think it might look different?

Speaker: I'm just wondering if the only satisfaction to make it look different if instead at the front end of child, as you're looking at a prevention into the child's welfare versus four years later or when a child is trying to reunify. So I'm just curious.

Mary Rauktis: And by the way we did add several...

Speaker: Malpractice in satisfaction.

Mary Rauktis: Yes. Aside from the fidelity items in the revision, we also added two satisfaction items, because the leadership team said we think fidelity is great but we really, really want these two satisfaction items from before, so we also added those. But I agree with you and I wonder if professionals also view the fidelity differently depending on again, are we in a prevention or are we at sort of the lower another section of the pathway closer to reunification or maybe transitioning out of care. So, I'm really looking forward to that being able to answer that.

Shauna Reinhart: Lisa, right?

Lisa: So my question is that you're at a state I think and all these counties that are implementing multiple models of engagement correct. So...

Mary Rauktis: Yes.

Lisa: Of course, they have the right to do that. Some people think – I mean conferences, some people putting photographs, you probably have team decision meetings or rapid case planning conferences or emergency family group conference, I don't know, but I mean there are so many different forums that are used for all these different models. So I'm curious about fidelity measure and how do you track or whether interacts which model is being implemented like if this is done for every family engagement agent model practice around the state or if there is some funneling, because some family engagement practice really do no preparation a family, right. So I'm just kind of curious like how that all plays out, how these multiple long list play out into your evaluation activities?

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Shauna Reinhart: I guess Mary Beth's is looking at me.

Mary Rauktis: No, I can take, it doesn't matter go ahead. Why do you start and I'll add?

Shauna Reinhart: Well, thank you. It's interesting because a lot of the family engagement models are relatively actually new implementation in Pennsylvania and what we're still seeing at this point is more of the traditional family group conferences are going through our fidelity measure. But what we're learning about is what the preparation includes for the family. Because at the training program we're working to bridge Family Finding activities with family group conferencing. And so we're looking to have these all support and lead up to a family group conference in Pennsylvania. But we do have counties that are using some of the emergency family groups as part of their practice and those are relatively new in the service spectrum and they are not it's not very wide spread in Pennsylvania and I let Mary Beth answer that.

Mary Rauktis: Not to knowledge – again, I don't claim to know everything that's goes one. But to my knowledge I don't believe we are doing team decision making in Pennsylvania. I think that roughly speaking our model as its trained by the people at the Pennsylvania child welfare program and those are people who typically doing these voluntary evaluation of the people trained follows pretty much the model that Joan outlined roughly. But as Shauna mentioned we're now building what sort of what I refer to sort of this Lego model of family engagement and which we're bridging it with Family Finding with Family Group Decision Making. And we're also seeing this with our counties with areas as what, is that shared.

Shauna Reinhart: Shared case responsibility

Mary Rauktis: Shared case. So we're now beginning to see these variations and right now I don't have we don't have a good way of tracking that. But we should we need it because I think it's really important to see for example if the Family Finding peace really does help to if it adds if it potentates in other words will I will see more people families saying that they really felt like they own the group. So, we're that's something we definitely need to do and we hope to we don't have a checklist we don't have we've talked about this in the past but people sitting into observe to makes sure that certain elements of the model happen. But we've not done that. I think it's more of a man power model although again thinking about the fact that we do have a lot of providers in Pennsylvania who do this it also creates a little bit of a concern about is the county or the state watching what we do, is this going to impact our contract so, it creates some political attention. So that's why we haven't moved to an observer piece in monitoring fidelity.

Lisa: I've just one other quick question, one of your questions is about whether or not the family not respected by the facilitator.

Mary Rauktis: Yes.

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Lisa: I'm curious why because I know in some counties in Pennsylvania you use a split model whereas sometimes there is the coordinator who does all the preparation in it and the facilitator comes there at the meeting itself facilitating, that's just something it was just facilitating. So why did you measure so many around facilitator and not whether people got respect for the coordinator.

Shauna Reinhart: I think that has to go back – actually I'm going to respond to that I'm actually going to ask Joan to respond to, because it is a different model in Pennsylvania, sometimes the facilitator and the coordinator are the same person. Sometimes they are different and in Pennsylvania I know that that was an issue that people actually had some issue with originally was who is the coordinator who is the facilitator. They didn't understand that distinction and I think we've focused on the facilitator because that was – who was in the family group when we were – of what we were evaluating. But I know that the question originally came from Joan's original work and I'm hoping maybe she can shed some more, because their model in North Carolina was a little bit different than the Pennsylvania model.

Joan Pennell: The work in North Carolina with family group conferencing was really based off of the model out of New Zealand and there is a coordinator there is not a facilitator its intentionally – they intentionally do not use the term facilitation because it's not a facilitated process. The coordinator organizes convenes the meeting but then very quickly moves to the background. And that's – now remember the origins in terms of family group conference say while they go way back in terms of lots of people's traditions. But in New Zealand it really came out of protest by indigenous people there against Pākehā that means European descent people, approach us to Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice as undermining their family groups their tribes. And therefore, what they were really focusing on and are focusing on is that involvement of the family group into in making those decisions. When we did the work in Newfoundland and Labrador we had one coordinator we did not have the split model.

There was another reason and again, I keep referring to domestic violence, but we were doing they were very difficult family violence situations where there was words brain damage, there is a whole lot of – I'm talking real deep end stuff. And my own feeling it continues to today is that when there is such a serious safety concerns it's better that the coordinator and the facilitator whatever terms you want to use are the same person in order to monitor.

Now, having said that I've seen some excellent practice in the United States where there are split models I think that if you are trying to really have a community based approach that rapidly brings together neighborhoods it can be important to have people based with in that neighborhood helping to coordinate the meetings. And you know I've seen good practice around that I think though that the question that Lisa raised about core different models and it's the United States that has such a number of different models. This does not tend to be true in other countries. I think for one think we're just large we have had more money. We have a whole lot of different sources of funding, it's not just

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government but there's foundations, there is just a lot of things going on in the United States and it also makes for some real creativity ingenuity. So I'm not knocking that either.

The – but going back to the issue of a coordinator and facilitator, I also just want to go back to the presentation this morning by Diane in terms of Indian approaches that the terminologies are important and I had the experience I live in Canada for a good part of my adult life. I was involved with indigenous first nations groups there. And they would not have used the term facilitation in the same way that we do at least – I'm not going to do that's too sweeping, but at least the groups that I was involved with would not have used talking about a facilitative process. They would have talked about really basing things within culture traditions like that. And I'm afraid that I went on pretty long, so sorry.

Unidentified Questioner: You mentioned a hybrid between the family unity model, in the...

Mary Rauptis: Right

Unidentified Questioner: ...in the part group conferencing. Do you have a manual, is there a manual?

Shauna Reinhart: There is a manual on the website for the child welfare training program. Its needs update. There are a few things that – the survey that's in there is not the most current one, but we do have a very large tool kit actually for family group that will take anyone really through the stages that Pennsylvania experienced. And Pennsylvania Family Group came with through the family group implementation team with the suggestion that counties develop their own implementation team for family group and it should be a multidisciplinary group, so not only you are child welfare agency in the county but it should represent also your juvenile probation.

And one of the ways that juvenile probation gets involves is in some counties the funding for family group is actually split between the two agencies and so they come together at the table and you're implementation team looks to how you're going to implement that in your county. And one of the things that Mary Beth normally talks about, but didn't mention today is the neighborhood effect. In Pennsylvania what we've been trying to do is team one counting with a neighboring county that's been doing family group for a while to help them get lessons learned on implementing family group within their practice in the counties and so, there is some reference to that and also how that – you can access technical assistance from the state for a family group. So, that tool kit really goes through almost the stages from really infancy in a county to a full maturation in other counties that we see. So, I know that it is a very big tool kit and I've got one in the last binders that was available. We don't printout hard copies anymore it is quite and large with a lot of stuff in there.

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Mary Rauktis: One of the things that we did look at was just this adoption 90, why do some counties adopt it and heavily and why its why don't some and we worked with those social net worker someone much, much smarter than me who has looked at this actually from a business point of view. And we did find that who you boarded on really made a difference to the degree to which you adopted it. So, that or typical way of looking at places where nothing is in sort of seeding it from an implementation science piece doesn't seem to work as well on family group.

In fact, we found that when counties were bordering each other that there was we don't know why whether it was because people were friends or talking to each other sharing facilitators sharing resources whatever that we actually were mathematically able to show this model that when you were close to a very sort of 2A sort of high level adopter that people around them were as well. So, it's really interesting because you know in child welfare we tend to say oh well let's put one over in the north west corner and someone down here and let them grow. When in fact actually you need it's more like spreading it as opposed to seeding it. Yes.

Anita: Yes. I have a question about how this survey is administered. Who gives it to the participants after the conference, is it the facilitator is it a neutral party and who does the cognitive narrative interviews. I'm just imagining that if the respondent feels like they have a relationship with the person are their answer is really objective.

Shauna Reinhart: I can start with how the survey is administered. The survey is given at the conclusion of the family group conference and it's usually given by the facilitator of the conference and we give them a script and we're really encouraged them to use their own words and make the families feel comfortable completing the survey. So, that's really how its administered and the families are assured that you're – your responses are confidential. We really encourage them to give the families an envelope and they all put their survey in it and the last person seals it up. And then the coordinator will or the facilitator or whatever had they wearing at that moment in time they then will return them back to the child welfare training program for them to be have a quick quality control check and then they get scanned. And we treat the surveys like we treat other research documents, so they get double locked and so that's part of what families hear when they take the survey. And as to the cognitive interviewing that was Mary Beth.

Mary Rauktis: By the way I want to tell you that that's an – like in the best of all possible worlds we would have someone who wasn't a facilitator/coordinator doing it. Again, in best of all possible worlds we would maybe have a research observer sitting in also. So – and I have to tell you that caused a great, great deal of consternation in the community because people in the past liked to look at the surveys.

Shauna Reinhart: Yes.

Mary Rauktis: When family groups would leave they would like to look at them and so they were rather chagrined about the thought that they couldn't do that and it was like I don't want to know if you were doing it before, but that's was really an issue for them.

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So what we did do because we – I spent most of my practice career working in provider organizations. So, I know how important this information is and so what we did was we created a narrative forum, we ask families if you would like to you can write you can answer these open ended questions. However, they will be looked at by whosoever doing the conference, but it's for their improvement.

And so I know – we don't enter that information, we don't look at it but the agencies and the sometimes the private providers who were doing the family group coordination, facilitation said that was important. But ideal it's not ideal frankly. I mean if the best of all possible worlds we would have a neutral party for the dispersing of this and you know I can't guarantee that everyone is putting it immediately in an envelope and not looking at it.

The cognitive interviewing piece we only did one time when we were trying to do – when I called families and said after they had done the survey and walked them through it and said ask them “could you tell me what you were thinking when you answered the question each.” I'm just trying to find a quick one, the plan was approved quickly or you know whatever the one and they would tell me what they were thinking and I would say well, which item did you make that a 4 did you made that a 3. And I tried to do it almost immediately like the next day after the meeting. I only did – we only did with a handful people less than 10. And so we have not continued to do that, we did that so we could inform the revision, but it's not something we've continued to do just because it's a time intensive but it was fascinating.

I never – I have to say I never would have gotten out some – like why isn't anyone doing not applicable, I couldn't understand why was no one endorsing that. And basically a family said to me “I feel stupid when I fill that – when I fill that circle, I was like, dah you know like why didn't I think that. So I wouldn't have – we wouldn't have found that out, so instead they're saying what we're just then circles strongly agree, because we want to make people happy. And that was a really important piece of information from a measurement point of view but also from a practice point of view that we shared with the evaluation subcommittee and the leadership team, is that you may walk out feeling pretty good, but you don't necessarily – but we don't know that that's exactly and sometimes people don't understand things so they just act happy. Students, I might tell you in my research class often do that, so might not understand it but they act happy.

So, that was – so the cognitive interviewing was really very helpful and helping to make this revision a better. I would say if I had – all over I mean I'm glad that I aired in the way that I did because I've learned so much in this process. And I think that in some ways we've come all because of this it really we had a chance to talk to a lot of people and bring them on board as to what fidelity was as important as satisfaction and why we should continue to do it. And I'm really proud that people didn't tell me to go back to satisfaction they said stay the course we think this is important just not great how you're doing it.

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Joan Pennell: I just wanted to one is I think what they've pulled together it looks better than what I had originally so I'm just delighted with the work that they've done. And I kind of hit myself in the head and say why didn't I use that simpler wording. The other thing though and this came from a psychometrician that both Mary Beth and I were consulting with one of the things she said about participant satisfaction versus model fidelity instruments is the participant satisfaction instruments are even more likely to have be skewed towards the positive end then the model fidelity because you can stand back a little bit more and see it in terms of the process. So, I just wanted to raise that point.

I should also just mention, in North Carolina what is in policy now-a-days is child and family teams; they use some of the principles practices at family group conferencing. The family private time is quote optional. Some counties are using it we do the state wide training on child and family teams purposely stack the deck in terms of people who've done family group conferencing to do the training. And the other thing in North Carolina it is very high volume because it is mandated to have the meetings at certain points in time for all cases that like 30 days after a decision is made and so on, which I Anita, you would probably be starting to pull out your hair when you think about preparation. The good part though and this is what we hear repeatedly from counties, is that a process that really is involving people in decision making does change around how families and workers are relating does change around the kind of plans. So and I also just wanted to make Mary Beth to even more work on evaluation she talked about that wonderful study that she did on the neighborhood effects of how something gets diffused. Since she has thousands of surveys coming in I would love you to take a look at that process in relationship to model fidelity and what is happening.

Mary Rauktis: So, Joan's added a new research question just not do, are they more likely to do filling the group, but are they likely to do and with greater fidelity when they are next to a high fidelity county so to speak. Okay, Joan that's another 15 years of work but that's okay. No it's a good question because there is not just enough again can people can your neighborhood peer influence you in that way to not only do family group but do it to that degree in terms of following principles that's a really good question. Thanks.

Joan Pennell: She said thank you. We have time for one or two more questions so...

Unidentified Questioner: I'll let everybody ask one...

Mary Rauktis: No.

Unidentified Questioner: I'm wondering about judges, if that plays a role because in Oregon that was a big stem involved. We had judges initially who didn't approve the idea of parents having or families having private time and that's I think slowed us down for a long time. But then we had a few judges and this is all anecdotal stuff who got behind it and as judges in different areas started supporting it. We saw that moving, I'm just wondering if you've seen anything like that Joan.

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Mary Rauktis: Yes.

Joan Pennell: We have and it's been interesting the relationship with the courts, because some of our – some of Pennsylvania's family engagement initiative are actually coming through the administrative office of Pennsylvania courts through the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth, Families in the courts, lot of acronyms there.

So, one of the things that we actually saw initially was judges that wanted to mandate people to go family group. And, not because they thought that we should mandate the service but they really were sold on the idea that this could really help improve kids and families. So, we there was some work that had to be done with some judges to say we're really great to – glad that you are supporting our efforts for family group, but please don't mandate them to family group it is a voluntary service. But, that's not the case everywhere some judges aren't really familiar with family group and so there has been worked on family office of Pennsylvania courts to develop a judicial bench book that talks about the relationship with children and youth and the practices that are used there. And there is a section on Family Group Decision Making to better educate judges in the courts. But Pennsylvania also has the practice in some counties where there are special masters that hear cases and not judges and so that's another added layer of groups there and sometimes even district – the district magistrates, which are more of like the local judges.

And so there is actually outreach being done at the grass roots level to also reach district judges to for example refer families to family group who might not be involved in any family serving system that could really benefit from it as well. So, what we're really seeing is an effort to bring them on board in a really supportive way and ask them to be supportive but not to mandate it, but to set the expectation that family engagement is part of the service with that family.

Joan Pennell: I just wanted to raise one thing about the judges, often when the program is starting off judges may not understand about how is invited process for the family group, so not ordering families into it though they certainly can order workers to invite. What we find in North Carolina, this was child and family themes, judges now are expecting to have that kind of plan come forward to them.