

FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY

What You Should Know: 5 Facts About FFT

Fact #1: *FFT* is an *intensive* treatment program.

Fact #2: *FFT* is appropriate for youth with severe behavior problems, chronic delinquency, and co-morbid diagnoses, as well as youth presenting with relatively mild behavior problems.

Fact #3: *FFT* is based on the widely-accepted theory that families may develop patterns of relating and getting their relational needs met that promote and maintain problem behaviors. Therefore, treatment involves changing the patterns of how families members communicate, problem solve, and get their needs met.

Fact #4: *FFT* is a sophisticated clinical model that increases a family's motivation to change and tailors interventions to each family's unique risk and protective factors.

Fact #5: *FFT* has almost 40 years of research behind it and is widely recognized as a state-of-the-art evidence-based treatment program.

What You Can Expect From FFT

- The FFT therapist will work to engage all family members and motivate them to actively participate in treatment, especially early on when the risk of treatment drop-out is high.
- The FFT therapist will meet with the family as often as necessary. Sessions occur at least once per week, but the therapist can meet with a family multiple times per week at the beginning of treatment and during times of crisis or high need.
- The family will participate in family therapy focused on building specific skills that will improve family relationships, increase protective factors, and reduce risk factors – in turn resolving the youth's referral behaviors. Skills commonly taught include communication, problem solving, conflict resolution and effective parenting skills. In order to facilitate lasting change, skill-sets will be selected and tailored to match the unique characteristics of each family (culture, relational and hierarchical functions, developmental level, etc.).
- After change has been achieved within the family, the FFT therapist will help family members generalize changes to other situations and settings, such as peers, school, and community, and will identify other supports that will help to maintain the progress made.
- The FFT therapist can collaborate with the referral source and regularly share information as needed to meet treatment goals.
- The FFT model does not allow traditional 24/7 on-call, but the FFT therapist will provide contingent crisis *prevention* to reduce the need for after-hours crisis intervention. (Note: If necessary, families can access after-hours crisis support offered by the provider agency or community crisis services.)
- The FFT Therapist will spend a significant amount of time in consultation and treatment planning for each case between sessions to ensure that time with the family is used as effectively as possible.

