

Functional Family Therapy

What is FFT?

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a family-based prevention and intervention program that has been applied successfully in various contexts to support at-risk youth and their families.

Core Principles and Goals

FFT recognizes the importance of family relationships. It works to improve family communication and family member's support to one another, while decreasing intense negativity. It assists family members in adopting positive solutions to family problems and making positive behavioral changes. It helps families clarify and work toward achieving positive goals and enhancing parenting strategies.

FFT also recognizes that family problems can be related to stressors coming from outside the family--involving school, peers, extended family relationships, economic difficulties, interaction with child welfare and juvenile justice systems, etc. A major goal of Functional Family Therapy is to utilize the family's strengths to help build positive interactions with the surrounding community as well as within the family.

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Why FFT?

FFT has been successfully applied to treat youth and families coping with severe behavioral problems at home, in school, and in the community. This treatment model has been refined for 30 years resulting in a model that works. Outcome studies consistently show significant reductions in violence, drug use, recidivism (reoffending) and family conflict in youth/families treated with FFT as compared to youth receiving no treatment or youth/families involved in other types of treatment.

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Can FFT Work for My Family?

Sometimes people attach a stigma to receiving counseling services, without realizing the advantage of having an objective guide to help with family issues. Or they may have already received support from other service providers but the problems continue. FFT therapists recognize that despite problems, families have many strengths. The FFT therapist's goal & commitment in serving your family is to help activate those strengths to reduce stress, overcome problems, improve the quality of relationships, and achieve your goals.

FFT is a short-term treatment process, which ranges from 12 to 15 one-hour sessions in the home or therapist's office. The duration of services is generally three months. FFT counseling services are provided by qualified Master's level therapists trained and supported in this model of treatment.

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Eligibility Requirements:

- Youth, age 11-18 exhibiting delinquency, violence, substance abuse, conduct/behavior problems &/or family conflict.
- Currently living at home with family or will be returning home within the next few weeks.
- Family is willing to participate in FFT.

Humboldt County Department
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Mental Health Branch
Children, Youth & Family Services
1711 3rd St., Eureka, CA 95501

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For Youth & Families
at Risk and in Need



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and Human Services
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