



Good Communication Practice in Family Group Conferences (FGCs)

Helping everyone to participate and have their say

Across New Zealand Family Group Conference Co-ordinators, Social Workers, Lawyers and Police are beginning to collaborate to plan, and support, FGCs that meet the speech, language and communication needs of everyone involved.

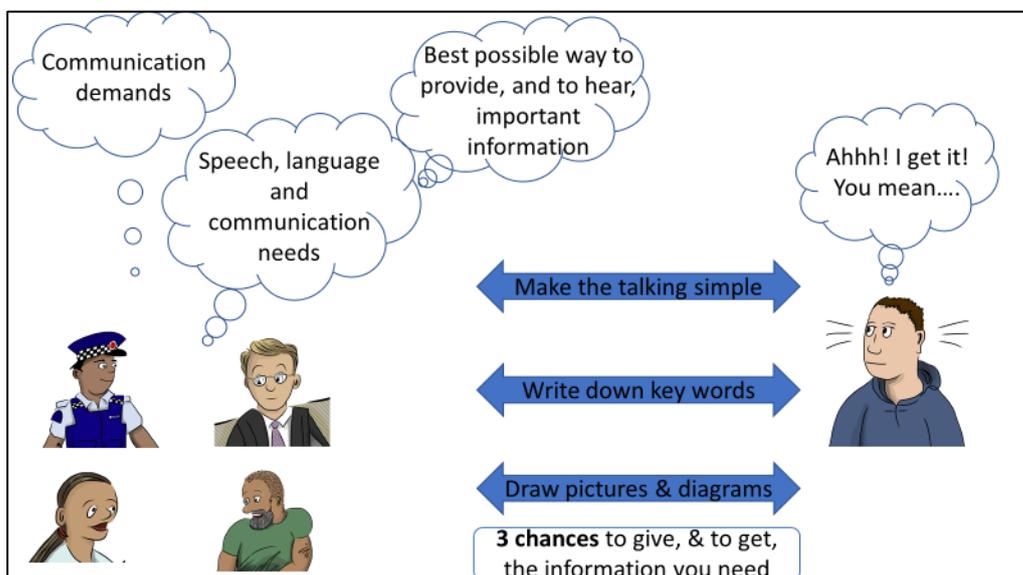
What are these wonderful practitioners doing to get such great results, and how are they doing it?



Before the Family Group Conference:

Meet to discuss

- the communication demands of the Family Group Conference - identify the words, information, options, opportunities and consequences that need to be clearly understood
- the speech, language, and communication needs of the young person, victim, whānau etc
- how you and the young person can plan, and prepare in advance, resources that will help to make sure their views are expressed e.g. where they live, what they want in their plan, what they feel/believe about what happened and those involved (victim, whānau, and wider community)
- whether or not you need communication assistance from a speech language therapist to help you plan your communication and/or to help you mediate communication during the FGC
- the best possible way you can provide information given what you know about the communication demands, and communication needs above



During the Family Group Conference:

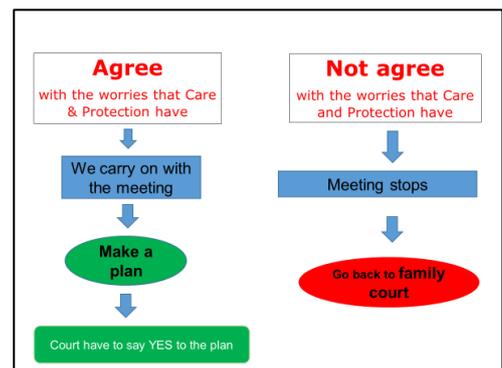
- Include good communication practice in your Ground Rules – make sure that everyone knows it is ok to say “I need break” or “Sorry I missed that. Say it again” or “I don’t know what you mean”

- Signpost topics

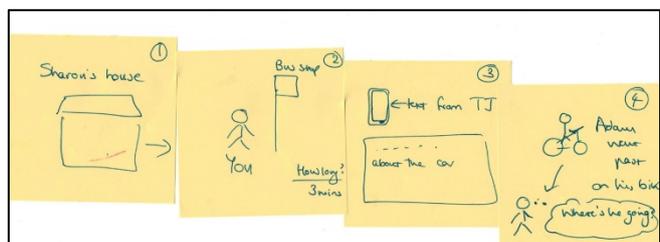
Visually orient everyone to each topic as you introduce it by using pictures and/or writing key words relating to the topic on a whiteboard. When the topic is finished say something like “we’ve finished talking about _____. Now we’re going to talk about” and put up a new visual or key word to represent the new topic



- Draw flowcharts and diagrams to show processes as you talk about them. They are a great way to make sure that options, opportunities and consequences are all made really clear



- Use Comic Strip Conversations to explore information that comes up during the meeting

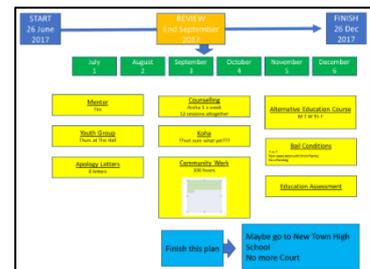


Generally the FGC’s got a lot of legalese, complicated words and processes and I think we lose our families and our kids very early on in the piece... Because the presentation (FGC) was simplified in terms of language and.....pictures helped (the young person) piece everything together....you could see that he was able to make an informed decision”

“Most of our kids would benefit from this style of FGC”
Youth Aid Officer”

After the meeting:

- Create a short, one-pager version of the Family Group Conference Plan that provides the information that everyone really needs to know
- Create visual versions of things like bail conditions, timetables, and organisers
- Save copies of the resources you used to demonstrate your good communication practice in the child, or young person's file



What else are practitioners doing to make sure that FGCs represent good communication practice?

- Asking peers or Talking Trouble speech-language therapists to observe one of their FGCs and give them feedback on how they mediated communication during the meeting
- Sharing stories of their good communication practice during FGCs – telling colleagues what they did differently, and the impact it had
- Sharing ideas and resources around good communication practice

How can you contribute to this good communication practice?

Your Communication Goal

I want to KEEP doing
I want to STOP doing
I want to START doing.....