



## **LOCAL DEPARTMENT LESSONS LEARNED**

### **1. Develop a peer consultation "roundtable" group with other Family Partnership Meeting practitioners in your region.**

“It doesn't make sense to ‘reinvent the wheel’ when you can benefit from the lessons learned from others.”

### **2. Spend time to get Social Workers to buy-in.**

“We learned through the process that some Social Workers felt they were giving up control of their decision-making which made them more resistant to the process. Change in itself can sometimes be difficult.”

### **3. Make training a priority.**

“If we conducted mock Team Decision Making meetings (TDMs) and showed training videos that mimicked the TDM process and the role of the Social Worker on a **consistent basis prior** to the inception of the TDM process, we would have eased emotions by clarifying worker roles.”

### **4. Train and educate stakeholders at every level prior to rollout.**

“Our meetings are strength-based. We learned very quickly that everyone around the table does not always think or focus on the strengths of the children and families we serve. When we met with our service providers initially to prepare them for our change in practice, we should have stressed the importance of this **strength-based model** more.”

### **5. Collaborate with Guardian ad Litem and Probation Officers at the inception of the process.**

“When our collaboration process began, we unintentionally overlooked meeting with our GALs and Probation Officers. This became an issues when we went to court”.

### **6. Include city/county attorneys when creating your own internal agency policy.**

“Once our policy was implemented, there was the need to make changes due to suggestions made by our City Attorneys from their legal perspective that should have been considered initially.”

### **7. Develop a structured community education plan.**

“I made a list of all the agencies that needed an introductory training. Then I called each one to set up a time when I could come to to provide training, perhaps at a staff meeting over the next 3-4

months. I designed a curriculum that included a 1 1/2 hour power point presentation for all service providers that included a 20 minute video of a simulated Family Group Conference (FGC), handouts, and a training feedback survey. The Virginia Supreme Court provided funding to our local Model Court for a training in which I was one of several speakers. I also did a 2 hour training for DSS Referring Workers. I found it very helpful to do all this training before I even practiced one FGC. Once the practice began, there was no time to devote to the training because referrals came in very quickly.”

**8. Agency policies and procedures may need to be realigned.**

“Through the Team Decision Making process, we learned that our internal policies needed to be re-written to reflect our Transformation.”

**9. Share informational materials and resources with the families.**

“To accommodate and educate our families at the initial stage of a TDM meeting, TDM brochures should have been made available to assist with understanding and explaining the process for our families.”