

# Parent Advisory Group and Family Practice Model

March 19, 2025



# PAG Member Request

**GOAL:** Add your perspective to each section of a practice profile

**ACTION:** Review profile, personal reflection, group reflection, and share your thoughts

## **CO-DESIGN:**

- As a group (note-takers capture discussion)
- During PAG meeting

**OUTCOME:** Practice Profiles will include your voice!

## FPM Commitments and Accountability



We will take time to be open and build trust. If trust is violated, own up to it and be better as a result.



Will give credit to the source and acknowledge who contributed to the work.



Ask and receive permission before your contributions are formally shared.



Seek additional opportunities to grow and participate. You are important to our process and will be treated with respect and as a professional.



There is space to ask questions and know you will get answers.



FPM team will show up regardless of meeting format or time of day. Being comfortable with each other is important to our work.



Transparent about the goals of our work: know how your input is applied.



Will listen to understand and will not be defensive, dismissive, or judgmental.



When meetings are in person, will bring snacks or coffee.



We are sincere about compensation and will work to ensure compensation for participants.



We will give and receive grace for our contributions, how we show up, and collective commitment.

# Plan with Families Practice Profile

Focus today's  
attention on  
ENGAGE



# ENGAGE: Gather Comprehensive Information

Create space for collaborative engagement.

There are ways to create a hospitable environment when you meet with a family, even when tensions and stressors are high. Avoid surprises. Consider scheduling meetings in a place that is comfortable and familiar to them. Your preparation for the meeting will impact the quality of the information you gather and will also help you build rapport and relationship with the family. By doing these things, you are **setting the most favorable conditions to engage with the family**.

Know ahead of the meeting what information you have, **what can be shared with family and what cannot** so you can be as transparent as possible. Come prepared to outline the steps and the different roles of the people they might encounter in the planning process.

**Know what you want or need from the meeting** and organize yourself and your time around those needs. Anticipate the flow of conversation. If you are a new worker, familiarize yourself with a semi-structured set of questions. This will help **gather necessary information without forcing the discussion or being inflexible** about where the conversation takes you. Remember that taking time to build rapport with the family might require multiple meetings.

# ENGAGE: Plan Participants

Be inclusive of all supports and family members.

Demonstrate respect by learning from the family who they see as supportive and consider them as part of the plan. Note that if you have preconceived, negative opinions about the family or who they identify as support it may be apparent in your interactions and limit engagement. It is worth the time and effort to **build a foundation for case management that is relational**.

**Plan participant includes all people who play a role in the safety and case plan. This can be family, community, or providers.**

A trauma-informed approach means not rushing interactions with the family or plan participants. Provide them with your full attention by listening, hearing, validating, and understanding their concerns, hesitations, and fears.

A plan that includes support from other people, people they trust, is the least disruptive and most sustainable support we can offer a family. The idea of restricting participation to only people who are approved by the Agency is limiting. Be prepared to have transparent conversations with the family and engage all members of the household including non-traditional family supports.

# ENGAGE: Plan Participants (continued)

## Build trust through competency and reliability.

Have conversations to **build partnership** instead of completing tasks. Begin by inquiring about their daily life, noticing activities that support the family and ensure child safety. This can be transportation to appointments, modeling behavior, or encouraging the family in other ways. Remain open to how the **plan participants describe their support**.

**Competency** means using engagement skills, assessment tools, shared decision making, and practicing transparency. Share your process with the plan participants to show them the integrity of our system, which includes methodical gathering and analysis of information to base your plan with families. Be honest about your limitations. If you do not know the answer, follow up in a timely way once you do.

**Reliability** means being responsive and available to answer questions thoroughly. Once you have established a pattern of trust with plan participants make sure you have an open line of communication so they know they can reach out with questions, celebrations, or concerns. If someone is not transparent or hides information, consider their motivation. They are true partners in the goal of minimal disruption and authentic support to the family over time.

# ENGAGE: Plan Participants (cont.)

Consider barriers to engagement that may be masked as resistance.

When a worker is met with resistance from plan participants it is easy to make negative assumptions for why there is resistance. Take a moment to **consider the reasons behind why plan participants are not forthcoming with information or resist cooperation**. Recognize that plan participants might be reluctant to express their observations or knowledge about the family, particularly in early stages of engagement.

We know that families may experience fear and shame when we become involved in their lives, which might be a response to their trauma. Distrust of the child welfare system is further complicated for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) families due to various historic and current reasons. Invite conversation about fear or stigma which might be personal or based on history or other people's experiences.

There is a significant **power differential that you can take steps to mitigate** when working with a family.

Use [Motivational Interviewing](#) skills or coaching techniques to help gain understanding of the family or plan participant's perspectives.

**Recognize and consider the impact of [disproportionality](#)** when we engage with impacted communities. Do this by being aware of possible bias and ask questions rather than make assumptions. Familiarize yourself with the family's culture and be open to understanding microaggressions that might not be obvious to you.

It is worth **acknowledging and exploring resistant behavior to address the reason behind it**. Do not ignore or make assumptions about the existence of these complicated dynamics. Prompt conversation about the family's personal experiences.



# ENGAGE: Equitable and Neutral Mindset

Be human centered.

Each family will **respond in their own way** to our involvement with them. Typical feelings you might observe are anger, fear, and hopelessness, or they might feel like our involvement is unjust. These responses are consistent with trauma. Resist the urge to judge people if they are angry and allow them time to process information without judgement.

During this time, use high empathy and reflective engagement. [Strategic Reflection](#) reinforces boundaries while encouraging the family to talk about what they want, need, and value.

**Listen to understand their perspective.** Acknowledge family challenges in a way that **reinforces compassion without normalizing their behaviors**. Use professional discretion to let the parents know they are not alone but the behavior that led to the safety threat cannot be normalized.

Frame questions to **convey curiosity rather than accusation**. Ask family members to describe how their family functions daily, helping them recognize strengths and challenges. Remember that they might not use the same words. Practicing curiosity will improve your understanding of the family unit and gives them the chance to describe their lives in their own words.

# ENGAGE: Equitable and Neutral Mindset

Recognize your own feelings and concerns before you engage.

Prior to engaging with the family, **be truthful about your concerns or biases** and how you feel with your supervisor or a coworker. These perceptions can be evident and limiting when you work with a family. **Avoid labeling** families based on your previous experience (“I had a family just like this...”). This is particularly difficult when working with families who have a chronic history with our system. Notice these things and be open to asking a peer for feedback because it **impacts how you present yourself to the family**.

Understand **your own story** and where you come from. Reconcile ways that **might influence how you work or engage with a family**. Know how these things might sway your view and actions while working with a family.

Check in with yourself:

- Do not take things personally or judge people for their anger
- Start by imagining families want what is best
- Remain open minded and avoid preconceived notions
- Be attentive not dismissive
- Resist showing frustration with families