

FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (FFT)

The rates of commitment to juvenile justice correctional institutions, secure detention, and out-of-home placement continues to be a focus for state and county officials as they seek effective community-based programs which are found to have greater impact and are less costly than placement options. Recidivism outcomes for incarcerated youth suggest that institutional care is less effective, more traumatizing and increases the likelihood of being involved in the adult criminal system. Southwest Key Programs is a private, nonprofit organization that has a long standing history and commitment to providing alternatives to detention and incarceration since 1987. Southwest Key is a nationally recognized leader in the design and implementation of innovative community based programs. Among the many models operated by Southwest Key is FFT, which fits well into the organization's values of providing home-based services and engaging the whole family as part of the intervention. Southwest Key is a trained and certified provider of the FFT services.

Program Overview

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) has been deemed "Effective" (the highest evidence rating) by www.crimestoppers.gov and other studies. It is an empirically grounded, well-documented and highly successful family intervention program for dysfunctional youth. FFT is an evidence-based practice supported by more than 30 years of clinical research. In addition, FFT has been proven effective with youth from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Sexton & Alexander, 2000).

FFT was developed to work specifically with at risk young people and their families, many of whom are angry, resistant, and unmotivated to change. Therapy must not only target maladaptive behaviors of the family and youth, but also must increase family members' motivation for change by nurturing existing family strengths. The FFT model focuses on the multiple systems within which adolescents and their families live and interact.

The FFT clinical model is based upon clear identification of 3 specific phases of intervention which enable clinicians to maintain focus in the context of considerable family and individual disruption. The service model allows for 8-30 hours per youth/family in a three-month cycle.

Phase 1: Engagement & Motivation focuses on partnering with the family to participate in the treatment process, and reducing family resistance and negativity.

Phase 2: Behavior Change focuses on assessment for the development and implementation of service plans that are culturally appropriate, relevant to each family's unique needs, and developed by the therapist and family.

Phase 3: Generalization takes place during the final weeks of intervention focusing on the need to maintain positive change over the long term and apply positive family change to other problem areas or situations.



Through our evidence-based **FFT program** and other community-based models, Southwest Key helped Clayton County, Georgia reduce youth incarceration by 80% in 2014.

The Georgia program isn't alone in its success. In 2013, Southwest Key's Youth Justice programs across the country diverted 3,169 kids from prisons – a success rate of 90%.