TEAMING

What's in a name?

"Team" - What do you think of when you see that word? You might imagine a sports team, an office team, or a team of mules. There are commonalities here. Each of those teams has a clear purpose or goal, whether that be scoring a goal or pulling a wagon.

Each team has a system of communication, possibly interoffice memos or coach's signals. Each has clearly defined guidelines including rules of the game or policies and procedures. Finally, each has a sort of "referee" to ensure everyone follows the rules, like a game referee, office supervisor, or mule team driver. For our purposes, we are focusing on teams related to Child Welfare. Teaming in Child Welfare has changed over time. You may hear someone mention a "staffing". Staffing is an older version of the team process where the Department chose the team members and led all decision making. Conversely, our current goal is to use the family team process. This process allows the family to largely choose their team members. Further, they are encouraged to identify their own strengths and risks while using their team members as supports. A staffing is the equivalent of a "group" rather than a "team". You might ask, "Aren't teams groups, aren't we talking about the same thing?" Well, all teams are groups. However, teams are a subset with a **specific purpose**. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) provide a clear distinction between work groups and teams. A *group* is a number of people working in the same area or brought together to complete a task. The group members come together to share information, views, and insights but each member's focus is on their individual performance. The work they do is geared toward their own compartmentalized portion of the overall task.

On the other hand, the working definition of a *team* is: "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." (p.112) In Child Welfare, the purpose of building a family team is to accomplish larger goals than any one member can accomplish alone. The aim and purpose of the family team is to perform, get results, and attain the best outcomes for families.

> ***Assigned Reading****: Child Welfare text, pages 339-342* *342 about Team Decision Making*

Interagency Partnerships

Now that you've read about Team Decision Making, you know that teaming with the

> ***Assigned Reading****: Child Welfare text, page 26, about Interagency Partnerships.*

family is of utmost importance. The family is essential in identifying underlying needs and their functional strengths that can be used to address their needs. Sometimes, the family needs assistance from agencies outside the Department to reach their goals. Interagency partnerships can move a family through the system with an efficient use of time and resources. Further, partnerships can help keep families from "falling through the cracks".

BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS

By Margery Gildner and Dan Corrie

Why Are Teams Essential?

To help at-risk families make positive changes as swiftly as possible, the child welfare worker will need teammates to share responsibility in helping these families. These teammates will help the worker carry out necessary responsibilities, pitching in to assess, plan for, support, guide and monitor at-risk families. No one expects the worker to do this important work alone; however, workers need to learn how to build and maintain these teams which will be such crucial helpmates.

Not only is the job of changing families too much for one worker; it is too much for the agency. Beyond helping the worker work with families, teams are necessary for carrying out the agency's mission. The agency cannot bear the full responsibility for protecting children from maltreatment. Multiple partners are necessary to bring about and support real and lasting positive change in families.

Thus, a fundamental role of the worker is to provide leadership in developing and managing teams for families. These team members can all contribute their expertise and/or personal influence with the family so that the family will be helped more swiftly and effectively toward making necessary, long-term and positive changes in their lives.

Who Are the Team Members?

The worker will need to partner with each family on his or her caseload to identify and bring together the family's team members. These team members will include 1) formal resources and 2) informal resources.

Formal resources: Formal resources are professionals and representatives from community agencies and institutions, such as mental health professionals, health care providers, child care providers, occupational therapists, school guidance counselors, teachers, coaches, law enforcement officers, substance abuse professionals, women's shelter staff members, the courts, staff from home visiting programs, employment and manpower development staff, and pastors, among others. Foster parents are crucial for any team in which there is a custody episode to be effective. Other formal team members have publicly recognized roles or functions, such as child care providers, CASAs, guardians ad litem, as well as volunteers or staff from neighborhood organizations, recreation centers, and Boys & Girls Clubs, among others.
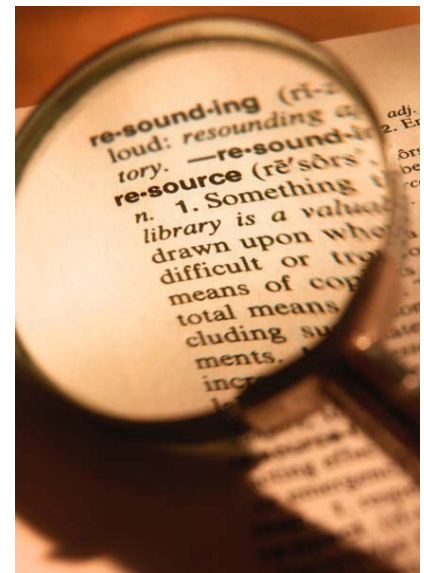
Because these people have ongoing public roles and positions, the worker may be able to establish comfortable and productive working relationships with these people, who can prove valuable and helpful not only with the current family, but also in working with numerous families for years to come. The more the worker cultivates connections with formal resources in the community, the more the worker will have professional relationships with increasing numbers of skilled people who can repeatedly serve as valuable partners in helping families.

Informal resources*:* Unlike formal resources which are available to the general public, informal resources are people who have actual or potential *personal connections* with particular families and family members. The family's team needs these people to provide a kind of emotional support and long-term support which formal resources cannot provide. For example, perhaps the birth mother has a sister or a cousin. Perhaps the birth father's mother or grandmother lives nearby. Perhaps the family has a relationship with the neighbor across the street. Perhaps the child has a godmother. Perhaps the mother has a friend from high school. Perhaps the father has a "buddy" at work with whom he sometimes eats lunch and bets on sports. Perhaps the mother used to attend Alcoholics Anonymous and met some of the other members who used to encourage her to stay sober. In some cases, family members may have current, active relationships with people like these. In other cases, family members may have drifted away from these relationships by "burning bridges" and becoming increasingly isolated, as at-risk families often do. However, if the family members once had genuine relationships, there was at one time a mutual bond, and that bond might be reestablished to help the family strengthen itself and achieve needed changes in their lives.

Beyond the obvious advantage of the value of human bonds, informal resources are important because they can continue helping these families for the "long haul," supporting families and preventing them from slipping back into their former, destructive patterns, long after the agency is no longer involved with the families. Practically speaking, informal resources are also usually without cost, compared to a cost for the support of formal resources, although payment for services is not the only criteria distinguishing formal vs. informal resources. A teacher, for example, may be considered an formal resource or an informal resource. If a teacher joins a family team as the child's educator, the teacher is acting in a formal capacity. However, if the child sees the teacher as an important support in their life, the teacher may choose to continue to be a support to that child after the child is no longer his or her pupil. In this case, the teacher becomes an informal support. As another example, a parent may have a friendship

with a person who is a mental health professional and ask that person to join the team. If this person's role on the team is as a friend of the family, s/he is an informal resource. If this person joins the team as a service provider, s/he is a formal resource.

The family members: The most important members of the team will always be the family members themselves. The worker will not be able to identify the best people to invite to join the team unless the worker can build trust with the family members so they will be willing to make a genuine effort to share their thoughts about who might serve as meaningful supports and team members. The family members are the ones who know the most about themselves, their history and their feelings, so the worker and team members will be more effective if they continually build trust with the family members and listen closely to them.

Identifying Team Members and Supports

The faster the worker begins to identify and enlist team members as helpers, the sooner the family will reap the benefits of having a support network. Also the worker needs to assemble a strong team early to assist in assessing the family's needs and developing the family's initial plan. Therefore, from first contact with the family and on an ongoing basis, the worker needs to engage the family in exploring possible contacts who might serve as team members. During the life of the case, the worker will continue to identify and consider potential team members who might help meet the family's changing and emerging needs.

Identifying and Recruiting Formal Resources

When beginning work with an at-risk family, the worker may need to take immediate actions to ensure children's safety and/or to begin stabilizing a high-risk situation. For example, the worker may take a mother to a woman's shelter or refer a parent to substance abuse treatment. When family members begin receiving such services, it is important that representatives from these services serve on the family's team, such as the parent's substance abuse counselor and the staff member at the woman's shelter who is working most closely with the mother. Such professionals will be valuable members of the family's team both because of their expertise and because they will be working with and learning about the family. Their insights can greatly help the worker and team in assessing, planning and monitoring the family. Also these professionals will benefit from being part of the team because they, too, can learn about the family from the other team members who are spending time with the family and who have

expertise in varied areas. Thus, all the team members will learn from one another and will therefore be better able to carry out their own work with the family.

In identifying potential team members, the worker will also want to learn about other formal resources with which the family is already connected. The worker can learn about such formal resources by talking with family members. For example, the worker might ask a family member, "Who takes care of your child during the day? A day care provider? A neighbor? A relative?" or, "Are you affiliated with a church?" The worker might ask the child, "At school, is there a teacher who takes a special interest in you? Do you meet with the guidance counselor? Is there a club or a youth program you belong to?" The worker might ask a youth attending junior or senior high school, "Are you on a sports team? Do you go to any after-school programs?" Any child who has an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) is connected with someone at the school who has a stake in the child's success.

The worker can find out about medical providers by asking family members such questions as, "Who is your child's pediatrician? Does your family work with a nurse? Who is somebody who has worked with the child medically? Has the child seen any kind of therapist, such as an occupational therapist? A physical therapist?"

As the worker learns of these family connections, the worker and family will discuss which of them might serve a valuable role on the family's team and which of them would be willing to serve.

Elsewhere in this training, you will learn how workers can help families draw their Eco-maps. The process of developing an Eco-map is invaluable in helping the family think about both the formal and informal resources in their lives. When the family members thoughtfully complete their own Eco-map, the worker and they themselves will gain a strong understanding of the family's current and potential supports.

Some workers may feel awkward asking other professionals to serve as team members. They may feel that they are imposing on busy professionals. When workers request these other professionals to attend ISP meetings or to contribute in other ways to support these families, the workers may quickly come to feel they are always asking and never giving. However, this is not the case.

All the professionals who serve on the team receive benefits from participating in the team process. For example, a worker may be more successful in recruiting a child's school guidance counselor to serve as a team member if the worker helps the counselor understand that not only will his/her participation help achieve the worker's goals of safety and security in the home, but the counselor will also be contributing to achieving the school's goal of student success, which is more likely to occur when a child is safe. Similarly, a mental health therapist has the goal of his/her client achieving emotional and behavioral stability, and a substance abuse therapist has the goal of his/her client becoming strong enough to quit using substances. Both of these goals are more likely to be achieved if the family's team members keep the professionals informed about the parent and the parent's family. Further, team members can help professionals consider the parent's needs and strengths from different, fresh perspectives. In other words, the team "belongs to" and helps every professional participating as a team member – not just the worker.

Workers may feel more comfortable recruiting these professionals if they understand that, in recent years, helping professionals from many fields (e.g., substance abuse therapists, psychologists, family counselors, etc.) have come to recognize that, to be more effective, they need to work together with other service providers who are helping the same clients. They realize that by joining with these other service providers and communicating with one another, they will all benefit by receiving a clearer picture of the person or people they are trying to help. They recognize that such communication helps them see and, therefore, better help the "whole person," rather than having the limited perspective we tend to have when we have only our own impressions to go by. They also increasingly realize the need for themselves and other service providers to coordinate efforts. For example, a therapist can take an approach that is consistent with the approach taken by a child welfare worker, so the two professionals will not confuse or alienate the person with mixed messages. Professionals from these various helping fields have come to realize that, in the past, they have become "fragmented," meaning the many helping professionals in a community have worked separate and apart from each other, serving the same clients yet seldom working together to coordinate their efforts. The national trend is for helping professionals to work together and to coordinate their efforts to provide a more holistic and unified approach in helping individuals and families.

Thus, by taking the initiative to organize teams for families, the worker is not "imposing" on these professionals or asking them for any sort of "personal favor"; to the contrary, the worker is significantly helping these professionals by taking on the responsibility of bringing them together in the sort of team approach that service providers from varied fields across the country believe is the most effective approach in helping at-risk individuals and families. In many states, many helping professionals are aware of and recognize the value of such inter-professional partnerships, but they often are unsure how to go about initiating and organizing working relationships with professionals in other fields. In Alabama and several other states, the child welfare worker is taking on this key role as the organizer of these teams.

While the team approach can be beneficial for all professionals who participate, the worker who serves as team leader will need to be sensitive to team members' schedules and other commitments. For example, a family's mental health therapist would be valuable to have present at all of the family team meetings. However, the therapist may be too busy to allot that much time. Therefore, when the worker first contacts people to recruit them to join the team, the worker will want to discuss with each person how available and active that person is able to be for the team. The worker will want to be sensitive to the time constraints of all team members—both *formal* and *informal* resources—but will likely need to be particularly sensitive to the schedules of the former. In organizing each team meeting, the worker will want to consider when a family's needs currently call for the expertise of specific team members; if a team member's schedule tends to be busy and the upcoming meeting is not particularly relevant to that team member's area of expertise, the worker might bypass inviting that person to that meeting. Then the person will be more likely to make the time when he/she is truly needed at a future meeting.
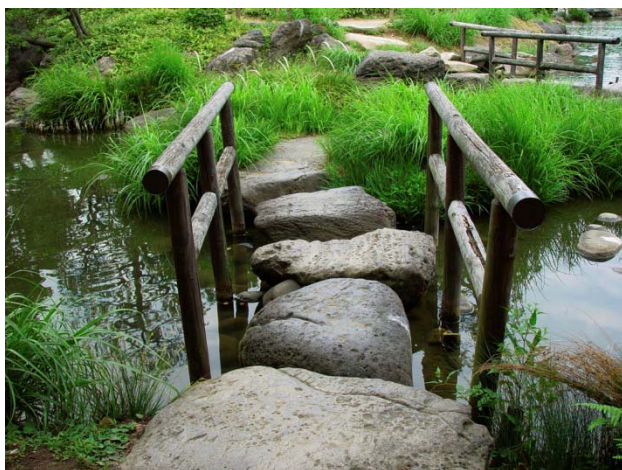
Identifying Informal Resources

The worker will need the family's help to identify a family's informal resources. In talking with the family to identify informal resources, the worker should keep in mind that many family members may need coaxing to think of their current and potential informal connections. By contrast, in thinking about themselves, workers could probably quickly name all the key informal supports in their own lives (e.g., best friend, friends from high school and college, friends from work, friends from church, friends from clubs,

etc.) because workers' lives tend to be far more orderly than the lives of at-risk family members. Thus, because the lives of at-risk families tend to be very different from a worker's life, a worker may need to remind him or herself to be patient and methodical in helping family members try to remember who the important people in their lives are.

At-risk families have often experienced confusion and hardship. As earlier mentioned, when families suffer from some conditions, particularly substance abuse, they may have long ago "burned bridges" with many of the people who once cared about them. They may have drifted into living isolated lives. When the worker asks them what people are important in their lives, these family members may think they are alone in the world, without any supportive connections. They will need the worker's help in thinking about 1) people from the past with whom they might rebuild connections and 2) people in their present lives who could become more important to them.

In other cases, family members may not be isolated, but have come to have people in their lives that provide negative influences, such as companions who sell them drugs. Thus, although the family member has current connections with these people, they are not appropriate as members of a team whose purpose is to help the family make positive changes in their lives.

Thus, as the worker guides the family members in thinking of people in their lives with whom they might connect or re-connect, the worker will want to ask about the following points to decide if the person is appropriate as a positive support:

1) *Capability*: Is the person able to help? How can the person help? What tangible and/or intangible supports can the person offer?
2) *Willingness*: Is the person currently willing to help? Has the person in the past been willing to help, and what would convince the person to be willing to help again?

Whether they offer tangible or intangible benefits, informal supports are immensely important to families. Studies show that families who experience child abuse or neglect almost always lack supportive connections to help with child care and other daily living tasks. Simply reducing the isolation of troubled families may be just as important to them as providing them with formal services. In the long run, informal supports are even more important than formal services, because formal services cannot continue forever,

and families will need to develop a *natural helping network* on which to rely over time, so they will not slip back into former unsafe patterns of behavior. Even when people cannot offer the family concrete support, they can offer emotional support, positive regard, advice, information, mentoring and teaching.

While such intangible benefits are extremely valuable, it will also be important for families to find friends and connections who can help in practical ways. For example, as the worker begins working with a family, he/she may need to arrange for their transportation to therapy. However, the agency will not always be in the family's lives to fill such needs, so it is important for the family to find (as most of us do) *natural helpers* – family members, friends and acquaintances. Ultimately, on a long-term basis, it is important for the family to depend more on themselves and their natural, informal supports to help them in maintaining their family's positive changes.

How does the worker guide the family in identifying informal resources? As previously mentioned, the worker can learn a great deal about the family's informal resources by working with them to complete an Eco-map. The worker can also help the family identify informal supports by asking questions, such as the following:

❖ "Who might be an important person who is part of your family that may not live with your family?"

❖ "Who cares most about your family?"

❖ "Who is somebody who likes to be updated about how your kids are doing or what's happening with your kids?"

❖ "It's not easy to raise three kids alone. Who are some people in your life who can help you in any way?"

❖ "You've been through a lot. Who has helped you find the strength to keep pushing on?"

❖ "Who else in your family is concerned about this problem?"

❖ "Who else is interested in helping your family change?"

❖ "You mentioned that a couple of years ago, things were going better for your family. Who was around then? Who helped that happen?"

❖ "Who is someone your kids feel they can turn to when they're upset or want to talk?"

❖ "Are there people in your life with whom you used to have a strong connection that you have now drifted away from?"

❖ "I know some people I really respect, like my brother-in-law. I really like him and look up to him, which sort of inspires me to want to act my best when I'm around him. I guess I think highly of him and want him to think of me that way, too. Is there anyone like that in your life?"

❖ "Who are people you know that would like to see the drug-use stop?"

❖ "You said that a couple of months ago you went for five days without drinking. Did anyone say or do something to inspire you to do that?"

❖ "Think back to the time when you felt better – maybe back in high school. Was there someone whom you liked and who really liked you?"

❖ "Think back to a time in your life when you were happier or feeling less depressed than you are today. Who was around you then?"

❖ "If you think about a time before you started using drugs – which may have been when you were 10 or 12 – who was somebody then whom you might have turned to or looked up to?"

From the very beginning, upon first contact with the family, the worker will benefit from identifying and making contact with a family member outside the immediate family or with a family friend who can help the worker better understand what is and has been occurring in the family. Such a person may be able to provide a different and useful perspective. While the immediate family is the key source for information about themselves, the worker will meet them while they are in the middle of the problems which brought them to the attention of the agency. Therefore, the worker can benefit greatly by communicating with a person who knows the family well and who has a more detached, less emotional perspective than may be the case with the immediate family.

The worker may be able to discover people who are already in the family's life, who are helping out on a regular basis and who might be willing to take on further responsibilities if asked. To identify such people, the worker might ask such questions as, "On a day-to-day basis, who helps you get the kids off to school? Who helps you when the kids are coming home from school and you can't be home? Who takes care of things when you can't?" If the worker discovers that the family currently has such people in their lives, then the family already has a natural helping system in place that could be expanded by

1) the current helpers taking on more responsibilities with the family and/or 2) the worker and family identifying additional helpers to supplement the efforts of the people who are already helping the family.

Such day-to-day connections can be crucial in helping the family stabilize and remain stable. Sometimes these same helpers can also be very valuable when a crisis arises. However, the family may need to find other connections who might be unwilling to help out with the family's day-to-day needs but who may care enough about the family to be available in times of crisis. To explore whether the family has connections with such potential supports, the worker might ask, "Suppose your family has medical needs or has some other scary thing happen, who do you turn to for that?" or, "When your car breaks down, who gives you a ride?"

As indicated by some of the earlier sample questions, the worker may need to help the family think back in time to identify potential supports. Some families will have fallen into patterns for years which have alienated the more positive connections they once had, particularly when substance abuse is present in a family. Thus, the worker may need to help the family think back five or ten years, or even longer into the past, to remember who was once there for them. To help the family remember a potential person to bring back into their lives, the worker may ask questions like, "If there's somebody with whom you've burned a bridge, how might we contact that person to become a team member?"

Sometimes when a family member and a former friend have had a "falling out," the family member may feel uncomfortable about personally contacting the friend to try to re-establish the connection. The estranged friend also might feel uncomfortable if contacted by the family member, perhaps painfully remembering the very type of behavior which eventually led to the agency's intervention. In such cases, the worker and family may agree for the worker to make the initial contact with the former friend to take the first step in "patching up" the old relationship. In contacting the former friend, the worker can explain that the family is trying hard to change and regain some of the things that the friend probably liked about them in the past, emphasizing the family's need for contact with people who care about them.

Sometimes family members need the worker's help in realizing they have people in their lives that might be willing to be supportive. For example, the father may have an older car which often breaks down and which he brings to a neighbor who enjoys fixing cars for extra income after work. Perhaps in working together so often when repairing the car, the two men have come to have an easygoing relationship which the father might

build upon, for example, by inviting the neighbor and his wife to dinner or to a ball game. This couple could be a much more positive social connection for the family than "drinking buddies" or other companions who tend to reinforce the family's problem patterns. Even if such relationships are too new for family members to feel comfortable inviting these friends to contribute in such formal ways as coming to team meetings, such new connections can become part of the family's support network. Such connections can provide a great deal of positive energy for a family, just knowing that they have new friends in their lives who respect and like them and who sometimes might be people they can rely on in practical ways.

Sometimes potential supports may fall somewhere between being formal and informal. For example, a mother may have left her boyfriend because of domestic violence issues. The boyfriend may continue to harass the woman, calling her at work or even sometimes coming to her place of work to try to see her. In such a case, the worker and/or the woman would probably want to explain the situation to the woman's supervisor. Without such an explanation, the supervisor might become frustrated with such distractions at work, perhaps even considering whether an employee who attracts such distractions should continue to be employed there. But if the supervisor is provided an explanation of the situation and the mother's desire to build a new and better life for herself and her children, the supervisor could become a sympathetic ally. Even if the supervisor never has the time or commitment to come to a team meeting, he/she will nonetheless be a valuable team member if he/she puts a plan in place to handle the boyfriend in an orderly, safe way when he calls or comes to the work place. Or perhaps the supervisor might help the mother devise a safety plan for coming and going in the parking lot. The supervisor will be a valuable team member even if all he/she does is to tolerate the mother's problems, so that her job will remain secure.

The Worker's Role as Leader of the Team

Throughout this training, you have and will learn about numerous situations in which the worker must take on a very "hands-on" role in working directly with families. However, this training and this current chapter also emphasize how essential it is that the worker be active as the family's team leader. In this leadership capacity, the worker will often delegate responsibilities to team members, rather than carrying out these responsibilities personally. As the worker delegates responsibilities to team members, the worker will take on the role of facilitator, helping to guide the team members' work with the family. As leader of the team, the worker has six areas of responsibility: 1) identifying team members, 2) recruiting the team, 3) negotiating responsibilities and

degrees of involvement, 4) enhancing team cohesion, 5) resolving conflict and 6) directing the team.

1) Identifying team members

As previously discussed in this chapter, the worker will engage the family members in identifying people informally connected to the family who might be willing and able to serve as team members and supports for the family. In considering candidates for the family's team, the worker will also identify formal resources/professionals that have provided, currently are providing or will begin providing services to the family.

2) Recruiting the team

Once potential team members have been identified, they will need to be contacted and recruited for the family's team. In some cases, the family members may themselves contact the potential team members, such as in the case of family and friends; however, the worker will also need to talk with these potential team members to orient them to the team's purpose and working arrangements. Often, the worker will contact and recruit team members.

If the worker's attitude is casual when contacting potential team members, often the potential team members will not be inspired to join the team or to seriously contribute. To recruit committed team members, the worker needs to be persuasive in emphasizing the importance of the team in helping the family provide safer, nurturing homes for their children; the worker needs to explain and emphasize the important helping role the person could carry out as a team member; and the worker needs to emphasize his/her own commitment to work closely with the team in helping them to use their time effectively.

The process of contacting, recruiting and orienting will be ongoing throughout the time the agency is involved with the family, because, as the family improves, they will face new challenges and meet new potential connections, so that new team members will be necessary to meet the family's changing needs and situations.

3) Negotiating responsibilities and degrees of involvement

The worker will take an active role in talking with team members to negotiate the degree to which they will be willing and able to participate. For example, will a team member come to all CFTM's, only the CFTM's at which his/her expertise or knowledge of the family would be most useful, or is he/she

unable/unwilling to come to meetings? Rather than attending CFTM's, is the person only able/willing to be consulted by office telephone? If the person attends the CFTM, will the person be willing to share his/her knowledge of the family in order to help assess, plan for and monitor the family's progress? Will the team member take an active role as a support for the family, such as by occasionally baby-sitting, providing a parent with transportation to work, inviting the family to join their place of worship, etc.?

In early discussions with the team member, the worker can begin exploring some of the responsibilities the person might be willing to take on. During subsequent team meetings, the worker can continue helping team members consider supports needed by the family and which team members may be willing to volunteer to help provide those supports.

The worker will help in strategizing how each team member can enhance the support he or she provides to the family. In doing this, the worker might engage all the team in brainstorming how some or all of them can improve their methods of supporting the family.

4) Enhancing team cohesion

Once the team has been assembled and the team members have committed to degrees of involvement, the worker will help them cohere as a group, enhancing the team members' working relationships with one another. In carrying out this function, the worker acts as the coach. In bringing the team together, the worker will help the individual team members see the value and worth of one another and of the family. The worker will also look for ways to help the team view their work positively and productively. During team meetings, the worker will encourage an atmosphere of honesty, openness and mutual respect.

5) Resolving conflict

In the CFTM process, conflict will almost inevitably arise because the family is facing such difficult challenges. The family may show frustration with team members whose expectations seem difficult to meet. Also team members may become frustrated with family members and/or with each other. Also, as is often true with groups in general, some personalities simply may clash. If conflict arises between team members and/or the family, the worker will need to make genuine efforts to mediate and resolve the conflict.

In attempting to resolve team conflicts, the worker will decide if all or some family and team members should discuss the conflict or differences. The worker can decide this by asking himself/herself 1) whether the issue involves the whole team, 2) whether the issue needs the whole team to resolve it and 3) whether the conflict is interfering with the successful development, implementation and monitoring of the family's plan. If the

answer to any of these questions is "yes," the worker may want to address the issue at a team meeting, inviting the team to brainstorm solutions or compromises in a way that will be as non-threatening and as healing as is reasonable, given the nature of the particular issue. Depending upon the nature of the issue, the worker may also consider trying to resolve the issue by meeting with only the team members directly concerned with the conflict. The advantage of this more private approach is to avoid team members feeling "put on the spot" with the rest of the team.

When conflicts arise from personality clashes, the worker can try to resolve these conflicts by meeting with the team members who are feeling tension with one another and attempt to work through their differences. To be effective in this role as peace-maker, the worker can rely on many of the techniques covered in this training, such as engagement skills, interpersonal helping skills, social contracting and reframing.

In some cases, the family may complain that the worker and team are expecting too much from them and that their CFTM's goals are unreasonable. In such a situation, the worker and team need to genuinely consider whether the family's complaint is justified and reasonable. The worker and team need to talk with and listen to the family so they can all clearly understand where they and the family do and do not agree. When the worker and family are not in agreement, the worker should decide whether the family's or a family member's stance is counterproductive to bringing about changes necessary for child maltreatment to cease. If the family member's stance is counterproductive in this way, the worker is responsible for finding ways to help the family see how their stance is counterproductive and to help them change their stance to be more in agreement with a course that will end the child maltreatment. The worker should also help the family understand the consequences of continuing to take a counterproductive stance, emphasizing that the Department is responsible to pass information on to the court to ensure children's safety, permanence and well-being. The worker should also be continually aware of family members' feelings and should try to interact with them to work through emotions, such as anger, fear or helplessness, which are or might become obstacles to a productive working relationship.

6) Directing the team

Every group needs a person to coordinate and direct their efforts: a committee needs a chairperson, soldiers need a commander, and actors need a director. Similarly, the family's team needs the worker to direct them in effectively combining their efforts on behalf of the family.

TEAMING WITH FAMILIES

Genograms and Ecomaps

As discussed in the prior reading, ecomaps are valuable tools for engaging family members while identifying informal resources. Another pictorial tool used by the Department is the genogram. A genogram is a drawing of a person's family tree. Genograms exist to identify members of a family system, to identify issues that exist for members of that system, and to provide details about those issues for non-household members. The ecomap exists to illustrate connections and relationships that do or do not exist that can help or hurt a family's ability to protect their children. You can read about the use of genograms and ecomaps as effective tools to promote engagement, team building, and assessment in the next assignment box.

__Assigned Reading__: 1.
__Genograms and__
__Ecomaps,__ found on the
Course Contents page or
the Curriculum CD.
2. __View__ and __print__ a
legend of genogram
symbols at:
http://www.familytiespro
ject.org/Documents/geno
gramchart.pdf

Team Decision Making

You've read about Team Decision Making in the textbook. You've also read about team building including the who, how, and why of team members. Further, you've explored eco-maps and genograms. Now, let's watch a video that explains the process of teaming more in-depth. You'll see supervisors and facilitators discuss the process and see an excerpt from a Child and Family Team Meeting.

__Assignment__: Watch the
__Family to Family Video__
at:
http://www.kidscount.o
rg/kidscount/video/tea
m.html

Why does the Team Decision Making model work? How did the Department representatives approach and communicate with the family? Did you notice how information was being gathered from the family? Approaching the family in an honest, respectful manner opens lines of communication. This initial communication with families begins the assessment process. You'll learn more about assessment as you continue through your on-line training.

After viewing the video clip, please continue to the next module on Assessment.