



OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

~Family Decision Making

Introducing Family Decision Making Youth Justice

Family Decision Making Youth Justice (FDMYJ) is a circle where specified members of the youth's core support group come together with significant others and family members of the youth's community who are, or might become, involved to assist the youth to develop their plan of success for their future.

The circle is arranged and facilitated by a FDMYJ coordinator. The youth and FDMYJ coordinator make the final decision about who participates, and it can be anyone the youth identifies as important to him/her.

What are the strengths of FDMYJ?

FDMYJ helps to promote and develop the capacity of aboriginal youth and communities to care for and protect youth between the ages of 12-17 years. FDMYJ is seeking to help avoid the need recurrence with the criminal justice system and ensure the youth knows about and has access to resources and services that can help, and builds stronger relationships by helping youth work out problems to develop a future. FDMYJ recognizes and acknowledges the right and capacity of aboriginal youth, family and communities to care for and plan for their youth. FDMYJ respects and understands Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

Referrals:

The program receives referrals from Youth, Bands, Friendship Centers, Probation Officers, Youth Justice Workers, Police/Courts or Social Workers; Parents or Family members.

Note: Youth/Families who are deemed at high risk prior to incarcerated/gang involvement will be placed in higher priority;

Roles:

- The FDMYJ Coordinator is independent of the Band, Friendship Centre and Justice Department. The coordinator works with youth and participants to ensure balance of the circle and that people can come together in a good way and feel safe. The FDMYJ coordinator will also describe the FDMYJ circle and legal process and other options if available.
- The role of the youth at the FDMYJ circle is to actively participate in planning for the youth's safety, wellness, permanency, culture and any other area decided by the youth/family to be appropriate and important. It also may include supporting the youth in developing a wellness plan.
- The formal support role at an FDM YJ is to provide information and offer consultation and resources to youth and family members.
- In situations where there is MCFD, probation involvement, the MCFD social worker's role is to agree to, support and resource youth plans wherever possible.

Family Decision Making Format

Since this is a youth driven process the format is dependent on the youth, family and community culture.

1st Round—Opening

Prayer / Smudge / Song
Introductions
Confidentiality
Ground Rules

2nd Round - Information Sharing

Youth Strengths
Risks/Concerns
Questions
Sharing

3rd Round—Private Youth/Family Time

Discuss the Concerns
Decide on a plan

4th Round—The Plan

Present the Plan
Discuss the Plan
Questions/Get Clarification
Agreement to the Plan

Youth Driven Process:

As a youth driven process the youth will determine:

- Who will be invited to participate;
- The location and food to be served at the meeting;
- The culture and ceremony to be incorporated;
- The use of any co-facilitators;
- Elder involvement;
- Support People;
- Follow Up.

Preparation:

The FDMYJ coordinator will meet with all participants to prepare them to attend the youth circle. They will describe the process, outline what is understood as the needs of the youth and the purpose of the circle, explain the rule of confidentiality, describe who else is attending and ensure the participants feel safe participating. The coordinator will work to ensure the youth and family understands all the options available to them, understands the legal processes if applicable, is able to come together in a good, safe way and that the circle is balanced.

- FDMYJ's are not designed or expected to resolve every issue that a youth may face.
- There may be a follow-up youth meeting to review the plan and see how everything is going.
- FDMYJ follows youth process, as a result the circle itself may last anywhere from a couple of hours and 1 or more follow up Circles may be arranged to ensure an acceptable Plan is created.
- A written copy of the plan will be sent to all participants

QUESTIONS?

Please contact: FDM Team Lead (250) 707-0095 ex 152.