

Working with Families in Conflict

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Learning objectives

Learn	Participants will learn to identify families who are in conflict.
Learn	Participants will learn skills to use when working with families in conflict.
Be Able to	Participants will be able to successfully plan an intervention with a family in conflict.

Why learn about working with families in conflict?

1. Because you work with families, and conflict within families is COMMON.
2. Because it is in line with best practice and positive healthcare provision values.
3. Because it will develop skill and comfort in dealing with conflict in an effective manner.

Self-assessment

1. On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you in working with families in conflict?
2. Why did you rate yourself at this number, as opposed to a number higher on the scale?
3. Why did you rate yourself at this number, as opposed to a number lower on the scale?
4. What are your concerns about working with families in conflict?
5. What are your favorite things about working with families in conflict?

Identifying families in conflict

- All families are families in conflict at some point in time!
- Family conflicts can be hard to identify
 - Every family handles conflict differently
 - Not all families have effective communication skills
- Culture and diversity can impact the presentation of conflict within families
 - Some cultures/backgrounds/family cultures may inhibit people from talking about a family conflict outside the family
 - Some families may find it difficult to talk about healthcare outside their family system

Working with families in conflict

Family work is
different than
individual work

Set guidelines at
the outset to
facilitate
successfully

Differences using
the motivational
interviewing
stages:

1. Engaging

2. Focusing

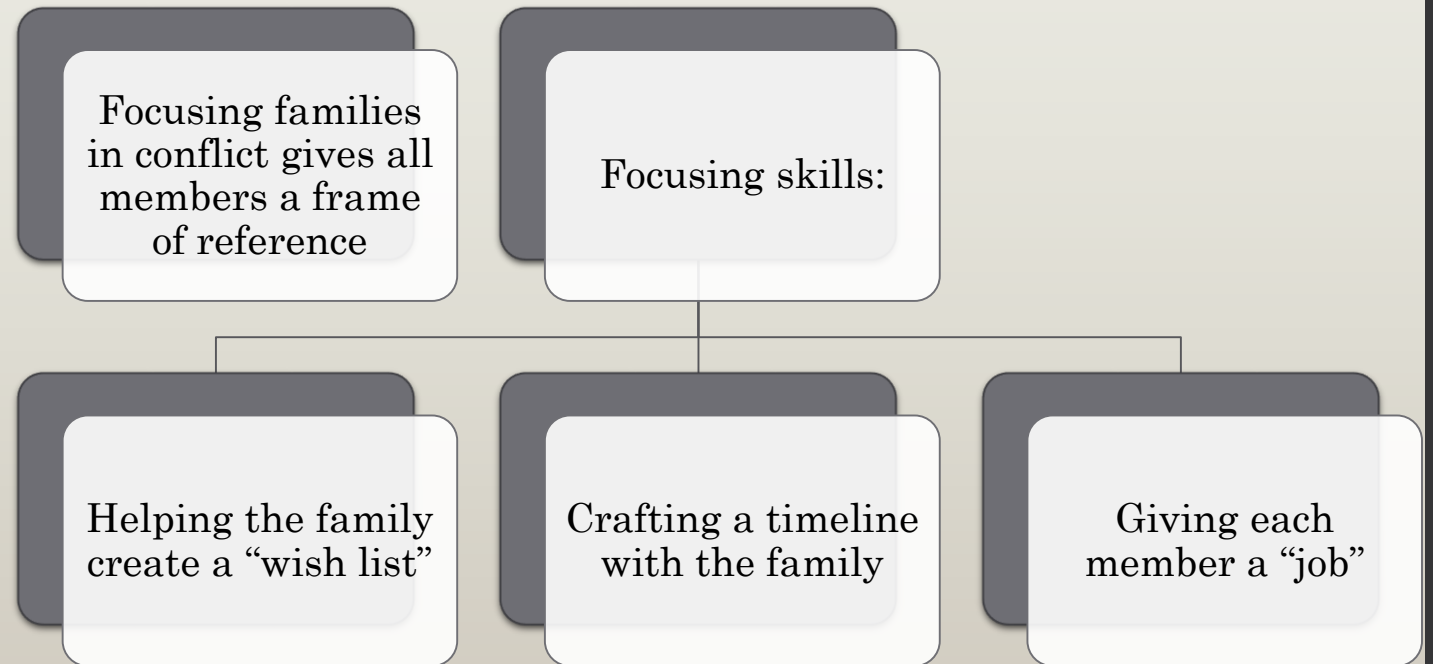
3. Evoking

4. Planning

Engaging families in conflict

- When families are in conflict, it can be difficult to engage all members
 - This is imperative, though!
- Some skills you might use:
 - Icebreaker activity
 - Asking each member to share their goals with the family
 - Using a “team” approach

Focusing families in conflict



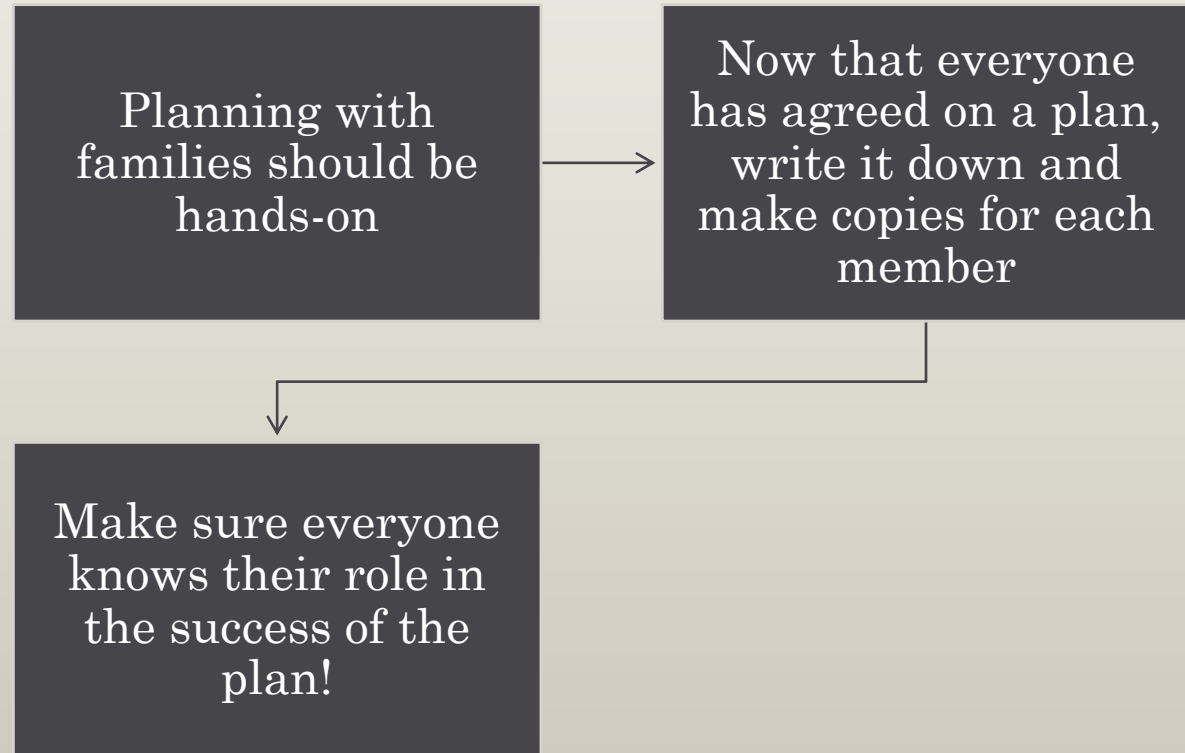
Evoking families in conflict

The decision-making part of family work

Be sure to keep focus on the task at hand

- If family dynamics stand in the way, it is ok to recognize it and say it out loud
- Ask family members to share what the other family members might be thinking

Planning with families in conflict



Ending a family work session

- Focus on a sense of belongingness within the family
- At the end, ask every member if their goals were met
- Ensure understanding of each member's role
- Make a time to check back in
- Identify a member of the family who will be the main point of contact

Activity

1. Draw a picture of your family or a family with whom you recently worked. This picture should name all of the members and show you sitting around a shared workspace.
2. Think briefly about each member of the family. What personal characteristics does each member bring to the table?
3. Think about the family as a whole. What family dynamics come into play?
4. Does the family have different goals? If so, how do the differing goals compete?
5. What strategies would you use based on this information?

Discussion and case consultation

Case Consultation:

Angela is a case coordinator working in a primary care clinic. She is meeting with a family whose matriarch, the grandmother, has just been diagnosed with cancer. The family asks to meet in order to discuss options and to get more information.

During the meeting the grandmother, two adult children and their spouses, and two young adult grandchildren attend the appointment. The grandmother doesn't speak much, but her two children have many questions and want to hear from the care coordinator about options for treatment. There is a lot of tension in the family, as the grandmother's adult son wants his mother to take all of the treatments available, and the grandmother's daughter thinks her mother would prefer to focus on natural treatments.

How you might work with this family? What are the expectations you might set at the beginning of the session? How would you engage with the family? How would you help them focus, evoke them, and help them make a plan? What would be important in ending the session?