

# So, You Want to Start a Family Healing to Wellness Court? Where Do We Start?

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# Acknowledgment



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*This project is supported by Grant #15PJDP-22-GK-03559-DGCT awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.*

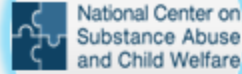
## OJJDP's Three Priorities

- ✓ Treat Children As Children
- ✓ Serve Children at Home, With Their Families, in Their Communities
- ✓ Open Up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth

## OJJDP's Mission

OJJDP provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to youth delinquency and victimization. The Office helps states, localities, and Tribes develop effective and equitable juvenile justice systems that create safer communities and empower youth to lead productive lives.

To find out more about OJJDP, visit: [www.ojp.ojjdp.gov](http://www.ojp.ojjdp.gov)



## NATIONAL CENTER ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CHILD WELFARE

- In-Depth Technical Assistance
- Regional Partnership Grants

*Funded by the Children's Bureau (CB), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)*



Children and Family Futures strives to prevent child abuse and neglect while improving safety, permanency, well-being and recovery outcomes with equity for all children, parents and families affected by trauma, substance use and mental health disorders.



## NATIONAL FAMILY TREATMENT COURT TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FTC TTA)

*Funded by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*



## NATIONAL SOBRIETY TREATMENT & RECOVERY TEAMS TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Funded by Individual States and/or Local Jurisdictions*



## CHILDREN & FAMILY FUTURES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & EVALUATION PROJECTS

- Casey Family Programs
- Sacramento County Early Intervention Family Treatment Court
- Sacramento County Dependency Family Treatment Court
- Recovery Opportunities Open for Men (ROOM) for Dads
- Strong Families, Strong Children
- Children and Families Commission of Orange County



**CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY FUTURES**  
Strengthening Partnerships, Improving Family Outcomes



- **Vision:** It is the vision of the Lummi Family Wellness Court to reunite families and to provide support for these families to live healthy and productive lives free of drugs and alcohol dependence, for the future of our children and in the ways of our ancestors.
- **Mission:** To promote healing by providing a culture and treatment centered court program that integrates essential services, and community members to encourage parents affected by drugs and alcohol dependence to live healthy, sober lives for the well-being of themselves and their children.

# Learning Objectives

1. Identify key implementation and planning considerations for Family Healing to Wellness Courts (FHWCs)
2. Explore the important role of governance structure, leadership, and data during the planning process
3. Learn from the experiences of FHWC teams that have successfully planned and launched a FHWC

# Family Treatment Court (FTC) Model as a Collaborative Solution

Judicial Oversight



Treatment  
Court  
Hearings



Therapeutic  
Jurisprudence



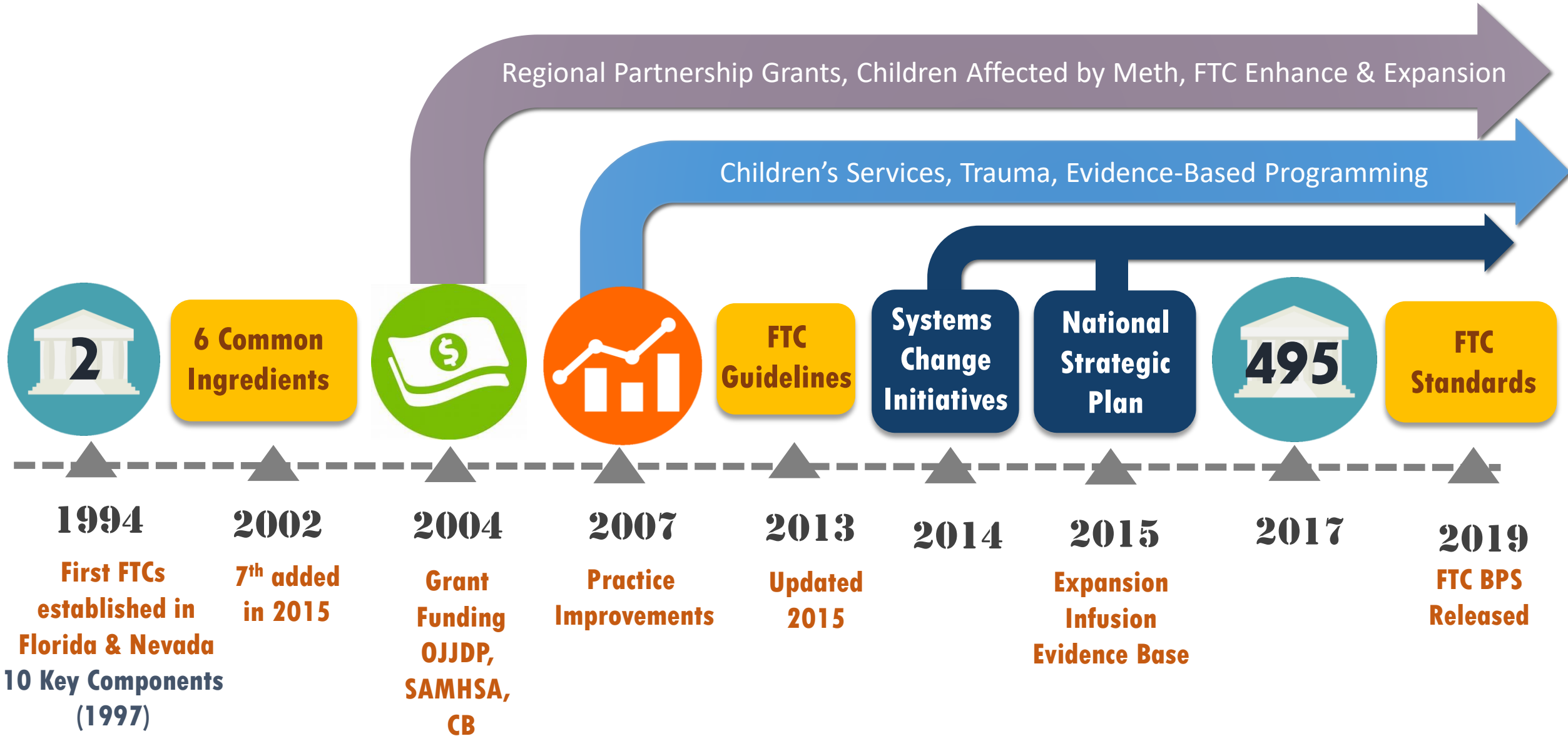
Access to Quality  
Treatment and  
Enhanced  
Recovery Support



Enhanced  
Family-Based  
Services

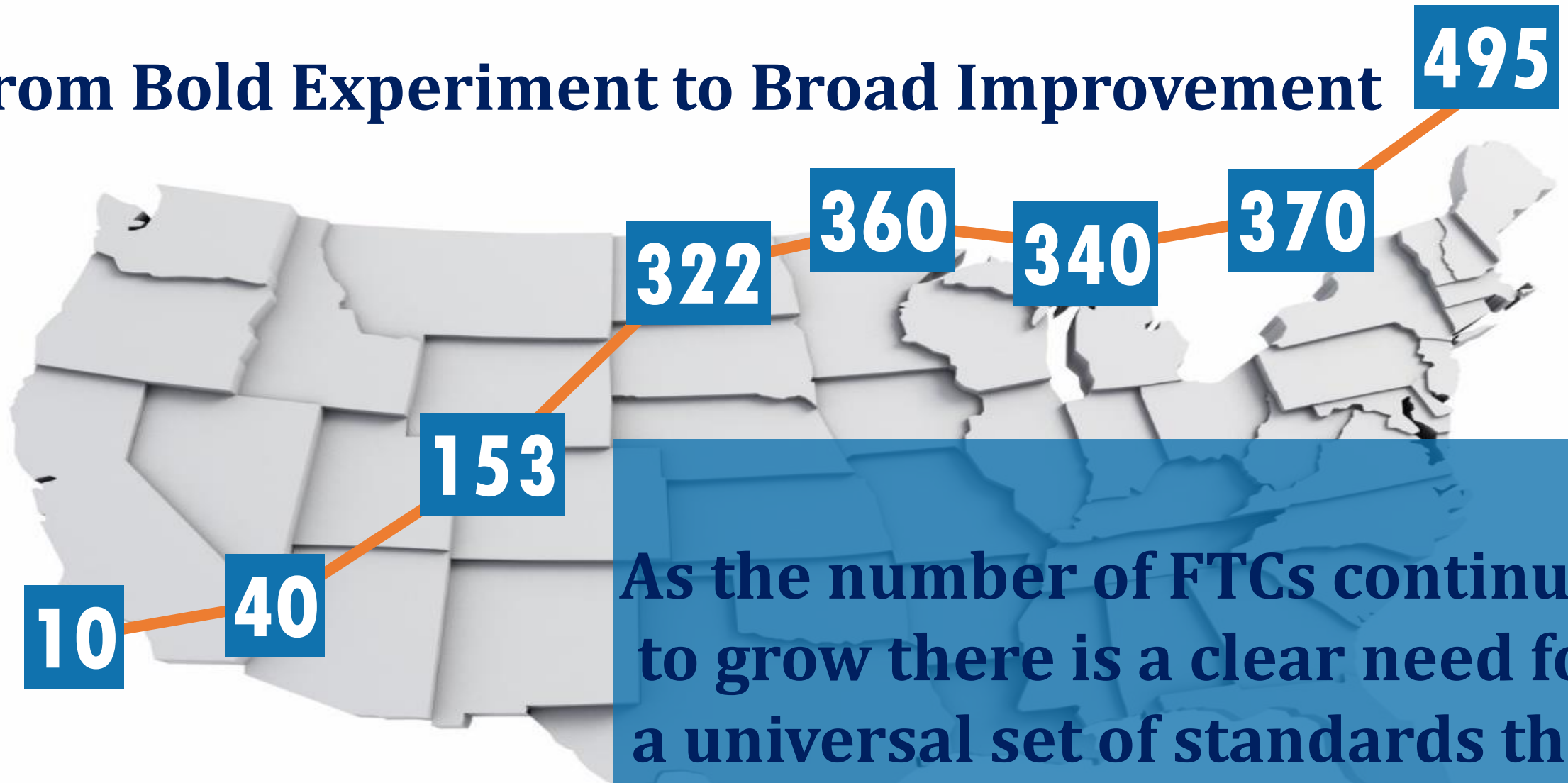
Comprehensive Services

# Family Treatment Court Movement





# From Bold Experiment to Broad Improvement



As the number of FTCs continues to grow there is a clear need for a universal set of standards that define quality practice.



*Family Treatment Court  
Best Practice Standards*



# Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards

**8** *Standards*  
and Key Provisions



*To obtain a copy or for more information:*

FTC @ [cffutures.org](mailto:cffutures.org)

A decorative graphic of a feather, rendered in a light beige color, is positioned on the left side of the slide. It has a central rachis with numerous barbs extending outwards, creating a fan-like shape. The feather is oriented vertically, with the base at the bottom and the tip at the top.

# Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts: 10 Key Components

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1. Individual and Community Healing Focus
2. Referral Points and Legal Process
3. Screening and Eligibility
4. Treatment and Rehabilitation (or Habilitation)
5. Intensive Supervision
6. Responding to Participant Behavior (Incentives, Sanctions or Therapeutic Adjustments)
7. Judicial Interaction
8. Monitoring and Evaluation
9. Continuing Interdisciplinary and Community Education
10. Team Interaction

**1**

**Do you need a Family  
Healing to Wellness Court?**

**Using Data to Establish the Need**





**8,700,000 children**

# By the Numbers....

- In 2020, **216,838** children were separated from their families and placed in out of home care - **that equates to a removal every two minutes**
- Behind neglect, **parental alcohol or drug abuse** was the leading identified condition of removal
- 20% of all removals were **infants under one**
- Black and American Indian/Alaska Native children make up a **disproportionate number** of children removed from their homes

# Inequitable Outcomes for Native Families

- Native families in 2016 had **higher rates of prenatal substance exposure** than any other ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>
- **Nearly 66%** of AI/AN children removed from their families before turning a year old had parental alcohol or drug abuse as an identified condition of their removal.<sup>2</sup>
- Nationally, **over 42% of cases** in 2018 resulted in a **termination of parental rights** when parental alcohol or drug use stood as a condition of removal.<sup>3</sup>

(1) Strahan, A. E., Guy, G. P., Bohm, M., Frey, M., & Ko, J. Y. (2020). Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Incidence and Health Care Costs in the United States, 2016. *JAMA pediatrics*, 174(2), 200-202.

(2) AFCARS data, 2018, v1.

(3) AFCARS data, 2018, v1.



# Long Term Outcomes - What is Success?

## 5 Rs and E

### Equitable Outcomes in:

All outcomes should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other key demographic information

### Recovery

- Parents access treatment more quickly
- stay in treatment longer
- decrease substance use

### Remain at Home

More children remain at home throughout program participation

### Reunification

Children stay fewer days in foster care and reunify within 12 months at a higher rate

### Repeat Maltreatment

Fewer children experience subsequent maltreatment

### Re-entry

Fewer children re-enter foster case after reunification



**2**

**How will you organize  
your work?**

**Establishing a Governance Structure**

# Involved in Systems That Struggle to Serve Them

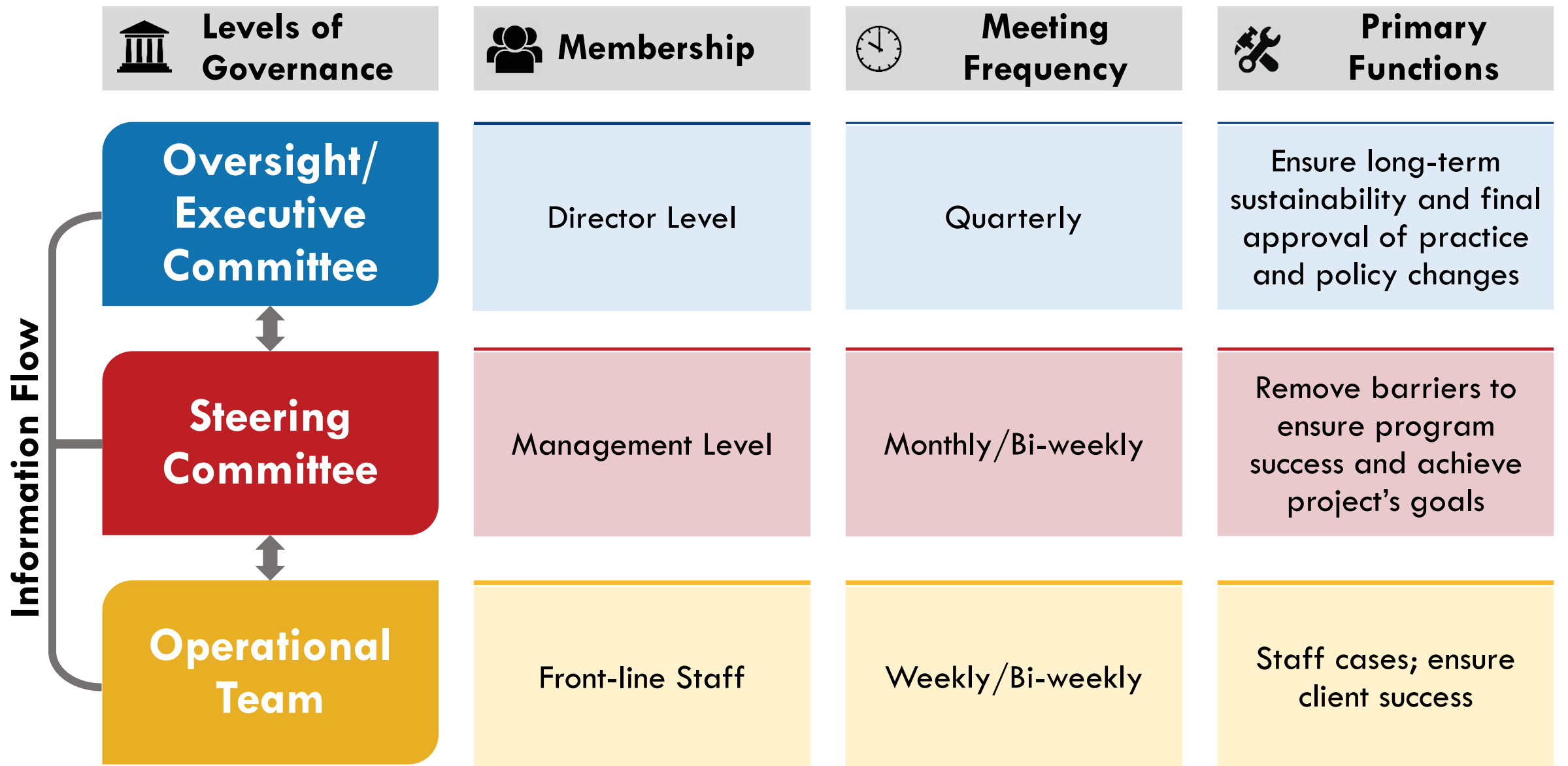


The lack of coordination and collaboration across child welfare, substance use disorder treatment, and family or dependency court systems have hindered their ability to fully support these families.



# What Are Critical Components for Effective Governance Leadership?

- Three-tiered structure that includes oversight committee, steering committee and core treatment team
- Cross-systems agency representation with members who have the authority to make needed practice and policy changes
- Collaborative decision making that involves all partners and is not driven primarily by FHWC staff
- Defined mission statements
- Regular, ongoing meetings to identify and address emerging issues
- Formal information and data sharing protocols



Subcommittees/Working Groups – to address specific, emerging issues (e.g., data, recruitment)

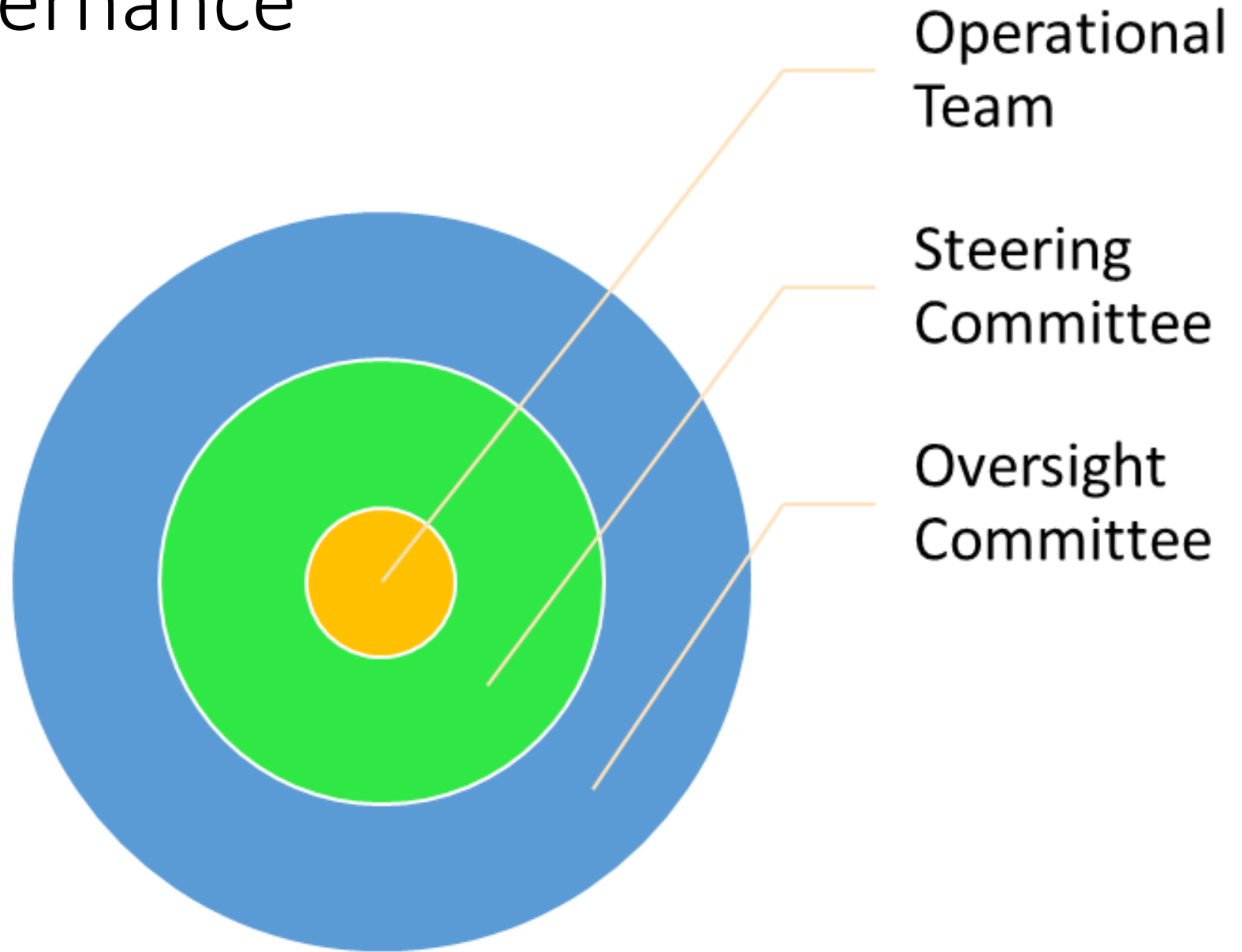


# FHWCs Without a Governance Structure

- Operate under capacity
- Tunnel Vision—FTC-Centric
- High Burnout
- Artificial “ownership” of the FTC
- Isolated from the larger community
- Person dependent

**Are Not Sustainable!!!**

# Lummi Governance



# 3

**How will you set the course for success for families?**

**Develop Key Processes for Identification, Access to Treatment, and Recovery Support**

# Caseworker Identification of Substance Use (SU) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is Low

- Only 18% of caregivers who had a positive substance use screen were identified by caseworkers (Testa & Smith, 2009).
- Identification of parental SU/SUD by child welfare staff is as low as 5% to 20% (McAlpine, et al., 2001).
- Low identification may be due to:
  - Poor training.
  - Ineffective or limited resources.
  - Worker beliefs or attitudes to interfere with their ability to engage clients, assess situations, and develop appropriate treatment strategies.
  - Attitudes of clinicians and administrators can be a barrier to universal screening protocols.



# Who do FTCs Work For? Families who need extra support to succeed

## Studies Show Equivalent or Better Outcomes:

- Co-occurring mental health problems
- Unemployed
- Less than a high school education
- Criminal history
- Inadequate housing
- Risk for domestic violence
- Methamphetamine, crack cocaine, or alcohol
- Previous Child Welfare Involvement or Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)



(e.g., Boles & Young, 2011; Carey et al., 2010a, 2010b; Worcel et al., 2007)

# Early Identification

- At the **earliest point possible** – integrated with risk and safety assessment by child welfare system
- **Multi-prong approach** – including screening tools, drug testing, reports, observations
- Structured protocols that send clients with positive screenings to **timely assessment**
- **Warm hand-offs**, follow-ups and communication are critical



# What Do We Mean by Systematic Approach?

## **Objective & Systematic**

- Clearly defined protocols and procedures, with timelines and communication pathways (who needs to know what and when)
- Eligibility criteria based on clinical and legal assessments
- Match appropriate services to identified needs

## **Subjective & Informal**

- *I refer all my clients to FHWC because I know the people there*
- *I only refer clients who really want to participate*
- *Let me know when you get in the program*
- *I prefer to refer clients who are doing well on their CWS case plan*
- *I refer all my clients with a drug history to the FHWC*



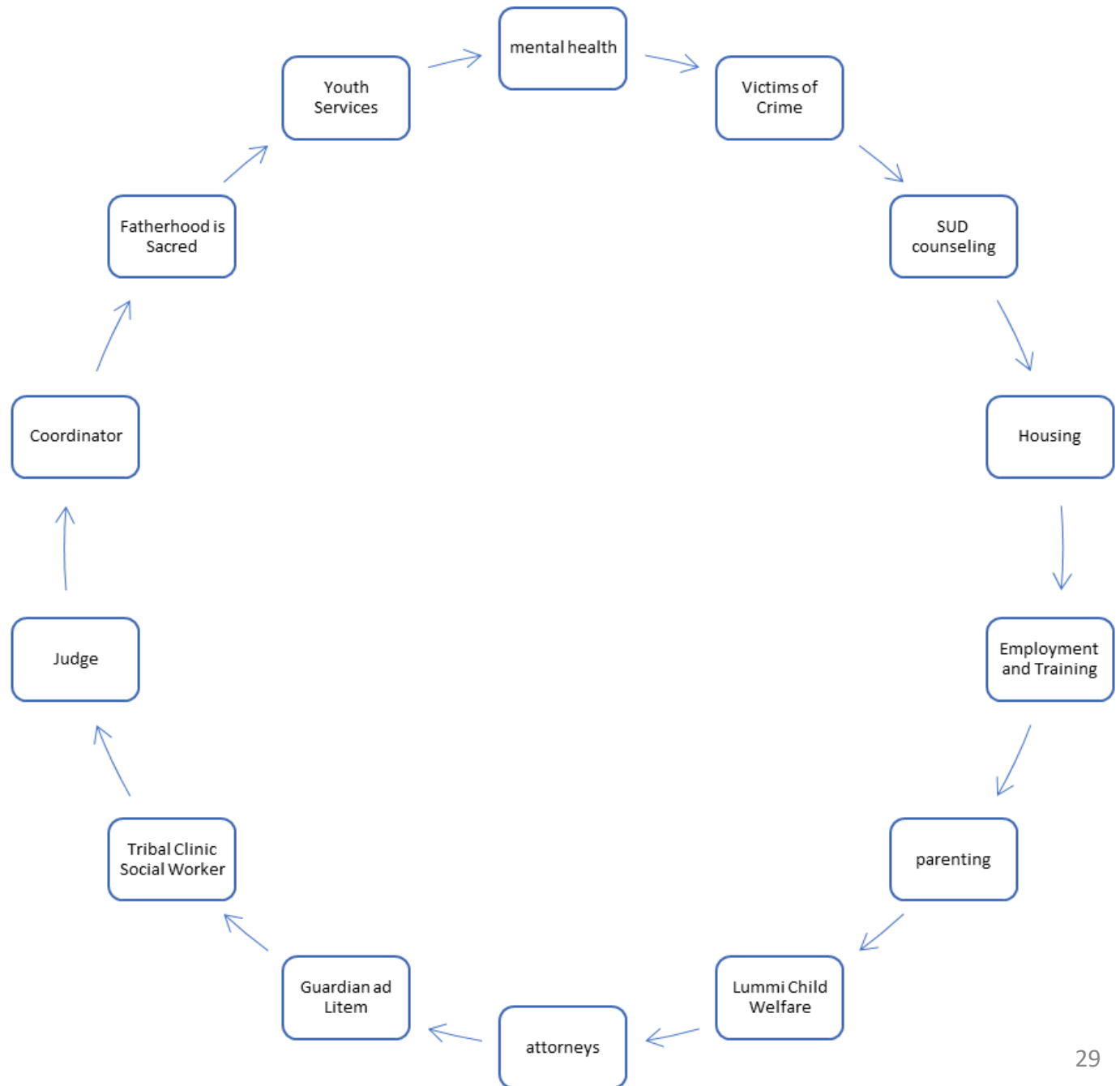
# Early Engagement Techniques



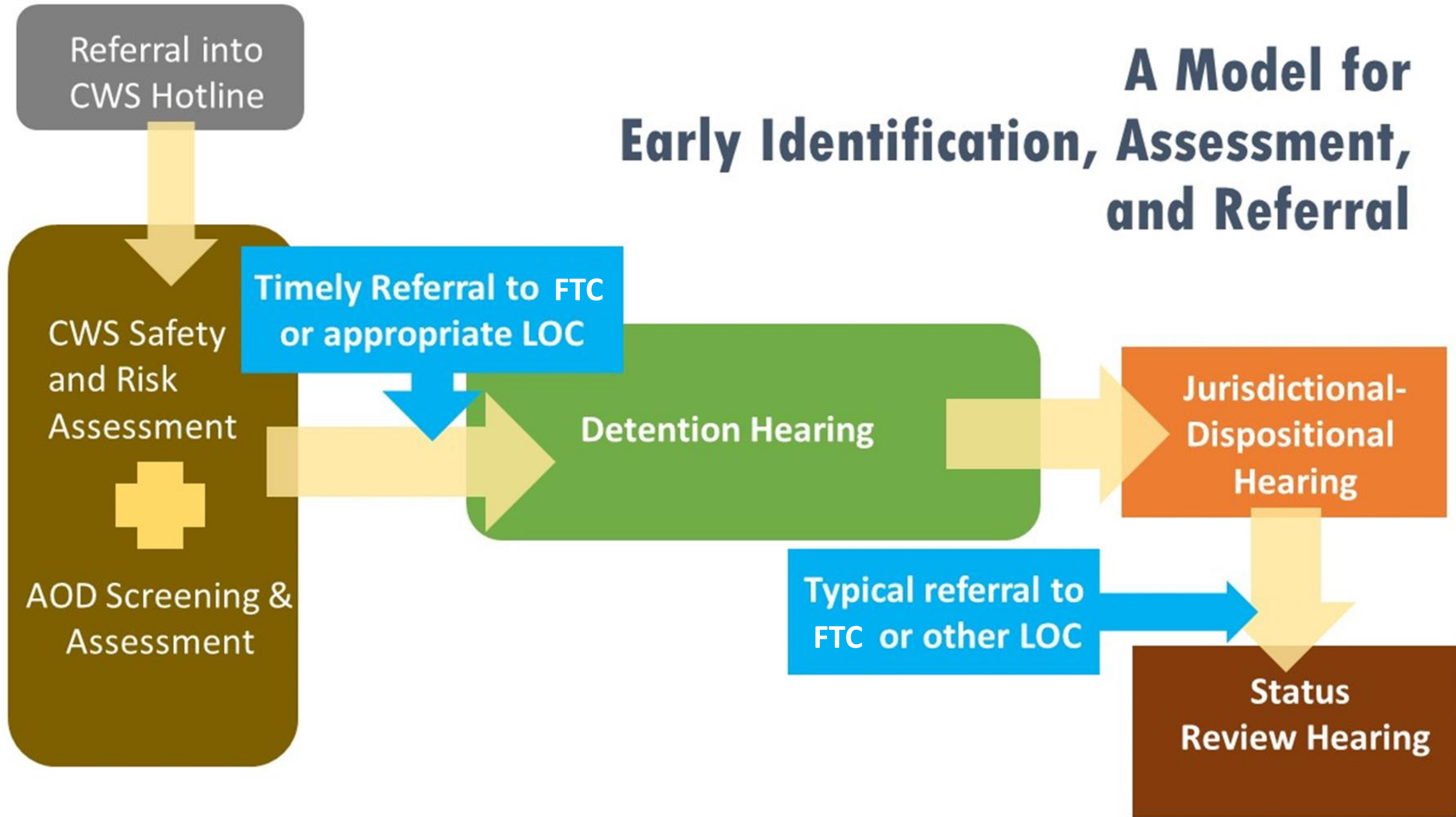
- Automatic referral
- Attend Shelter Care Hearings
- Consistent messaging about FHWC benefits
- Train stakeholders (judges, attorneys, child welfare)
- Require all eligible parents to observe an FHWC hearing
- Implement an “Orientation” phase
- Use peer recovery support specialists (PRSS)
- If declines entry – back on docket in 30-45 days



# Engaging Families



# A Model for Early Identification, Assessment, and Referral



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Is the screening and assessment process reviewed regularly to ensure equitable access?

Do screening and assessment practices help reduce disproportionate representation in child welfare and promote more equitable access to treatment services?

What data are being used to monitor and track?

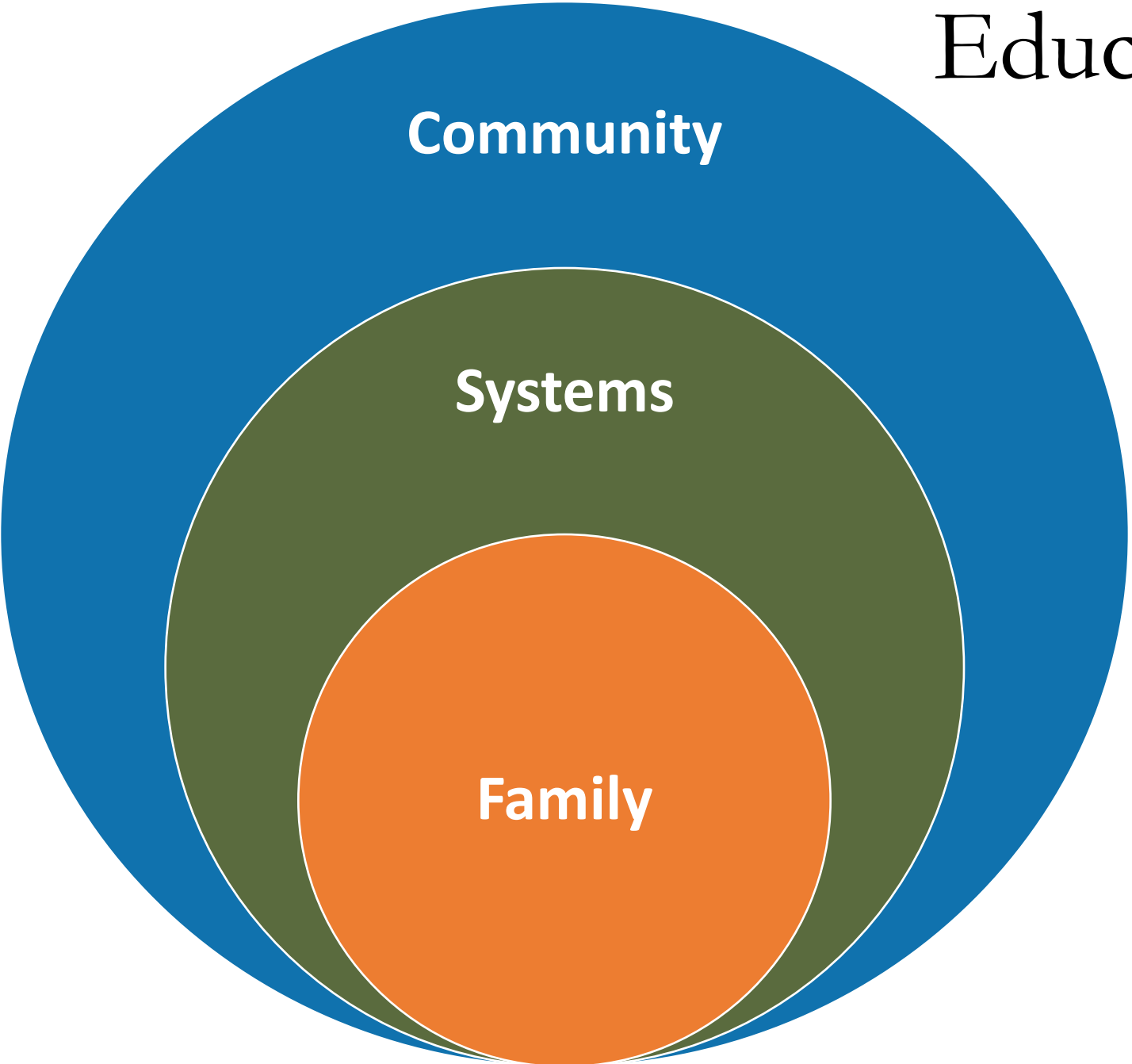
# 4

**How will you train  
stakeholders and  
partners?**

**Develop a Plan for Interagency Training**



# Education and Training at Multiple Levels



# Recovery Inclusive Community

**Community recovery capital** is about community attitudes/policies/resources related to addiction and recovery. This includes:

active efforts to reduce addiction/recovery-related stigma,

visible and diverse local recovery role models,

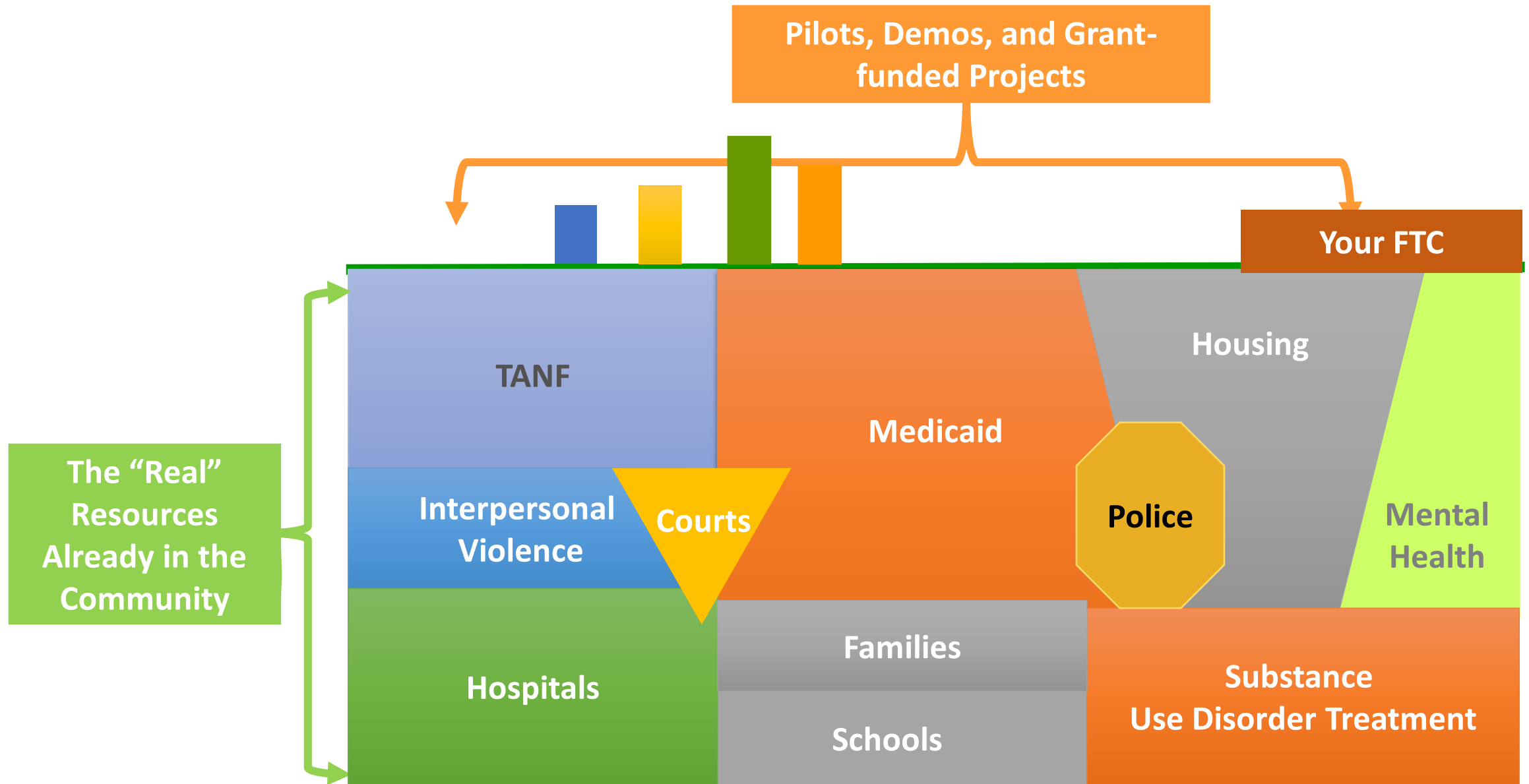
a full continuum of addiction treatment resources,

recovery mutual aid resources that are accessible and diverse,

local recovery community support institutions

sources of sustained recovery support and early re-intervention

# USING THE RESOURCES ALREADY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

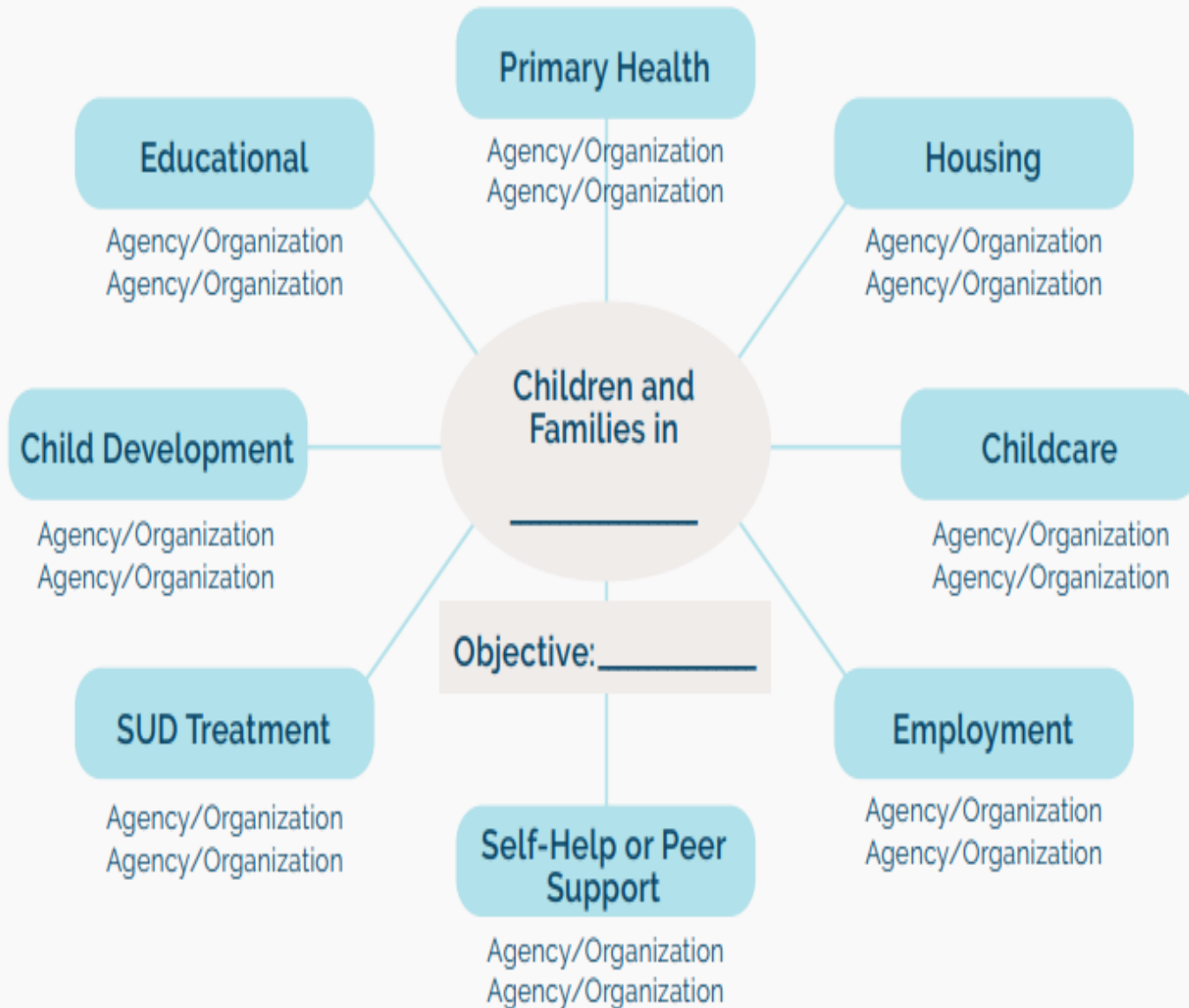


# Community Mapping

- Align available services and resources
- Streamline services and resources
- Identify areas of need



“Your stakeholders are those individuals in the community who have something to gain by the outcome of your mapping process.”  
—Workforce development executive director

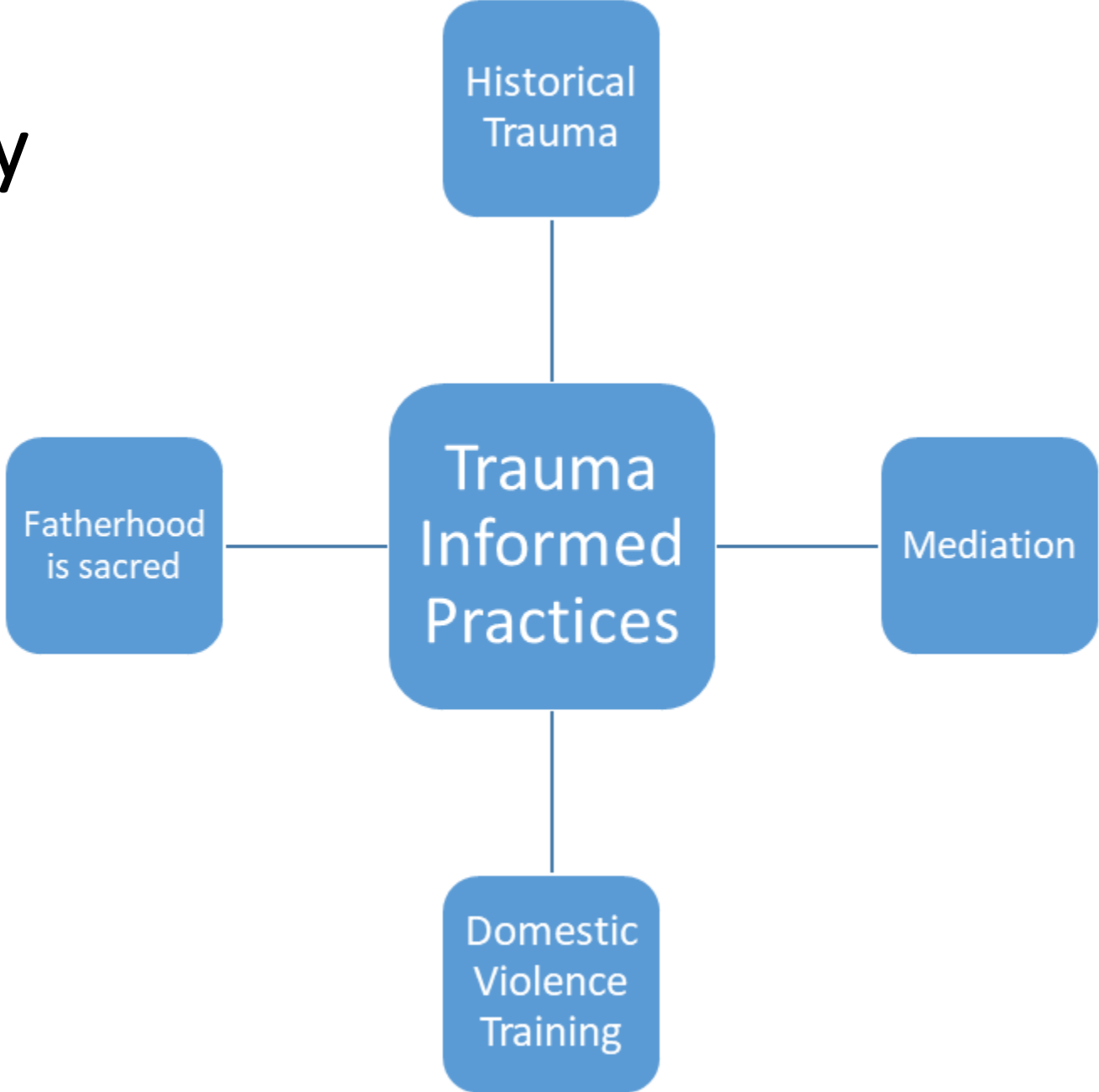


# Community Mapping

- Identify the unique needs of the families you serve
- Conduct a community mapping exercise with your team to identify gaps and potential partners



# Lummi Community Mapping





JOIN US!

## Family Healing to Wellness Court Community of Practice

**What:** [The National Family Treatment Court Training and Technical Assistance Program](#) in partnership with the [Tribal Law and Policy Institute](#) invites you and your team to participate in a Family Healing to Wellness Court Community of Practice. This will be an opportunity for Family Healing to Wellness Court teams to network, share lessons and innovative strategies with peers, and create new knowledge for the field. Each meeting will feature a topic area that the group decides on during the previous meeting.

**When:** Every third Friday of each month from 10-11 AM PST; 1-2 PM EST

**Where:** [Register Here](#)



**Questions?** Contact Will Blakeley at [wblakeley@cffutures.org](mailto:wblakeley@cffutures.org) or Ashay Shah at [Ashah@cffutures.org](mailto:Ashah@cffutures.org)

Visit our [website](#) for more information about the FTC TTA Program

The background of the image is a dense, close-up photograph of green palm fronds. The leaves are long and narrow, with distinct parallel veins, and they are arranged in a way that creates a complex, overlapping pattern. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving the green a rich, slightly dark tone. A semi-transparent dark green horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

# Q&A | Discussion





# Resources



**NDCI**  
NATIONAL DRUG  
COURT INSTITUTE



**CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY FUTURES**  
Strengthening Partnerships, Improving Family Outcomes



**Family Treatment Court**

# PLANNING GUIDE

- **Designed to provide step-by-step instructions**
- **Use Guide to gather needed information to present FTC concept**
- **Worksheet Activities**

*Download* @ [www.cffutures.org/fdc-tta](http://www.cffutures.org/fdc-tta)





*Family Treatment Court  
Best Practice Standards*



# Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards

## 8 *Standards* and Key Provisions

*To obtain a copy or for more information:*



# FTC Briefs



## What are family treatment courts and how do they **improve outcomes for children and families?**

This brief is part of a series on family treatment courts developed in partnership with [Children and Family Futures](#). Forthcoming briefs on this topic discuss practice-level strategies to improve outcomes for families affected by a parent's substance use disorder and the role of FTCs as a catalyst for systems change. For more information about Family Treatment Courts, please consult the [Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#) or contact Children and Family Futures at [EDC@cfutures.org](mailto:EDC@cfutures.org).

Child welfare agencies and their community partners often struggle to meet the needs of families affected by substance use disorder, due to the limited availability of family-friendly treatment options, caseworker and court personnel's misconceptions about substance use and treatment, and the competing timelines of the parent's recovery and child's permanency (as mandated by state and federal law). For a growing number of communities, family treatment courts offer an effective solution.

A family treatment court (FTC), considered a problem-solving court by leading judicial and legal organizations,<sup>1</sup> is a family court docket for cases of child



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casey.org | 1

<https://www.casey.org/family-treatment-courts/>



## What can we learn from **family treatment courts to support systems change?**

This brief is part of a series on family treatment courts (FTCs) developed in partnership with [Children and Family Futures](#). Additional briefs on this topic provide an [overview of family treatment courts](#) and [practice-level strategies](#) that FTCs employ to improve outcomes. For more information about family treatment courts, please consult the [Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#) or contact Children and Family Futures at [EDC@cfutures.org](mailto:EDC@cfutures.org).

[System transformation](#) requires successfully developing strategies that realign child welfare agencies and the justice system to work in increasingly effective and collaborative ways with other public-serving organizations and community networks to support and nurture family development, promote overall child and parent well-being, and to help families thrive. The process of developing and operating family treatment courts (FTCs) naturally enhances collaboration and communication among family-serving systems and community agencies, including substance use disorder treatment and health. The relationships and



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<https://www.casey.org/ftc-brief-two/>



## What can we learn from family treatment courts about **improving practice for families affected by substance use disorder?**

This brief is part of a series on family treatment courts (FTCs) developed in partnership with [Children and Family Futures](#). Additional briefs on this topic provide an [overview of family treatment courts](#) and their role as a [catalyst for systems change](#). For more information about FTCs, please consult the [Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#), or contact Children and Family Futures at [EDC@cfutures.org](mailto:EDC@cfutures.org).

Family treatment courts (FTCs) have proven to support positive outcomes for families affected by parental substance use disorder, including improved recovery for adults, safety for children, and timely permanency for families.<sup>1</sup> However, not all jurisdictions have secured the funding for implementation of this model, including the hiring of an FTC coordinator, one of the primary program expenses.



Updated July 2021

casey.org | 1

<https://www.casey.org/ftc-brief-three/>

# 2023 Family Treatment Court Practice Academy

## *BLUEPRINTS TO THE FUTURE*

### ***Building Strong Futures:***

Scale, Capacity, and Meeting the Need with FTCs

**Watch the Recorded Live Conversation Idea Exchange:** August 22, 2023

### ***Building Secure Futures:***

Bonding and Attachment Support for Parents and Their Infants Affected by Substance Use


**Live Conversation:** October 26, 2023  
**Idea Exchange:** November 16, 2023



### **Course Map:**



Watch short video

Join *Live Conversation* and *Idea Exchange* 



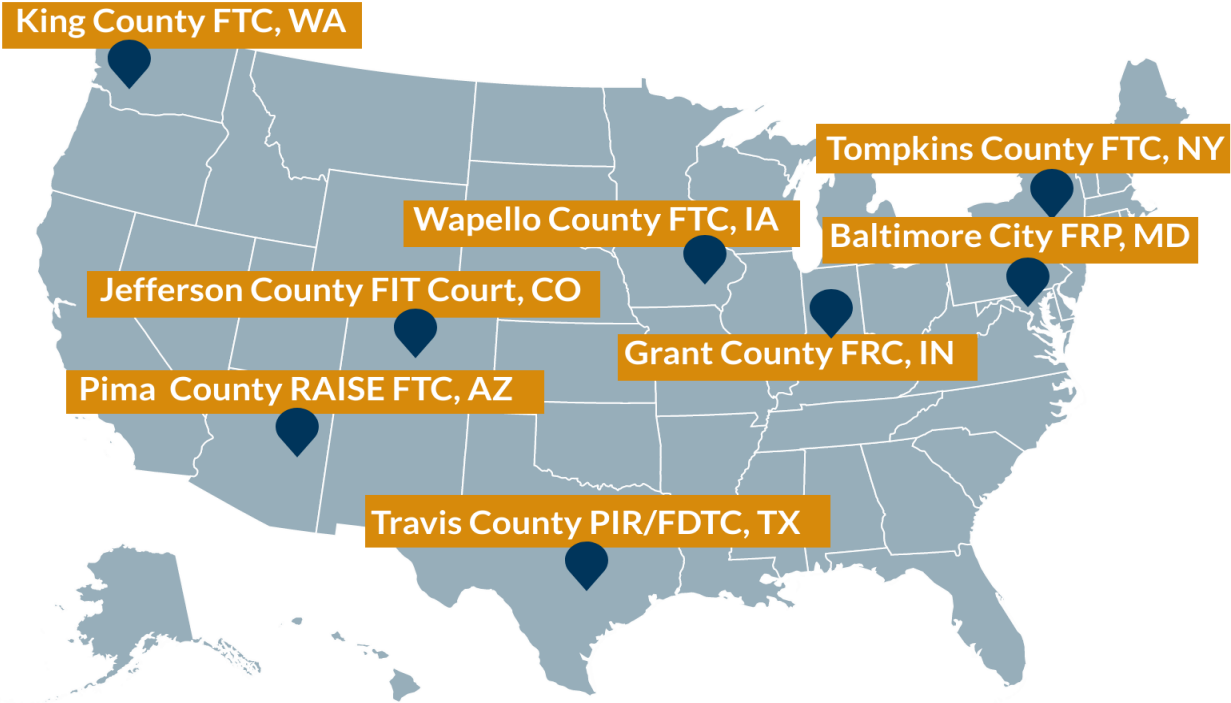
Access *Exploration Tool*

### **Register Here:**





# Family Treatment Court Peer Learning Court Program



## PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT INCLUDES:

- ◆ Virtual and in-person observation of FTC staffing and court sessions
- ◆ Discipline-specific discussions
- ◆ Technical assistance support
- ◆ Access to operational documents (e.g., policy and procedure manual, parent handbook, reporting templates, MOU, etc.)
- ◆ And much more

To learn more scan the QR code  
or visit our webpage



[www.cffutures.org/plc/](http://www.cffutures.org/plc/)



To participate in a peer-to-peer  
connection, contact us!



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## CONTACT US:

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# Evaluation

Please take a moment to complete the **E3: So You Want to Start a Family Healing to Wellness Court? Where do we start?** session evaluation. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

If you need a paper copy, please ask for one from a Tribal Law and Policy Institute staff member.

