



Family Group Conference

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a facilitated meeting where a young person who has offended, their family, victims and other people like the police, a social worker or youth advocate, talk about how the young person can:

- own up to what they did wrong and learn from their mistakes;
- find practical ways how they can put things right and make up for what they did;
- look at why they offended and find ways to help them turn their life around; and
- show some empathy or understanding of the impact of their offending on the victim or victims.

The family group conference is your chance to have your say. This is where the young person, their family and others come together to talk about the offending and what can be done to put things right. You will be able to talk about how the crime affected you, physically, emotionally and financially. Your thoughts can be presented verbally or in a written Victim Impact Statement.

Most conferences take one to two hours, but some may take longer.

Who attends a Family Group Conference?

The:

- young person;
- young person's family, whanau or support people;
- victim, support people, Victim Support worker;
- Youth Justice Co-ordinator (who acts as the facilitator of the meeting);
- Police;
- young person's lawyer, called a youth advocate; and
- health and education professionals or a social worker.

An interpreter can attend the meeting if needed.

What is a Victim's role?

It's natural to be feeling angry, hurt, upset and have a sense of loss. A Family Group Conference is an opportunity to talk about how the crime affected you. It can also be healing to express how the crime has affected you. You will be able to talk about the effect of the crime on you and your family or whanau, physically, emotionally and financially.

You will also be able to have your say about how you think the young person can make things right with you.

You have the right to:

- be given information about the FGC;
- have a say about the day, time and place of the conference;
- be supported to attend the conference;
- be safe. You can ask to be seated next to the Police or Youth Justice Co-ordinator;
- give your views and present your expectations;
- help make decisions about the plan for the young person; and
- be kept informed about the young person's progress and the outcomes of the FGC plan put in place.

Who organises the Family Group Conference?

The FGC is arranged by the Youth Justice Co-ordinator from Child, Youth and Family.

The Youth Justice Co-ordinator is the key person for the young person and their family. They are there to help everyone get the most out of the meeting and to answer any worries or questions.

What happens at a Family Group Conference?

Generally, there are three parts to a Family Group Conference: Getting the facts, talking and making a plan.

The facts of the offence are given by the Police; if the young person does not agree with their account of the offence the matter will be directed back to the Youth Court.

Talking is an opportunity for victim and the young person's family to openly discuss the impact the offence has had on them. The victim can talk about how the crime affected them and what they think should happen and what the young person can do to make things right.

>>

A plan to put things right is mapped out. The plan should be fair to the victim and help the young person learn from their mistakes.

A good plan will help a young person:

- face up to it and admit to what they have done wrong;
- put it right with the victim, as much as possible, and accept consequences; and
- move on by supporting the young person to make positive choices from now on.

Things to consider when thinking about attending an FGC

Your involvement can give you some answers to any question you may have and help make a difference.

You can play an important part in helping the young person face up to their crime. You can assist the young person to really understand the impact of their offending. You will have an opportunity to help develop a plan for the young person, and have a say in what you would like to see happen.

You can be part of developing a plan that will help put things right for you as far as possible.

Taking a support person will usually make things easier for you.

Who will be able to support me?

Facing the young person and their family or whanau takes courage. It is OK if you feel emotional, that's natural. The Youth Justice Co-ordinator will organise the meeting and be your main point of contact. You can talk to them about any worries or questions you have. You can invite support people to come with you and be there for you. Victim Support can help with information, attend the conference with you or go on your behalf and represent you at the FGC.

If I don't attend the FGC can I still have a say?

If you don't want to attend the FGC your views can still be expressed. The Youth Justice Co-ordinator can talk to you about other options like:

- getting someone else to attend and speak for you;
- the Youth Justice Co-ordinator or Victim Support volunteer presenting your views to the FGC ;
- writing a letter putting in a Victim impact statement; or
- teleconferencing.

