

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 12: Staffings, MDITs, Icebreakers, TDMs

Item 003: Team Decision Making (TDM) Meetings and Facilitator Expectations

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA](#) Mailbox

Issued: February 6, 2015

References:

Major Revision

Replaces Issue: October 10, 2005 and PPG 03-12-007 dated May 18, 2012

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Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides (PPG) are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

Policy

Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings will be utilized to help make placement decisions in order to assure a network of support for children and the adults who care for them. The meetings will involve birth/adoptive families, community members, resource families, service providers and the Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Welfare staff.

TDM meetings for Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) may occur as requested by the assigned Social Worker (SW). However, because the NMD is an adult, the NMD must be agreement with having the meeting, as well as who attends.

Purpose

To explain to staff what TDM meetings are and the responsibilities of DSS Child Welfare staff regarding TDM meetings.

Introduction

TDM meetings address the safety, permanency and well-being of children, youth, and NMDs as it relates to placement. The process involves family, youth, NMDs, extended support members, caregivers, service providers, community representatives, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and agency staff in decisions regarding child removal, placement changes, placement stability and reunification.

When DSS staff is making initial removal decisions, TDM meetings focus on the safety needs of children. Discussions center on whether children can safely remain at home with their parents or, if removal is necessary, be maintained with relatives whenever possible. When DSS staff is making decisions regarding possible placement disruptions of children who are already in out-of-home care, discussion turns to placement changes and permanency plans. Placement decisions made in TDM meetings must be the safest and least restrictive for each child/youth/NMD, while at the same time preserve and nurture their familial and community connections.

Definitions

In TDM meetings for Emergency Removal, protective factors, strengths, and demonstrated safety are used to form action plans that address the safety threats, past harm, future danger, and complicating factors, thereby enabling children to safely return home with appropriate services and supports. When it is recommended that children remain out of the home to ensure their safety, the DSS considers the least restrictive placement possible for each child that will preserve and nurture familial and community connections. This type of TDM meeting is usually held when a Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 300 protective hold has been placed on the child/youth, or when a dependent is re-removed from a parent.

Imminent Risk (IR) of Removal TDM meetings are held when children/youth remain at home and are at risk of being removed and placed into protective custody. The focus of these meetings is to provide for the children/youth's safety and well-being and, at the same time, to preserve the family. Safety threats, worries, and protective factors are also addressed. Appropriate services and family and community supports are utilized in creating circles of support and safety plans. If after discussion it is determined that an appropriate safety plan cannot be created, then the meeting participants need to decide whether or not the children should be removed.

Placement Change TDM meetings are held to stabilize and support children/youth/NMDs in out-of-home placements that are in crisis. When a child/youth/NMD cannot safely be maintained in the current placement, the focus then turns to identifying another placement that is safe, meets the child's/youth's/NMD's needs, fosters educational stability, is in the child's/youth's/NMD's best interest, and is the least restrictive placement possible. Action plans are created to support the child/youth/NMD and resource family, and address stability and permanence.

Permanency or Reunification TDM meetings are held when DSS is considering plans for children or youth to return home or plans for permanency when reunification services are being terminated. When children/youth can safely return home, the focus of the TDM meeting is to create an action plan that supports the transition from out-of-home care and ensures the parents have access to services and resources to meet the children's/youth's ongoing needs. If reunification is unlikely to occur, the focus of the TDM meeting will be on creating a permanent plan of adoption, guardianship, or long term foster care, as well as maintaining familial and community connections for the children.

Procedure

When a SW needs to schedule a TDM meeting, they shall complete the TDM Referral/Request, which is located in the green section of CWS/CMS. The SW will need to distinguish whether the TDM meeting is in regards to an Emergency Removal, an IR, or Placement Change.

- If the meeting will be an Emergency Removal or Imminent Risk of Removal TDM meeting, then the SW will pick a date and time for the TDM meeting. The TDM must be scheduled at least four hours prior to the time a petition would need to be filed in Juvenile Court, if there is likelihood that Court involvement will be needed.
- For Placement Change, Permanency, or Reunification TDM meetings, the SW shall provide a choice of three different dates and/or times.
- TDM meetings are usually scheduled at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., however, can be scheduled at different times in emergency cases. Priority is given to the Emergency Removal TDM meetings due to the time constriction of the protective hold.

The SW shall email the completed TDM Referral/Request to the “[CWS TDM](#)” Inbox and cc their SWS.

The TDM Scheduler, TDM SWS, and TDM Facilitators shall monitor the CWS TDM Inbox throughout the work day for TDM Referrals, and schedule TDM meetings as requested. The TDM SWS and TDM Facilitators will schedule TDM meetings when the TDM Scheduler is not available.

Facilitators (fulltime and back-up) shall be contacted by the TDM Scheduler when a TDM meeting is assigned to them. Requests may be made via email or telephone.

Once coverage by a Facilitator has been confirmed, the TDM Scheduler shall send a confirmation email to the requesting SW and their SWS advising them of the TDM meeting date, time, and location, as well as all other DSS staff and community partners who need to know.

- Confirmations for fulltime Facilitators shall be emailed to the CWS TDM Inbox.
- Confirmations for back-up Facilitators shall be emailed directly to the back-up Facilitator.

The SW assigned to the family shall narrate the discussion and decisions made in the TDM meeting in CWS/CMS in accordance with [PPG 03-01-001](#), *Mandatory Face-to-Face Contacts/Documentation Timeframes*.

Training for TDM Facilitators

The 4-day TDM Facilitator Training shall be completed prior to facilitating a TDM meeting.

Any SW who wishes to be trained as a Facilitator must receive approval from the SW's direct SWS and Program Manager (PM) as well as the TDM SWS prior to attending the TDM Facilitator Training.

Refresher training topics shall be identified by the TDM SWS, based upon the TDM SWS's direct observation of the Facilitators' performances.

Expectations of TDM Facilitators

Facilitators shall check TDM meeting history for the family prior to the current TDM.

Facilitators shall arrive on time for TDM meetings with all the required supplies.

Facilitators shall record the results of the TDM meeting on the appropriate form.

- Back-up Facilitators shall place the form in the designated basket and/or enter their results in the TDM database.
- Fulltime Facilitators shall enter the results of their own TDM meetings, as well as any back-up Facilitator results, into the TDM database.

Fulltime Facilitators shall scan all the paperwork from the TDM meeting and save it to the TDM folder in the "H" drive under the case name.

Fulltime Facilitators shall save all emails, including confirmations, to the TDM folder in the "H" drive under the case name.

Back-up Facilitators shall be required to facilitate at least one TDM meeting per month and attend TDM refresher training, as requested. (Back-up Facilitators may be requested to facilitate additional meetings if coverage is required.)

Requests for back-up Facilitators shall be made with as much advanced notice as possible. In the event of TDM meetings scheduled in excess of Facilitator availability, requests for coverage may be made in a shortened time frame.

When back-up coverage is requested, the back-up Facilitator may not be available due to primary workload responsibilities. The back-up Facilitator may decline to provide coverage based on workload commitments, however, must advise the TDM SWS or Scheduler of their availability or unavailability.

- It is not expected that a back-up Facilitator neglect primary workload responsibilities to provide TDM coverage. If the back-up Facilitator is reasonably able to rearrange his/her schedule to provide TDM coverage while still meeting workload responsibilities, the back-up Facilitator may provide coverage.

- It is the responsibility of the back-up Facilitator and their SWS to ensure that his/her workload responsibilities are kept current and within DSS policy and procedure guidelines.

To best accommodate the workload issues, each back-up Facilitator shall provide a general list of dates and time of their availability to the TDM SWS. Back-up Facilitators shall be utilized according to their availability schedule.

Responsibilities of the TDM SWS

To enhance skill development for the Facilitators, ensure quality assurance of the TDM model, and identify areas in which training may be needed, the TDM SWS shall observe each fulltime Facilitator at least once per month and each back-up Facilitator at least once annually.

The TDM SWS shall provide feedback from the observation to the back-up Facilitator and the back-up Facilitator's direct SWS.

The TDM SWS shall be responsible for maintaining an active list of back-up Facilitators. The back-up list must be approved by the Child Welfare Deputy Director and impacted PMs.

Arrange training, as needed, for the Facilitators.

Compile monthly statistics from the TDM database and share them with the TDM PM.