

# Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

## **Target Population**

FFT is appropriate for **youth 11-18 years old** with severe behavior problems, chronic delinquency, and co-morbid diagnoses, as well as youth at risk for these problems. The model requires participation from the youth and his/her family.

## **Treatment Setting**

This is a mobile service that works with youth and families in their homes, communities and schools.

## **Length/Frequency of Treatment**

Sessions occur at least once per week, but the therapist can meet with a family multiple times per week at the beginning of treatment and during times of higher need. The average length of treatment is 3-5 months.

## **Referral Process**

Pre-authorization from Community Behavioral Health is required for FFT. Youth typically do not receive other services concurrently with FFT.

## **Website:**

<http://www.ftllc.com/>

## **Overview**

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a short term, intensive, community-based, **family treatment program**. FFT is based on the theory that families may develop patterns of relating and getting their relational needs met that promote and maintain problem behaviors. Therefore, treatment involves changing the patterns of how families members communicate, problem solve, and get their needs met.

## **Core Components**

FFT contains 4 main phases:

- **Engagement:** Engaging youth and family members in treatment.
- **Motivation:** Motivating them to start behavior change.
- **Behavior Change:** Teaching the youth and family new skills so that problems are addressed.
- **Generalization:** Practicing new skills with the family in different situations so that they become internalized and helping the family to connect with community resources to prevent relapse.

## **FFT in the DBHIDS network**

In Philadelphia, FFT was originally targeted toward children involved in Family Court to connect at risk youth with FFT services in the hopes of avoiding out of home placement. In 2014, FFT referrals were opened up to youth in the community as well as through the court system. FFT providers are required to contract with the treatment developer for ongoing training and consultation.