Expanding the Family Circle
Module II

A Framework for Practice
Building a Framework

• Building a framework piece by piece

• Use this framework with families with the tool of an eco-map
Framework for Practice: Ecological Systems and Intersections

- **MACRO-LEVEL**: Social, Political, Historical
- **MEZZO-LEVEL**: Community, Extended Family
- **MICRO-LEVEL**: Individual, Family

- Historical Events
- Social trends and Issues

- School
- Work
- Extended Family

- Family/Individual
Systems Theory

• Systems theory: all elements of our environment impact who we are as individuals and families
• There are three levels in our environment:
  1. The Macro level
  2. The Mezzo level
  3. The Micro level
• The interactions occur between systems
  1. transactional-relationships
  2. “person-in-environment.”
MICRO LEVEL SYSTEMS

The individual, couple and family systems
MEZZO LEVEL

Community and extended family
MACRO LEVEL

Historical events & the political and social environment
CULTURE

Culture influences systems at every level of the environment.

- Macro-level: culture influences policies and laws
- Mezzo-level: organizational culture as well as neighborhood and extended family cultures
- Micro-level: culture influences choices in family function, such as marriage, family roles & child rearing.
Family Systems

- Are made up of family members
- Are nested in the larger systems of community and society.
- Have unique characteristics which maybe perceived as strengths or challenges.
- Engage in “transactional-relationships” with those both within and without the family system.
Family-Centered Practice

Family-centered practice provides a framework that is based on the belief that the best way to protect children is to strengthen families.
Components of Family-Centered Practice

1. Safety, permanency and well being of children are the first priority.
2. The family is the focus of the casework process.
3. Successful outcomes are demonstrated by the child’s developmental progress and well being.
4. Families are at the center of the decision-making process.
5. Racial and ethnic background is respected
Why be family-centered?

• Most children are raised in families

• Families are the main source of social and financial support

• Engaging the entire family system leverages all available resources for a child

• Involving families in decision making processes strengthens family ties, and encourages ongoing support for children

• FCP supports ASFA, ICWA, and the Grand-parents Rights Law

• Helping parents be better parents keeps children safer in the long run.

• Using the eco-map is a non-threatening way to gather information for FASP and other forms.
Framework for Practice: Ecological Systems and Intersections

MACRO-LEVEL: Social, Political, Historical

MEZZO-LEVEL: Community, Extended Family

MICRO-LEVEL: Individual, Family

---CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----

Historical Events

Social trends and Issues

School

work

Extended Family

Family/Individual

MACRO-LEVEL: Social, Political, Historical

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---CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----CULTURE----
Micro-Level: The Individual

Individual Characteristics
Individual Characteristics

- Personality traits
- Physical traits
- Culture
- Racial and ethnic identity
- Gender identity
- Sexual preference
- Age
Intersectionality

“Intersectionality” describes the unique way that personal characteristics, such as age, race and ethnicity *intersect* with each other in one individual.
Personal Intersections

What characteristics *intersect* to make you the person you are today?

Think about:

- Culture, religion
- Ethnicity, Race
- Urban or rural
- Economic status
- Gender and sexual preference
- Health, weight, beauty, age
ECOMAP

• The ECOMAP is a tool to “map” information for a family from all levels of the environment.
Genograms vs. Eco-maps

• Genograms, family maps and eco-maps are all similar.

• Eco-maps include information from all levels of the environment

• Culture crosses all levels and effects families at every level of the ecosystem.
ECOMAP: Micro level

• The Eco-map can be used to record information about family systems, subsystems and individuals.
Mapping: Individual Characteristics

Thinking back to the family in the case you brought, what are some specific characteristics of the individuals in the family. Think about:

- One family member
- That person’s characteristics
- What made you choose those characteristics?
Micro-level: Individual and Family

- Family characteristics and family sub-systems are mapped at the Micro level.
Family

What is a Family?
Definitions of Family

Two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption and who reside together (Nye & Bernardo, 1973)

A group of people who love and care for each other (Seligman, 1992)
Family Structure

• Families come in many different shapes and sizes, like houses- we call this their *structure*.

• Think about the structure of the family in the case you brought.
Family Characteristics

- Family Power Structure
- Boundaries
- Family Homeostasis
- Subsystems
- Family Rules
- Communication Patterns
- Family Roles
- Triangulation
- Family Myths
Mapping Family Characteristics

- Communication patterns
- Boundaries
- Triangulation
- Power imbalances
- Family myths
- Sub-systems
- Strengths
Family Sub-systems

Family sub-systems are related by blood, marriage or strong emotional ties.

Sub-systems include:

• Parents
• Parent and child
• Siblings
• Grandparents
Couples

Couples are an important subsystem they have tremendous impact on the lives of their children whether they are married, divorced, cohabiting, same-sex, or in a conflicted relationship
Parents

• In addition to biological parents, children also may have step-parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, or grandparents who are acting as parents.

• Native American’s often consider biological aunts and uncles to be the same as parents.

• Children may consider a non-related person who cares for them such as mother’s boyfriend as their parent.
Mezzo Level: Extended Family
Extended Family

• Family-centered practice looks to *extended family* as a source of strength and resources for the family.
Mezzo Level: Community Supports
String Activity

This activity will demonstrate:

• There are many resources within the community to help families.

• The extended family may provide resources for children.

• Family group conferences should include all potential resources for families.
Benefit of mapping community and extended family resources

*Mapping the resources that the family is connected with can help the family (and us) visualize the support they already have in place and any gaps that need to be filled.*
ECOMAP: Mezzo Level

- The Eco-map can be used to record information about the community and extended family and their relationship with the family.
Macro Level

MACRO LEVEL
- Historical events
- Social trends
- Social issues
- Economic factors

MEZZO LEVEL

MICRO LEVEL
Historical Events

• Wars
• Natural disasters
• Terrorist attacks
• Civil rights activities
• Space travel events
Macro Level

Social forces are not event based like historical influences

• They are part of our culture and our times
• These are values and ideas that influence us
• Sometimes we are aware of these influences and sometimes not
• Sometimes we agree with them, sometimes not
Social Trends

Social trends and social issues affect all of us, even when we are not aware that it is happening.
Macro Level

What are some of today’s social norms that influence us all?
ECOMAP: Macro level

• An eco-map can be used to record historical events, social issues or trends and cultural issues which occur at the Macro-level.
Summary of Eco-map Contents

• Micro Level
  – Individual Characteristics
  – Family Characteristics

• Mezzo Level
  – Extended family
  – Community Resources

• Macro Level
  – Societal events, trends and issues
How to use Eco-map

• As a source of information
• When completing the FASP relationship matrix
• When planning a family case conference.
• When identifying gaps in resources
• When doing a needs assessment
Activity

Application of the Eco-map To Cases
Family Group Conferencing

1. How many people are familiar with FGC, or have participated in FGC?
2. What is the purpose of FGC?
3. What has the FGC “looked like” when you were involved?
Family Group Conferencing

This webcast:
1. Gives an overview
2. Focuses on one model in Washington State
3. Describes models for African American and Native families
VIEW WEBCAST
Family Group Conferencing

What might be challenging about using Family Group Conferencing in your casework practice?
Family Group Conferencing

What might be the benefits to using FGC into your casework practice?
OASIS MODEL

VIEW WEBCAST
Family Group Conferencing

What were some of the unique elements of the African American culture that this FGC model was very responsive to?
The Church is the Village

Meetings were conducted 80% of the time at church and 20% at grandmother’s or relative’s home.

It speaks specifically to the Kwanza principles, many of which overlap the New Zealand model.
Family Group Conferencing

Did anything else in this webcast leave you with any thoughts or feelings?
OTHER THOUGHTS

African American children are “over represented” in care

Negative biases against AA families regardless of the worker’s ethnicity

AA families receive higher risk ratings

FGC outcomes have been very positive
Cultural Connection Agreements

In your workbooks there is an example of a Cultural Connection Agreement that was referred to in the webcast.

You may take time later to see how this could fit into your practice.
Benefits

- Provides you with a framework to conduct your work in a family centered and culturally competent manner
- Supports the legislation, rules, regulations and mandates (ASFA, ICWA, Grandparents legislation)
- In your workbooks there are summaries outlining these mandates
Casting the Widest Net

All the FGC models we just viewed emphasize the importance of “casting the widest net” in terms of who should be present at a FGC.

What are some of the benefits of involving a non-resident father or extended family with the service planning process?
Challenges

Often times, “casting a wider net” can be extremely challenging for a caseworker.

What are some of the challenges that you have encountered or could imagine encountering with involving the non-resident father or extended family?
Overcoming Barriers

How have you or could you overcome some of these barriers?
Your Case

Think for a moment about the case you brought today
Remembering to “cast the widest net”, who would you want to include in a FGC?
Why?
How would you include the input from members who could not or should not attend?
Challenges

SAFETY is paramount

Family violence requires forethought

Remember, the absent member can have input via phone, letter, etc..