

Implementation

Flexible Funding and Resource Allocation

Flexible funding is always meant to move the Child Family Team towards the goal of child and family empowerment. It empowers families and children to have the ability to navigate within their community and society in general in such a way as to meet their needs in a cost-effective manner. Often flexible funds are needed to initially jump-start a particular goal, which can later be taken over by natural or community resources.

The goals set by the Child Family Team are related to the various life domain areas, which include but are not limited to educational, recreational, social, family, cultural, spiritual and others. The purpose of wraparound is that normative needs of the child and family are addressed in such a way as to empower the child and family. The intent is to increase their competency within the community with empowerment to access whatever they need, from a strengths based perspective.

Flexible funding is used to carry the plan forward. The CFT member that is the fiscal agent keeps track of the funds expended by the team and shares this information with the team on a regular basis. Expenditures that are made for movement toward a goal are implemented with the idea that the expense is temporary or one-time expense.

Example Under \$300

The Child Family Team meets and comes up with goals for each of the identified life domain areas. A need that becomes evident for Johnny is transportation. Johnny is from a low-income family that doesn't have money for "extras". Johnny is 16 but does not have a driver's license. In fact at this time he is not contemplating getting a license. He is depressed and sits at home. In the strength based conversation with Johnny the other CFT members find out that Johnny is very interested in music. He would like to learn to play the guitar. The Child Family Team finds a guitar class for Johnny at the local Parks and Recreation program. However, the classes are right after school and with both parents working there is no one available to give him a ride. After other resources are checked out and eliminated, flexible funds are used to purchase a bus pass for Johnny so that he can get to class. The wraparound Specialist accompanies him on the bus the first few times so that he can learn the route. Johnny's self-esteem rises because of his success in navigating the bus line and his ability to play guitar. Now Johnny might want to be able to purchase his own guitar and other things such as sheet music. The CFT can work together to look at job opportunities. Perhaps there is a local businessman who can offer Johnny an apprenticeship that could lead to a job. With employment Johnny might start thinking that he would like to have a car or his own guitar.

In the above example, the expenditure of flexible funds to purchase the bus pass was a means to experience success by building on the youth's interests and achievements.

Example Over \$300

Johnny's parents believe that Johnny's issues are much more severe than others seem to think. They are convinced that Johnny has a neurological dysfunction that is affecting the performance of his every day duties. They wonder if wraparound is the answer. Johnny's parents state that they would be willing to continue to work with the rest of the CFT and develop a plan as long as Johnny is able to see a Neurological Psychologist first to rule out neurological dysfunction. The cost of the neurological testing and evaluation is \$2000. The CFT looks for options for paying for the evaluation. Nothing is found in the county. Johnny's parents are willing to sacrifice other things to get this done. They are able to scrape together \$500. Uncle George is contacted because he has supported the family in times of financial troubles in the past. Uncle George agrees to donate \$500 to the cause. The flexible funding is accessed for the remaining \$1000. After the neurological problems have been ruled out Johnny's parents are much more invested in the process. They feel heard. They know that they are respected members of the CFT.

When accessing flexible funding, it is always important to first establish the need rather than the categorical service that would have been listed on the CFT plan. In that way the CFT plan and budget information kept for the CFT become the paper trail needed to demonstrate how the flexible funding is being used to carry out your wraparound process.

| Life Domain | Need | Resource |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Recreation | Involvement with music | Parks and Recreation |
| Living Skills | To get from one place to another | Specialist models use of bus |
| Transportation | To get to guitar class | Bus pass/Flex Funds |
| Employment | \$ to buy things | Apprenticeship with local business |
| Financial | \$ for the evaluation | Parents/Uncle George/Flex Funds |

In wraparound we strive to stabilize the living situation of the family so that the child will be successful living in the community. This frequently means that we will be dealing with multiple issues that may be impacting the family's life. This could include, for example, a substance-abusing sibling or a grandparent with special needs that is living with the family. Sometimes, in order to stabilize the situation for the child, we may be called upon to assist the family in accessing services and resources for other family members.

Our mission in wraparound is to model how resources and supports are accessed. In this way, the family members will learn how to access natural and community resources themselves in the future when we are no longer with them.

When a need is determined it is important to look at natural and community resources prior to having the direct wraparound staff carry out the required action or need and prior to accessing flexible funding. A useful tool to aid in this process is the **Customized Resource Bank** also found in this section.