

# PERSPECTIVES ON ACHIEVING THE PROMISE OF CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM (CFT) MEETINGS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

CFT meetings are an evidence-based approach designed to bring together youth, parents, caregivers, social workers, behavioral health providers, and other supportive individuals to support action planning for families and ensure service needs are addressed.

## UC SAN DIEGO CFT MEETING RESEARCH STUDY



The goal of this qualitative study was to gather **perspectives** from **diverse roles** within CFT meetings and to **better understand** how different members **experienced** the meetings

Participants shared valuable ideas and experiences from CFT meetings, highlighting key elements that contribute to successful meetings and better outcomes for youth and families involved in child welfare

8 interviews and 8 focus groups were conducted

71 individuals participated in the study

## STRENGTHS OF CFTS

CFT meetings are a key component of San Diego County Child and Family Well-Being, focusing on family involvement and teamwork in decision-making. While CFTs show potential to improve outcomes for youth and families, it's crucial to overcome participation barriers and ensure everyone feels included.

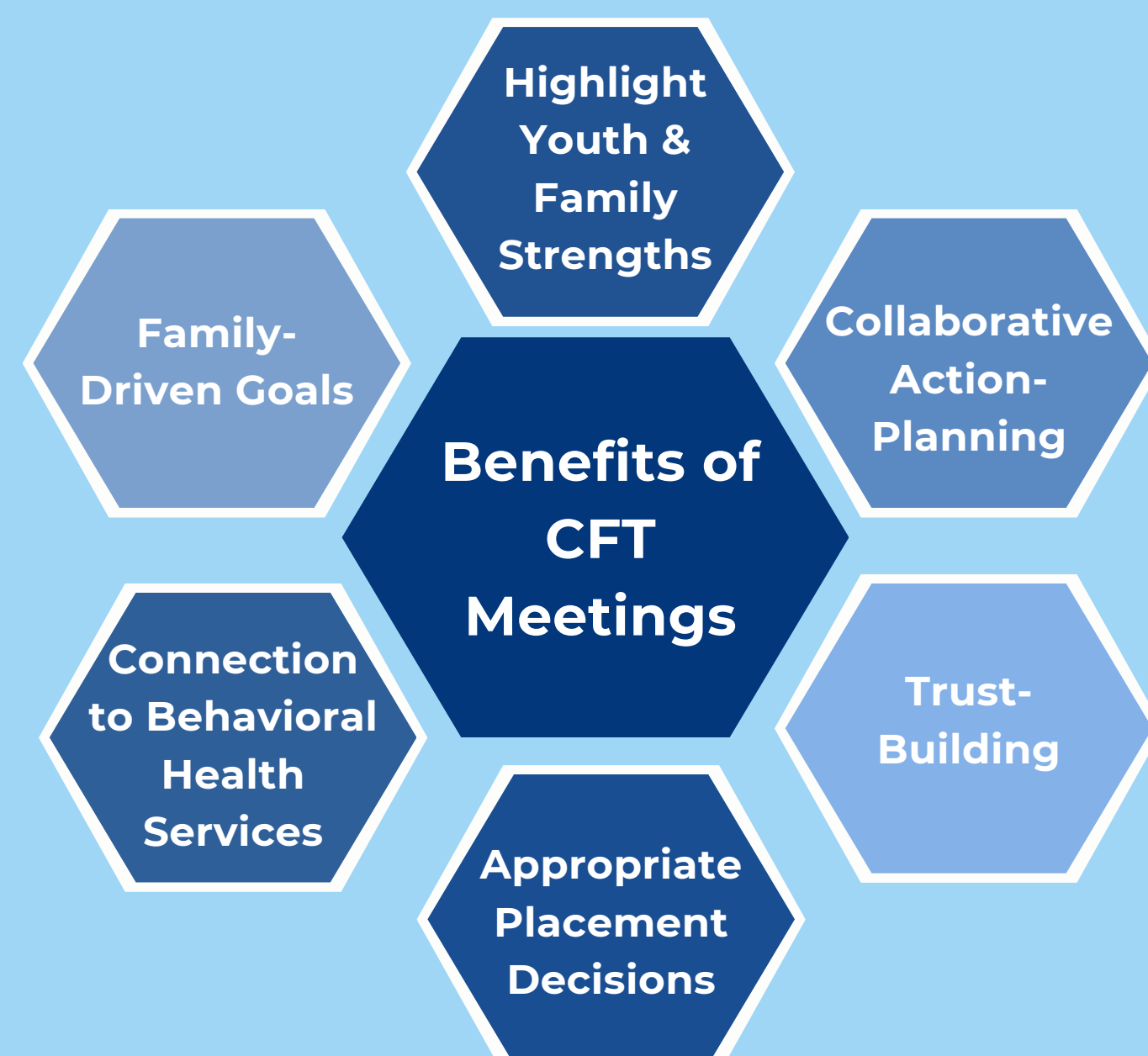
Participants agree CFTs play a vital role in:

- Enhancing service coordination
- Fostering collaboration & rapport
- Highlighting family strengths
- Ensuring the needs of youth & families are met

### Most Important Goal of a CFT:

*"Collaboration with the family and their providers. Coming to a mutual agreement as far as how we can better serve the family with the ultimate goal of it being driven by the family's needs."*  
– CFWB Leadership

*"To make sure that the child's needs are discussed and there's a plan in place for services or supports. I think it's two parts, right, that everyone on the team is aware of what the concerns are..."*  
– Community Support Provider



# Areas of Opportunity for San Diego County CFT Meetings

## Create a Plan that Clearly Defines the Purpose & Goals

Clearly outlining the purpose and goals of CFT meetings helps everyone stay on track and focused on getting the best results for youth and families.

“Setting specific goals gives us direction, and revisiting them keeps everyone accountable and focused.” – Provider

## Bringing in the Full Support Network for the Family

Getting the entire family support network involved in CFT meetings shows a family-focused approach, including different viewpoints and resources to fully meet the needs of youth and families.

“One thing that was pretty cool about them was that they actually organized them to have everyone come together and communicate.” – TAY

## Advanced Communication & Planning Matters

Good communication before CFT meetings helps set the agenda and gets everyone ready, leading to more productive conversations and better results.

“I think consistent communication and open communication with the assigned social worker for families ahead of CFT meetings is often really helpful.” – Provider

## Skilled Facilitation is Important

A skilled facilitator is key in CFT meetings to guide the discussion, ensure everyone's input is heard, and keep the focus on the set goals.

“I think that's huge for the facilitator to be good at what they're doing, and to be able to touch on all the key points.” – CFWB Caseworker

## Respect & Meaningful Inclusion are Essential

Respecting and valuing everyone's input in CFT meetings creates a collaborative atmosphere, leading to more creative solutions and stronger commitment to the action plan.

“Just give the families more grace. I know it's a meeting and everyone has a schedule, but we're talking about people's children...” – Parent/Caregiver

## More Than Just Checking Boxes: Amplify Voice & Highlight Strengths

CFT meetings should focus on amplifying the voices and strengths of the youth and family, going beyond just meeting requirements to encourage true engagement and empowerment.

“I feel like I wasn't really invited in the conversation. I felt like it was more of like, just a review of me, and I was just there [in the CFT].” – TAY

## Improve Understanding of the CANS Assessment

Understanding the CANS assessment in CFT meetings helps participants pinpoint specific needs and make better service connections.

“They just start rapid fire talking about the CANS, the social worker answers everything, and then we're done.” – Parent/Caregiver

## Clear Expectations & Accountability for a Strong Action Plan

Creating a clear and accountable action plan in CFT meetings helps ensure everyone is on the same page and committed to taking the right steps for the family's well-being.

“It seems like there is a lack of accountability. And you have all these great action plans, and there was nobody...There was absolutely no accountability for any party, even us, I guess, to follow through.” – Parent/Caregiver

## Empower & Support Youth

CFT meetings should focus on empowering and supporting youth by creating safe spaces where they can share their needs and dreams, involving them in discussions and decisions about their future, and helping them prepare for a successful transition into adulthood.

“For the youth, part is having that voice or self-confidence, and if that's not possible, having a safe person in the meeting that you can...connect to, to have them either speak up for you or to...reiterate your point...” – TAY

**Thank you to everyone who participated in our study! We appreciate you taking the time to share with us**  
Questions? Contact us at [dfettes@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:dfettes@health.ucsd.edu)



**UC San Diego**