Changing the Way We Do Business: Lessons from Family-Focused Initiatives

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UNLOCKING THE FUTURE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

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The Bodega Model®—An Introduction

Family Justice's signature method—the Bodega Model—draws on the strengths of individuals, families, and communities; builds on the interactions within social networks; and considers each person’s context, culture, and connections. The approach is based on the various disciplines, perspectives, and approaches listed below.

Family systems:
This perspective holds that there is no single cause of family stress or conflict—rather, tension originates within the relationships that constitute a family system. In the Bodega Model, solutions come from understanding how families and other systems interact—how the members influence each other and their relationships.

Strength-based:
This evolving approach to counseling and therapy is built on the belief that all people have competencies and dreams; all communities have hidden resources. The Bodega Model looks for and builds on strengths in families, government and non-governmental partners, and systems, rather than focusing solely on problems and deficits.

Case management:
For the purpose of the Bodega Model, case management is defined as a series of systematic interventions and interactions aimed at helping one or more individuals to identify and utilize all the resources at their disposal, both internal and external.

Community partnership:
Community partnership proposes that communities have strengths and resources to contribute that may be critical to bringing about change. The Bodega Model builds on community partnerships by recognizing a neighborhood's formal and informal supports for families, such as faith-based organizations, neighbors, health-care facilities, and schools. In addition, just as families and communities have important resources to offer, so do government agencies. For example, a community-based organization might welcome supervision officers to the team as allies, not adversaries who must be battled or circumvented.
The Bodega Model®—Tools and Methods

Genograms
Sometimes referred to as a family tree, the genogram codes information and highlights the emotional relationships between family members. It depicts family roles and patterns of interaction over three or more generations.

The fundamental goal of genograms with participants is to highlight the family’s strengths and relationships and consider how these relationships may benefit the family during their participation with Safer Return. It is important to understand how the relationships, experiences, and events within a family have influenced both the family system and each member. Throughout the process, families are able to visualize and identify available supports that can be included in the case management process and help with the attainment of goals.
**Ecomaps**

Family ecomaps diagram the social, community, and government resources available to families with members involved in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. These include formal resources such as health clinics, parole and probation, schools, or drug treatment agencies, among others; and informal resources such as houses of worship, godparents, and neighborhood clubs, among others.

Further, a family ecomap emphasizes the relationship between a family and the resources in the community they access, as well as the relationships among various community resources. Ecomaps can easily track a family’s relationship to its community over time—noting progress and ensuring that families lead healthy, productive lives by drawing on their social networks.
Ecomaps—Practice making your own
Supportive Inquiry

Supportive inquiry is a creative process of information gathering that relies on asking open-ended, non-judgmental questions. These questions are not intended to focus on a family’s deficits, such as substance abuse or criminal behavior, but instead promote new insights into family strengths, productive behaviors, and healthful coping mechanisms. Questions asked by the family case manager are formulated to help participants focus on their capabilities, identify goals, and assess what is needed to achieve them. The supportive inquiry stance validates an individual or family’s competence by viewing them as capable, recognizing their internal and external resources, and acknowledging the individual and family’s participation as crucial to the betterment of their lives.

A deliberate and supportive inquiry can reveal positive behaviors, successful coping mechanisms, skills, and talents within the individual and the individual’s family network. These strengths can be mobilized and their development encouraged, boosting self-esteem and empowering the individual and family to take control over their lives. The focus on competence and capacities empowers individuals and families to discover and expend the resources and tools within and around them. A stance of positive expectations, possibility, and promise on the part of the case manager facilitates the resilience, reserves, and resources of the participants.

Examples include,

1. What is working well that you want to see continue?
2. How is your life different today than it was six months ago?
3. What would be different if six months from now if you believed our work together was successful?
4. What are you doing to keep your head above water in this difficult time?
5. What would you do differently tomorrow than you are doing today?
6. What do you like about yourself and your family?
7. What do others like about you?
8. What is a value that you try to practice?
9. How do you show others that you care about them?
10. How have you supported a friend or family member in the past?
11. Who in your family talks to you when they are upset, happy, excited?
12. Who do you talk to in your family when you are upset, happy, excited?
13. Whom have you found to be helpful to you? In what ways?
14. When have you made up your mind to do something, and did it?
15. What about you (and each family member) could help you succeed in making a change?
16. Whose pictures do you carry with you?
17. How do you rise to the challenges you are now facing?
18. When things were going well, what was different?
STRENGTHS can be

**Skills**: learned or acquired competencies; for example, driving a truck, caring for younger children, speaking Spanish, doing budgets, welding, cosmetology

**Talents**: innate or “natural” competencies; for example, sports, art, music, juggling, mechanics, cooking

**Personal virtues and traits**: for example, insight, patience, self-discipline, a capacity for relationships, a sense of humor

**Interpersonal skills**: for example, comforting the anxious, mediating conflict, listening and validating

**Interpersonal and environment resources**: for example, extended family, ethnic associations, strong intimate relationships, school or job, caring friends

**Cultural knowledge and lore**: for example, healing ceremonies and rituals, stories of cultural perseverance, the modeling of cultural heroes

**Family stories and narratives**: for example, overcoming obstacles, migration and settlement, falls from grace and subsequent redemption, important family members, instructive family lore

**Knowledge gained from struggling against adversity**: for example, how one came to survive and surmount barriers; how one developed and maintained faith and hope

**Knowledge derived from one’s own occupational or parental roles**: for example, how to be of service, care for others, plan events and celebrations, follow schedules and institutional rules

**Spirituality and faith**: for example, a system of meaning to rely on; a declaration of purpose beyond the self

**Hopes and dreams**: for example, personal, familial, social and occupational goals and visions; positive expectations about a better future
Improving How Families are Involved in the Reentry Transition Process
An Example of a Family Member Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. **Note:** ‘family’ is broadly defined to include blood relatives as well as godparents, friends, neighbors, a youth worker, legal guardian, or other positive, close relationships that a young person may have.

1. **How long has your loved one been in custody at this facility?**
   _______ year(s) and _______ month(s)

2. **Are you the parent or legal guardian of this youth?**
   _____ Yes    _____ No

3. **What is your relationship to your loved one?**
   _____ Parent
   _____ Grandparent
   _____ Sibling
   _____ Aunt or Uncle
   _____ Neighbor
   _____ Friend
   _____ Other (please specify: _________________)

4. **What are some ways you provide support?**
   *Check all that apply:*
   _____ Write letters
   _____ Phone calls
   _____ Visit
   _____ Send packages
   _____ Send money
   _____ Other (please specify: _________________)

5. **If you are able to visit your loved one at the facility, how often do you go?**
   _____ Every week
   _____ Twice a month
   _____ Once a month
   _____ A couple of times per year
   _____ Never

6. **If you are able to visit, how do you usually get there?**
   _____ Bus or other public transportation
   _____ Own car
   _____ Friend drives me
   _____ Taxi
   _____ Not applicable

7. **What challenges prevent you from visiting more often?**
   *Check all that apply:*
   _____ Unreliable transportation
   _____ Limited program hours
   _____ Cost of transportation
   _____ Work schedule
   _____ Family responsibilities
   _____ Conflicts with family member(s)

Comments:
8. About how often do you speak on the phone with your loved one at the facility?
   ___ Twice a week  ___ Once a month
   ___ Once a week   ___ Less frequently
   ___ Twice a month ___ More frequently

9. What, if anything, prevents you from talking with your loved one more often?
   ___ Program rules  ___ Cost of calls
   ___ Lack of information on program rules  ___ Family responsibilities
   ___ Other (Please specify: _____________________________)
   ___ I don’t need to speak to my loved one more often

10. About how often do you speak on the phone with staff at the facility?
    ___ Twice a week  ___ Once a month
    ___ Once a week   ___ Less frequently
    ___ Twice a month ___ More frequently

11. What, if anything, prevents you from talking with staff more often?
    ___ Program rules  ___ Cost of calls
    ___ Lack of information on program rules  ___ Family responsibilities
    ___ Other (Please specify: _____________________________)
    ___ I don’t need to speak to staff more often

12. What support, if any, does the facility staff provide you with that is helpful in supporting your loved one while in this facility?

13. What concerns, if any, have you had regarding the care of your loved one while in custody? Check all that apply:
    ___ Health  ___ Job training
    ___ Mental health  ___ Planning for release arrangements
    ___ School/Education programs  ___ Safety
    ___ Other (Please specify: _____________________________)
    ___ No concerns

14. Have you been able to address concerns you have regarding your child or loved one while they have been in custody?  ____Yes  ____No
If so, how?
   ___ By writing program/corrections staff a letter
   ___ Calling program/corrections staff
   ___ Meeting with program/corrections staff
   ___ Seeking assistance in other ways
   Please specify: ___________________________________________
15. What information, if any, do you receive from the program, corrections, or parole staff about your child's or loved one's progress or challenges regarding his health, school, behavior, or other issues since he has been in custody?
   Check all that apply:
   ___ Substance treatment
   ___ Mental health treatment
   ___ Health
   ___ Conduct issues
   ___ School
   ___ Release planning
   ___ Programs when he returns home
   ___ Other

16. If you have received this kind of information, about how often have you been updated?
   ___ Weekly
   ___ Monthly
   ___ Every three months
   ___ A few times a year
   ___ Rarely
   ___ Never

17. How did you receive this information?
   Check all that apply:
   ___ Letter
   ___ Phone
   ___ While stopping by the program
   ___ During home visits
   ___ Scheduled meetings with staff

18. Do you feel you have received enough information about your child or loved one’s progress or challenges while in custody?  _____Yes _____ No

19. Have you received any information regarding probation or parole regulations, procedures or decisions?  _____Yes _____ No
   If so, is it enough?  _____ Yes  _____ No

20. What other kinds of information about probation or parole regulations, procedures, or decisions would be helpful?  Please check all that apply:
   More information about…
   ___ Length of time youth will be under probation or parole supervision
   ___ Role of probation or parole officer or other staff
   ___ Conditions of probation or parole
   ___ Youth conduct issues
   ___ Incidents involving probation or parole violations
   ___ Probation or parole hearings or other decisions

21. Do you have any suggestions on how the staff or other agencies can help you prepare for and support your loved one while at the facility?

22. What kind of support would be helpful in preparing you or other family members for your child or loved one being under probation or parole supervision?

Thank you very much for your time and participation!