

Family Group Conferencing Ontario Provincial Resource

Complaints Resolution Process

The process of resolving complaints at the FGC Ontario Provincial Resource is grounded in the guiding principles of Family Group Conferencing and Alternative Dispute Resolution, including transparency, inclusiveness, learning and accountability. The Committee will endeavour to meet all timelines outlined in the process below, but in keeping with the Family Group Conferencing principle of “it takes what it takes”, resolving complaints is an organic process and effective resolution may take more time than identified.

1. Scope

- a. As the rostering body for Family Group Conferencing in Ontario, the FGC OPR's scope is limited to reviewing and addressing complaints regarding the conduct, capacity or performance of a rostered FGC Coordinator (the practitioner), engaged in the practice of facilitating a Family Group Conference. This process is not intended to address complaints about a Transfer Payment Agency (TPA) or to mediate disputes between TPA's and Coordinators.

2. Review Committee

- a. The role of the Review Committee will be to review and address complaints regarding the practice of FGC by Coordinators on the FGC OPR Roster.
- b. One member of the FGC OPR Steering Committee will be designated for a two-year term as Chair of the Complaints Review Committee.
- c. The Review Committee will be convened, on an ad hoc basis, when a complaint is received by the FGC OPR.
- d. The Committee will consist of the Chair and two additional members, to be selected from the list of willing Rostered Mentors and/or Trainers, paying attention to regional concerns, conflicts of interest, etc.
- e. Consistent with practices regarding compensation for participation on the Steering Committee, members of the Review Committee who are independent practitioners will be compensated for their time with an honorarium and members of the Review Committee who are full-time employees of an agency, will not be paid for their role.
- f. No person shall act in any role in the complaint or inquiry process if that person has or may have any conflict of interest, or any reasonable perception of conflict of interest, with either the Complainant or the practitioner.

3. Review Process

- a. The complaints process will be implemented only after the complainant has attempted some level of dispute resolution with the practitioner or the TPA (as appropriate), with no resolve, or when the complainant believes that additional measures may be required. In that instance where the complainant continues to have concerns about how the practitioner is practicing, the complaint then becomes elevated and the complainant submits their complaint to the Provincial Coordinator of the FGC OPR.

- b. All complaints or inquiries concerning the conduct, capacity or performance of an FGC Coordinator must be made in writing (complaints from family members can be given verbally) and must include the following:
 - i. The name and contact information of the practitioner who is the subject of the complaint or inquiry.
 - ii. The name and contact information and signature of the person making the complaint or inquiry.
 - iii. A summary of the alleged facts underlying the complaint or inquiry, together with any documents that support or confirm those facts.
- c. When a complaint is received, the Provincial Resource Coordinator will first explore with the complainant what resolution process has already been undertaken and what the outcomes were.
- d. If a complaint is to proceed to the Review Process, the Complainant will be required to sign a Waiver of Confidentiality.
- e. Once the signed Waiver is received, the Provincial Resource Coordinator will notify the designated Review Chair on the Steering Committee. The Chair will convene a Review Committee in accordance with Item 2 above. The Review Committee will be convened within 10 business days of receiving a complaint.
- f. The Review Committee will be responsible for exploring the complaint will endeavour to hold discussions with all parties to the complaint within six weeks of convening.
- g. The Review Committee will meet with or interview the practitioner, the complainant, the TPA Program representative and any other relevant parties such as CAS staff or family members with relevant information to contribute to the understanding of the situation.
- h. Information gathered will include
 - i. Details of the complaint and all parties' perspectives
 - ii. What resolution has been attempted and what outcome was achieved from that
 - iii. History of concerns
 - iv. Risk or potential harm of practitioner's actions to clients or program
- i. The Review Committee will make recommendations for resolution of the complaint and the Chair will present those recommendations to the Steering Committee within 10 business days of completing all interviews.
- j. The Steering Committee will decide on the recommendations and the Provincial Resource Coordinator will communicate that decision within 10 business days of receiving them.
- k. The practitioner will have 10 business days to respond to the decision of the Steering Committee, either accepting the decision and outlining their plan for additional training, mentoring or consultation as required, or appealing the decision.

4. Potential Outcomes

- a. No basis for complaint found; no action taken.
- b. Basis for complaint found; action taken may include:
 - i. Additional training required (at the practitioner's expense and within a specified time frame) to deal with issues raised in the complaint
 - ii. Additional consultation/mentoring required (at the practitioner's expense and within a specified time frame) to deal with issues raised in the complaint
 - iii. Suspend practitioner from the roster for a fixed period of time and provide conditions for reinstatement
 - iv. Permit the practitioner to permanently resign from the roster
 - v. Remove practitioner permanently from roster
 - vi. Take such other actions as the Steering Committee deems appropriate, including but not limited to potential report of practitioner's conduct to a regulatory body or professional college or to police.
- c. The committee's recommendations will provide timelines and accountability requirements for the coordinator to meet.
- d. The disciplinary consequence of permanent removal from the roster or a report to a regulatory body, professional college or to police, are extraordinary sanctions not usually resorted to unless the practitioner's conduct, capacity or performance
 - i. Violated the law and/or endangered the well-being of clients, and/or
 - ii. Was of such an egregiously low standard that the to permit the practitioner to continue to remain on the roster would endanger the well-being of future potential clients and/or
 - iii. Would bring the practice of FGC or the reputation of the George Hull Centre and the FGC OPR into disrepute; and/or
 - iv. The practitioner has previously been the subject of a complaint or inquiry which has been upheld and the disposition of the present complaint or inquiry demonstrates that the practitioner is unable or unwilling to address the concerns in a manner satisfactory to the Steering Committee.

5. Responsibilities

- a. The Provincial Resource Coordinator will be responsible for receiving any complaints and forwarding to the designated Chair of the Review Committee. The Provincial Resource Coordinator will provide support to the Chair of the Review Committee in scheduling meetings and interviews and gathering and compiling information for the review process. The Provincial Resource Coordinator will be responsible for communicating the results of the review and recommendations for resolution to the Complainant and the practitioner.
- b. The Chair of the Review Committee will be responsible for convening the members of the Review Committee (with the assistance of the Provincial Coordinator), ensuring members of the Review Committee understand their roles and responsibilities, preparing members of the Review Committee for the review

process, leading the Committee through the review process and presenting the Committee's recommendations to the Steering Committee.

- c. The Review Committee will be responsible for exploring the complaint and making a recommendation for resolution to be presented to the Steering Committee.
- d. The Steering Committee will be responsible for final decisions regarding the resolution of all complaints.

6. Follow Up

- a. The Provincial Resource Coordinator will inform the complainant and the relevant TPA's of the outcome of any complaint procedure.
- b. It will be the practitioner's responsibility to ensure the requirements set out by the review committee are fulfilled by the identified timelines and to demonstrate such to the Provincial Resource Coordinator of the FGC OPR.
- c. When all requirements have been met, the Provincial Resource Coordinator will report back to the Steering Committee who will determine that the matter is closed. At that time, the Provincial Resource Coordinator will also report back to the TPA's that the matter is closed.

7. Appeals

- a. The Steering Committee of the FGC OPR reserves the right to require additional training, place additional conditions of practice or to remove individuals from the Ontario FGC Roster, when, after careful review, their practice of FGC is found to be not meeting the requirements of good practice.
- b. In the event that a practitioner wishes to appeal the decision of the Steering Committee, the Executive Director of the George Hull Centre for Children and Families, as the lead organization of the FGC OPR has the ultimate decision-making authority regarding the Ontario FGC Roster. An appeal of a Steering Committee decision regarding a complaint must be made in writing to the Executive Director of the George Hull Centre for Children and Families within 10 business days of receiving the Steering Committee's decision.

FGC ONTARIO PROVINCIAL RESOURCE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

