

supporting victims

- ⋮ *Helping those affected by youth crime*
- ⋮ *The youth justice family group conference process*



As a victim of youth crime we believe you should be safe, supported and have your say. You may feel angry, hurt, upset and have experienced some sort of loss. Through the youth justice family group conference, we want to help you be:

safe

by fully informing you of the process and addressing your concerns

supported

by involving you and listening to you

have your say

about how the crime affected you and how the young person can put things right.

**Contact Child, Youth
and Family at
0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)
www.cyf.govt.nz**

having your say

As a victim you can have your say and you do have rights. That is why we want to invite you to a youth justice family group conference, or FGC. This is where we bring the young person, their family and others together to talk about their offending and what can be done to put things right.



why should I attend?

You may be surprised by how your involvement can give you some answers and help make a difference.

- ⋮ You are the best person to express how the offence has affected your life financially, physically and emotionally.
- ⋮ You will have an opportunity to help develop a plan for the young person, and have a say in what you would like to see happen.

The great thing is that as a result of a conference most young people won't go on to offend again and many of them will want to put things right.

The FGC has proven so successful that many other countries have followed New Zealand's lead and adopted this process.



who will support me?

We understand that this can be an uncertain process and facing the young person can take courage. We want you to feel supported throughout your involvement.

The youth justice coordinator: They organise the meeting and will be your main point of contact. You can talk to them about any worries or questions you have.

Your support people: We encourage you to invite support people who can be there for you.

Victim Support: They can help with information, attend the conference with you or go on your behalf. Call 0800 VICTIM (0800 842846) to contact them.

If I don't attend can I still have a say?

We really want you to attend the conference, but if you don't want to we would still like to hear your views.

The coordinator can talk to you about other options like:

- ⋮ getting someone else to attend on your behalf, who can speak for you
- ⋮ having the coordinator present your views to the FGC
- ⋮ writing a letter
- ⋮ or even teleconferencing into the meeting.



putting things right

What is a youth justice family group conference?

The FGC is a structured meeting which will consider how the young person can be held accountable, right their wrongs and change their behaviour.

The conference will look at:

- ⋮ practical ways the young person can right their wrongs, acknowledge that what they did was wrong and learn from their mistakes
- ⋮ things that may have contributed to the offending and ways to help change their behaviour. This may include programmes that help with life skills, employment and education, or activities like team sports and mentoring. This has been shown to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending.



who can be there?

Apart from the young person and their family, the key participants are:

- ⋮ you
- ⋮ the youth justice coordinator, who will run the meeting
- ⋮ any support people you want to invite
- ⋮ police
- ⋮ the young person's lawyer, called a youth advocate
- ⋮ others who can provide important information (such as health and education professionals or a social worker).



Putting things right

what happens at the FGC?

Every conference is unique to meet the needs of the participants. You can ask the coordinator what the process will be, and how you will be looked after at the conference.

However, this is generally what will happen at each meeting:

Presenting the facts

The police read out the summary of the alleged offending:

- ⋮ the young person then admits or denies the charges;
- ⋮ in almost all FGCs the charge is admitted and a plan is made. However, in the unlikely event that the charge is denied, the matter will then be referred back to the police or the court.

Discussion time

Everyone talks about the young person's offending, why it may have happened, its impact and how to make it right.

Your say:

- ⋮ this is when you will be able to talk about how the crime affected you, physically, emotionally and financially
- ⋮ you will be able to have your say about how you think the young person can make things right with you
- ⋮ it's OK if you feel emotional, that's natural.



The plan

The family will talk on their own and develop a plan of action for the young person. They bring their ideas back to the meeting and everyone agrees on a plan that makes sure the young person can:

- ⋮ **face up to it:** the young person is held accountable through appropriate consequences
- ⋮ **right the wrong:** the young person puts things right with you as much as possible
- ⋮ **move on:** the reasons behind the offending are addressed
- ⋮ their family and other people help them to change their behaviour
- ⋮ there is a clear timeframe that identifies who will monitor each of the tasks.

Most conferences take one to two hours although some may take longer, as the plans need to have a lot of detail in order to make them work.

The plan will be reviewed by Child, Youth and Family to make sure all the tasks are completed. If you have any concerns about the plan, please talk to your coordinator.

“After the robbery my kids couldn't sleep. At the conference we talked about that and the offender gave my children a card, some games and books and this made them feel better.”

VICTIM

what you can expect from us

If you choose to be part of the conference, we will do everything we can to make sure you are treated with respect, that you are safe and feel supported.

You have the right to:

- ⋮ be given clear and timely information on the process
- ⋮ have a say about the day, time and place of the conference
- ⋮ be supported to attend the conference. For example, we'll consider your loss of income, childcare, cultural or disability related needs
- ⋮ confront the young person safely. For example, you may ask to be seated next to the police or coordinator if you feel worried
- ⋮ give your views and present your expectations
- ⋮ help make decisions about the plan for the young person
- ⋮ be kept informed about the young person's progress.

I didn't feel safe doing my paper run after I got assaulted. But the guy who did it is about my age and after the conference he ended up helping me with my paper run. He even did it for me while I was away on holiday.

VICTIM

how can we help you?

We will provide information, answer any questions you have and support you in a number of practical ways. Please talk to us if you have any questions.

And remember you can...

- ask for an interpreter if you need one. For example, if you are deaf or English is not your first language.

Youth justice coordinator:

Phone:

Email:



Printed in New Zealand on paper sourced from well-managed sustainable forests using mineral oil free, soy-based vegetable inks.



child, youth
and family

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

newzealand.govt.nz