



Le Chéile Strengthening Families Programme (12-16yrs)

**Information Pack for agencies funded by Le Chéile
Delivering the Strengthening Families Programme**

Funded by:



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Introduction

This Information Pack has been developed as an accompaniment tool for Steering Committees who are receiving funding through the Le Chéile SFP Funding Form to run the Strengthening Families Programme. It has been designed specifically to aid Steering Committees, Site Co-ordinators and Facilitators in Ireland who are involved in the planning, delivering and evaluation of the Strengthening Families Programme (SFP 12-16yrs).

This Information Pack is intended as a resource for practitioners to use in addition to the existing Strengthening Families Programme (12-16 yrs) 2006 cd-rom materials as available directly from the US Developers of the programme. This information pack in no way supersedes or replaces any of the official Lutra and/or SFP guidance manuals but is intended to assist Irish SFP programmes as it has been compiled through feedback from Irish Strengthening Family Programmes ran to date.

It is hoped that the information, policies and paperwork contained within this information pack can be used to ensure each Strengthening Families Programme is run in a best practice manner. This Information Pack should assist agencies in planning, delivering and evaluating an effective programme and give your clients the best possible service in improving family skills to benefit communities and families throughout Ireland.

Steering Committees are encouraged to edit and adapt policies and paperwork to the specific regional needs of their programme whilst also ensuring they are keeping the best interests of personnel, participants, children/teens and families on the programme as the key element and do not (as stated by Lutra Group) modify the programme content itself.

The topics in this Information Pack have been placed into three main categories:

- **Planning of a SFP Programme**
- **Delivery of a SFP Programme**
- **Evaluation of a SFP Programme**

In developing this Information Pack, please note that Le Cheile have taken information **directly** from the Lutra website, the Lutra cd-rom materials (2006) and from Lutra evaluation reports. Lutra Group are the outright owners of the Strengthening Families Programme (12-16).

A number of the policies and paperwork contained in this pack have been developed in-conjunction with a number of services on an inter-agency basis with the best interests of families at heart. Le Chéile are hugely indebted to the numerous organisations throughout the country who we have had the pleasure of working alongside on Strengthening Families Programme to date. The spirit of true inter-agency work and the genuine desire to deliver a quality Strengthening Families Programme to benefit families has been a hugely positive experience for all involved.

Acknowledgements

Le Chéile have been working closely with a number of agencies since April 2009 on the Strengthening Families Programme and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their passion and dedication to the families of Ireland with whom we work. There are too many people to thank individually and below are just some of the agencies who gave their time to discuss and share their experiences, policies and procedures of planning, delivering and evaluating the SFP.

- The Lutra Group, Utah, USA.
- Local and Regional Drug Task Forces nationwide.
- Local and Regional Funded projects nationwide.
- YPARS, Dublin.
- Barnardos
- ISPCC
- Tallaght Youth Service.
- Probation Service staff, Probation Officers and Senior Probation Officers across Ireland.
- Probation Funded projects across Ireland.
- Garda Youth Diversion Project staff and Juvenile Liaison Officers nationally.
- Facilitators and Site Co-ordinators of previous SFP's across the country.
- Foroige staff and Foroige agencies nationwide.
- Kerry VEC and North East Kerry Development.
- North West Alcohol Forum
- CAWT
- Numerous HSE personnel

Le Chéile have approached the development of this info pack as a guide to best practice and ultimately with a view to assisting in developing the SFP in Ireland (alongside the numerous other agencies we have the pleasure of working alongside) for the benefit of families, communities and service providers nationally.

We hope to continue to do this in a spirit of co-operation, interagency, value for money and with a view to developing positive outcomes and reporting structures to ensure the SFP continues as a program of choice for families in Ireland.

This is not a comprehensive info pack as the Strengthening Families Programme should hopefully continue to grow and adapt to a changing Ireland but we do hope this pack is useful as a guide to rolling out a successful SFP. If there are any omissions or additions you would like us to make to this info pack or if agencies or personnel would like to be credited with any of the content they may have shared with us or wish to offer updates and/or suggestions, we would be very happy to hear from you.

Background to the Strengthening Families Programme

The Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) is a 14-session family skills training programme developed by Dr. Karol L. Kumpfer and associates at the University of Utah in 1982.

The programme was initially developed as a prevention strategy for 6-12 year olds and high risk children of drug and alcohol stressed families. SFP now however is used in other settings, including schools, family agencies and sheltered housing. In Ireland to date SFP has been delivered in numerous situations in the community or in family resource settings with medium to high risk families.

The programme has been proven to help parents and their teens build new, healthy parent/child communication skills that build up positive relationships within families, address family behaviour management while allowing families to have fun in the process.

Positive results from empirical research of this Programme over 15 years in the U.S.A and other countries demonstrate that the programme is robust and effective in strengthening a family in its values and boundaries, thus creating protective factors for a family. The course actively improves family relationships, parenting skills and within teens/younger children, social and life skills. In addition, SFP is recognized by many federal agencies in the USA as an exemplary, researched-based family model.

The Structure of the Strengthening Families Programme

The SFP curriculum includes three **skills** courses (Parent skills Training, Teens skills training and Family life skills training) taught together once a week over 14 weeks.

For SFP purposes, a “family” is one or more adults with long term responsibility for one or more teens.

SFP skills are **not** special skills for deficient families; SFP skills are for **all** families, but presented in a way to make them accessible to high stress families.

Incentives for attendance, positive participation, home practice completion, and graduation are recommended and encouraged. Family meals before each session, transportation, and child care provision can all assist in reducing barriers to participation.

Before the programme begins families and facilitators gather together for a family meal and a chance to relax and get to know each other.

In the first hour of the programme, parents and teens participate in separate groups focusing on different skills and in the final hour families come together to practice these skills.

Note: The Strengthening Families Program is designed to be conducted in 14 consecutive sessions, with each session lasting approximately two hours (plus a meal). The Lutra Group have confirmed that the program can be “unbundled”, however effectiveness is greatest when all three are taught together (Lutra Group Leader Training notes 2007).

Parents Group

Parents learn new skills to increase desired behaviours in their teens by using attention, rewards, clear communication, effective discipline, substance use education, problem solving and limit setting.

The new skills/ information and participation in a group provide support and learning about the primary role of parenting and the strengths of positive communication in strengthening family life.

Teens Group

In the Teen group, Teens learn skills on how to communicate positively, understand feelings, cope with criticism, stress management, develop social skills, learn problem solving, resisting peer pressure, understanding the consequences of substance abuse, how short term consequences affect long term dreams and goals.

The group also explores why teens need to comply with parental rules and what parents want for them.

Family Group

During the second hour the families join together and practice structured family activities, family meetings, healthy communication skills, effective discipline, re-enforcing positive behaviours for each other, jointly planning family activities outside the group, dealing with embarrassing/difficult subject matter regarding sexuality/drink/drug usage.

Objectives of the Strengthening Families Programme

The major objectives for the Strengthening Families Programme for the family, the parents, and the teens (a number of which can be measured with the built-in Lutra Evaluation) are:

To Improve Family Relations

- Improve Family Communications
- Improve Family Bonding and Cohesion
- Increase Family Organization and Planning
- Decrease Family Conflict
- Increase Parent/Teen Time Together
- Increase Parent's Empathy toward Teen

To Increase Parenting Skills

- Increase Parent Knowledge of Parenting
- Increase Parenting Self-Esteem or Efficacy
- Increase Positive Attention and Praise
- Reduce Physical Punishment
- Increase Effective Discipline
- Decrease Parenting Stress
- Decrease Parent Depression

To Improve Child's Behavior

- Increase Child Compliance
- Increase Child's School Bonding and Attachment
- Increase Child's School Grades and Performance
- Decrease Children's Overt Aggression
- Decrease Child's Covert Aggression
- Decrease Child's Hyperactivity Decrease Child's Shyness
- Decrease Child's Depression

To Increase Children's Social Competencies

- Increase Communication Skills
- Increase Peer Refusal Skills
- Increase Recognition of Feelings
- Increase Knowledge of Alcohol and Drugs
- Increase Coping Skills for Anger and Criticism
- Reduce Future Intentions and Use of Alcohol and Drugs

To Reduce or Prevent Alcohol and Drug Abuse

- Decrease Parent's Alcohol and Drug Use
- Prevent Child's Alcohol and Drug Use

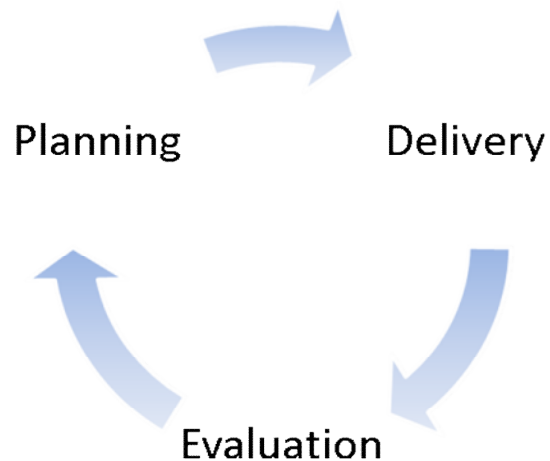
The objectives have also been designed to address teen pregnancy, poor life adjustment, decrease children's intermediate risk factors (i.e., behavioral, social, emotional, and school problems) and improve protective factors (i.e., coping, communication, social, and academic skills) by improving family relations and parenting and supervision skills and significantly improving relationship skills.

A Model for Delivering SFP

The Strengthening Families Programme Cycle

It can be useful to think about the different stages of a Strengthening Families Programme and what needs to be done at each stage.

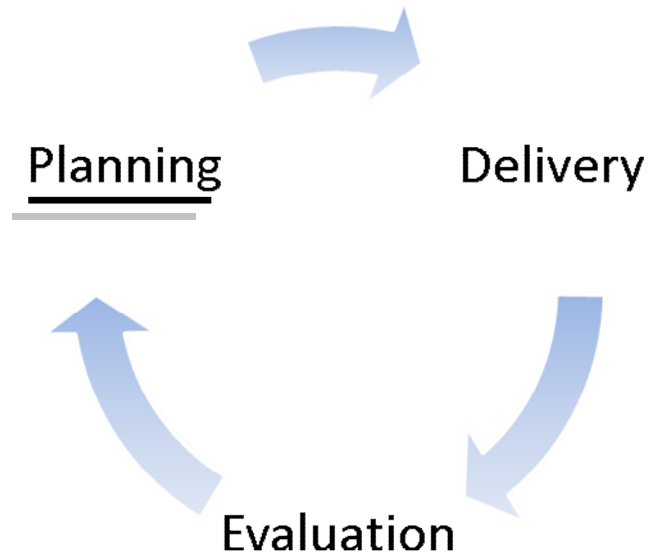
In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people and parents, it is recommended that Steering Committees adopt this model of events with regard to the Strengthening Families Programme.



The above three stage cycle is used in this Information Pack to assist those delivering the SFP in identifying the key stages of a Strengthening Families Programme. It is also used to illustrate how equally important all the stages are.

Stage One: Planning

Planning of the Strengthening Families Programme



The Steering Committee

The first step in planning a Strengthening Families Programme in an area is to form a Steering Committee. This should be populated by a number of relevant agencies who currently work with families on a caring basis, ideally with reference to families with teenagers.

Steering Committee members should bring enthusiasm, commitment to good practice, solution focused skills, a child centered ethos and positivity to delivering the programme successfully. The steering committee will be the means to address any issues which arise throughout the 3 stages of the programme.

In addition it can be useful for Steering Committee members to have a natural mix of professions, thus having a broad understanding of areas such as programme planning, youth work, counseling, family services, child protection, working with offenders etc. This in turn can inform the Steering Committee in relation to specific issues which may arise.

Key considerations for the Steering Committee:

- (a) Funding
- (b) Referrals
- (c) Timeframe
- (d) Personnel
- (e) Site Logistics and Materials/Supplies.
- (f) Incentives, Transport, Childcare and Catering
- (g) Policies
- (h) Paperwork
- (i) Evaluation (also see Section Three)

(a) Funding:

The most important initial step of the Steering Committee is to establish the clear need for a Strengthening Families programme in the area before funding is sought. This can first be established on an informal basis by the agencies represented on the steering committee who will have a knowledge of the potential referral base for the proposed programme. At the funding application stage, however, accurate referral numbers should be calculated as much as possible.

A steering committee requesting funding through Le Chéile should enquire with the a Le Chéile staff member about the availability of funding and conditions/guidelines for the receipt of funding. A funding form is available specifically for this purpose which includes guidelines on completion. In addition Le Chéile staff are available to clarify any issues in relation to the funding form.

As Le Chéile funded programmes are funded through Young Persons Probation, funding can only be granted to a Steering Committee on the recommendation of the local area's Senior Young Persons Probation Officer. This recommendation may also come with the understanding that a certain level of places on the programme are offered to Young Persons Probation or agencies funded through the Irish Youth Justice Service in the area of the proposed programme.

(b) Referrals:

The Strengthening Families Programme in Ireland to date has welcomed referrals from families in the community, statutory and/or voluntary sector as well as those ordered to attend as the result of a court ruling.

The SFP can be used with universal, selected and indicated populations and has been tested with all three types of primary prevention approaches. The SFP is able to accommodate families with single or multiple primary caretakers and multiple or single children within the age range. A Parent is defined as the child's primary caregiver(s) and is interpreted in a broad context (e.g., foster parents, boyfriends, same sex couples, step parents, adoptive parents, kinship care, etc.) and these considerations are important when adapting the programme to the specific referrals on your programme.

The recommended number of families on the programme is 12 which allows for some level of drop off during the running of the programmes. It is recommended that Steering Committees accept up to 14 families on a programme as experience has shown that some families may not engage in the first few weeks of the programme due to a number of factors.

The Strengthening Families Programme has a recommended budget based on a capacity of 12 families enrolling and participating in the programme, but in reality many groups begin with 10-12 families, with 8-10 families graduating the programme and this should be taken into consideration when budgeting for your particular programme.

The standard amount of families with a youth justice connection required to enroll on an SFP where funding is 100% from Le Chéile is 50% of the total number of families.

Should a referral come from a different agency, it may be useful to investigate any connection the family has to a youth justice service.

Where 50% funding for the programme comes from Le Chéile 25% of the referrals are required to have a youth justice link. It is advisable that steering committees invite local YPP, JLO and GYDP representatives to sit on the steering committee to assist with these requirements, or to communicate with them during the planning stage if this is not possible.

If referrals are coming from the Adult Probation teams ideally it needs to be shown that the Adult Probation Client and their teens will benefit from the programme from a preventative capacity.

A referral subcommittee of the Steering Committee (which includes the Site Co-Ordinator) may be useful in assisting in the referral process and in selecting appropriate referrals.

(c) Timeframe:

The time needed to plan, deliver and evaluate a programme needs to be considered depending on a number of issues including trained personnel and resources available and the experience of the SFP being rolled out in the area previously etc.

There follows a few considerations which a steering committee may wish to discuss in relation to their specific area/ time of programme. This is by no means a definitive or exhaustive list and should be used as more of a discussion guide to assist in deciding on the timeframe required.

Time of Year	Advantages	Challenges
September	Anecdotally considered a good time for most people to start something new, children start back at school, families get back into a routine. Programme may get completed before Christmas.	In terms of referrals, agencies have experienced difficulty in gaining referrals as the referral agencies are sometime on holidays in July and August. Centres are closed etc. May need to consider support issues for families over Christmas.
October	Can be advantageous as referrers are mostly back to work in September and may have new case loads to refer on in October. Most youth centres re-establish programmes in September. Can support families who may have experienced difficulties over Christmas.	If commenced in October, the programme is finishing after Christmas, which might prove challenging as there may be some disruption over the Christmas period which may result in difficulties in re-engaging families.
January	Can be a good time to start but may due to the “fresh start” feeling of the new year.	May be difficult to get hold of referrers or families during the 1 st or second week of January.
Feb	Good time to start as it may mean that the programme finishes before end of school.	May run into the Easter school holidays which might have an impact on attendance.
March	Can be a good time to start a programme if set to finish at the end of May before the break for school holidays.	A chance of professionals taking holidays in May. May be disrupted by the Easter period.
April	Gives the opportunity for good planning to take place from January to March.	Risk of the programme going right through to June and July when many people take annual leave and family holidays.

Note: Mid term breaks: You may experience a low-turn out during midterm breaks, simply because the family are “out of a routine” and may be involved in other things.

(d)Personnel

A total of at least four facilitators are recommended to deliver the program, as stated by the SFP creators. In reality, in Ireland a core team of 8-10 personnel each night may be needed. The programme works best having 2 facilitators for the Parent Training group and another 2 facilitators for the Teens' Skill Training group (depending on size of teen group).

During the Family Skills Training sessions, the families may split into two groups with at least two facilitators in each group, or meet as a whole with at least four facilitators. It is strongly recommended that the facilitators be gender balanced (both a man and a woman) and ethnically matched to the participants where possible.

The Steering Committee should be aware of the training & accreditation process for Strengthening Families personnel. Each facilitator/Group Leader should have completed the Two Day SFP Group Leader training and have a certain level of facilitation skills and experience with the group they will be facilitating.

An assessment should be made by the Site Co-ordinator and/or Steering Committee around the need for a refresher morning/day for facilitators of the programme and meetings of the facilitators on the run up to the programme have found to be useful in answering questions and bonding the facilitators as a group.

It is not necessary for personnel to be credentialed in mental health or substance abuse treatment or prevention, although it may be helpful with some higher-risk populations. It is recommended that those coming into contact with young people be both Garda Vetted and be trained on the principles of the Children's First guidelines.

The Facilitators and the Site Co-ordinator are the most valuable resource in the Strengthening Families Programme. Their training and the facilitation they provide to both the teens and parents is what will make or break the programme. They should be selected and trained carefully and supported throughout the process by their organisations, the Steering Committee and the Site Co-Ordinator. They must find a balance between the needs of individuals and the needs of the group as a whole; between the problems of the teen and those of the parents and they must be sensitive to the feelings of the families while maintaining order and a sense of responsibility for imparting the skills of the programme. This can be a challenging assignment but a hugely rewarding one for all involved including the families, the individuals and their organisation.

The personnel requirement per region in Ireland may vary but the average cohort of facilitators in each region may be as follows:

SFP Personnel	Number needed
Site Co-ordinator(s)	1 or 2 (where joint site co-ordination is agreed)
Parent Facilitators	2 (minimum)
Teen Facilitators	2 or 4 depending on the size of the group and whether there is a need to split the groups into younger and elder teens.
Time out Facilitators/Floaters/Helpers.	1 or 2
Back Up Facilitators.	As many as thought appropriate.
Childcare Personnel (if available on-site)	This depends on the number of children in childcare
Security/Caretaker	Depending on the need

Note:

- All those involved in implementing the SFP are to have completed the SFP two-day training.
- All those involved in implementing the SFP should be Garda cleared with their current employer.
- All those involved should have attended Children’s First Training and/or have an excellent understanding of Children’s First guidelines/appropriate experience.
- It is recommended that all those involved should have access to supervision from their own organisation and the full support of their organisation throughout the duration of the programme. (Personnel trained under YPP delivered trainings since 2010 will have needed to provide a signed statement to this effect from their Manager)

Additional staff

Additional staff includes childcare providers, food preparation, transport personnel as needed for programme implementation. Childcare providers are recommended to provide on-site childcare and supervision of families’ youth not participating in the curriculum due to age inappropriateness. Some building and resources may provide crèche facilities while other programmes may put in place other external arrangements in relation to Child minding with the caregiver and the referral agent.

Previous Participants involvement in a programme as facilitators or aides

Parents who have completed the Strengthening Families Programme can be very effective as future leaders or training aides in other groups. In many ways, they may be able to relate better to the current participants. If your area is conducting the SFP Programme on an ongoing basis, be sure to make a note to talk with those parents who have potential as future leaders or aides. Since they have already participated in the programme, they will be able to relate their own personal examples concerning the effectiveness of the programme to new participants. They may also be helpful in recruiting for a new group.

The Site Co-Ordinator:

The Site Co-ordinator will be expected to work closely with the Steering Committee, the funder and the many other agencies and stakeholders involved and referring into the Strengthening Families Programme in their region. It is important that a Steering Committee supports and assists the Site Co-Ordinator throughout the SFP process.

A Site Coordinator may be responsible for referrals, oversight, logistics, staff supervision and coordinating the programme implementation, delivery and evaluation. This includes being accessible to referral agents and families between sessions to assist in assuring retention.

Site Co-ordinators should:

Have the commitment of their organisation to participate in the SFP.

Have time, enthusiasm & a willingness to fulfill the Site Co-ordinator commitment.

Be able to relate, communicate and develop positive relationships with a wide range of people including young people & adults, volunteers, staff, referrers, committee members and funders
Be open to reflective and non judgmental practice & lead SF personnel to do the same.

Identify & communicate their own support needs & make effective use of the support mechanisms provided by their own organisation and the Steering Committee.

The Duties of a Site Co-Ordinator may include:

Organising and Co-Ordinating the SFP in conjunction with the Steering Committee

Liaising with the available batch of facilitators for the programme delivery

Giving practical help, guidance & support to the SF facilitators before & during the programme

Actively encouraging, supporting and promoting referrals to the SFP from relevant agencies alongside the Steering Committee

Liaising with all Referral Agents regarding their clients commencement or non commencement

Linking in with referrers to ensure support to families throughout the programme

Managing the budget allocated for the programme and administrating the funds according to the procedures set down by the funders, alongside the Steering Committee

Attend Steering Committee meetings where appropriate during the course of the programme

Co-ordinating all issues in relation to catering, childcare and transport alongside the S. Comm

Being the Designated Child Protection Person for child protection disclosures

Compiling and completing the evaluation paperwork for the programme

Ensuring the completion of weekly sign in sheets/attendance and debriefing sheets

Compiling statistics in line with data requirements & with a view to evaluation

Ensuring Health and Safety policies and procedures are adhered to, as set down by the Steering Committee and venue

Following policy & procedure guidelines on the delivery of the programme as specified by the Steering Committee, the funders of the programme and the creators of the programme

Being responsible, along with the Steering Committee and other facilitators, for ensuring best practice within all aspects of the Strengthening Families programme

(e) Site Logistics and Materials/Supplies:

Site Logistics:

Sites are selected based on accessibility and appropriateness for families to come together for a positive skills building programme. The site must avoid stigmatizing or labeling attending families based on the local community's perception of the activities and persons that generally frequent the site. For example, in some communities the substance abuse treatment center may only be frequented by persons who are diagnosed with substance abuse treatment disorders, which may deter families from attending a programme there. Some correctional facilities do not permit or are not considered appropriate for children. The site should be accessible by public transport in those communities where the families utilize such transportation and/or have convenient parking available in well-lit areas. The site must not only be safe, but must be perceived as safe, particularly for young and vulnerable children.

The site should have adequate facilities for separate rooms for the children and parents to meet for one hour and for the families to meet together for a meal and one hour of programme curriculum. Additionally, there may be a requirement to have adequate space for childcare while parents are attending sessions. If the meal is to be prepared or stored on-site, there must be adequate facilities for food safety. Issues around insurance, health and safety, fire safety, security, first aid and emergency procedures should all be taken into consideration when selecting a venue.

Materials and Supplies:

Materials needed are specified in each session. It is strongly recommended that the materials for the entire programme be reviewed and obtained before the programme begins. In general, the materials necessary to conduct the Strengthening Families Program include:

- Leaders manuals
- Parent and Teen's handbooks
- Name tags
- Course outline, welcome letter, course dates.
- Construction paper, scissors, paste, newsprint
- Tables and chairs
- Incentives/rewards
- Pens, crayons, paints, soft balls

In the Teen's group sessions, facilitators may choose to copy and/or laminate pictures available in the workbooks.

During all sessions, parents and teens should have access to a variety of resources, games, etc. The best resources are those that allow them to express feelings. These resources should be attained from agencies involved on any level with the SFP, where possible, to ensure a value for money and inter-agency approach.

(f) Incentives, Childcare, Transport and Catering

Programme incentives for participation increase retention and reinforce the programme and assist dramatically in reducing barriers to participation by families. Incentives that are tied to, build on and reinforce the curriculum are recommended. These include a family meal provided at each session, transportation, childcare, graduation certificates and completion rewards, and intermittent grab bags and supplies necessary for the family to complete the home practice and weekly activities.

Childcare:

Childcare may be required by families and can be provided on or off site during the sessions, depending on the need, available resources and venue suitability. Since the programme is promoting parental responsibility and family organisation, it should facilitate and assure age appropriate care for other children in the family, both younger and older than the participating children if provided on-site. On-site childcare provision should be in keeping with providing safety and fun for children not included in the skills training. Specific arrangements regarding contributions to off-site childcare provision may be entered into with the family in consultation with the site co-ordinator, the referring agent and the family. Issues relating to the insurance, vat registration, training, clearance, confidentiality etc. should all be considered if providing on-site childcare provision and local agencies specialising in childcare provision should be consulted and/or sit on the steering committee for this purpose.

Transportation:

Transportation to and from the programme needs to be assured and coordinated within the resources of the community and the programme. This is particularly true since some families may not have access to private transportation. Additionally, many of these families do not want and should not have to disclose that transportation is the barrier, particularly in the recruitment and early sessions of the programme. Local community agencies may provide appropriate transport services at reduced rates or for free in line with community and family development and in a spirit of inter-agency co-operation. Issues relating to insurance, vat registration, confidentiality, vehicle appropriateness etc. should all be considered when selecting an appropriate transport provider.

Incentives:

Many local shops, food outlets, toy stores, cinemas, restaurants, etc. may be willing to donate gift certificates, prizes, and other incentives for group attendance, completion of homework assignments, good behavior for children's group, etc. This is an excellent resource that should not be overlooked. Budgets should allow for incentives for both the teens and parents. Incentives should be used appropriately throughout the programme and how this is done should be considered by the steering committee, the site co-ordinator and the facilitators before the programme begins.

Catering:

Providing a warm, nutritious meal is a key element for each programme and arrangements should be made with the building being used or with an outside caterer to provide a meal to all families each night.

It may be beneficial for facilitators and Site Co-ordinators to make the dining room a pleasant experience for all by lightly decorating and servicing the room accordingly, for example: cutlery, glasses, drinks, condiments, napkins etc.

Facilitators and Site Co-Ordinators are encouraged to sit among the families and not to bunch together or be separate in order to promote a communal spirit and to assist in getting to know the families. The dinner is often found to be a useful time to have check in chats with the families who may have experienced difficulties in the previous week and also just to help them feel at ease, particularly in the first few weeks. Issues relating to appropriately trained staff, health and safety, hygiene, insurance, vat registration, child protection, Garda clearance, confidentiality etc. should all be considered in relation to providing catering.

Where issues arise due to the lack of tendering or of full and appropriate checks not being carried out on service providers the funder will not accept any liability in relation to these issues and may in some cases not issue payment for services which have not gone through an appropriate tendering and selection process.

(g) Policies

A range of policies that can be used throughout an SFP programme have been compiled at the back of this info pack. Some of these policies were shared with Le Chéile by other agencies involved in SFP around the country or were developed and adapted by Le Chéile or in conjunction with steering committees involved in rolling out a SFP. These policies have been developed and are made available in the spirit of ensuring a SFP is run under best practice principles to the benefit of the families, agencies involved and the community as a whole.

These policies are by no means meant to be all encompassing, definitive or legally binding articles but should be utilized and/or carefully adapted where appropriate by the steering committee as a whole. Programmes that receive funds from Le Cheile should utilise these policies unless similar or existing policies are suitable and preferred by their local Steering Committee.

A dramatic change of policy usage should always be discussed with Le Chéile for programmes receiving funding. Le Chéile accepts no liability for programmes which do not use policies which come from a best practice ethos and have consideration to child protection and the duty of care to the families and facilitators taking part in the SFP.

(h) Paperwork

A range of sample forms that can be used throughout a SFP programme have been compiled at the back of this information pack. Some of these forms were shared with Le Chéile by other agencies also involved in SFP around the country, and to these agencies we are particularly grateful for sharing some of their learning's with us.

Others have been created by Le Chéile and/or adapted by Steering Committees with which we have been involved.

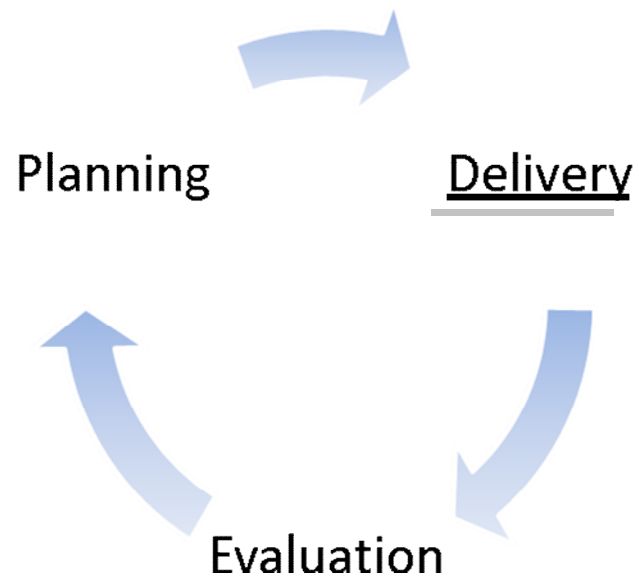
Programmes that receive funds from Le Cheile should utilise these forms unless similar or existing forms are available in their own agency. The purpose of these forms are both to assist recording data where required and to ensure best practice and any other paperwork used or adapted should incorporate this ethos.

(i) Evaluation

For information on how a Steering Committee evaluates the programme and the requirements of a Le Chéile funded programme in relation to evaluations please see Section 3 of this handbook.

Stage Two

Delivery of the Strengthening Families Programme



A Typical Weekly SFP Session

The Strengthening Families Programme is designed to be presented in 14 consecutive weekly sessions lasting approximately two hours (excluding the food).

Parents and Teens come together along with the other families and facilitators at the beginning of each session for a meal.

Following a general welcome, the first hour is spent with the parents and teens meeting in their own respective groups.

At the end of these groups there may follow a short break before families are reunited in the Family Group.

This second period is spent in the Family Skills Training portion of the programme. Depending on the number of participants, this group may be divided into smaller groups or may remain together.

Meet and Greet Nights

Some agencies have found it beneficial to hold a Meet and Greet/Welcome Night before Session 1 in order for the families and facilitators to get to know each other and the venue

Aim of the Meet and Greet Night:

- The overall aim of the night is to help the families feel more comfortable about signing up to the programme.
- For families to get to know the location, parking, time it takes to come etc
- For families to meet the Group facilitators and get to know them.
- For families to understand better what the programme is all about and have any questions answered and fears alleviated.
- For families to meet any previous past participants of the programme (where this is possible or has been arranged)
- For the Group Facilitators to get to know the families before Session One.
- Referral Agents can also come along to this evening where it might help to make the family feel more comfortable.

Staff needed for the Meet and Greet Night

- All facilitators for the programme and back Up facilitators are welcome as it can be useful to have a larger number of staff on board that night
- Families that have participated in the programme before may be really beneficial to attend

Please note that the following section on delivery is mostly comprised of information taken directly from the Lutra SFP US Revised Implementation Manual 2006. (located in the SFP 2006 cd-rom) and the Lutra Fidelity Benchmarks 2008.

References to “child” or “children” may have been changed to “teen” or “teens”. Other references may also have been adapted to make it more applicable to Irish Teens.

The Strengthening Families Programme Content

The Parents Programme:

Structure of Weekly Sessions

The format for each session is specified in each session's curriculum. Generally, each session begins with a review of home practice and the previous week's concepts. Next, the training material is presented in a variety of ways including exercises, lectures, discussions, role playing, etc. New concepts are then reviewed and new home practice is assigned. Ideally, there should be at least two leaders per group.

Training methods for the parents', teen's and family groups include lecture, demonstration, discussion, role-playing, audio-visuals, charts, home practice assignments, exercises, peer support, Teen's Game, Parents' Game, supervised practice etc.

Actual delivery of the lessons will vary depending on the individual characteristics of the facilitators. Ways of adapting the content to make it interesting, fun and specifically targeted to your individual group should be considered by the Facilitators when preparing the lesson, whilst also not modifying or straying from the actual purpose of the lesson.

Outline of Parent Skills Training Sessions over the 14 Weeks

1. Introductions and Group Building
2. What Teens Are Like & How to Manage Stress
3. Encouraging Good Behavior
4. Goals and Objectives
5. Communication for Better Relationships
6. Communication and Family Meetings
7. Helping Your Teen Handle Peer Pressure
8. Alcohol, Drugs and Families
9. Solving Problems and Giving Directions
10. Relationships, Love and Sexuality
11. Setting Limits I
12. Setting Limits II
13. Contracts for Changing Behavior
14. Remembering All You Have Learned

Overview of Content for Parent Groups

1. Introduction and Group Building:
This opening session welcomes parents to the Strengthening Families Programme. Sessions are reviewed and a course outline is distributed to group members. Attrition, barriers to attendance, and rewards are discussed. Group building exercises and a short talk on how people learn are also presented.
2. What Teens Are Like & How to Manage Stress
Parents and leaders discuss realistic expectations in terms of developmental expectancies. Stress and anger management are also covered in the second session. (Discipline is not covered in detail until later on in the programme.)
3. Encouraging Good Behavior
Rewarding teens for their good behavior is covered in detail in this session. Rewarding is differentiated from bribery. Rewarding with attention and social rewards are also discussed. The "catch them being good" philosophy is emphasized.
4. Goals and Objectives:
This fourth session includes a short talk on teen development. The majority of the session is spent on goal setting, defining "good behavior", making behavioral goals and objectives, and making positive statements to their teens.
5. Communication for Better Relationships
This lesson focuses on ways to talk and listen that will make family life and being a parent easier, less stressful and more rewarding. The Value of Speaking and Listening Skill are emphasised. The benefits of communication are re-enforced, "I" messages are used and the speaker, listener and coaching roles are used. Roadblocks to effective communication are also discussed. Extensive time is spent role playing these skills. Parents are also instructed to practice them at home with their teens
6. Communication and Family Meetings
This session reinforces concepts discussed in session five. Group members role play significant issues with one another. The importance and benefits of family meeting are also introduced with sample agendas and practicalities discussed also.
7. Helping Your Teen Handle Peer Pressure
Understanding peer pressure, temptation and the general difficulties faced by teens around saying No are discussed with a view to teaching parents skills to help their teen to handle peer pressure. The 4 steps to saying No are also taught in this session.

8. Alcohol, Drugs, and Families:
This session is suitable for use with any family, whether or not parents have or have had problems with alcohol or drugs. However it may be advisable to adapt it if parents are still in a state of denial or with regard to other issues that may arise from the subject matter. This session also introduces the parents' role in prevention of problem behaviors in their teens. "Awareness of parents influence on teens" is also discussed.
9. Solving Problems and Giving Directions
Parents are taught basic problem solving skills, which their teens are also learning during this session. Communication in relation to giving directions is also covered in this session.
10. Relationships, Love and Sexuality
Talking to teens about sexuality and the need to prepare for this and to recognise the importance of same are discussed in this session. This can be a sensitive topic and should be handled as such with respect to different values relating to topics that may arise.
11. Setting Limits I
During this session, parents are taught noticing/ignoring, making it right, natural consequences, loss of privileges and time-out strategies. "Good behavior cues" are also discussed.
12. Setting Limits II
The limit setters discussed in session eleven are reviewed. The issue of consequences and "punishment" is covered extensively. The drawbacks to "punishment" and reasons why some disciplines don't work are also covered.
13. Contracts for Changing Behavior
The Steps involved in implementing behavioral change are covered in this session. This includes identifying problem behaviors, behaviors parents would like their teen to perform, goal statements, etc. The group then helps develop the first week of a behavior programme for their teens. Parents then rehearse the words they will use to introduce this with their teen in the group, receiving feedback from other parents. The Evaluation component may also be completed in this session if not completed externally with their referral agent.
14. Remembering All You Have Learned
This session focuses on all that has been learned in the last 14 weeks and especially on new skills and strengths within the family unit. The importance of continuing to use the skills learned and affirming all that they have achieved is emphasized by the facilitators. A nice closing to the group should precede the graduation ceremony.

The Teens Programme:

Structure of Meetings

Following the general welcome during the meal, Teens then go to their group and any young children go to childcare. (Child care for children under 12 years of age is a service that may be offered on-site or off-site depending on the particulars of the programme) There also may be provision for 2 teen groups e.g. 1 Group comprising teens 12 – 14 years and 1 Group comprising teens 15 +

There should be two leaders per group. Optimum participant number for the Teens groups may be 6-7 teens per group. The format for each session is specified in each session's curriculum. Generally, each Teen's session begins with a review of homework and the previous week's concepts. Teens are then taught the new material through the use of exercises, games, workbook activities, role plays, discussions, etc. A review is then conducted, and new home practice is assigned. Teens following group rules (as explained in session one) may receive reinforcements and incentives (prize, novelties, etc.) for good behavior.

Outline of Teens Skills Training Sessions over the 14 Weeks

1. Getting Started and Dreams
2. Speaking and Listening
3. Staying Cool in Conflicts
4. Being Who You Want to Be
5. Speaking for Yourself
6. Speaking Up in Your Family
7. Handling Peer Pressure and Temptation
8. Alcohol and Drugs
9. Problem Solving
10. Friends, Dating and Sexuality
11. Managing Emotions
12. Handling Criticism
13. Coping with Anger
14. Resources, Review and Graduation

Overview of Content for Teens Groups

1. Getting Started and Dreams
This opening session welcomes Teens to the group through the use of games. Teens are also told why their group has been established. The remainder of the session is devoted to developing and discussing group rules and focusing on Dreams and Goals.
2. Speaking and Listening
Teens review rules and incentives as well as the names of participants in the group. Conversation skills, specifically talking and listening are discussed. Teens can then play some suggested games, color illustrated conversation skills workbook pages, or role play to reinforce the concept of social skills.
3. Staying Cool in Conflicts
Checking in with teens and discussing how it might be possible to recognise conflicts and strategies around staying cool in conflict situations are discussed. Speaking for yourself is also discussed and teens are introduced to the "I feel.." method.
4. Being Who You Want to Be
The importance of learning "People" Skills and being who you want to be are introduced in this session. A teen's likes and dislikes, knowledge of what they want to change are all discussed. Goal statements are then formed and teens are taught the "Secret Rules of Success," – Rewarding and Ignoring - the same principles their parent(s) are learning in the parents' group. Teens then role play relevant situations where they can use the "success rules."
5. Speaking for Yourself
Following a review of social skills learned to date, Teens are then taught the use of additional speaking and listening skills such as use of "I feel" messages, saying one thing at a time, not talking for others, showing interest, accepting other's views, asking questions, not jumping to conclusions, etc.
6. Speaking Up in Your Family
"Rules for Family Talks" and speaking and listening rules are reviewed. Holding "family meetings" and talking in your family are discussed with tips for family talks being taught. A family meeting is role played and practicalities surrounding this are discussed.
7. Handling Peer Pressure and Temptation
Saying "No" to stay out of trouble and ways to deal with peer pressure are taught in this session. The four steps to saying No are laid out and role played.
8. Alcohol and Drugs:
Teens are taught the effects and consequences of alcohol and drug use and abuse through the use of stories, lecture, and discussion.

9. Problem Solving:
Seven steps to solving problems are presented in this session. Teens role play several examples to reinforce the concept.
10. Relationships, Love and Sexuality
The issues around talking to their parents about relationships, love and sexuality and tips to assist in doing so are discussed in this session.
11. Managing Emotions
In this session teens are taught about recognising and managing Emotions and Feelings through the use of discussion, games and worksheets. Teens are taught how to recognize feelings in themselves and in others, how people may feel similar or different feelings about the same situations and what to do with those feelings.
12. Handling Criticism
Handling and Dealing with Criticism: This session focuses on how to give and receive criticism and what is criticism itself. Role plays are used to illustrate the concept.
13. Coping with Anger
Teens discuss things that make them mad, how to cope with anger and how to control and express anger. Problem solving skills are reviewed in relation to dealing with anger. Teens then role play the new skills.
14. Resources, Review and Graduation:
Teens are taught about other resources that can help them if they have problems and their parent(s) are unavailable to help. Again, problem solving skills are emphasized, as are staying safe and staying out of trouble (reviewed from session five). Teens then review all fourteen sessions, which may be done in the form of a game, if desired. Wrapping up the session in a positive manner, emphasizing all they have learned and achieved is important ahead of the graduation activities arranged.

The Family Programme:

Structure of Meetings

The Family Training programme follows the parents' and teen's groups and is designed for each session to last up to one hour. The families may all come together as one group (or there may need to be two groups of families depending on the numbers). The format for each session is specified in each session's curriculum, and ranges from didactic to experiential and practicum activities. This component may require a large room which may be equipped with age-appropriate equipment. There should be two leaders per group to help the families practice the Teens Game, Parents' Game, provide individual support, etc.

Outline of Teens Skills Training Sessions over the 14 Weeks

1. Introduction and Group Building
2. Appreciating Family Members
3. Our Time and Rewards
4. Goals and Objectives
5. Communication for Better Relationships
6. Communication and Family Meetings
7. Supporting Teenagers Resistance
8. Learning from Parents
9. Problem Solving and Giving Directions
10. Relationships, Love and Sexuality
11. Empathy: The Other Persons Shoes
12. Family Values
13. Managing Anger
14. Graduation and Celebration

Overview of Content for Family Group

1. Introduction and Group Building:
This session presents the rationale of the SFP, the format and mechanics of the family group and explains the rationale and the importance of Our Time.
2. Appreciating Family Members: The session provides the parents with the concept of noticing and rewarding and emphasizes the importance of doing so during Our Time. Families are also invited to make a family tree.
3. Our Time and Rewards: Parents and teens continue to practice Our Time while leaders review noticing skills and introduce the concept of rewards.
4. Goals and Objectives: Parents and teens continue to practice Our Time and to focus on goals and objectives. The “Spend the Jackpot” game is played toward the end
5. Communication for Better Relationships: The purpose of this session is to present and discuss the reasons for practicing communication skills and to review the rules and roles of communication skills.
6. Communication and Family Meetings: Families are encouraged to practice communication skills while continuing to use Our Time and Family Meetings are discussed and demonstrated.
7. Supporting Teenagers’ Resistance: Pressures that destroy dreams; Knowing Who, What, Where, When and Identifying Family Protective Strategies are introduced.
8. Learning From Parents: Families continue to practice communication skills and the issue of what is “learned” from parents is discussed.
9. Problem Solving, Giving Directions: Parents practice giving effective directions and problem solving with their teens.
10. Relationships, Love and Sexuality: Being prepared and ready to talk about sexuality in a family setting is discussed and families are asked to make the time for this.
11. Empathy – The other persons shoes: Putting yourself in the other persons shoes and demonstrations and role plays around this are practiced in this session.
12. Family Values: Families focus on what the values in their families are.
13. Managing Anger: Ways to manage anger are taught to the group.
14. Graduation & Celebration: Families are encouraged to plan and take “ownership” of the graduation. Fun activities can be arranged depending on the family’s wishes.

Adaptations and Modifications of the Curriculum

The Lutra Group have stated that adaptations are welcome to make the programme more culturally appropriate.

Modifications of the programme however should be avoided as this can impact negatively on the quality of the programme and evaluation.

This means that while facilitators may adapt certain ways in which the programme is taught by bringing in extra materials such as newspaper articles or other resources; using local, regional and national examples and developing games and other means of getting the topic of the week across – the programme cannot be modified in any way.

In other words if the topic of the week is on communication it is necessary that the learning's contained in that weeks workbook are transferred to the families in order to ensure curriculum fidelity and to ensure that the evaluation tools are measuring what has been taught and that the basework for the following weeks lesson has been laid.

Curriculum fidelity (how true the programme is to the original programme) is dependent on facilitators' delivering all 14 sessions; assigning and reviewing homework and including the content areas specified for each session in sequence. Additionally, facilitators are expected to model the tenants of the programme when interacting with the families, including at the family meal. (SFP 12-16 Group Leader Training Lesson Outlines June 2007).

It is recommended that each local site tailor the programme to accommodate cultural and community diversity. The programme is designed to provide a framework and an outline of activities that will meet each programme lessons objectives. The skills and activities are prescriptive and designed to be sequentially lead to the families (both Teens and parents) developing skills proven to result in improved family, child and parent behavioral and affective outcomes and reduced risk behaviors. (These outcomes are assessed in the outcome evaluation instruments).

Facilitators are encouraged to make the programme more culturally and locally appropriate by changing the names of people in the stories, using more appropriate ethnic stories for storytelling, adding food, cultural dances or games that the participants find reflect their traditional family values. (SFP 12-16 Group Leader Training Lesson Outline June 2007)

Group Facilitation Techniques

To get the group involved, here are a few facilitation tips:

1. **Be friendly and act personably:** Start using the parents' names as soon as you learn them. Hopefully you can learn them by the first session if you prepare stick-on labels they can wear. Be sure to greet all family members at the door with their name and a warm welcome when they come to the programme. Saying goodbye and thanking them for coming also helps. Remembering any special things they have shared with you or asking them about follow-up information about personal stressors, crises or family successes shows you care about the families.
2. **Be relaxed and well prepared.** Preparing by reviewing the material several times before the session begins will help you to act more naturally during the sessions. If you are part of a team delivering the session, be sure to meet with your co-facilitators before the session to coordinate who will do what. In addition, you should also meet before the programme to reconfirm how you will run the session, consider logistics and to share any new information about families the other should know. You should never read directly from the Leader's Manuals, but rather understand the concept and put them into your own natural words.
3. **Use humor.** Funny examples and laughing at jokes that the participants make during the discussions or presentations may help make the programme more fun and go faster. The parents and the teens will be more likely to return to a programme where they feel they will have fun.
4. **Use personal examples.** The facilitators may wish to share personal situations from their own family to illustrate the different parenting or teen situations or techniques. It is important for facilitators to demonstrate that they understand the difficulties in being a parent/ teen/ family member. In addition, it is also useful to make the participants feel that most parents, including the facilitator, are not perfect parents. It often helps to have personal testimonials about the effectiveness of some of the parenting skills, teen social skills and family relationship skills being taught in the programme. If the leader is not a parent/guardian, he or she can discuss examples from their own childhood, babysitting experiences, or those of relatives or friends (without mentioning names, of course). Some examples may be gleaned from popular television programmes that focus on family situations.
5. **Praise good responses and thank them for volunteered responses.** This programme is based on the principle of "Catch Them Being Good". This includes the parents and the teens partaking in the programme. Be sure to praise or thank participants for responding. If a response is not exactly what you had hoped or is not entirely to the point try to put a positive slant on your response back to them. Do not make them feel stupid or that they do not know the right answers. All responses can be used to help make some good point.

- 6. Making the programme fun!** The participants will be more likely to return and participate actively if they feel that the programme is interesting, tailored to their needs and fun. There may be a number of humorous (yet appropriate!) examples from a trainer's personal experience of parenting, being a teen or from their own family life that can be used as anecdotes in the programme. A fun-loving and relaxed presentation style helps to make the group more relaxed and to learn better.
- 7. Trust:** Facilitators should develop a trusting, warm relationship with the families. Invest a significant amount of time and concerted effort to get to know and engage these families. Because some parents in disenfranchised groups may be fearful of state intervention and the loss of their children, it is important to develop a trusting relationship with the clients.
- 8. Positive Climate.** Be sure to maintain a positive climate in the group that does not exclude any family. During the family dinner make sure that each family has someone with which to sit and talk. Also make sure that all family values are respected during the group discussions. If a family member mentions that something taught in the programme content does not match their family values or ways of doing things, mention that they are not expected to do all of the things recommended in the program but "To take away what they can use".
- 9. Group Family Opening and Closing Ritual:** To increase the sense of belonging and togetherness of the SFP group, many programmes develop a special ritual to open and close the groups at the beginning and ending of the family group. Many use a large opening and closing circle that involves special closing words. One very good idea is to end the teen and parent groups with selecting two teens or parents who can tell the whole family group what was the most important thing they learned that night.

Other Considerations

Quality of Delivery:

Facilitators are not encouraged to read from the training manuals during the sessions, but rather to present the material in a well-thought out professional manner. They are encouraged to use personally developed flip charts or poster boards for visual outlines of their major points. This helps visual learners to learn better, personalises the programme (vs. power point presentations or overheads), and helps the facilitators not to read from their books. Facilitators may look better prepared and appear more respectful to the families with material prepared in advance of the group. Facilitators should personalise the delivery to fit their style, local language and examples.

Actual delivery of the sessions may vary depending on the individual characteristics and experience of the facilitators themselves and the dynamic and make-up of each group. The curriculum is clearly laid out in the manuals complete with instructions for delivery, key lecture content, details of activities, lists of materials needed, homework assignments and handouts for copying and distribution.

Group Rules:

Group rules to be followed by parents, teens and facilitators should be clearly established in session one. The family members should generate the rules to increase the chances that the rules will be followed. Leaders should include rules they believe are important and not rely solely on the rules generated by the parents and teens. Rules might include such things as speaking in turn, not interrupting, not talking about certain subjects, any aggressive behavior, etc. Confidentiality should be a group rule, but the facilitator must also understand and explain his/her duty to report certain issues that may arise. It may be useful to post the group rules in a visible area at the beginning of each session. Some agencies also develop and explain in Session One a "Fair Value Contract." This contract may list items such as; attend programme sessions, do homework, support others, keep an open mind, etc.

Workbooks:

The parent and teen workbooks can be very useful resources to reinforce concepts discussed in group sessions. Depending on literacy issues and the reading comprehension level of the participants, parents and teens should be encouraged to read their books both before and after the sessions. Parents should be encouraged to read the books and come prepared to the groups with questions, if possible. At the very least, participants should bring their books to group each week. If this is not occurring, leaders may try incentivising this behaviour to increase the chances that the books will be brought weekly. If this does not work, leaders may consider keeping the books and bringing them for parents and teens to work on during the group. Emphasise to family members that these books belong to them and that they should take care of and use them.

Reading and Conceptual levels

It is important to know the reading level of your participants. In the parents' group, higher functioning adults can be instructed to read ahead in the workbooks. They may need less instruction for home practice assignments and may be more apt to follow through with the assignments. Lower reading level parents should have home practice assignments carefully explained to them to ensure they understand them well enough to complete the assignments. In addition, facilitators should be aware of their conceptual level as well, carefully reading over workbook sheets as needed to see if parents understand what they are required to do as well as understand the ideas presented in the material. Having parents repeat instructions or explain what they will be doing during the week is also a helpful comprehension check.

In the event you discover that a parent is unable to read or has a comprehension problem, do not draw attention to the fact, but privately offer to repeat the assignment until the parent can remember it. It is important that you do not embarrass the parent or act surprised or upset. People who may have literacy issues or who may have a learning disability usually respond very well to discreet, private assistance offered by a trainer or coordinator.

In the Teens group, teens may be at various reading and comprehension levels. It is important to review all workbook pages, even with Teens who appear to have higher reading levels. It is also important to have the Teens repeat instructions to check for understanding. Reading the scripts for the workbook pages, etc. are an excellent way to gain group participation, increase interest level of the teens, enhance the self-esteem of the participants, etc. but be sure to be sensitive to those who may have literacy issues or who may have a learning disability and find creative ways to involve lower reading level teens as well.

One of the ways to avoid any issues in relation to literacy issues is to perhaps assume that they may exist in the group and therefore design each lesson with this in mind, ensuring that at no point are any participants being asked to read or write anything. Where it may be absolutely necessary for something to be written down facilitators can do this for the participants.

Home Practice:

Assigning home practice to participants presents a unique challenge to facilitators. Without tangible incentives for parents and teens it may be possible that some will not be properly completed. Providing a scheduled "follow up" at the beginning of each session to review the homework assigned the previous week, will help participants increase home practice completion. To increase the chances that home practice is completed, facilitators may try several different strategies.

First, when assigning the home practice, parents and teens should understand the importance of the assignment. If they view it simply as unnecessary work, they may be less apt to even consider doing the assignment. In addition, having participants repeat back what they will be doing, to make sure they understand the home practice may also be helpful.

Second, if participants feel that the facilitators think the assignments will be useful and are important, they may be more likely to complete them. Facilitators should therefore be enthusiastic about the assignments.

Third, facilitators may institute incentives for home practice completion if this is possible and the families are involved in agreeing on appropriate incentives. Having group members involved in aspects like this may provide more “ownership” for the families, which will hopefully increase completion.

Lastly, facilitators who socially reinforce group members for completing the assignments at the beginning of each group have more success with follow through than those who do not review homework assignments.

Preparing for Graduation:

A fun activity may be to ask the families if they have any special talents that they could teach others that could be used as entertainment at the graduation, such as parents teaching teens dances, songs, meals, music, customs, games, etc (and vice versa). Some suggestions for the graduation may be: organising a buffet or special meal, a raffle, having a presentation of certificates, inviting a guest speaker, asking families if they wish to dress up, having a poem to be read out by a participant, playing party games, organising music, organising for photographs to be taken etc. Generally just discussing with the families what they wish to do in the run up, in order to celebrate the completion of the programme is a good idea.

These families have now successfully completed an intensive programme as a group and are entitled to enjoy and celebrate this very fact with a properly organized graduation ceremony. It is worth also remembering that facilitators have also shared this journey with the families and to make it equally special for them too. Sometimes, it has been found, that it’s the smaller, inexpensive, yet personalized touches (whether it be cards, designed cakes, a nicely laid table with place tags, the nice words that are said etc.) that have been found to be the things that families most appreciate on the graduation. If your graduation is falling close to a seasonal or holiday period it may be an idea to link this in (i.e. Easter eggs at Easter, Santa visiting at Christmas etc) Most of all make sure and make a Big Deal of what has been achieved over the last 14 weeks and probably most importantly of all....ENJOY IT 😊

Completing Evaluations:

Leaders should also allow adequate time at the end of the chosen group session(s) to complete the evaluation forms (see "Evaluation" section) and to chart the progress of individual parents, children or families where applicable through the debriefing session and through the reports compiled at the end of each session. If the leaders are completing programme evaluation forms at the end, be sure to document any programme adaptations on these forms also.

Referring on:

It is important for facilitators to be familiar with local and community resources. Services for those who need individual counseling, group counseling, family counseling, medical services, basic welfare services, etc., may already be accessed by some participants but unknown to others.

It is also critical that leaders do not offer advice or assistance for problems they are not trained to handle, but rather refer the family to more appropriate agencies through their referral agent and ensuring the referral agent is putting the appropriate interventions/support in place. This may be something a steering committee may wish to discuss ahead of the programme starting.

In addition, it may be an idea to coordinate services with schools, counselors and other community organisations while the SFP is running. Should participants be accessing other services the Steering Committee should discuss whether those facilitating should be aware of these, whilst also taking issues of confidentiality into consideration. Note: Steering Committees should make sure that all appropriate releases-of-information, confidentiality forms and other such documents are signed by families ahead of the programme.

The Site Co-ordinator should remind all SFP staff that there is to be no contact with SFP participants following the graduation ceremony (only at the Reunion night). Example: A Group Leader receives call from an SF participant wanting to talk to her about something to do with the course-the caller should be directed back to the Referral Agent.

Personal Talking:

How much personal talking to allow & why some of the sessions need to be open to it

Some hard-to-reach, insular, or minority parents may be uncomfortable with the demands for personal disclosure and intimacy in the parenting group. Try to be sensitive to these boundaries in the participants and not demand too much from them. Demands for personal disclosure can scare them away. They may feel uncomfortable if they do not understand how to complete the group homework assignments or the group exercises. Some high-risk parents, on the other hand, may be overly responsive to the chance to talk about their problems and may take up too much of the group's time. Facilitators should be prepared to suggest tactfully that they may be able to make some suggestions after group, but for now need to return to the lesson.

You will have to find the right balance between the skills training material and the personal need in some parents to discuss their parenting problems. For some parents there will not be enough time for personal sharing and disclosure, while for others there will be too much. Include humor and fun activities in your programme to lighten up the mood occasionally and make the group enjoyable.

Balancing free discussion with completion of exercises

It is very important that lessons are completed; however, there are times when discussion will be difficult to contain. Sometimes the discussion may be of an intensely personal or emotionally difficult nature, which would be insensitive of the facilitator to interrupt. The purpose of the programme is not to rigidly plan every minute of the hour with assignments; it encourages group problem-solving skills and allows for differences. On the other hand, the facilitator may need to restrain a parent or teen who insists on monopolizing the discussion and using the time to repeatedly enumerate their problems. One way to do this is to explain that the exercises are very important and you would like the group to complete them if possible. Once again, it is the facilitators evaluation of the circumstances that will provide the balance needed and their ability to do this is vital.

Disruptions:

Disruptions should be handled in a respectful but firm manner. Guidelines to follow governing disruptions should be discussed when the group rules are determined. Disruptions can be mild, from family members interrupting each other in the groups, a belligerent parent talking out of turn, etc. or serious, for example, one group member striking another.

In the case of a mild disruption by a parent, it is best to handle it with tact. Remind the disrupting individual that the spirit of the group is to consult and discuss problems and that the rules the group has set up say that this is not appropriate behavior. If possible, discuss the disruption in private with the individual, not in front of the other group members or children. If one or more of the Teens causes the disruption, again handle it with tact and humor. Remind the Teens of the rules and the consequences of their disruption. Try to maintain a positive attitude and discuss rules in terms of positive consequences and rewards for good behavior, not bad or negative consequences.

Serious disruptions, i.e. those involving drunk or drugged parents or teens and/or physical violence should be dealt with as carefully as possible. Before you begin the first session, the facilitators should consider the likelihood of these types of occurrences given the population of the participants and also discuss what your Steering Committee recommends as a course of action. If physical violence is involved, a policy regarding contacting the Guards or hospital should be made. These policies should be clear to all leaders (and participants) before the programme begins.

Non participation:

You can help members who are shy or do not feel like they have much to say by calling on them directly by saying their name. Be tactful and try not to put them on the spot and maybe address them with an easy question that everyone could answer. If it is really clear that some participants, either Teens or adults, do not want to speak in the groups, do not force them. The creators of SFP have found that in some groups, some participants feel they are not as well educated as others or and may embarrassed about speaking. Be sensitive to their needs and

wants. Also be alert for group members who may limit their participation because they read poorly or not at all. Use sensitivity in determining when to call on them.

Not all members must participate to learn. The developers of the SFP state that in a research study with single, low-income African American mothers in South USA, they found that those mothers who participated very little still learned as much.

Parent denial of impact on Teens:

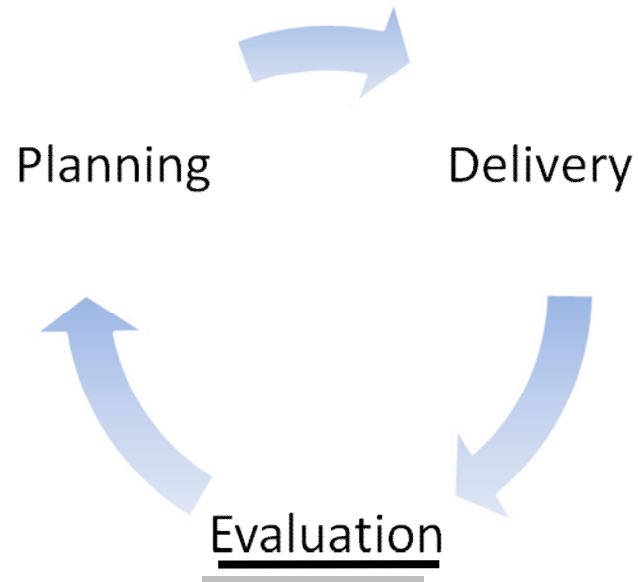
Some parents may be in denial about the degree of impact their example has on their Teens, particularly in the area of their own alcohol or drug use. Many parents feel that their teens should do as the parent says, not as the parent does. There have been occasions where parents have become argumentative and have left a session which brings up the impact of the parents' example on their children. SFP encourages facilitators to be very sensitive to the group dynamic during these sessions and whenever this topic comes up. In addition, some parents may have an ethos based around the fact that if they give their children alcohol or drugs at home early, they will not use with their friends at parties later.

Dealing with crisis levels:

Working with at-risk parents and their children requires sensitivity and flexibility. It is not uncommon for parents and children to come to group sessions in crisis (i.e. family fights prior to group, arrests, and participants coming under the influence of drugs or alcohol, etc.). DO NOT IGNORE THESE PROBLEMS. Ignoring the problems participants bring to group can be counterproductive for group process and impact the entire group, not just those who came to the group in crisis. It is therefore important for facilitators to be flexible and meet the needs of the participants first, adapting the curriculum to them, or at least processing the dynamics first. Discussing rewards and incentives may not have much meaning when a parent is going through his or her own crisis. In other words, START WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS ARE. Do not present material members are obviously not ready to handle.

Stage Three

Evaluation of the Strengthening Families Programme (12-16 yrs)



Evaluation of the Strengthening Families Programme

(when funded by Le Chéile SFP)

In order for Steering Committees to receive funding from Le Chéile, they must agree to an evaluation of the programme and/or supply outcomes using whatever tools agreed.

It is essential for the Steering Committees and Site Co-ordinators to ensure that all relevant information for evaluation is collated throughout the programme and submitted within an agreed timeframe where necessary.

Lutra Group have an in-built evaluation instrument contained within their cd-rom Strengthening Families Programme (12-16 yrs) 2006 which is one such evaluation option. This comprises of the use of a number of evaluation instruments contained in the SFP (12-16 yrs) cd-rom 2006 version.

Please note that any agencies that wish to use additional Lutra instruments for evaluation purposes (marked *) need to contact Le Chéile to discuss as there may be additional charges by the Lutra Group for the analysis of this data. However, agencies may wish to use these additional instruments for their own purposes and are free to contact the Lutra Group directly.

Please note that the members of staff of the Lutra Group can also conduct site visits to programmes for the purpose of process evaluations, the cost of which would be an additional cost to the standard Lutra evaluation and would need to be further explored by the Steering Committee. Please contact Le Chéile for more information or contact Lutra directly.

In addition, any Site Co-ordinator and/or Steering Committees who intend to have their programme evaluated by an agency/research team outside of the Lutra Group or Le Chéile should disclose this at the funding application stage.

The Site Co-ordinator and Steering Committee should familiarise themselves with whatever agreed upon evaluation instruments before the commencement of the programme.

Note: The following information on the Lutra Group Evaluation tool is based on information supplied to Le Chéile by the Lutra Group and is not intended to replace any existing/current evaluation information or advice supplied directly to agencies by the Lutra Group

SFP (12-16 yrs) Evaluation Instruments

Lutra Evaluation Instruments	Steering Committee	Le Chéile	Lutra Group
Mandatory: Site Information Survey	Steering Committee to keep a copy and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	Steering Committee to send copy to Le Chéile-Le Chéile to retain copy.	Le Chéile forward copy to Lutra. Lutra to use as part of the evaluation.
Mandatory: Excel spreadsheet: Participant Data Return Sheet (available from Le Chéile only)	Steering Committee to keep a copy and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	Steering Committee to send copy to Le Chéile-Le Chéile to retain copy.	Le Chéile to forward copy to Lutra. Lutra to use this as it replaces the Word table in the Site Information Survey.
Mandatory: SFP Adult Retrospective Pre/Post test.	Steering Committee to send the original to Le Chéile but to retain a copy and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	Le Chéile to send originals to Lutra and also retain a copy.	Le Chéile to forward originals to Lutra. Lutra to use as part of the evaluation.
All other documents containing identifying information on participants, e.g. attendance sheets, referral forms, Site Co-ordinator log.	Steering Committee to keep these and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	No need to send to Le Chéile.	No need to send to Lutra.
Notes from Steering Committee meetings relating to their perceptions of the programme, i.e. in house evaluations.	Steering Committee advised to keep a copy of these notes and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	Le Chéile welcomes copies of any Steering Committee notes on the outputs, outcomes, adaptations or learning's of the SFP.	These notes may be sent on to Lutra by Le Chéile as additional information to accompany the mandatory documents.

Leader Questionnaires *	Steering Committee to keep originals and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	Le Chéile would welcome any extra information contained.	No need to send to Lutra. These are not analysed by Lutra.
Attendance/Client Progress Forms *	Steering Committee to keep originals and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	If completed, a copy to be sent on to Le Chéile.	At present, these are not analysed by Lutra. They can be analysed at an extra cost.
Client Satisfaction Form	Steering Committee to keep originals and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	If completed, a copy to be sent on to Le Chéile.	At present, these are not analysed by Lutra. They can be analysed at an extra cost.
Parent Knowledge Questionnaires	Steering Committee to keep originals and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	If completed, a copy to be sent on to Le Chéile.	At present, these are not analysed by Lutra.
Group Leader Training and Delivery Assessment.	Steering Committee to keep originals and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	Le Chéile would welcome any extra information contained.	No particular need to send to Lutra.
SFP 12-16 Youth Retro Pre/Post Test Questionnaire	Steering Committee to keep originals and store under data protection policies of lead agency/Steering Committee.	If completed, a copy to be sent to Le Chéile.	At present, these are not analysed by Lutra. They can be analysed at an extra cost.

* See next page.

Mandatory Instruments:

(1) SFP Site Information Survey (version July 2009):

It is essential that the Site Co-ordinator and/or Steering Committee complete this form and return with the SFP Adult Retrospective Pre/Post test. Le Chéile can assist you with completion of this form.

(2) Excel Spreadsheet Participant Data Return Sheet (version July 2009):

It is essential that the Site Co-ordinator and/or Steering Committee complete this spreadsheet. Note: this spreadsheet replaces the table contained within the Site Information Survey July 09

(3) SFP Adult Retrospective Pre/Post test (version July 2009):

It is essential that this questionnaire is administered and completed with the adult participants just before or just after the end of the programme. This is commonly completed at the second last session, the final session or one week after the final session. Please contact Le Chéile for more advice on the administration of this questionnaire.

Why do the questionnaire retrospectively?

According to the Lutra Group:

- Facilitators had previously reported that they felt that the pretest was not an accurate reflection of what the families were like. They reported that they felt that the parents are often not honest in their answers and/or don't really know the concepts or are good reporters of their behaviors until they do their monitoring homework in the programme.
- Lutra have found that with some disenfranchised families and some families involved with the criminal justice system, parents may tend to underreport problems on both types of pretest (Parent and Youth) but not as much on a retro test. Under-reporting can reduce the effect sizes and number of significant outcomes.
- Administering the questionnaire before the programme commences could increase dropout because some parents object to doing the pretest and answering such personal questions in session one or at an orientation night and sometimes may not come back.

Non Mandatory Instruments:

Please note that these forms are **not** returned to the Lutra Group for analysis. They are for in-house evaluation purposes only. Site Co-ordinators and/or Steering Committees can choose whether or not to ask facilitators to complete these forms.

(1) *Leader Session Rating Form:

If completed, then this form can be completed by each leader for each session (parents' group, teen's group, and family group). The 10-question form allows leaders to rate the session on a 1-5 scale covering information regarding overall satisfaction with a particular session, completion of material to be covered, leader delivery, group enthusiasm, appropriateness and flow of presentation, usefulness of homework assignments, group activities and usefulness of the particular session in general, and difficulty of session.

(2) *Attendance/Client Progress Form:

The Steering Committee should note that the completion of this documentation may need to be disclosed to the participants (i.e. the family). Steering Committees and Site Co-ordinators should be mindful of this should they wish to complete these forms.

The "Attendance/Client Progress Form" allows leaders to track attendance, punctuality, and completion of homework. It also allows each participant (or family group) to be evaluated on a 1-5 scale on the following criteria: attention and participation, amount of disclosure and sharing, appropriateness of disclosure and sharing, supportiveness of others, interest level, motivational level, and competency in concept.

The teen's form also includes four additional variables: completion of in-class assignments, behavior, level of sharing (toys, games, food), and cooperativeness. Totals are then determined for each participant by adding the ratings from the 1-5 scale. Leaders can use this information to note areas in which they need to support clients in becoming more involved in the sessions. In addition, this information can be used to predict client outcomes.

Follow Up / Booster Sessions

Following the completion of the fourteen sessions, it is recommended addressing follow-up and on-going support for families, this includes linkage when necessary to community services. This may also include any plan for a 3 month, 6-month, 9 month, 12 month Follow-up or Booster Session.

At these sessions the families come together again. It is an opportunity for the families to reflect on the programmes impact on their lives, receive assistance in content areas unclear or problematic, to receive new educational or family skill building, participate in programme evaluation and, moreover, reinforce the positive bonds they built with each other in the programme. The format for these sessions is flexible and determined by the needs of the families, the steering committee, facilitators, the evaluators and the funding prerequisites.

It is advisable for Steering Committees to plan for these Follow Up sessions or booster sessions accordingly at the Funding Application Stage as there may be a cost and time element associated with this. The Steering Committee should also put in place an agreed format for a Follow Up session or Booster Session and have a very clear aim for each session. Guidelines may need to be written by the Steering Committee around issues that may arise during a booster or follow up session.

Benefits of Follow Up/Booster Sessions	Issues to Consider
Families have participation in programme evaluation, i.e. tracking the impact months on from completion. This can be useful for Steering Committees and future funding.	It may be confusing for participants and facilitators if there is no clear aim for what the session is about and if there is no identified leader of the session.
Families and participants may enjoy and have fun!	Families or facilitators may not be able to attend as they may be involved in other duties since the end of the programme and may have not the time to come to the booster or follow up session
Families are given the opportunity to reflect on skills learnt and the impact it has had on their lives.	The SFP is designed to be a brief intervention and not a long term supportive service, may need to address this when deciding on the frequency and content of the reunion or booster session.
Reinforcement of bonds built during the programme.	Families may disclose concerning information at these sessions which would need to be addressed by the leader of the session and passed on to the relevant authorities.
Families receive some assistance with programme on material that they felt was unclear or problematic at time of doing the programme.	Is the funding and other resources needed available to run this?



Le Chéile Strengthening Families Programme (12-16yrs)

**Sample Policies for agencies funded by Le Chéile delivering the
Strengthening Families Programme**

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Introduction to Sample SFP Policies

The Policies that follow have been drafted as an aid to Steering Committees receiving funding from Le Chéile to deliver the Strengthening Families Programme.

They can be used as a guide for Steering Committee who are welcome to edit and adapt them to their specific regional needs whilst ensuring they are keeping the best interests of personnel, participants, children/teens, parents/guardians and families on the programme as the key element

These policies have been developed in-conjunction with a number of services on an inter-agency basis with the best interests of families at heart and a number of them have been utilised on numerous programmes running in Ireland to date.

Some of these policies were shared with Le Chéile by other agencies involved in SFP around the country or were developed and adapted by Le Chéile or in conjunction with steering committees involved in rolling out a SFP. They are being made available in the spirit of ensuring a SFP is run under best practice principles to the benefit of the families, agencies involved and the community as a whole.

These policies are by no means meant to be all encompassing, definitive or legally binding articles but should be utilized or carefully adapted where appropriate by the steering committee as a whole. Programmes that receive funds from Le Chéile should discuss, edit and adapt these policies unless similar or existing policies are suitable and preferred by the Steering Committee.

For Le Chéile funded programmes, a dramatic change of policy usage should always be discussed with Le Chéile. Le Chéile accepts no liability for programmes which do not use policies which come from a best practice ethos and do not take into consideration child protection issues and the overall duty of care to the families and facilitators taking part in the SFP.

Any feedback, suggestions, additions or omissions to these policies are most welcome

Child Protection

Every Steering Committee should commit to delivering best practice in terms of Child Protection issues. Ideally an expert in this area should sit on or advise the Steering Committee where appropriate. What follows is a sample of issues, policies and procedures that a steering committee should consider in relation to Child Protection. These are based on information from the child protection guidelines “Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children” which at all times should be used as the model from which to work off within the SFP.

Deliverers of the Strengthening Families Programmes should be fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of young people. All personnel involved should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of the child.

On the Strengthening Families Programme, participants may make certain disclosures that may require ethical decisions on the part of the personnel involved. These personnel should be aware of certain considerations, and at the same time, be aware of relevant regulations, and legislation within this area of work.

Agencies implementing the Strengthening Families Program should be particularly alert to signs and symptoms of child abuse.

If abuse is detected, the Steering Committee should follow the child abuse and sexual abuse reporting requirements of the state and their agency's and the Steering Committees policies for dealing with cases of suspected sexual abuse as agreed.

Child abuse is a difficult subject, and it is understandable that people may at times be reluctant to acknowledge its existence. Facilitators may be afraid of being thought to be insensitive, afraid of breaking confidence or afraid of being disloyal to the young person if they report suspected child abuse. However these fears should never override the right of our young person to be protected from harm.

Any suspicions of abuse should be reported directly to the Site Co-Ordinator, who will in turn discuss it with the referring agent, and together they should decide what necessary action to take (i.e. whether to report it to the local HSE and/or Gardaí). If it is an emergency and it is outside health board hours, the Site Co-Ordinator may report the concern directly to An Garda Síochána. In these cases, the site co-ordinator is simply referring allegations of abuse, subsequently these may or may not be substantiated.

"DON'T TALK" ISSUES AND FAMILY SECRETS

Families may have certain issues that are not discussed, often by unspoken mutual consent. This may be especially true of families where substance or other abuse has taken place. One can usually tell if a sensitive area has been touched upon by the silence of one or more group members.

If you suspect from the preceding conversation that the secret may involve child or sexual abuse, you must remember that you usually are bound by law to report the offense, but at the same time, it could be unethical to badger the member to disclose this information. If the participant has been warned of your duty to report, and you are sure the member understands, but he or she still wants to provide the information, then it is his or her privilege to do so.

If one group member tells a harmless family secret (such as the fact that no one in their house gets up until after noon) or a non-reportable family secret (for example, that his mother is having an affair), the information should be treated respectfully. The leader should be careful not to react with surprise or dismay.

Procedures for Reporting Abuse

Write down the information. You must be factual. Note any conversation, disclosures and concerns you have. Remember confidentiality, you should not discuss the above with anyone other than the site co-ordinator or the Gardaí/HSE. You should write down this information as soon as possible after your meeting with the young person.

Contact the Site Co-ordinator. The Site co-ordinator should be contacted first; if they are not available then you should contact the local health board and then An Garda Síochána. Remember you are not the decision maker in this process you must always pass it on.

Complete a serious incident report. This should be completed with as much detail as possible and passed on to the Site Co-ordinator. The Site co-ordinator will contact the relevant parties.

Principles for Best Practice in Child Protection

- The welfare of the young person is of paramount importance.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting the young person and respecting the rights and needs of the parents/carers and families; but where there is conflict, the young person's welfare must come first.
- The young person has the right to be heard and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and level of understanding, they should be consulted and involved in relation to all matters and decisions that affect their lives.
- Early intervention and support should be available to promote the welfare of young people and their families, particularly where they are vulnerable or at risk of not receiving adequate care and protection.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which concern their family.

Duty to Protect Children

Parents/carers have primary responsibility for the care and protection of their children. When they do not fulfil this responsibility, it may be necessary for the Health Service Executive to intervene.

The wider community also has a responsibility for the welfare and protection of children (a child is defined as any person under the age of 18). All facilitators involved in the Strengthening Families Programme working with young people should be alert to the possibility of child abuse. You need to be aware of your obligation to convey any reasonable concerns or suspicions, to your site co-ordinator who in turn will advise you on steps to take or will themselves notify the appropriate authorities. The site co-ordinator does not have the authority to investigate child abuse or suspected cases; but will notify the relevant bodies that are responsible for this.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse. A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

Neglect is normally defined in terms of an omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

Emotional Abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. This form of abuse is often present with other forms of abuse.

Examples include:

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming.
- Emotional unavailability by the young person's parent/carer.
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child.
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the young person.
- Under- or over-protection of the young person
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age appropriate opportunities for the child's cognitive and emotional development.
- Use of unreasonable or over harsh disciplinary measures.
- Exposure to domestic violence.

Physical Abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child.

Examples include:

- Shaking or suffocation.
- Deliberate poisoning
- Use of excess force in handling
- Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a young person.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of other

Examples include:

- Exposure of sexual organs.
- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child.
- Intentional touching or molestation of the body of a child or the involvement of a child in act of masturbation.
- Sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- Sexual exploitation of a child including inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts.
- When a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act including the recording on film, video tape, computer images or any other form of media.
- Showing sexual explicit material to a child.
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person. In relation to child sexual abuse the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years. This means that sexual intercourse between a 16 year old girl and her 17 year old boyfriend is illegal, although it may not be regarded as constituting child sexual abuse. Therefore when an underage participant is involved in such circumstances it is a matter for professional judgement and each case should be considered individually.

Responsibility to Report

Any Facilitator who suspects a young person is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, or has been abused in the past - has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Site co-ordinator who will in turn report it to the Referral Agent and follow proper procedure.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act (1998)

Anyone who reports a suspected case of child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' has immunity from civil liability. Giving information on others for the protection of a child does not constitute a breach of confidentiality.

Allegations of Abuse against Facilitators

If an allegation of abuse is made against a facilitator, due regard should be had for the rights and interests of the child on the one hand, and those of the facilitator on the other hand.

It is possible that Facilitators may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support should be provided for the facilitator in question from the Steering Committee. However, the primary goal is to protect the young person while taking care to treat the facilitator fairly. If an allegation is made the facilitator may be asked to step down from the SFP while a full investigation is carried out. This investigation will be passed on to the necessary authorities to be investigated.

Recognising Child Abuse

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always visible. The recognition of abuse normally runs along the following stages:

1. **Considering the possibility.** If a child appears to have suffered an inexplicable and suspicious looking injury, seems distressed without obvious reason, displays unusual behavioural problems or appears fearful in the company of parents/carers.
2. **Observing signs of abuse.** A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Children may make direct or indirect disclosures, which should always be taken seriously. Less obvious disclosures may be gently explored with a child, without direct questioning (which should always be carried out by the Gardaí or HSE). Indications of harm must always be considered in relation to the child's social and family context, and it is important to always be open to alternative explanations.
3. **Recording of Information.** It is important to establish the grounds for concern by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be recorded and should include **dates, times, names, locations, context** and any other information which could be considered relevant or which might facilitate assessment/investigation.
4. **Report Concern** If you have any concerns you must report and discuss them with the site co-ordinator immediately.

Consideration if you suspect a young person is being abused

It can be difficult to know whether or not your suspicions about child abuse are real. Before you act on them, you need to consider whether any alternative explanation might exist and ask yourself these questions:

- Is there any other reason why the young person may be behaving a particular way?
- Is there a pattern to this type of occurrence?
- Did you or anyone else see what happened?
- Has the young person said anything to indicate that he/she is being harmed?
- Could injuries or signs be caused another way?

If you have considered these questions and you are still concerned, it is likely that you have reasonable grounds to take some action and you should report your suspicions.

A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective signs of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion, or reasonable grounds for concern.

(If you are unsure what constitutes reasonable grounds for concern then you should discuss the issues with the site co-ordinator).

Sample Child Protection Policy/Protocol

The Strengthening Families Programme is a confidential programme with exception to issues relating to Child Protection. The Strengthening Families Programme recognises its responsibility under **Children First** Guidelines to report any Child protection concerns to the relevant agencies (Gardai & Child Protection Social Work Dept) where disclosure is made indicating a child is at risk. The protocol for this within the programme is as follows:

1. All families involved in the Strengthening Families Programme will be informed of the protocol for dealing with disclosures prior to commencing on the programme.
2. The Site co-ordinator will be the Designated Officer in discussing or dealing with any child protection concerns that arise
3. Where a disclosure is made in the group the facilitator(s) will report such incidents only to the Site Co-ordinator on the night. A decision will be made as to whether to refer the child to the Gardai (if at immediate risk or in an unsafe situation) or to wait and inform the Child Protection Department the following day (if appropriate) the next day. (Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation of risk pending contact with a statutory agency. Gardai must be informed as per Children's First Guidelines if child is at risk out of hours.)
4. The referral agent for the family will also be informed the following day or as soon as possible.
5. A child protection referral will be made to social work where appropriate, following Children's First Guidelines.
6. Should a referral be submitted to a Child Protection Social Work department, then the Designated Officer will make a referral to the Social Work Department. The family will be notified by the Designated Officer unless to do so would place the child in greater danger.
7. All such issues will be recorded on the night (by the personnel that heard the disclosure) on an incident form, this will be then passed to the Site Co-ordinator (Designated Officer). The steering committee will be notified with an outline of the situation by the Site Co-ordinator (Designated Officer).
8. The facilitators will continue to monitor the family and report any further concerns to the relevant agency

Sample Child/Elder/Other Care Reimbursement Policy (Off Site)

The aim of this policy is to assist parents/guardians and their teenage children to attend the Strengthening Families Programme by providing financial support to families that could otherwise not attend the programme due to the child, elder or other care needs in the family home. The steering group may make a contribution to care costs in appropriate cases which have been signed off by the referral agent and the parent/guardian.

Parents/Guardians eligible for this support must be participating on the Strengthening Families Programme. By making this financial support available it is hoped to assist those who might not otherwise access this programme.

It is the policy of the SFP Steering Committee to ensure that all parents attending the SFP have the ability to do so through the provision of financial support for care needs for as long as they attend the programme, or until the end of same, whichever comes first.

(The Steering Committee should afford support to any parent/guardian attending the programme in line with equal status legislation (non-discriminatory))

Objectives

- To meet, through very practical means, a specific need identified in; child/elder or other care provision for parents/guardians attending the Strengthening Families Programme.
- To ensure that parents/guardians are able to continue to fulfill their care obligations in the manner in which best suits their needs. In doing so it is hoped to alleviate disruption to the routine of those not attending the programme.
- To help parents/guardians face and overcome the very real challenge of managing the issue of care needs whilst financially supporting the access of same.

The contribution made by the SFP Committee will be up to a maximum of 75% (or whatever agreed figure by the steering committee) of the care costs and this will be assessed on a case by case basis dependent on individual care needs and requirements. This contribution will also enable families to preserve their dignity in providing care by being responsible for 25% of the remaining costs.

How to Apply for Child/Elder/Other Care Reimbursement

- Parents/Guardians can apply for this support through their Referral Agent
- The Referral Agent will complete and return the endorsement forms (included in the forms section of this info pack) to the Site Coordinator who will establish the eligibility of the parent/guardian.
- The Site Coordinator will confirm eligibility with the Referral Agent and supply details of the contribution to be made and the details of how this will be administrated.
- The referral agent will support the parent in sourcing a suitable care provider where necessary and ensuring any currently in place is of a suitable nature
- Contributions will be made to parents/guardians on a weekly/bi weekly/ monthly basis or at the end of the programme depending on the specifics and logistics of the programme funding. Parents/guardians will not be entitled to (nor receive) any (such) contributions for evenings where they have not attended.
- Parents are responsible for paying their care provider directly and the contribution of the SFP towards childcare will be given directly to the parent.
- The Strengthening Families Programme accepts no responsibility for the care provider, the child(ren)/adults in care or payments for service or any other related issues regarding arrangements for care for those not attending the programme
- For any specific issues that may arise relating to Childcare and Babysitting it is recommended that contact is made with a relevant agency in your region for advice i.e. ISPCC, Barnardos, Childcare Centres etc.

Sample Confidentiality Policy

These guidelines are required for the safe and efficient performance of facilitator duties and the maintenance of satisfactory relationships between the participants, SFP personnel and all the agencies involved.

It is expected that facilitators will observe these standards in practice at all times whilst involved in their role with the Strengthening Families Programme. In situations where a facilitator breaches the conditions of this policy, the matter may be raised with them by the site co-ordinator.

In the case of a serious incident or an inappropriate display of behaviour on the part of a facilitator, they may be asked to end their involvement with the Strengthening Families Programme.

Facilitators must notify their Site Co-ordinator immediately if they are the subject of action by the Gardaí due to committing an alleged offence of any kind.

Facilitators should regard all information they have access to or are given in relation to clients as being confidential unless advised otherwise. No information should be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement of the referring agent, the site co-ordinator and/or the individual concerned, as appropriate.

Facilitators should not disclose personal details (home or work address, telephone number etc) to clients.

Records and other information relating to SFP participants must be stored securely to prevent accidental or intentional viewing by anyone.

Clients have a right to access their own personal records. All personal information collected and held throughout the SFP is protected under the Data Protection Act.

Breaking Confidentiality

All group and one-to-one conversations that occur should remain confidential and within the confines of the SFP unless the health and safety of a client is at risk. All clients should be made aware that any such information may be shared within the project on a strict 'need to know' basis

The health and safety of the client is of paramount importance and anything that threatens this must be reported. All facilitators have a responsibility to report any issues to their site co-ordinator. You should explain the reasons for this to the clients, both at the beginning of the programme and at any time of a disclosure.

Confidentiality may be breached in the following circumstances:

- If the facilitator receives information that a participant may be in danger or at risk.
- If the facilitator receives information that a participant may be a danger to him/herself or to others.
- Where a participant discloses, or you have serious concerns about abuse, sexual, emotional or physical abuse.
- Where a facilitator is aware that a participant intends to get involved or is already involved in criminal activities.
- Where the facilitator is aware that a participant under the age of 17 is engaging in sexual relations with another person or persons. Additionally where the young person is 17 and older, it must be reported when they disclose a sexual relationship with someone under 17 years old.
- Where a participant discloses, or the facilitator has concerns about the participants mental health, including issues around self-harm.

In any of these circumstances the Site Co-ordinator should be informed. They will then inform the appropriate agencies and authorities, depending on the details of the situation. The participant should be informed of the need to breach confidentiality prior to it happening. Where this is not possible (in an emergency) the participant will be informed of the breach at the earliest possible opportunity.

Confidentiality must be stressed in the programme from the very first session. The group participants should be reminded at the ending of each session during the reminders for homework and during the closing circle that they should not discuss any personal information heard during this session with anyone outside of the group.

Confidentiality and keeping the information within the group should also be stressed because family secrets may also involve drug or alcohol abuse, or distribution. In this case it may be up to your discretion as to how to proceed, but you should be aware of the consequences on the member and what they are trying to accomplish in the parenting class.

Participants should be made aware that the disclosure of certain problems (abuse, etc.) could lead to a report being filed with the proper authority. Facilitators should meet with the site coordinator to discuss the handling of these kinds of problems.

Sample Health and Safety Policy

It is the policy of the Steering Committee to promote high standards of health and safety and to ensure that the best practicable methods of compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and associated legislation are achieved. All issues relating to Health and Safety within the building being used should be checked by the Steering Committee before commencement of the programme to ensure the premises are suitable and it complies with all elements of the act and any other relevant regulations.

The Steering Committee should strive to provide a healthy and safe environment in which to run the SFP. In accordance with the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and any Regulations made there under, together with EU Directive 89/391/ECC (“the Health and Safety legislation”), the Steering Committee should be committed to developing and maintaining a safety culture that ensures the safety, health and welfare of all on the premises chosen.

Steering Committee Duties

To this end, the Steering Committees should undertake to oversee the SFP in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all personnel and participants and/or other persons to include:

- Ensuring adequate resources are provided to ensure that proper provision can be made for health and safety
- Ensuring adequate numbers of suitably trained personnel are available to undertake the activities involved.
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available to provide necessary information and training with respect to health and safety.
- Preventing, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare of personnel or participants at risk.
- Ensuring safety and prevention of risk from the use of any substances or articles, from noise, vibration or ionising or other radiations or any other physical agent at the chosen venue
- Reporting accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health & Safety Authority

Personnel and Participant Duties:

In line with Health and Safety Policy all SFP Personnel have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid accidents and to prevent injuries to themselves and those involved on the SFP. The health and safety of both the SFP personnel and participants is paramount and should not be compromised at any time

SFP personnel have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that they protect their own health and safety, and that any act or omission on their part does not put any other person at risk. All members of the Strengthening Families personnel team are expected to demonstrate

their commitment towards a safe and healthy work environment by complying with the Strengthening Families health and safety policy and associated procedures.

All personnel and participants in the SFP should be aware of their own obligations under the legislation which include:

- Taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or fail to do:
- Ensure that they don't attend the SFP under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs to the extent that they might endanger their own safety, health and welfare or that of others.
- Fully co-operate with the Steering Committee on health and safety policy
- Not to engage in improper conduct or other behaviour that is likely to endanger their own safety or welfare or that of any other person.
- Report to the Steering Committee any work being carried on, any defect in the place of work, and/or any contravention to the Health and Safety Legislation of which they become aware which might likely endanger their safety, health and welfare
- As best as possible participants should not be left unattended during the SFP.
- No drugs or alcohol should be taken either before or during a meeting.
- Facilitators should not be alone with participants who are suspected of being violent, who are being aggressive or where there is clear tension between you both.

Accidents

All accidents and incidents no matter how trivial must be reported immediately to the site co-ordinator who should report it back to the steering committee and the building managers, who should record the details in the accident book in line with the Data Protection Act 2003, and /or report the accident or incident to the relevant authority in line with health and safety legislation where appropriate.

All SFP personnel must ensure that any participants in the group they are facilitating received appropriate care and attention should an accident occur during the programme. If necessary, they should be taken to Accident & Emergency and a parent/guardian/carer or family member should be informed immediately and who should accompany them.

First Aid

Should any personnel or participant become injured, however minor, he/she must notify a First Aid Officer immediately. If they are unable to move, the First Aid Officer in the building must be informed and brought to the scene of the accident or incident. If further medical assistance is required, the emergency services should be contacted.

Lifting of objects

SFP personnel should never try to lift or move heavy objects in the course of their participation with SFP and should get those in charge of managing the building to arrange for such actions. SFP personnel have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that they protect their own health and safety, and that any act or omission on their part does not put any other person at risk.

Insurance

All SFP Personnel should be covered by their own organisations Public and Professional Liability Insurance. For further details contact the Site Co-ordinator who can bring this issue to the Steering Committee.

Administration of Medication

It is not appropriate to give medication to any person participating on the SFP. If such a matter does arise, the facilitator/personnel involved should inform the Site Co-ordinator who will in turn inform the Parent of that Teen that there is a medication need. In rare cases where a young person under 18 years may need medication during the course of the SFP, an agreement should be made between the Site Co-ordinator and Teen and parent/guardian and a consent form should be completed.

Supervision of Teens and Children

At all times during the arrival, dinner, break and finishing periods the parents/guardians are responsible for supervising and the welfare of their teens. Parents should be informed of this at the start of the programme and as best as possible, no teen should not be left unattended during the course of the programme. Back up facilitators and floaters are essential to ensure that teens are not left unsupervised if they need to leave the group for any reason. In particular during any breaks, parents should be clearly told to supervise their teens and children.

Accidents whilst on the programme.

All SFP personnel must ensure that the participants and group with whom they are facilitating received appropriate care and attention should an accident occur during their programme. If necessary, they should be taken to Accident & Emergency and a parent/guardian/carer or family member should be informed immediately (or in the case of the programme must accompany their young person). The Site Co-ordinator should be informed at the earliest opportunity and will assist you in completing a Serious Incident/Accident Report.

Physical Assault/Aggression

SFP Personnel should never tolerate the use of offensive or inappropriate language, especially if it is aimed in an aggressive manner, even in the form of a joke. As SFP personnel may not be trained in methods of physical restraint, they should never attempt to discipline or restrain a client who becomes physically violent. SFP personnel have a duty to try to verbally calm participants but should they become very aggressive, (to the point where they may put themselves or others at risk) assistance should be sought from another SFP personnel or the Gardaí. The Site Co-ordinator may need to contact the Referral Agent and a Serious Incident/Accident Report should be completed. Facilitators should not be alone with participants who are suspected of being violent or aggressive or where there is clear tension between you both.

Breach of Health and Safety

Any failure to comply with Health and Safety Policy or rules and/or any breach of the matters referred to in the related buildings safety statement may result in appropriate disciplinary procedures including appropriate sanctions up to and including dismissal from the SFP as decided by the Steering Committee.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Venues should have their own procedures in place and these should always be known and followed by participants

On suspecting or discovering a fire:

- Raise the alarm by breaking the glass of the nearest fire alarm call point
- Notify the Site Co-Ordinator/Building Fire Marshal who will call emergency services
- Follow the fire evacuation procedures of the building by leaving through the nearest available exit.

On hearing the fire alarm:

- Follow the instructions of the fire wardens and leave the building by the nearest exit route immediately (all exit routes should be clearly marked)
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Do not run or push past other participants
- Do not re-enter the building during an evacuation
- Do not obstruct an access route that may be used by the emergency services
- Do keep calm
- Do remain at the assembly point until allowed back into building

Sample Drugs and Alcohol Policy

One of the aims of the Strengthening Families Programme is to provide substance use education. The objective of providing such information is to reduce the risks associated with drug and alcohol use for both parents and teens alike. Therefore, it is conducive to have a policy on drugs and alcohol for the duration of the programme itself.

The Steering Committee and Site Coordinator should discuss the SFP Drugs and Alcohol Policy with SFP facilitators/ personnel and the group participants

While the reality that alcohol and drugs may have become an integral part of everyday life for some families, the Steering Committee and SFP personnel involved do not need to accept either a participant or a SFP personnel on the programme while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The safety of participants, facilitators and other relevant personnel is paramount and at no time during the programme should this be compromised.

At no time should a facilitator or SFP personnel give alcohol or drugs to a person that is taking part in the programme, regardless of their age. Alcohol and/or drugs should not be sold, bought or consumed onsite throughout the SFP weekly sessions by an SFP participant or facilitator/ personnel member.

In accordance with the ethos of the SFP it is unacceptable for either a participant or SFP facilitators/personnel members to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while attending the SFP as it may impair their ability to facilitate and/or participate.

SFP Personnel should never turn up to a weekly session whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs (unless medicated). Such an incident would be viewed as extremely serious and the facilitator or personnel involved may be disengaged from the programme as a consequence. This requirement is also a legal duty under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Facilitators or SFP personnel members should ensure that they do not smell of alcohol when undertaking their work as this may spark a reaction in some people who have had past experiences linked to the consumption of alcohol.

Facilitators should discuss with the group participants at the beginning of the programme that alcohol and drugs are not to be taken either before or during the weekly session. If this happens then the Site Co-ordinator will speak with the family member privately and ask them to leave the session and rejoin the following week. This information may be passed on to the Referral Agent. This should be clear from the onset.

Should a participant arrive under the influence of alcohol or drugs (unless medicated) they should not be permitted to join the session. In the case of a young person you will need to ask their parent to accompany them home safely. Record the incident on a Serious Incident/Accident Report.

If an incident of drug and/or alcohol use by one of the participants does come to the attention of the Site Coordinator or a Facilitator the following steps may be taken;

- The SFP facilitator/personnel member notifies the Site Coordinator.
- The Site Coordinator will speak with the family member(s) privately, ensuring a parent/carer is present in the case of dealing with a young person
- The family member(s) may be asked to leave the session, with the option of rejoining the following week
- Inform the family that if an incident of drug and alcohol use happens within the programme on a second occasion they will may be asked to leave the programme permanently for the benefit of the others in the programme
- In the case of a young person, ask their parent(s) to accompany them home safely.
- Record the incident on a Serious Incident/Accident Report and conduct any follow-up necessary
- Pass this information onto the Referral Agent and Steering Committee.

Guidance on Cigarettes

The legal age to smoke is 18 years. SFP personnel should never give cigarettes to a participant under 18 years of age. When involved in the programme you should strive to dissuade under 18's from smoking. As a general guideline it is best practice not to smoke with any of the participants, unless both parties are smokers and over 18 years of age.

As a SFP Personnel member you may be in a position to influence and encourage a participant who expresses a desire to quit smoking and help is available from the National Quitline 1850 201 203.

Guidance on Substance Use Education

Session Eight of the programme discusses alcohol and other drugs. It outlines the difference between legal and illegal drugs to the young people. It also provides a forum to discuss how drugs including alcohol affect how people feel or behave and what young people can do if they are offered drugs or alcohol. This session explains how parents/guardians awareness of and attitudes to drug and alcohol use can influence their teenagers. It also explains to parents what puts teenagers at risk of drug and alcohol use and why some teenagers may be more at risk than others. Some protective factors regarding teenagers attitudes to drug and alcohol use are also referred to.

This session is not intended to be a comprehensive curricular on drug and alcohol uses and abuses. However, it is important that SFP facilitators/ personnel are confidently informed on Substance Use Education. Any training or information on Substance Use Education SFP facilitators/ personnel feel they may require is available on request by contacting their local drugs task force or Health Promotion Unit.

Sample Spillage of Blood / Bodily fluids Policy & Procedure

(Adapted courtesy of the North East Regional Drugs Task Force)

Definition of 'Bodily Fluids' – any blood/bloody fluid / tissue, vaginal / seminal / nasal secretions, cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, amniotic fluids, saliva, tears, sputum, sweat, vomitus, urine and faeces.

The following procedure is to be followed immediately after spillage:

The area in which the spillage has occurred is to be evacuated of all families and SFP personnel. The SFP Personnel that witnessed the spillage should inform the building manager who should clean the spillage using the Biohazard Kit following the procedure as detailed below:

- Put on disposable gloves, where sharp material is involved, needle stick gloves to be worn, along with eye protectors if there is a risk of splashing
- Use the powder in the Biohazard Kit to treat the spill
- Clean up the spill using the scoop in the Biohazard Kit and absorbent kitchen towel
- Clean the surface using soap and water to remove any remaining blood / bodily fluids. Wipe with absorbent kitchen towel
- Wipe contaminated surfaces with disinfectant solution mixing 1 part household bleach to 50 parts water. Wipe up with absorbent kitchen towel
- Place the gloves, glasses, broken sharp material, kitchen paper and scoop in a biohazard bag and put in a sharps disposal unit
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water

Sample Exposure to Blood / Bodily Fluids Policy & Procedure

(Adapted courtesy of the North East Regional Drugs Task Force)

Definition of 'Exposure' – contact with mucosal membrane (eye, mouth or lining of nose), or contact arising from a biting incident. In the event of contact occurring as a result of a needle stick injury, refer to the policy on Needle Stick Injury.

The following procedure is to be followed immediately after exposure. The person exposed should not panic and should seek immediate assistance from colleagues and the building manager. The exposed area should be treated appropriately as follows:

- if you are splashed on the skin, wash the area well with soap and water
- If you have been bitten, wash the are well with soap and water
- If you are splashed in the eyes, mouth or nose, rinse well with water

The person exposed should inform the Site Co-Ordinator immediately on performing the above, who will then accompany the exposed person to the nearest emergency treatment centre

If possible, identify the donor (person whose blood / bodily fluid that was spilled) and inform them that there has been an incident involving blood / bodily fluids that may belong to them. Ask if they will consent to share the following information; HIV / HEP status (if known); Name; Date of Birth. If the donor consents to sharing the above information this must not be shared outside the programme. This applies even where such information is held on file.

Ask the donor if they are willing to give a blood sample at the hospital for the purposes of testing for Blood Borne Viruses making it clear to them that they are not obliged to do this. If the donor is willing to be tested for BBV's, liaise with the manager at the hospital and see if it is feasible to bring them to the A & E department of the nearest emergency facility. The event

should be recorded either personally or through dictation, in writing (using a serious incident form) and passed on to the Site Co-ordinator (who in turn passes it to the steering committee) and to the exposed persons organisational line manager within 24 hours. The report should be signed and dated by both the person exposed and the person receiving the report.

The Steering Committee should ensure that the exposed persons organisational line manager reports the incident to both the company's insurance provider and the Health and Safety Authority. The organisational line manager should ensure that the person exposed is giving ample support either internally and / or externally for as long as is necessary.

Sample Needle stick injury Policy & Procedure

(Adapted courtesy of the North East Regional Drugs Task Force)

Definition of Needle Stick Injury – A penetrating stab wound from a needle (or other sharp object / material) that may result in exposure to blood / bodily fluids.

The person wounded should not panic and should seek assistance immediately. The wound should be treated as follows by either the person wounded or a person assisting:

- Put on rubber gloves
- Clean area with sterile swab and / or wash with soap and water
- Encourage bleeding from the puncture wound, and continue to flush the wound with water
- Safely dispose of swab and gloves
- ensure the site co-ordinator and the building manager is informed
- The site co-ordinator is to accompany the wounded individual to the nearest emergency facility

If possible, identify the donor (person whose blood / bodily fluid that was spilled) and inform them that there has been an incident involving blood / bodily fluids that may belong to them. Ask if they will consent to share the following information; HIV / HEP status (if known); Name; Date of Birth; if they have used the needle in question; if they have shared the needle in question. If the donor consents to sharing the above information this must not be shared outside the organisation. This applies even where such information is held on file. Place the needle into a sharps disposal unity whilst wearing needleproof gloves along with any other material i.e. swabs etc.

Ask the donor if they are willing to give a blood sample at the hospital for the purposes of testing for Blood Borne Viruses making it clear to them that they are not obliged to do this. If the donor is willing to be tested for BBV's, liaise with the manager at the hospital and see if it is feasible to bring them to the A & E department of the nearest emergency facility. The event should be recorded either personally or through dictation, in writing (using a serious incident form) and passed on to the Site Co-ordinator (who in turn passes it to the steering committee) and to your own organisational line manager within 24 hours. The report should be signed and dated by both the person exposed and the person receiving the report.

The Steering Committee should ensure that the SFP personnel's organisational line manager reports the incident to both the company's insurance provider and the Health and Safety Authority. The organisational line manager should ensure that the person exposed is giving ample support either internally and / or externally for as long as is necessary.

Sample Data Protection Policy

Non-Profit Organisations are not required to register as a Data Controller or Data Processor with the Data Protection Commission, nevertheless, certain rights and obligations apply when any personal information is held by an organisation and it is strongly recommended that Steering Committees consider the issue of Data Protection ahead of running a SFP. The most up to date information on Data Protection can be obtained on the Data Protection Commissioners website: <http://www.dataprotection.ie/>

This document is an example of a type of document that may be utilised by a Steering Committee in considering Data Protection issues and should be adapted accordingly to your region.

The Steering Committee of the Strengthening Families Programme undertakes to adhere to this Data Protection Policy to protect all personnel and family members and ensure best practice rules are in place regarding the obtaining, processing and retention of all data.

General Enquiries to the Steering Committee

Steering Committees are obliged to inform any persons contacting them about the Strengthening Families Programme if they are being placed on a mailing/future contact list and these persons retain the right to refuse or unsubscribe themselves at any point.

Sensitive Personal Data

This relates to specific categories of data which are defined as data relating to a person's racial origin; religious or other beliefs; physical or mental health; sexual life; criminal convictions or the alleged commission of an offence. Additional rights are conferred upon the individual in relation to the processing of any such data and as a result, special care will be taken when capturing this data and disclosing it to others.

Data Subjects

For the purposes of this policy document, the data subject is referred to as the 'individual or family' or 'clients', about and from whom the information is obtained and retained.

The Eight Rules of Data Protection

The SFP Steering Committee programme should:

1. obtain and process information fairly,
2. keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes,
3. use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes,
4. keep it safe and secure,
5. keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date,
6. ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive,
7. retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes,
8. give a copy of personal data retained to an individual, on request.

Rule 1: Fair Obtaining and Processing

At the time of providing personal information, the Steering Committee shall make individuals fully aware of what use information gathered is to be put, and of the organisations and persons outside of the Steering Committee to whom the information may be disclosed e.g. facilitators.

Should there be any such secondary or future use of the information gathered, the Steering Committee should contact the individuals to give him/her the option to opt out of such disclosure. This requirement of consent may not apply where the secondary or future use is for the administration of justice, to prevent injury or damage to the health or property of the individual, or for the performance of any other function of a public nature performed in the public interest.

Clients should be aware that SFP personnel obtain certain information from the Referral Agent.

Rule 2: Specifying a Purpose

The Steering Committee obtains its information for the sole requirement of the SFP.

Individuals should be made aware that some necessary details may be passed onto to their Referral Agent and/or SFP facilitators (personnel) of the programme.

A Steering Committee should have a Statement of the Purpose for which it holds Information about Clients. This could read something like the following:

The Steering Committee obtains and holds information about its participants on the Strengthening Families Programme in order to provide the most appropriate service for the families concerned; understand circumstances/background of the family; provide the best service for the family within the programme, prevent possible injury and to protect the health and safety of families & facilitators (personnel) and for statistical purposes.

Rule 3: Use and further processing of personal information.

Where the Steering Committee obtains personal information, it undertakes not use the data for any other purpose, and may not divulge the personal data to a third party, except in ways that are “compatible” with the specified purpose.

Where personal information is initially gathered by SFP personnel, he/she is to be considered as an agent of the programme, carrying out operations upon its behalf and not retaining it for his/her own purpose. This does not constitute a disclosure of data for the purposes of the Data Protection Acts.

The restriction on processing of personal data (including disclosure to a third party) is lifted in a limited number of circumstances, including:

- where it is required urgently to prevent injury or other damage to the health of a person or serious loss of or damage to property;
- where it is required by or under any enactment or by rule of law or order of court;
- where it is required for the administration of justice;
- where the data subject requests or consents to the use or further processing.

The Steering Committee undertakes to use and disclose the data only in ways consistent with the purpose for which it is kept.

Rule 4: Security of Personal Data

The Steering Committee shall take appropriate security measures to prevent unauthorised access:

- All computers are to be password protected, and manual files are to be stored in locked facilities.
- All sensitive waste documents are to be shredded.
- All sensitive information on screens is to be kept hidden from callers to offices.
- A back-up procedure is to be in operation regarding data on the server.
- All SFP personnel are to be made aware of security procedures for data.

Rule 5: Accurate and Up-to-Date Data

The Steering Committee endeavours to ensure high levels of data accuracy and to update files when new information is received and to ensure data is complete.

Where the data is incorrect all efforts should be made to correct it as soon as possible.

Rule 6: Adequate, relevant and not excessive.

The Steering Committee undertakes that all personal information holds will be necessary for the purpose of running the SFP. Information on the client shall only be passed to facilitators of the SFP on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Rule 7: Retention of personal data.

All data gathered should be kept for finite period of time.

All current manual files relating to clients should be securely retained in the local region, i.e. the office of the Site Co-ordinator.

Any type of manual case files of the families participating in the programme are to be retained in an office as decided by the Steering Committee for a period of time decided by the Committee.

Thereafter the closed files should be shredded unless there is information contained which may be required at a future date relating to the programme. Where information relating to a family may be needed in the future, this should be passed on to the referral agent of that family for archiving and secure storage.

Rule 8: Right of Access

The Steering Committee should supply to any individual about whom personal data is stored:

- (a) a copy of the data,
- (b) a description of the purposes for which it is held,
- (c) a description of those to whom the data may be disclosed and
- (d) the source of the data unless this would be contrary to public interest

where the individual:

- Applies to the Steering Committee in writing,
- Gives any details which might be needed to help the Steering Committee identify him/her and locate all the information we may keep about him/her.

The Steering Committee shall:

- Supply the information to the individual within 6 weeks of receiving the request;
- Provide the information in a form which will be clear to the ordinary person;
- Ensure that personal information is given out to the individual concerned. The Steering Committee shall not provide such information over the telephone;
- Provide this service free of charge.

Restrictions on Rights of Access:

Where the Steering Committee deems it necessary to protect the individual from hearing anything about himself or herself that might cause serious harm to his or her physical or mental health or emotional well-being, it may restrict access as permitted by the Acts. The Steering Committee shall inform the individual within 40 days, including a statement of the reasons for refusal. The Steering Committee shall notify the individual of his/her entitlement to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner.

That the individual may be a minor at the time of requesting information does not restrict his/her right of access, unless the Steering Committee restricts access under the modifications to the Acts laid out under the Access to Health and Social Work Data.

Sample Referral Policy

These may be some useful guidelines for a referral committee to consider when deciding is a referral appropriate for the SFP:

- The family agrees to the referral
- A better outcome can be achieved for the family should they complete SFP
- Is there multi agency involvement
- The family appear motivated to attend the programme
- Referral Agent has signed the Honorary Agreement form.
- Parental Consent forms being signed.
- Are the family in the middle of an investigation
- There are compatible age ranges amongst the teen group
- Ability of family to commit and complete the programme, given their risk level
- Is the location suitable - is priority being given to families living in a certain area
- Does the family pose a significant risk to others attending the programme
- A maximum group size of fourteen people in both the parent/teen group
- A maximum of two children with diagnosis of ADHD in the teen group
- The referral agent is committed and understands their role
- The decision of the referral committee is being made in the collective best interest of all families referred.

RISK FACTORS		OUTCOMES	
YOUNG PEOPLE	PARENTS & CARERS	YOUNG PEOPLE	PARENTS AND CARERS
Aggressive behaviour	Demanding and/or rejecting behaviour	Positive future orientation	Positive parent-child relationship
Withdrawn	Poor child management	Peer pressure resistant skills	Supportive family involvement
Negative peer influence	Poor communication of family rules	Pro social peer relationships	Age appropriate expectations
Poor school performance		Positive management of emotions	Appropriate parental monitoring
Lack of pro-social goals		Empathy with parents	Clear expectations regarding substance use

Appropriate referrals are deemed where the parents and carers and young people can meet the criteria under any of the risk factors or desired outcomes.



Le Chéile
Strengthening Families Programme
(12-16yrs)

**Sample Paperwork/Forms for agencies funded by Le Chéile delivering
the Strengthening Families Programme**

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Introduction to Paperwork/Forms

The Paperwork/Forms that follow have been drafted as an aid to Steering Committees receiving funding from Le Chéile to deliver the Strengthening Families Programme.

They can be used as a guide for Steering Committee who are welcome to edit and adapt them to their specific regional needs whilst ensuring they are keeping the best interests of personnel, participants, children and families on the programme as the key element

These Paperwork/Forms have been developed in-conjunction with a number of services on an inter-agency basis with the best interests of families at heart and a number of them have been utilised on numerous programmes running in Ireland to date. Some of these Paperwork/Forms were shared with Le Chéile by other agencies involved in SFP around the country or were developed and adapted by Le Chéile or in conjunction with steering committees involved in rolling out a SFP. They are being made available in the spirit of ensuring a SFP is run under best practice principles to the benefit of the families, agencies involved and the community as a whole.

These Paperwork/Forms are by no means meant to be all encompassing, definitive or legally binding articles but should be utilized or carefully adapted where appropriate by the steering committee as a whole. Programmes that receive funds from Le Chéile should discuss, edit and adapt these Paperwork/Forms unless similar or existing policies are suitable and preferred by the Steering Committee.

For Le Chéile funded programmes, a dramatic change of Paperwork/Forms should always be discussed with Le Chéile. Le Chéile accepts no liability for programmes which do not use Paperwork/Forms which come from a best practice ethos and do not take into consideration child protection issues and the overall duty of care to the families and facilitators taking part in the SFP.

Any feedback, suggestions, additions or omissions to these Paperwork/Forms are most welcome

Sample Agenda & Terms of Reference for a SFP Steering Committee

- Welcome and Introductions
- Need for SFP in region
- Types of Referrals and Sources
- Facilitators available
- Timeframe
- Venue
- Catering
- Transport
- Childcare
- Evaluation
- Funding

Terms of Reference for Strengthening Families Committee

Rationale for the SFP Steering Committee: to agree to meet on a regular basis to oversee the development and implementation of SFP in the region

The function of the SFP Steering Committee is as follows;

- To ensure the programme runs in a best practice ethos in all areas
- To support and advise the co-ordinator in their role
- Identify priorities for the SFP programme
- Provide insight of operational guidance
- Keep people motivated and maintain the momentum of the project;
- Secure practical buy-in from services
- Raise questions, discuss and debate issues in relation to SFP
- Provide professional advice on the long term role of SFP
- Monitor the viability of running SFP on an ongoing and regular basis
- Secure buy-in to the project by identifying potential within existing workloads
- Identify project outcomes
- To identify potential barriers overcome obstacles

Practical issues:

The SFP committee should meet on a regular basis in the first instance and as and then as and when required by the SFP co-ordinator. In the first instance the committee should meet a number of times prior to the programme running. Thereafter the committee should meet for a 5 week assessment, then again prior to graduation and on completion of the programme. Meetings should be facilitated by the SFP Coordinator where possible and minutes should be kept.

Sample Role Description: Site Co-ordinator

Site Co-ordinators should:

- Have time, enthusiasm & willingness to fulfil the Site Co-ordinator commitment.
- Be able to relate, communicate and develop positive relationships with a wide range of people including young people, adults, volunteers, staff, referrers, committee member and funders
- Be open to reflective practice & lead SF personnel to do same.
- Have an ability & commitment to be non-judgemental.
- Identify & communicate their own support needs & make effective use of the support mechanisms provided by the Steering Committee and their own organisation.

Site Co-ordinators Duties:

Organisation: Organise and co-ordinate the Strengthening Families programme in conjunction with the Steering Committee. Organise an orientation/refresher morning alongside the Steering Committee for the SF personnel of the programme that you are co-ordinating

Facilitators: Liaise, maintain and schedule the available batch of facilitators for the programme delivery and offer practical help, guidance and advice to the SF facilitators before and during the programme.

Referrals: To actively encourage, support and promote referrals to the SF programme from relevant agencies alongside the Steering Committee. Liaise with all Referral Agents regarding their clients commencement or non commencement at session one. Tie in with referrers to ensure support to families throughout the programme.

Accounts: To manage the budget allocated for the programme and administrate the funds according to the procedures set down by the funders and Steering Committee.

Steering Committee: The Site Co-ordinator should attend Steering Committee meetings where appropriate during the course of the programme.

Barriers to attendance: To co-ordinate all issues in relation to catering, childcare and transport arrangements for the families attending the programme.

Child Protection: To be the Designated Person for child protection disclosures.

Evaluation and Stats: To take the lead in the completion of the evaluation paperwork for the programme. Co-ordinate the completion of weekly sign in, attendance and debriefing sheets. Compile the statistics of the programmes in line with data requirements and with a view to the evaluation of the programme.

Health and Safety: To adhere to the Health and Safety policies and procedures as set down by the Steering Committee and venue.

Policies, Procedures and Best Practice: To follow policy & procedure guidelines on the delivery of the programme as specified by Steering Committee, the funders of the programme and the creators of the programme. Be responsible along with the Steering Committee and other facilitators for ensuring best practice within all aspects of the Strengthening Families programme.

Sample Role description: Group Facilitators

Group Facilitators should:

- Be experienced in the facilitation of parent/teen and/or group work programmes.
- Be able to attend all 14 weeks of the programme.
- Engage well with the families attending the programme.
- Be able to work well alongside your co-facilitator(s).
- Be able to attend the Group Leader orientation session(s) prior to commencement of the SFP.
- Have a good understanding of ice-breakers and energisers used in group work programmes with both Teens and Adults.
- Be trained in and/or have an excellent understanding of Children's First and be aware of the policy of the Steering Committee re: disclosures.
- Be able to identify your own support needs as regards the facilitation of the programme and make these aware to the Site Co-ordinator and or your own line manager for assistance.
- Have a basic understanding of the principles of evaluating programmes and be able to take instruction from the Site Co-ordinator on how to administrate a questionnaire. Take part in any post programme evaluation exercises.
- Attend briefing and preparation sessions prior to each session with the other facilitators.
- Attend de-brief sessions each evening following the session with the other facilitators.
- Be able to attend the Family Meet and Greet Night prior to the commencement of the programme (if applicable)

Agreed By: _____

Group Facilitator

Date

Sample Role Description: Link person

- A Link Person may be allocated to a family where the Referral Agent has requested that they require assistance in following up with a family who misses a session. The referral agent should make this know before commencement of the programme.
- A Link Person may be an experienced previous facilitator of a Strengthening Families Programme and should be currently employed by an agency that is known to the Strengthening Families Steering Committee.
- The Link Person will be allocated one family to link in with and maintain contact with throughout the programme should that family miss a weekly session or require extra support on material.
- The Link Person will cover the curriculum from the SFP programme where the family has missed a session (at a venue that suits both parties). This can also be done over the telephone should the family and Link Person be not able to meet.
- The Link Person should adhere to the programmes Child protection protocols (based on Children’s First guidelines) in the event of a disclosure being made of a child protection nature and forward any concerning information to the Site Co-ordinator of the programme.
- The Link Person should sign an SFP confidentiality statement in relation to the programme.
- The Link Person will need to be working with an agency at present and as such will have been Garda vetted for that position.
- The Link Person should attend the SFP Welcome night where applicable.
- The Link Person should feedback to the Site Co-ordinator the outcome of their contact with the family each week.
- The Site Co-ordinator encourages both the family and the Link Person to feedback any information on the programme that may help to make the programme a better programme for all families.
- Should a Referral Agent contact a Link person for information on their family on the SFP, the Link Person will ask the Referral Agent to contact the Site Coordinator of the programme
- The Link Person will give to the Site Co-ordinator any notes taken as part of their role upon completion of the programme.

Agreed By: _____

Link Person

Date

Sample Building/Site Health & Safety Check List

Name of Building: _____

Building Contact Person (office hours): _____

Telephone: _____

Building Contact Person (out of office hours): _____

Telephone: _____

Building Insurance:

Is the building insured for usage specifically for the nature of the Strengthening Families Programme and has this been confirmed by the Building/Centre manager?

Building Safety Statement:

Has the building a Safety Statement?

Have you seen the Safety Statement?

Are fire exits visible?

Is there a fire evacuation procedure and are all parties aware of it?

Will it be possible for someone from the building to do a talk to participants around health and safety and fire procedures before the programme starting?

Attendance and sign in sheets:

Are sign in sheets in usage for the duration of the Strengthening Families Programme?

Sickness and Emergency:

Is there a telephone number available for the nearest available out of hours GP assistance?

Security:

Is a security /caretaker service needed for the duration of the programme?

Are there other issues that need to be considered?

Sample Tendering Document for SFP Products/Services

PRODUCT/SERVICE:
Quote 1:
Business Name:
Figure Quoted:
VAT/Company/Charity No:
Other:
Quote 2:
Business Name:
Figure Quoted:
VAT/Company/Charity No:
Other:
Quote 3:
Business Name:
Figure Quoted:
VAT/Company/Charity No:
Other:

Sample Declaration from SFP Personnel

Surname: _____ First name _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Any other name previously known as _____

1. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order in Ireland or abroad that would make you unsuitable to facilitate the SFP?

(Please Circle) Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

Nature of offence	Date of offence
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. I undertake that should I be charged with any offence I shall make the Site Co-ordinator of the Strengthening Families Programme aware of this at the soonest possible instance.

3. I know of no reasons why I should not be involved with the Strengthening Families Programme, including past or current offenses, which would bring my suitability into question regarding working on the Strengthening Families Programme in the capacity of Site Co-ordinator, facilitator, volunteer or other. Should any information come to light which would bring my character or suitability into question I understand that I may be disengaged from the Strengthening Families Programme.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Sample Garda Vetting Declaration

Surname _____ Forename _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____

Organisation Name & Address

Organisation Contact Phone Number _____

I have received Garda vetting in the past three years in relation to my current work with children/young people,

Yes No

This vetting was completed on _____ .

Signature _____

Date _____

This section to be completed by the organisation that obtained the Garda vetting for the individual named above.

I confirm that this person has received Garda vetting to work with children/young people in the past three years.

Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ Position _____

Sample SFP Personnel Confidentiality Statement

I understand and accept that I may not disclose any information of a confidential nature relating to The Strengthening Families Programme and related agencies and clients either during or after my engagement with the Strengthening Families Programme. I have read and understand the content of the confidentiality policy. I agree to act in accordance with the confidentiality policy.

I understand and accept that I may not remove any document or item belonging to the Strengthening Families Programme which contains confidential information from the sites premises at any time without proper advanced authorisation.

I understand and accept that I must return to the funder, the Site Co-ordinator or Steering Committee (upon request and/or on completion of my involvement with the SFP) all documents and other items belonging to the programme which contain or refer to any confidential information or in relation to the evaluation of the SFP.

I understand that I may not disclose information to, or participate in interviews for media, academic or any other purposes relating to the SFP without prior approval from the related SFP steering committee. I agree not to disclose any information held and not independently available to a third party without the individual's written consent and permission from the Steering Committee.

I agree to exercise care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and at the time of end of my involvement with the Strengthening Families Programme, or at any other time upon demand, return to the organisation any such material in my possession.

I understand that this confidentiality statement does not prevent the use of information regarding the activities of this Strengthening Families programme for the purpose of research or evaluation, provided always that proper authorisation is sought, that the use of this information is in accordance with the Strengthening Families policy and that ethical guidelines in relation to research are strictly adhered to.

I realise that a breach of confidentiality is considered an act of Gross Misconduct and may be subject to further action.

Signed	Date
_____	_____

Sample Facilitators Preparation/Group Forming Meeting Agenda

Sample Agenda for 1st Meeting

11.30am to 11.40am: Welcome & Introductions

11.40 to 11.45: Update on referrals

11.45am to 12.20pm: Hopes and fears of the group.

12.20pm to 12.30pm: Dates, venue, staffing, catering, childcare, transport arrangements.

12.30am to 1.30:

- The Welcome / First Night.
- Incentives: what incentives and how often?
- Challenging behaviour: what is challenging behaviour (parents and teens), what to do
- Child Protection policy, disclosures and confidentiality.
- Health and Safety: in relation to the premises, SFP personnel, parents, young people.
- Drugs & alcohol Policy

12.30 to 1.00pm: Facilitator Documentation

- Confidentiality form and disclosure form.
- Useful readings for facilitators.
- Garda Clearance, Child protection, Access to Supervision & Facilitation Experience
- Date for next induction morning

Sample Agenda for 2nd Meeting

- Feedback from personnel since last induction morning.
- Updates on Referrals to the programme.
- Updates on Catering, Transport, Childcare and Incentive updates.
- Any outstanding documentation needed to be signed by facilitators etc.
- Preparation and plans for the First Night.
- Discussion re: materials needed to be purchased for the duration of the programme, e.g. flip chart paper, arts and crafts etc.
- Date for next meeting (if applicable)
- Evaluation & Graduation
- Discussion re: session one of the curriculum.
- Group Contract.

Sample Facilitators Group Agreement

We, as a group, agree to:

- Dedicate appropriate time each week to arrive, prepare and deliver the session with our co-facilitator(s).
- Be open about any difficulties or challenges that are arising amongst the group during the programme and to discuss and deal with these difficulties or challenges.
- Be mindful of the importance of facilitator debriefing after every session and how this is an essential part of the SFP and to be open to reflective practice following each session.
- Be respectful towards the families but also with each other.
- Maintain boundaries with clients, especially following the completion of the programme. The programme is designed to be a brief intervention only.
- Treat all Strengthening Families information as confidential (except for issues of child protection, as outlined in our Child Protection Protocol).
- Follow the Child Protection Protocol and to be mindful, where there are issues of concern, of discussing these issues with the others on a need to know basis.
- To seek support from each other, the Site Co-ordinator, the Steering Committee and /or our own line manager (through supervision) in relation to any issues that may be arising during our time with the programme.
- To give notice where we cannot attend a session and to take responsibility for arranging for a back up facilitator to cover our session. It is our responsibility to arrange cover and not that of the Site Co-ordinator.
- To do something nice as a group to celebrate the completion of the programme and to endeavor to enjoy the whole experience

Signatures:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Sample Key Details for SFP Personnel (1)

Dates and Times of the Programme

Day of the week	Date	Session	Time of Session
		Meet and Greet night/Welcome Night	
		Session One	
		Session Two	
		Session Three	
		Session Four	
		Session Five	
		Session Six	
		Session Seven	
		Session Eight	
		Session Nine	
		Session Ten	
		Session Eleven	
		Session Twelve	
		Session Thirteen	
		Session Fourteen and Graduation Ceremony	

Venue Details

Name and address of Venue:	
Venue Contact Person:	
Tel:	Email:

Session Outline: Example

6.00pm to 6.20pm	Arrival of families
6.00pm to 6.40pm	Dinner - Families and Facilitators sit together
6.40pm to 7.30pm	Parent Group and Teen Group Sessions
7.30pm to 7.40pm	10 min break
7.40pm to 8.30pm	Family Session

Facilitators to arrive atpm to prepare for the session each night.

Sample Strengthening Families Referral Form (Version 1)

REGION: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE FORM WITH THE FAMILY.

Name of Referral Agent: _____

Title: _____

Work Address:

Work Landline: _____ **Work Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

Family Referred: *(One referral form per family-please outline all the family members, even if they are not participating in the programme as it helps us to understand the family better)*

Family Contact Number(s): _____

Surname	Forename	Address	Gender	DOB	Attending

Are there other people living in the home e.g. grandparent (please tick) Yes No.

If Yes give details: _____

Does the family require assistance with the following to attend the programme:

Transport: Yes No (Please talk to Site Co-ordinator for more details).

Childcare Yes No If ticked yes please talk to Site Co-ordinator

What are the family's strengths?

What is the main presenting issue with the primary Teen leading to this referral?

(A primary teen is the one Teen in this family that you have selected to be the primary focus of this programme).

Is there any additional information about the teen that the Site Co-ordinator should be aware of?

Is there any additional information about the family that the Site Co-ordinator should be aware of?

What do you hope the family will gain from the Strengthening Families Programme?

As the referring agent of this family I will offer to stay in contact with the referred family to cover any material with them, to check their understanding of the programme and try to address any difficulties that are arising within the programme.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I request that an application be submitted for my family to attend this Strengthening Families Programme. I agree that the information contained in this form may be stored for the purposes of securing my families place on this programme. I am the parent/carer of the child/children named on this form. I agree that this information may be shared with the SFP Coordinator.

Signed: (Parent) _____ Date: _____

Sample Strengthening Families Referral Form (Version 2)

Area Programme Running:

Name of Referral Agent: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>
Title: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>
Work Address: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>
Work Landline: _____ Work Mobile: _____
Email: _____

Family Referred: *(One referral form per family-please outline all the family members, even if they are not participating in the programme as it helps us to understand the family better)*

Surname	Forename	Address	Gender	d.o.b.	Participant on programme?

Are there other people living in the home e.g. grandparent (please tick) Yes No.

If Yes give details; _____

Does the family require assistance with the following to attend the programme:

- Transport: Yes No (Please talk to Site Co-ordinator for more details).
Childminding: Yes No (Please talk to Site Co-ordinator for more details).

What are the family's strengths:

What is the main presenting issue with the primary Teen leading to this referral? *(A primary teen is the one Teen in this family that you have selected to be the primary focus of this intervention).*

Please tick the following categories that are applicable to the Primary Teen?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn / isolated | <input type="checkbox"/> Low self esteem | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious / nervous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal feelings | <input type="checkbox"/> Self harming | <input type="checkbox"/> Tearful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy difficulties | | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties making friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> ADHD | <input type="checkbox"/> Dyslexia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dyspraxia | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental delay | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech and language difficulty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperactive | <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration/attention difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temper tantrums | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive behaviour | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing | <input type="checkbox"/> School refusal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor social skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-social behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor delay |

Additional comment(s) re above needs:

Parents/Caregiver: Please tick the following where appropriate

Parents/Caregivers:

Family

<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol / substance misuse <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting alone <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health problems <input type="checkbox"/> Separation and Loss <input type="checkbox"/> Health problems <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual / physical disability <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Stress <input type="checkbox"/> Social isolation <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy and numeric difficulties Other, please specify: <hr/> Additional Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence <input type="checkbox"/> Poor housing <input type="checkbox"/> Social isolation <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with extended family <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> Child in foster care <input type="checkbox"/> Child in residential care Other, please specify: <hr/> Additional Comment:
---	--

Has the family currently or historically been involved with any other Agencies: (please state the agency, e.g. probation, child protection, counseling, home school liaison).

What do you hope the family will gain from the Strengthening Families Programme?

Consent: Has this referral been discussed with the family Yes No

If yes what is the families attitude to the referral and/or motivation to attend?

If no consent has been gained from the family, please explain why and when you intend to discuss with the family;

Any other relevant information you feel is applicable to their participation in this programme?

Signed: _____

Date: _____

<u>Office use only:</u>	Date Referral Received:	Selected for SFP: Yes/No
Comments:		

Sample Parent/Guardian's Agreement

(The Referral Agent, Site Co-ordinator or a facilitator should read through this with the Parent/Guardian before commencement of session one)

I agree to my family taking part in the Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) and to take part in any activities that this programme entails.

I agree that we will attend the programme each week for 14 sessions for a two and a half hour session. Should my family be unable to attend, then we must contact the Site Co-ordinator to let him/her know this is the case.

I understand that whatever our family talks about with the SFP personnel is confidential to the programme unless the SFP personnel believes that our family or my child is at risk and/or we disclose that we have committed a crime or are going to commit a crime. In such cases I know that the information may be passed on to me, my referral agent and to the relevant authorities (Gardai and/or Health Board)

I understand that the Site Co-ordinator will keep in regular contact with my referral agent as regards our families' attendance on the programme. Should my referrer request any additional information regarding our family engaging in this programme, then I will be informed of this by the Site Co-ordinator and asked for my permission for the Site Co-ordinator to do so.

Should my child ask to leave the centre during a session, I will be informed of this and I will be the decision maker as to him/her leaving. Should my child leave the centre without informing anyone, then I am responsible for his well-being as his parent/guardian. Should I (parent/guardian) need to leave the session mid way through then I will be unable to leave my teens or children in the centre without me, they will need to accompany me.

I understand that my child is unable to attend the SFP session if I or my partner does not attend.

The programme is unable to permit any other adult or child to come with us to the programme unless agreed previously with the Site Co-ordinator. This is to ensure privacy to the group.

Signed:

<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>	<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>
Parent/Guardian (s):	Date:

<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>	<hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>
SFP Referral Agent/Site Co-ordinator/Facilitator:	Date

Sample Family Emergency Contact Details

Name of family:

Contact Address & Telephone contact details

Address:

Home:

Mobile:

Work:

Please give the name and number of some other adult that we can call in an emergency

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Health Information

Family Doctor's Name:

Address:

Tel:

Do you and your children have any illness/conditions that the SFP personnel should know about?

Do you and your children use any medication e.g. inhaler, insulin etc.?

Do you and your children have any allergic reactions to any medicines, food etc.?

Is there any other information about your family that we may need to know? e.g. dietary needs

Sample Referral Agent Honorary Agreement

The intention of this agreement is to assure a referral agent of the appreciation of their referral and to indicate our commitment to do the very best we can to make their clients experience of this programme a productive and rewarding one.

This agreement is a commitment to the Referral Agent of what to expect from the Steering Committee, Site Co-ordinator and staff of the Strengthening Families Programme, and what they in turn expect from the referrer. In order to optimise a families experience whilst on the programme it is essential that all parties are aware of the expectations and commitments.

Our commitment:

- To provide the Referral Agent with adequate information and updates to help them to meet the responsibilities of their role as a Referral Agent.
- To treat the Referral Agent as the Case Manager for the duration of the SFP thereby forwarding on any relevant and concerning information to them, as case manager.
- To be receptive to any comments the referrer may have regarding ways in which we might mutually better accomplish our respective outcomes
- To treat the referrer as an equal partner within the Strengthening Families Programme, jointly responsible for the successful completion of this Strengthening Families Programme and the fulfillment of its' mission.

Referral Agent Ccommitment

- To offer weekly support sessions to my family on SFP material should they miss a session during the 14 weeks and to provide clarification around issues they may be unsure of.
- To attend the training offered in my area in order that I have a good understanding of the Strengthening Families Programme.
- To act as the case manager of the client that I am referring to the SFP.
- To be aware that on completion of the programme SFP personnel will no longer be in contact with the family.
- To be aware that the SFP is a Family Skills based programme and is not family therapy.
- If the Facilitators of SFP recommend that additional services may be beneficial to the participating family, the referrer will take responsibility for sourcing that service and directing the family to it, while continuing to support the family. If at all possible the family will be facilitated to identify services and encouraged to access these.
- To take part in any evaluation of the programme where asked by the Site Co-ordinator or the funder. Evaluating the programme is essential and this takes place by assessing, tracking and measuring the outcomes the families achieved as a result of their participation.

I, the Referral Agent understand that not adhering to the above agreement may result in my family not experiencing the optimum experience of the programme.

Agreed By: _____
Referral Agent

Date

Sample Child/Elder/Other Care Contribution Endorsement Form (1)

(To be completed by the Referral Agent of the family)

Referral Agent: _____

Work Address: _____

Telephone No: _____ **Email:** _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Address of Parent/ Guardian: _____

Number of children/care dependants: _____

Cost of Care in total each night of the programme. € _____

This is to confirm that the above named is a client of this service and will be requiring financial help with their care needs whilst they access the Strengthening Families Programme.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Strengthening Families Programme Office Use Only:

Total Cost € _____ Percentage allowed: _____%

Total Contribution to Parent each night they attend € _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Site Coordinator

Sample Child/Elder/Other Care Contribution Endorsement Form (2)

(To be completed by the Parent/Guardian attending the programme)

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Home Address: _____

Number of children/care dependants: _____

Cost of Care in total: € _____

SFP Contribution: € _____

My Contribution: € _____

I confirm the costs related to my care needs are as stated above and that I agree to pay the contribution as stated above as well as the contribution received by me from the SFP to the service provider. I understand that the Strengthening Families Programme has no responsibility for the care service or the child(ren)/adults being cared for within this service.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Sample Child/Elder/Other Care Contribution Endorsement Form (3)

(To be completed only if child/elder care is being provided by an agency)

Name of care provider/agency: _____

Address of care service: _____

Telephone No.: _____ Contact Name : _____

Name of those being cared for: _____

Age(s) of those being cared for: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Address of Parent/Guardian: _____

Hours of Care per week: _____

Cost of Care per week: _____

Commencement Date of Care: _____

This is to confirm a place has been reserved with this care facility, details are as stated above.

Signed _____

Date _____

Sample Meet & Greet/ Welcome Night Schedule

4.30pm to 5.30pm - Facilitators arrive

- Look over/prepare in advance of Session One the following week.(prepare flip charts, inform site-coordinator what is needed for next week)
- Decorate the Teen and Parents room for tonight's Meet and Greet night. i.e. Welcome posters, quotes from previous participants, referrers, facilitators, pictures etc.
- Site Co-ordinator to go over the role of the Group Facilitators for this evening.
- Some Group Facilitators will be meeting families at the door and giving them a tour of the building until they bring the families to their destination room, i.e. Teen Room Parent Room.
- The remaining Group Facilitators will remain in the Teen room and Parent Room for the entire evening waiting for each Parent or Teen to be brought in to them. They will then occupy the teens and the parents and cover the tasks as per below.

5.30pm to 6.00pm: - Arrival of families (possibly with Link Person/Referral Agent)

- Families will be greeted and registered by the Site Co-ordinator at the front door. Each family will be given a Welcome Pack.
- Each family will then be introduced to a Group Facilitator who will escort them around the building. The Group Facilitator gives them a tour of the building, showing them for example the childcare facilities, toilet facilities, parking spots, Teen and Parent session rooms.
- The teen will then be invited to remain in the teen room for a few minutes with the Teen Facilitators. The parents will be invited into the Parent room and asked to remain with the available Group Facilitators.

Parent Room: Parents to go through the following:

- Going over the dates of the programme.
- Explanation of how the session is run.
- Sample of topics covered over 14 weeks.
- Role of Site Co-ordinator, Group Facilitators and Referral Agent.
- Answering any questions that the parents may have.

Teenager Room: Teens to go through the following:

- Explanation of Incentives/ Reward System
- Go over Ground Rules of the programme.
- Explain what the programme is and what it isn't.
- Answering any questions that they Teens may have.

Facilitators should ensure that the rooms are comfortable, inviting, warm and equipped with snacks etc.

7.30-7.45pm:

- Ensure Families have Transport home
- Rooms to be returned back to normal by the Facilitators.

8.15- 9.00pm: - Debriefing with Facilitators

Sample Invitation Letter to Meet & Greet/ Welcome Night

Date:

Dear

I would like to invite you and your family to a Strengthening Families *Meet and Greet/Welcome night to be held in:* *on:*

We hope that you will get to know the people involved on the night and have any questions you may have answered about the programme. This will also be an opportunity to meet some people that have already done the programme, take a tour of the building and finally get more of a sense as to what the programme is all about.

Please let me know of any special dietary requirements that you or your family members may have and we will accommodate this.

We hope to see you and your family on the night.

Kind Regards

Strengthening Families Co-ordinator

Mobile number:

Sample Strengthening Families Programme-Key Details for Families

Dates and Times of the Programme

Day	Date	Session	Time of Session
		Meet and Greet night	
		Session One	
		Session Two	
		Session Three	
		Session Four	
		Session Five	
		Session Six	
		Session Seven	
		Session Eight	
		Session Nine	
		BREAK	
		BREAK	
		BREAK	
		Session Ten	
		Session Eleven	
		Session Twelve	
		Session Thirteen	
		Session Fourteen and Graduation Ceremony	

Contact Details

<p>Name and address of Venue:</p> <p>Tel:</p> <p>Contact Person/ Site Co-Ordinator:</p> <p>Tel:</p> <p>Referral Agent:</p> <p>Tel:</p>

Sample Strengthening Families De-briefing Summary Sheet

Note: This summary sheet documents key notes of sessions held each week. A facilitator from each group should fill this in at the end of every evening. There is one sheet to be completed per session. Please do not write any identifying information on this summary sheet.

Date of Session: _____

Session number: _____

Please **circle** the session:

Parent

Younger Teens

Elder Teens

Family

Please outline what you think went well at this session:

Please outline what you think did not work well at this session:

Any additional comments:

Sample Serious Incident and Accident Report

Submitted to:

Date report written:

Date of submission:

Date of incident:

Name of Strengthening Families Personnel:

Name of participant on programme (if applicable):

Other witnesses:

Details of incident/accident:

Site Co-ordinator Use Only

Actions taken following incident/accident:

Site Co-ordinators Signature:

Date:

Sample SFP Graduation Invitation

PLACE LOGOS HERE

Strengthening Families Programme

*The Inter-Agency Strengthening Families Programme
cordially invites*

*to attend our
Strengthening Families Graduation Ceremony.*

*We would like to take this opportunity
to celebrate the completion of the programme
and thank the participants for their commitment and support.*

Please join us for the graduation and buffet at the

on

We hope you can attend and we look forward to seeing you!

RSVP to -----