



2021 Online International Gathering

Belonging To Family And Community

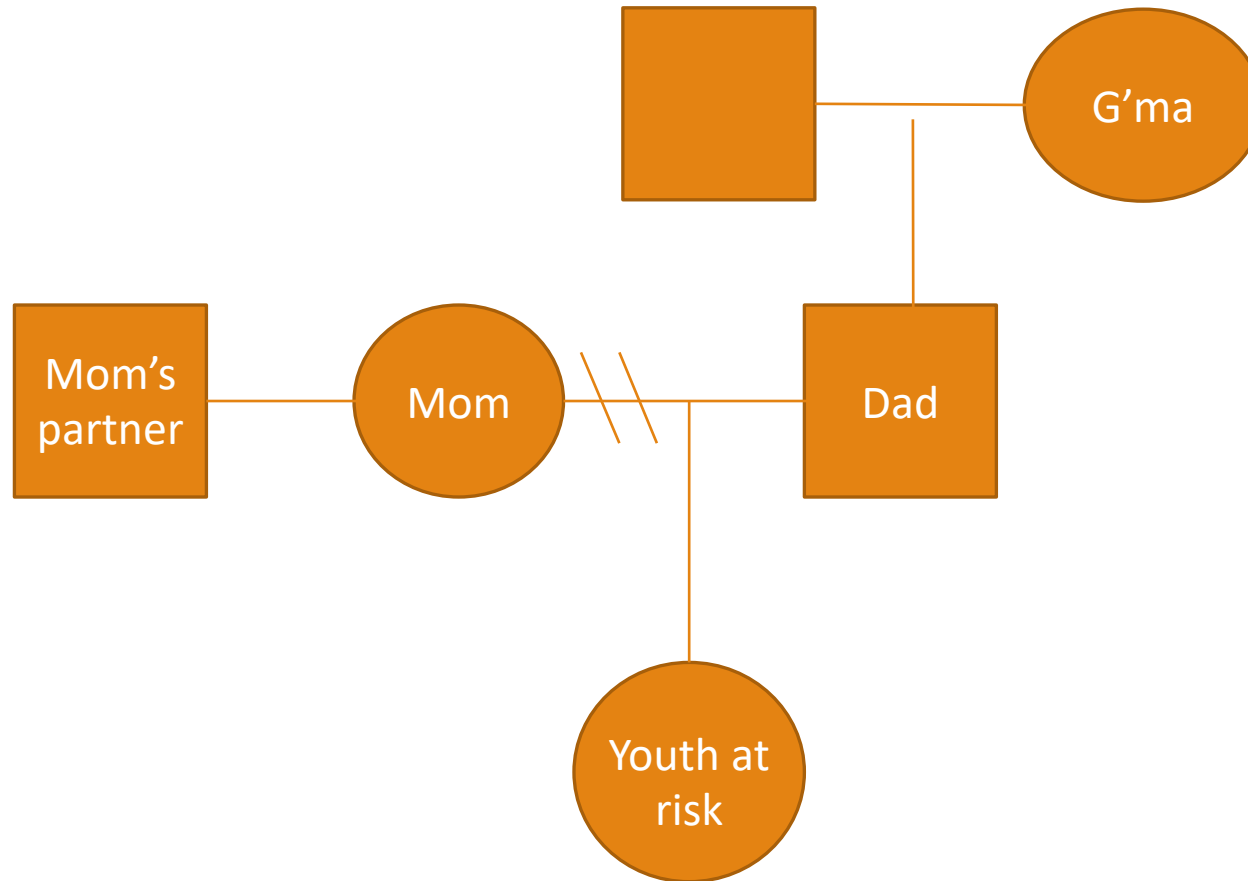
Windsor Essex Children's Aid Society, Canada

Loran Dutka
Tahira El-Sulayman

Windsor, Ontario, Canada



Family dynamics



The problem:

- ❖ Youth with high suicide behavior.
- ❖ Placement ending.
- ❖ Family is not trustworthy or cooperative

Our solution

- Youth will need a step-down group care because her family can't keep her safe.
- Professionals and more treatment are the only option.



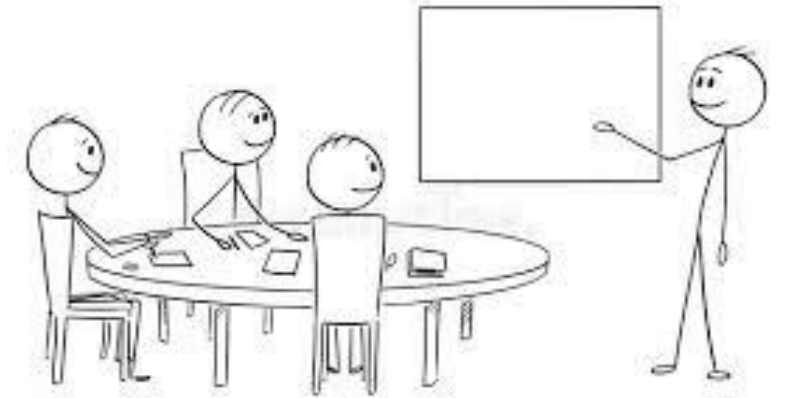
What needed to happen next

- We would ask for help from another agency in Cornwall, Ontario
- Read, research and prepare for the 2 days
- The reality of the worry people had around this youth returning home
 - This won't work.....
 - This isn't the right family....
 - I don't think I need to be there....



Doing the Work

- 2 intensive days of working together with our colleagues and the family
- Totally different way of gathering information, analyzing information and making decisions
- Hearing their plan and turning toward this youth belonging to her family as the best option for her



Danger Statement

Dad, Mom, Nana, workers and supervisors and directors at WECAS and her team at Syl Apps know how hard the child has worked at feeling better, like doing counseling and art therapy to talk about and work through her feelings. Everyone is very proud of how far she has come. We are worried that the adults in her life are sometimes too busy fighting about things in the past, that we forget to remember that ***she is a young lady who has been through significant trauma and we need a plan that will support her in finding ways to deal with trauma, otherwise no placement will be successful for her.*** She has said that she felt abandoned and rejected because her mother did not believe her when she disclosed that *** had sexually abused her. We are very worried that if she is feeling that no one believes her or is able to support her the way she needs, she will continue to withdraw and make threats or actions to harm herself, or worse yet succeed in ending her life. We worried that without a detailed safety plan for the family around her mental health her placement with her father will not be positive or successful one.

Safety Goal

Dad, Mom, and Nana love and care about their child very much and want what's best for her. She has expressed that she wanted to go live with her Dad and Nana and it's impressive how everyone has come together to support her wishes. For this to happen, we would need to see both sides of the family coming together, despite their differences, and developing a words and pictures explanation for her to explain all the things that have occurred and how these are not her fault. ***We would also need the family and the network to develop a safety plan that shows that when she is feeling rejected and abandoned, she will know who and when to seek out help or guidance, and use her coping skills during stressful times at home or school.*** This plan would also need to show how the network can put their differences aside and focus on making sure that the child is safe and well cared for and that no physical force is being used on her even when things get really difficult. We would need to see that this plan will be tested and followed for a period of twelve months.

Safety Scale

On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is that **even though we cannot all agree on what has happened in the past, mom, dad, grandmother and their safety network have come together and everyone is aware of the worries and have made a plan** and has been tested to show how they make sure she is getting the help she needs to deal with the trauma and sadness that she has experienced and there is a clear safety plan in place around her suicidal ideation that makes everyone feeling more comfortable and able to care for her. 0 is that **everyone is too busy arguing about the past, and making accusations toward each other that she is just left feeling torn and not having a sense of where she belongings and who will care for her the way she needs**. There continues to be no plan in place that shows her that she will be kept safe and to ensure that she is getting the help that she needs around her mental health and thoughts of suicide, as well as all the past trauma she has experienced.

Worker's reflections of the process

- Danger statement, safety goal and safety scale gave a clear pathway for the family to plan for their child
- Using a curious stance and a questioning approach helped us learn from the family
- Family know this child much better than we did
- Child belongs to family





[REDACTED] had a really hard time when she first went away. But as time went on [REDACTED] worked really hard and started talking about the future. [REDACTED] was doing so well that the Doctors and Workers at Syl Apps told her that she could go home. [REDACTED] asked to go live with her Dad and Nana. The Doctors and workers were still worried about [REDACTED] and wanted to make sure Mom, Dad, Nana and [REDACTED] had a good plan to keep [REDACTED] safe and to make sure she had people she could talk to if she felt like she didn't want to live anymore. Mom, Dad, Nana, and [REDACTED] met with the workers and supervisors at the Society and everyone agreed that [REDACTED] was doing so well. Mom, Dad, Nana and [REDACTED] had a good plan for [REDACTED] to live with Dad. Everyone said that they would support [REDACTED] to go home to Dad's house.

Doing the work as a leader

- 2 Intensive days of working together with our colleagues and the family
- Hearing their plan and turning toward this youth belonging to her family as the best option for her
- Building trust with the family by admitting we haven't been getting it right
- This family belonged to all of us



Re-visioning success

- Redefining what we thought was safety
- Case belonged to the agency
- Success as belonging to (her) family not to a system
- Asking for help and being open to learning from this family and from other practitioners has created endless opportunities for connections and to do better for families

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