

About Center For Family Connections

At a fundamental level, Center For Family Connections' (CFFC) mission is to help children feel safe, seen, and valued, and to help them adjust to the challenges of being, or having been, moved from one family to another. Many of the children CFFC serves have spent years in countless foster homes, orphanages, residential centers, or hospitals. CFFC constructs families, reconstructs families, refurbishes and restores families. The experienced clinicians understand the interactions and needs of complex families and provide the skills, tools and talent required to build stronger and healthier family units.

CFFC believes that the need to honor connections is an essential part of family life.

CFFC is an educational and clinical resource center that addresses the developmental, structural, and systemic issues related to adoption, foster care, kinship care, divorce and other complex blended families. CFFC serves individuals and families affected by adoption and foster care, as well as the people with whom they are connected, by offering training, education, advocacy, and clinical treatment.

CFFC serves a broad and diverse constituency nationally and internationally as well as in Greater Boston. From its founding, the staff has grown from 2 to 15, enabling CFFC clinicians to help more individuals and families. In the past year, CFFC served about 1,500 people on-site, and about 5,000 parents and professionals in national and international trainings and seminars. About 30% of CFFC's clients were low income; 30% were African American, 10% Latino, 15% Asian, and 45% Caucasian. CFFC's pro bono services to low-income clients are valued at approximately \$100,000 annually. Many of CFFC's clients reside in areas in DSS's Greater Boston and Metro regions.

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Center For Family Connections
presents

a Family Network Service

for

The Department of Social Services

CLINICAL MEDIATION



CLINICAL MEDIATION AT CFFC

One cannot legislate relationships.

In order to prepare for and carry out an open adoption that is in the truly best interest of the children and not only of the adults, Clinical Mediation is a proven process that builds strong extended families by open adoption. CFFC provides this highly expert service to families, clinicians, attorneys, and other professionals who are involved in the families' lives.

Clinical Mediation is a process whereby the best interest of the children is the central focus and the adults are guided to make decisions based on that one goal. The issues are reframed in clinically appropriate language and a safe container is created so that all the family members, along with the collaterals, are working together for the children.

Clinical Mediation is a venue for understanding and developing an extended family model where the child is the centerpiece.

CLINICAL MEDIATION: PROGRAM

Clinical Mediation gives families and providers the tools to negotiate open adoptions agreements. At the heart of Clinical Mediation is a focus on developing a real relationship between the birth/ foster/adoptive families in the best interest of the child.

The first step is assessing permanency in the best interest of the child. Reunification or placement with extended family is considered first, then open adoption as an alternative that extends the family and keeps kinship attachments vital to a child's emotional and psychological development.

Consulting with the larger system is crucial to gaining information and psychoeducation that will help the adults support the permanency plan.

Meetings with all various members of the family are held.

This process takes into account the full complexity of family and the importance of keeping the child at the center at all times. Family Group Conferencing may be used to further build relationships in the families.

CLINICAL MEDIATION: OUTCOMES

- Clarifies roles and responsibilities of all adults during the planning and carrying out of open adoption contracts.
- Enhances attachment through a collaborative model of adults working to make the child's life safe, permanent and balanced.
- Provides clarity about who the parents are and who the 'family' includes.
- Addresses and resolves complex and simple family problems.
- Increases permanency for children by enhancing family involvement in services.
- Helps families in crisis to determine a permanency plan for the child/family.
- Reduces the number of placements children experience, thus promoting placement stability.
- Ensures that every child has a family.
- Facilitates connection, collaboration and understanding.