



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children

A VICTIM OF YOUTH CRIME?

Have your say





If you're a victim of a crime committed by a young person, you have the right to attend a 'youth justice family group conference'.

It's an opportunity to have your say on how the crime has affected you – and to help the young person face up to what they've done and turn their life around.

Contact
Oranga Tamariki—
Ministry for Children
0508 326 459
contact@ot.govt.nz

WHAT'S A YOUTH JUSTICE FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE?

A youth justice family group conference (FGC) is a formal meeting that aims to help the young person take responsibility for their actions and change their behaviour for the better.

The people who take part in the FGC include:

- you - the victim or person affected by the crime
- the young person and their whānau
- a 'youth justice coordinator', who organises and leads the FGC
- representatives from Oranga Tamariki and the Police
- other professionals involved in the young person's life (for example, their lawyer, doctor, teacher and social worker)

Their role in the FGC is to:

- help the young person face the consequences of their crime and learn from their mistakes
- identify the underlying reasons for the offending

- look at ways to help the young person change their behaviour, such as through a life skills, employment or education programme, or activities like team sports and mentoring
- develop a legally binding plan with the young person to help them right their wrong and make a start towards a better future
- help them to put things right with you.

FGCs usually last for one or two hours, but they may take longer if there's a lot to talk about or some detailed planning to do.

WHY SHOULD I TAKE PART?

You could make a real difference in helping the young person to take responsibility for their actions and make things right.

It can take courage to go to an FGC, but if you do you'll:

- have the opportunity to say how the crime has affected you and your life (financially, physically and emotionally)
- help the young person to understand how their offending has affected others
- be able to help in developing the plan for the young person's future
- have a say in what you'd like to see happen to help make things right.



You can take friends and whānau with you

Support people are welcome at the FGC. Just let us know ahead of time so we make sure we have enough room for everyone.

You'll have support every step of the way

You'll get help and support from the youth justice coordinator, who'll contact you well before the FGC to:

- explain the FGC process and your role
- give you information to help you through the process
- answer any questions or concerns you may have.

They'll also:

- invite you to help choose the day, time and place for the FGC
- advise you on whether we can help with the costs of childcare and lost income while you attend the FGC
- ask you about any cultural or disability needs we need to consider
- arrange for an interpreter if you need one.

Can I do this another way?

If you'd rather not go to the FGC, talk to the youth justice coordinator about your options. For example:

- the coordinator could talk about your experience at the FGC
- you could ask someone else to present your views to the FGC
- you could write a letter to be read out at the FGC
- you could join the FGC by phone or tele-conference.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE FGC?

We'll do everything we can at the FGC to make sure you're treated with respect, and that you're safe and feel supported.

Every FGC is different, but it will likely have four main parts:

1. The Police give us the facts

The Police representative reads out the report on the crime and the young person either agrees or denies that they did it. Most young people agree – if they don't, the matter is referred back to the Police or Youth Court to decide what will happen next.

2. We discuss the offending

We all talk about the young person's offending and:

- why it happened
- how it's affected you, the young person and others
- how the young person can make things right.

You can talk about:

- how the crime affected you physically, emotionally and financially
- how you think the young person can make things right with you. This could include providing 'reparation' (such as paying for any damage they've caused), apologising or doing voluntary work for you or your community.

3. The young person and their whānau have time to themselves

The FGC takes a break while the young person and their whānau:

- talk about what's been said
- develop a plan to take back to the conference.

4. Together, we come up with a plan

The young person's whānau share their ideas with everyone at the conference. Then, as a group, we come up with and all agree on a clear, realistic plan for the young person.

The plan will likely include:

- how the young person will show they accept responsibility for their offending (such as through doing community service)
- how the young person will put things right with you
- actions to address why the young person did what they did, so that they don't offend again
- a commitment from the young person's whānau and others at the FGC to help them change their behaviour
- a clear timeframe for who does what and when.

What if I don't agree with the plan?

You can challenge the plan if you don't think there's a reasonable chance that it will work, or if it doesn't meet your needs. If the group can't agree on the plan, the Police or the Youth Court will decide what to do next.

Note that if the young person is aged between 10 and 13 years, the FGC must consider some extra aspects of their behaviour and circumstances. In this case the youth justice coordinator will explain everything to you.



WHO CHECKS THAT THE YOUNG PERSON FOLLOWS THE PLAN?

It's our job to make sure that everyone follows the plan.

We'll keep you up to date on the young person's progress. If things go off track the youth justice coordinator will talk with the young person and their whānau about what they can do.

If you would like to tell us how things went for you after the FGC, ask the coordinator for details on how you can do this. It's important you have the chance to have your say.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Here are some websites you might find useful:

Oranga Tamariki:

www.orangatamariki.govt.nz

Victim Support:

www.victimsupport.org.nz

Victims Centre:

www.victiminfo.govt.nz

Youth Court:

www.youthcourt.govt.nz