

## **FRS Guidelines for Conducting Virtual FROG Scale Visits Healthy Families New York**

As we continue in this time of offering a hybrid model of home visiting services due to COVID 19, we realize that many programs are still utilizing alternative ways of connecting with families beyond face-to-face home visits. Please keep in mind that any support that the program can give a family at this time will help them feel a little more secure and less anxious. The following guidance to help you navigate virtual FROG Scale visits.

### **Outreach**

Sites are encouraged to reach out to community providers, referral sources and families to ensure that they know that the program is still accepting referrals and offering services remotely.

### **Setting Up the FROG Visit**

The first step is to determine whether a remote home visit is possible. Each family and situation may be different, and any type of contact is always based on the family's willingness to participate. Questions to consider include:

When can both parents be available and is the family willing and able to use a form of remote contact (text, phone call, video chat) to conduct the parent survey?

Explore the family's options for interacting with the FRS in a private space, or a space in which they are comfortable. Is there enough privacy for the FRS and the parent(s) to interact via phone or computer? While there may not always be an ideal space, it's important for the FRS to have privacy for conducting the FROG.

Do they have the tech capability for video chats?

Are there topics that the parent(s) prefers not to talk about via phone or video?

Some possible methods for virtual visits are Skype, Face-Time, doxy.me, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp.

The expectation remains the same regarding building on opportunities to involve fathers at the first contacts being the scheduling phone call and the FROG visit.

### **Conducting the Visit/Administration of the FROG Scale**

Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the FROG can be administered virtually during this time if device cameras are available to support it occurring face-to-face. Because of the sensitivity of information we ask, the value of observing non-verbal cues, and the timing of the conversation, which is in the very early stages of relationship building, having a face-to-face visual is very important. If this is not possible, phone conversation is allowable and it is understood portions may not be completed until an in-person contact can occur.

For video calls, attempt to position phones and computers so both you and the parent can see one another and can interact verbally and non-verbally.

For phone calls, you will need to rely on the parent's reporting, rather than on observation, to gain information. Lacking visual cues, you will also need to pay close attention to the parent's tone of voice and inflection to guide your service provision. The following questions can help you "check in" with the parent and keep them engaged:

"How is this working for you?"

"What's it like for you to have our visit on the phone/video?"

"What could we do to make this phone/video visit work better for you?"

The expectation remains the same, in that the FRS will not write during the FROG visit but focus on eye contact and connecting with the parent as they share their stories. As with typical face-to-face visits, this ensures that you are focused on what the family is sharing, noticing cues, and energy shifts. As always remember to begin each FROG with an emphasis on building relationships and creating a safe, trusting environment for the parent(s) during the initial visit when the FROG is administered.

The expectation remains the same that the FRS will attempt to capture, quantify and qualify the family's responses in an effort to provide as much in depth information as possible. The FRS will explore and attend to the family's identified strengths, using strengths-identifying questions (SIQ's), protective factors and challenges.

We recognize during this time that the duration and content of the FROG visit may vary. The FRS remains attentive to family cues and adapts time frames accordingly to capture what information they can at the first contact.

### **Documentation/Scoring/Next Steps**

Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, it is understood that portions of the FROG that were not able to be covered during your first contact with the family may not be completed until an in-person contact can occur. All other expectations for documenting and scoring the FROG remain the same.

Follow established methods of documenting and scoring the FROG. If the FRS is unable to discuss a particular Domain area completely they will score that area "U" and document "FRS did not ask." If the FRS is unable to gather enough information for a score of 10 at the first contact, they are expected to consult with their supervisor and program manager to discuss what areas may need further exploration. We understand that there may be instances where an FRS may need another contact to gather the additional information needed to meet scoring criteria. Note this in case notes where this occurs.

When completing the FROG Scale narrative in the introduction section the FRS will indicate that the FROG was conducted during COVID-19.

It may be difficult to enroll new families during this time, and the expected timeframes for screening and assessment may be challenged as a result. Maintain clear notes for each family where COVID-19 restrictions impacted enrollment timeframes.

As the program requires consent forms in order to complete the FROG, we have expanded different ways to determine consent—sending forms via snail mail and then asking parents to text consent with a photo of the signed form, etc. Some sites and families may have the technology capacity that has used DocuSign to obtain signature on consents, this is an acceptable way of obtaining that information. Programs can also get verbal consent. Be sure to read the consents and review with the families if getting verbal or email consent and indicate in the file case notes that this exception was made as a result of COVID-19 and obtain the signed paper consent when in person home visiting resumes.

### **Supervision**

Just as the parents that programs support may need more time now to discuss personal challenges before they can bring their attention to their child, the FRS and their supervisor may need to allot more time in supervision to discuss personal challenges FRSs may be facing related to this crisis before attending to their work with families. It's very important that programs have the support they need to manage their own stress level - for their benefit, and so they can return to work with families with renewed strength. Remember supervision can be divided into two 45-minute sessions, which may work well under the current circumstances for best supporting staff.

### **Follow-up**

Please be in touch with your PCANY QA Specialist if you have further questions, or want to discuss additional challenges related to providing virtual home visits or any other issues related to this crisis. We are here to support you!

\* [SEE FROG TOOLKIT FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES](#)