

CERQual tables

Experience of practitioners delivering Parent Management Training Oregon (PMTO)

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
Training of practitioners						
Quality of the training was appreciated. "Educational, thorough, holistic, active, engaging". Adequate time for training sessions. Trainers were experienced, engaging, and supportive. Peer support from other trainees was also beneficial and networking with practitioners outside their own agency.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered several aspects of what contributes to "high quality training"	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Shortcomings of training - lack of clarity, vague answers, disorganization, long training, days, length of the training process, and repetitive content. In addition, a few participants stated that relevant child welfare topics were not fully addressed by the training, including trauma, parental substance abuse, and parent mental illness. Failure of trainers to understand the nuances of the child welfare work. While there was adequate time for training, a time gap between training and work with families was drawn out too long. Participants needed opportunity to practice their newly learned skills shortly after the training workshops.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered several aspects of training short comings	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Suggested improvements to training - Three common suggestions for training were to: (1) add more mock videos and	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered three different ways in	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
role-plays for illustrating sessions; (2) make a trainer available locally for several months instead of a week-long intensive training days followed by a two-month gap; and (3) establish a clear practice model structure, including topic-by-topic session agendas.			which training could have been improved.			
Helpfulness of coaching components - Most participants reported that coaching was a helpful, positive, encouraging, and “very gentle” experience. They received feedback from coaches and peers. Utility of watching other people in role-plays prior to implementing their first session. PMTO coaches were knowledgeable, kind, and focused on strengths. Feedback made participants feel more self-assured as therapists, helped them understand where improvements were needed, and expanded their understanding of families. Direct feedback was appreciated. Amount of coaching was generally found to be adequate. A great number of participants considered that the different forms of coaching they received were good, including online coaching (i.e., video conference) and ongoing coaching from supervisors.	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Facilitators to learning PMTO – some participants were highly committed to learning, self-reflection, and a desire to make improvements to one's own practice. Additionally, their comments reflected open-	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
mindfulness and enthusiasm about EBIs, in general, and PMTO, specifically. Others experienced an overcoming of initial skepticism during the process.						
Changes to clinical practice						
Benefits to therapeutic practice - All participants reported that PMTO benefited their therapeutic practice. Most of them noticed that after PMTO training, they were more hopeful and strengths-oriented, even becoming aware of their own strengths. Specific improvements involved being: a better listener, less confrontational, more insightful and “in the moment,” more active and “hands-on,” more agenda-driven in sessions, and more conscious of time restrictions. Other participants asserted that they had better relationships with clients, understood that silence can be useful, improved their teaching skills, and learned to problem-solve with parents, not for parents. Many respondents felt satisfied with the results as they applied PMTO in their practice.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered several different ways in which PMTO training had improved the practice of the practitioners.	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Barriers to applying the PMTO model in clinical practice - A few participants had no previous clinical experience, whereas a couple of participants mentioned that they initially had to navigate their education and clinical experience with PMTO. They noted that PMTO training poses challenges to	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
experienced therapists, as it emphasizes self-reflection and continual professional growth. This training process, however, changed these participants' practice style and revealed areas for growth.						
Customisability of the intervention - Gaining experience in using PMTO with families contributed to practitioners' comfort with the model. A couple of practitioners struggled with using role-plays and some families disliked them, whereas a majority reported that roleplays were readily applied in the practice setting. Giving directions, active listening, and limit setting were among the most straightforward and uncomplicated topics to implement. Most participants reported that they could customize PMTO to match each family's needs, staying true to the model. A minority of respondents initially considered the model rigid and difficult to adapt and noted that coaching facilitated this adaptation.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Some inconsistency with a minority of the participants finding PMTO to be a rigid model of care.	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Response by targeted families - According to participants, most families responded positively to PMTO. PMTO's powerful effect was evident in the rapid improvement that families experienced, even if it was small. Even though some families felt skeptical at first, their confidence increased as they used the skills and advocated for themselves. A couple of participants noted that families recommended PMTO to	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
everyone, even teaching PMTO skills to friends, and that teenagers reported better communication with their parents. Family response was more positive when practitioners got further into the PMTO curriculum.						
Barriers to effectiveness - Family response depended on parents' cognitive skills, functioning level, and willingness to try PMTO strategies. Some families learned PMTO skills quickly, others took longer, and some did not get them. Practitioners reported that adapting PMTO was more challenging with families with single dads, with more children, and with children with complex needs, such as blind or non-verbal autistic children. Less than a third of the participants reported having challenges adapting PMTO to the unique needs of families, including grief, domestic violence, sexual abuse, parental mental health issues, and parental substance abuse. Delivering PMTO was difficult with parents with mental health and substance abuse issues, who were purportedly more likely to dropout from treatment. However, a couple of participants clarified that these issues are indirectly addressed by PMTO; families who faced multiple contextual factors required harder work.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered several different barriers to the effectiveness of PMTO	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Organisational facilitators - Important were supportive leadership and reasonable work	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>expectations. Participants also expressed appreciation for collaborative processes, quick turnaround on questions, and work climates that were safe for “trial and learn. Key organizational supports included not rushing participants through training; sharing information quickly and continuously; making sure that staff were not overworked; carefully coordinating changes when there were staff shortages; and providing the structure, materials, and logistics for implementation. Advantages were also realized through effective communications and organizational structures that promoted peer support, teamwork, and collaboration. Some practitioners pointed to the helpfulness of fluid and effective communication throughout the implementation process; they felt their voices were heard by their agencies, describing how their agencies “listened” when participants had questions, frustrations, anxiety, or stress.</p>			<p>several different organisational facilitators to the effectiveness of PMTO</p>	<p>Only 1 study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Study was from outside of the UK</p>	
<p>Organisational barriers - less than a third of the participants felt that they received inadequate support, resources, and encouragement from their agencies. A few of them described challenges associated with their agency's norms, policies, and centralization. Specific problems included lack of support from other staff, inability to use flexible work hours, transportation</p>	1	No concerns	<p>Minor concerns Theme covered several different organisational barriers to the effectiveness of PMTO</p>	<p>Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
issues, heavy emphasis on paperwork, and indirect communication with trainers (e.g., not being allowed to directly ask questions to trainers). Indeed, a couple of participants felt as though the program was isolated in their agencies; they perceived resistance from other staff and had to advocate for clients within the agency due to conflicting practices or procedures (e.g., agency practices regarding families affected by substance abuse). Others considered that the lack of support from the agency was associated with the lack of understanding of the intervention model. They felt that the agency administrators did not understand therapists' problems, such as the hassles and workload associated with uploading videos. Few respondents wondered whether their agencies knew what to do with the model; there was lack of agreement on how to use it within the agency and the organizational structures needed to reinforce it. These participants concluded that better internal communication from upper management would have helped to create a more accommodating climate and improved the implementation.						
Practitioner suggestions for organisations - Practitioner suggestions for organizations were: do not be afraid of implementing new EBIs, select EBIs compatible with client	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered several suggestions to organisations to	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
needs, plan before implementing, have patience with the process, communicate excitement and information throughout the agency, share information timely, facilitate teamwork and collaboration among frontline staff, provide adequate working conditions, and listen to the struggles and suggestions of frontline practitioners.			facilitate the PMTO intervention			
Stakeholder buy-in - Participants recognized that stakeholder buy-in was a chief factor in successful implementation. In particular, the role of the court system was acknowledged: courts were supportive of the project because of the groundwork laid by agency administrators' efforts to reach out and educate them about PMTO. More frequent among participants' comments was an emphasis on the central role of case managers. They identified case managers as a major player whose backing and cooperation was essential.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Theme covered multiple important stakeholders	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low
Short timelines as a barrier to effectiveness of this intervention - ASFA timelines were pinpointed as major system-level challenges. The high demands placed on families by the child welfare system impacted their response to PMTO. First, when families started the program, parents were in shock because their children were in the system; they often felt angry and guilty, with a negative view of themselves as parents. Practitioners had to address	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from outside of the UK	Very Low

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those negative feelings that turned to displaced resentment Thus, practitioners recommended allowing families more time to get through the PMTO curriculum and learn the new parenting skills (i.e., longer than 6 months). Second, the mismatch between the time required by the child welfare system to attend to multiple case plan tasks and the time available for the family, creates frustrating barriers for families.						

Experience of foster care youth and conference facilitators undertaking Family Team Conferencing

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
The critical role of the facilitator - A trained facilitator employed by the foster care agency facilitated the permanency planning family team conferences. Facilitators guided the team through each stage of Team Decision Making, including the introduction to the conference structure, ground rules and participants, a discussion of youth strengths and concerns, brainstorming ideas to address the identified concerns, agreeing upon next steps, and developing an agreed upon service plan. The conferences followed a structured format however the facilitator played a critical role in positively engaging the young person in the decision-making process. The facilitation strategies employed to engage youth in decision making included: 1) creating a safe space, 2) encouraging the youth	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
voice, 3) re-balancing power, and 4) establishing a personal connection. These strategies are described in depth with examples below.						
<p>Creating a safe space – addressing fears about breaking confidentiality - A consistent theme identified throughout the youth interviews was the importance of adults respecting their privacy and confidentiality. Several participants discussed situations where they shared personal information with child welfare professionals they perceived to be confidential that was subsequently shared with others. Youth expressed a sense of betrayal, feeling their trust was violated. A lack of transparency regarding the parameters of privacy can create a divide between professionals as insiders and youth as outsiders to child welfare decision-making processes. In the context of the family team conference, it was important that the facilitator took time to thoroughly explain the parameters of privacy and the young person understood them. Since the information discussed in the conference was used for case planning purposes, the information was considered private but not confidential. One facilitator was observed telling the young person that the information in the conference would not come back and be detrimental to them afterwards. In the post-observation interview, the facilitator explained that many youth in foster care are reluctant to open up and share information in the conference because they are afraid it will be used in negative or harmful manner. Her goal is to create a safe space where youth feel comfortable sharing information and</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i></p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study was from the USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
engaging freely in the discussion. She explains the parameters of privacy, but also addresses their fears directly by emphasizing the collaborative nature of decision-making and informing them that no decisions will be made without their input and awareness.						
Creating a safe and collaborative environment - trust building exercises - In addition to discussing the parameters of privacy, some facilitators created a safe and collaborative environment by building trust among the conference participants. As illustrated in one conference the facilitator began by instructing each participant to write their name and relationship to the youth on a folded piece of cardboard, which she then placed on the table facing inward so everyone could view it. The facilitator then took the time to have each participant introduce themselves by their name and relationship to the youth. The note card visualization coupled with the verbal introduction highlighted the important role each participant played in supporting the youth in the decision-making process.	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low
Encouraging the youth voice - Another consistent theme in the youth interviews was the importance of having a voice in the family team conference. Youth wanted the opportunity to talk, be heard and have their perspective considered. The facilitator played an instrumental role in including youth in the conversation and making them feel like an equal member of the team. Facilitators used various engagement strategies including, verbal affirmations, non-verbal communication, everyday language, and	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family</i>	Minor concerns Theme covered several aspects of practically encouraging the youth voice. Unclear the number of participants who agreed with each of these aspects.	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low

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humor. Facilitators used verbal affirmations to engage youth in the conference. For example, some facilitators used positive action words to describe the youth's behaviors such as successful, independent, consistent and diligent. The use of positive language when describing the youth's actions led youth to open up and engage in the discussion. They also encouraged other members of the group to focus on youth strengths, rather than deficits. Facilitators also used non-verbal communication to engage the youth in the discussion such as physical presence, maintaining eye contact, smiling, nodding, and stating, "uh hum" and "ok." Through the use of non-verbal communication, facilitators sent a message to the youth that they were physically present and interested in what the youth had to say. Facilitators used everyday language to communicate with the youth in the conference. Child welfare professionals often rely on professional jargon, which can create a divide between professionals and youth. Examples of such language include the use of codes, acronyms or technical language. In order to engage youth in the discussion, it was important to substitute professional jargon with more developmentally appropriate language.		<i>group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>				
Re-balancing power - An important goal of the conference facilitator was to level the playing field so that all participants are provided the opportunity to speak, have their perspective heard, feel respected, and collaborate in the Team Decision Making process. Facilitators were responsible for managing power dynamics so youth and professionals were	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low

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<p>true collaborators, rather than the adults or professionals dominating the discussions. The idea of adults/professionals collaborating with youth in decision-making was novice and/or challenging for some participants. Therefore, it was the role of the facilitator to re-balance power when the adults were dominating the discussion. Facilitators accomplished this in multiple ways including keeping the focus on youth, seeking their perspective and advocating for their perspective. E.g. Several facilitators noted the importance of keeping the conference focused on the youth, including asking adults to remain quiet and/or re-directing the discussion when adults attempt to promote their views.</p>		<p><i>the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i></p>				
<p>Brainstorming to support meeting goals - Another re-balancing power strategy was to seek the youth perspective and brainstorm ways to assist them in meeting their planning goals. In one conference the youth reported an interest in obtaining employment in the medical field. The facilitator brainstormed the steps necessary to learn about educational and professional opportunities, and how other conference participants could support the young person in accomplishing this goal. Similarly, in another conference the youth reported that she wanted to graduate from high school. The facilitator responded positively by asking what she needed to do to graduate. The youth responded that she needed to go to class and said she was risking failing science. The facilitator probed further, asking about the specific steps the youth would take to pass science. The youth discussed steps she could take including,</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i></p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study was from the USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
waking up on time and going to the makeup labs. The facilitator elaborated upon the discussion by focusing on concrete steps the youth can employ to pass her science class, including a discussion regarding how the foster parent and case planner could support the youth in getting up on time, getting on the bus and attending her science labs. These ideas were then documented in the action plan.						
Rebalancing power - advocacy - Another important mechanism for re-balancing power was advocating for the youth perspective. At times this meant challenging the agency perspective and revealing potential agency missteps. For example, in a conference with a youth residing in a mother child residence, the youth complained that for the past two weekends when she came home from work the door to the facility was locked and she had to sit outside with her child for over an hour. The case planner attempted to place responsibility on the youth by saying that she needs to call the staff and notify them when she is coming home. In response, the youth reported she told the Assistant Manager of the residence that she will be home between 3:30 and 4 pm. The facilitator responded by advocating the youth perspective, stating to the agency, “we need to come up with a plan to deal with this.” The facilitator then focused on the agency’s actions, asking the case planner a series of questions until it was acknowledged that the agency was indeed at fault because the Director had been on vacation and things had “fallen through the cracks.” The facilitator then brainstormed a plan to address the situation.	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low

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The facilitator allowed the youth to voice their concerns, adopted their perspective and placed responsibility on the agency to address the concerns. The facilitator then brainstormed action steps to rectify the situation. The action steps became part of the written service plan, holding all parties accountable.						
Establishing a personal connection - remembering and celebrating goals - A consistent theme in the youth interviews was the personal connection (or lack of connection) youth experienced with the facilitator. Youth felt positively engaged in the conference when they perceived the facilitator to take a genuine interest in them. One mechanism mentioned by youth to determine whether the facilitator took an interest in them was their knowledge about the case. For first time facilitators, it meant being familiar with the case history and permanency planning goals. For repeat facilitators, it meant remembering the case history, permanency planning goals and checking in with participants on the progress from the previous conference as illustrated in one conference when the facilitator began with a round of applause for the youth for meeting her goal of graduating from high school. In the post-observation interview, the youth reported feeling “like a star” because the facilitator remembered and publicly acknowledged her goal from the previous conference of finishing high school. The youth perceived the facilitator to be proud of her.	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low
Establishing a personal connection - continuity of facilitators - not retelling story - While the family	1	Minor concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
team conference model does not call for continuity of facilitators several participants mentioned it as a factor in being able to establish a personal connection. From the facilitator perspective, it was helpful to be familiar with the individuals involved in the case, the case history and the case planning goals. By facilitating multiple conferences the facilitator became an “insider” to the case. Youth reported feeling more engaged in the conference when they had previous exposure to the facilitator. They discussed the importance of not having to re-tell their story. They also discussed the importance of already established trust and rapport.		<i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>		Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Study was from the USA	
Limitations of a personal connection with the facilitator - Although youth responded positively to facilitators who established personal connections, some facilitators did not perceive this to be their role. They saw their role as a neutral “outside” party to the case. One such facilitator discussed the importance of maintaining professional boundaries with the youth. She saw the case planner as the appropriate person to establish a connection with the youth, since the case planner works closely with the youth. The perspective of the facilitator as the outside neutral party was contradictory to the preference of youth to have a personal connection with the facilitator. In fact, youth expressed reluctance to open up and share information with facilitator they did not know well. Given that youth are asked to share sensitive information and make important decisions that impact their life in the context of the	1	Minor concerns <i>Unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. All were over the age of 18 yet family group conferences occur at younger ages.</i>	Minor concerns Theme somewhat contradicted the theme before, but was coherent.	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
conference, relational concerns were important to them.						

Experience of carers undertaking Treatment Foster Care

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Parent vs. Treatment Provider</p> <p>Several experts commented on the challenges TFC parents face in balancing their role as a caregiver with the expectation to be a professional. In treatment foster care, the experts emphasized how the TFC parent is responsible for creating an environment that provides a therapeutic experience for youth. Although the TFC parent may not have a clinical education or license, several experts expressed that “TFC parents are the ones who create the change.” Youth in a treatment foster care placement may also be receiving therapy outside the home, but “the foster family is the agent of treatment, not therapy from the outside.” The home setting itself is intended to be transformative. Although many TFC parents have experience and competence with parenting, this is no guarantee that they will be effective as a TFC parent. This tension between being a caregiver and being a treatment provider is not just about different competencies but also about embracing this expanded role.</p>	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study was from the USA	Very Low
<p>Teamwork - Parent Expertise vs Worker Expertise</p> <p>As TFC parents are empowered to have larger roles as experts of the youth in their home, they may struggle to collaborate effectively with their TFC social worker. One of the workforce dynamics commonly found in TFC agencies</p>	2	No concerns One study was low risk of bias, another was moderate risk of bias.	No concerns	Moderate concerns Only 2 studies	Minor concerns Studies were from the USA	Very Low

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<p>is that TFC parents may have more life and parenting experience while TFC social workers may have more formal training and education in treatment approaches. The different types of expertise is not just a problem for the TFC parents. For TFC social workers, playing a supervisory or coaching role with experienced TFC parents can be intimidating. This tension may inhibit the social worker from providing validation to the TFC parent's role as a treatment provider. To manage this tension, the experts offered several ideas. Operating from the perspective of a strengths-based partnership was one suggestion. Recognizing that each type of expertise can have value and contribute towards the family's success is key. TFC foster parents across groups repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing strong care teams founded on relationships built of mutual respect and characterized by consistent, clear communication. Participants who expressed satisfaction with their care team were positive about their roles. They felt included in decision-making around their child and were routinely kept abreast of important information. The importance of respect, engagement, and clear communication was also evident in TFC foster parents' relationships with clinicians, and their belief in the efficacy in mental health treatment overall.</p>				<p>contributed to this theme.</p>		
<p>Treatment foster carers need to know how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be advocates – including in education, medical, and behavioral health services. Bringing their unique perspectives. 	2	<p>No concerns One study was low risk of bias, another was moderate risk of bias.</p>	No concerns	<p>Moderate concerns Only 2 studies contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Studies were from the USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have systems knowledge – of both the child welfare system and behavioural health system so as to know how to navigate this care. Managing challenging behaviours Parenting youth with emotional and behavioural issues requires specialized skills. The experts noted that TFC parents should have the capacity to identify when a youth may require clinical care 						
Preferences for training for TFC Experiential Training - Universally, the experts encouraged hands-on learning opportunities during training for TFC parents. One TFC expert recommended to “do a lot of experiential pieces in the training: practicing and role play. Keep it very behavioural.” Another expert suggested, “giving them a skill, having them practice in class, and then work with the kids at home.” As summarized by one expert: “the more interactive, the better.” The experts seemed to agree that a single training event without follow-up would have little impact. This ongoing skill building could be in the form of a coach that could provide follow-up consultation and refining of skill development.	2	No concerns One study was low risk of bias, another was moderate risk of bias.	No concerns	Moderate concerns Only 2 studies contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Studies were from the USA	Very Low
Peer Support The experts emphasized the value of engaging other TFC parents in training and supporting TFC parents who are newer to the role or struggling. Learning from other parents was viewed as both credible and encouraging for TFC parents. The benefits were attributed to not just the recipient, but also for the experienced TFC parent who is able to exercise this leadership and service.	2	No concerns One study was low risk of bias, another was moderate risk of bias.	No concerns	Moderate concerns Only 2 studies contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Studies were from the USA	Very Low
Destabilising staff turnover	1	Minor concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Consistent across all groups were reports of frequent and, sometimes, destabilizing transitions in the form of staff turnover or staff changing positions within their agency. As a result, participants widely agreed that strategies for managing transitions should be included as part of staff and foster parent training, and that additional resources—both for children and for treatment foster carers—were needed during periods of change. Concerns about staff transitions focused primarily on the impact of transitions on the mental health of children; “every time you turn around they are changing caseworkers on them ... and then they feel like they just tired of them.” Participants emphasized the toll repeated transitions could take their children, but most said agencies did not prepare them adequately for changes. More than one participant reported addressing transitions by telling their child to focus more on the stability of their (parent-child) relationship than the one with his/her caseworker. Participants agreed that more structured, consistent communication and support was needed around caseworker transitions—for everyone involved. At the very least, participants wanted to be informed in advance of impending departures, and, if possible, given the opportunity to meet with both workers, to facilitate transitions</p>		<p>Theme was derived from a study at moderate risk of bias</p>		<p>Only 1 study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Study was from the USA</p>	
<p>Need for emotional support in times of conflict In most of the groups, TFC foster parents described situations in which they felt staff members did not support them when there was conflict with a child in their care; at times staff were described as siding with the child during such conflicts, and at other times they were described as being absent and unsupportive. TFC foster parents who</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns Theme was derived from a study at moderate risk of bias</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only 1 study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study was from the USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
felt supported by their agency during periods of conflict described the things their agency did to make it easier for them to maintain difficult placements. One TFC foster parent said her agency did “everything” from setting up needed appointments with therapists “right away for the child” to picking up things at school. She reflected: “I feel like they are there for me ... it's really important because sometimes you feel overwhelming ... some kids, you feel like, ‘what am I going to do?’ – but you have phone numbers for everything.”						
Trial period, importance of suitability of placements: Getting acquainted - visits to ensure suitability - Opportunities to become acquainted and begin building a relationship were often valued by TFC parents. The visits were helpful not just to assess the match between the youth and foster parents, but also to observe other family dynamics the youth would be joining. Some TFC parents had to consider how a new foster youth would adjust with other youth in the home. Incorporating the foster youth into the family was mentioned by various TFC parents as being an important consideration when deciding whether to accept a youth into their care.	2	No concerns	No concerns	Moderate concerns Only two studies contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Studies took place in the USA	Very Low
Feeling rushed to make a decision, the transition process into the home - Timing. Some TFC parents expressed feeling rushed by the transition process of a youth being placed in their home. There seemed to be a push/pull between child welfare policies that emphasize youth living in family settings and the desire for TFC parents to feel adequately informed and prepared to receive the child. TFC parents recognize the pressures within the system even when there is some lead time for placements. Indeed, there was not a clear relationship	1	No concerns	Minor concerns There was not a clear relationship between the amount of time on the run up to the placement and how “rushed” the foster parent felt. Therefore, it was unclear what exactly	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Study took place in the USA	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
between the amount of time involved in the transition and the experience of feeling rushed. Some TFC parents who received youth within hours of first being notified about the youth did not express any concerns about the timing, while other TFC parents who had a week or more to weigh the decision mentioned that the process seemed “real quick.” This finding suggests that TFC parents differ on the amount of time they feel is needed to prepare for the transition.			leads to this feeling of being rushed.			
<p>The need for information prior to placement. information gathering – feeling that information may be withheld.</p> <p>TFC parents used a variety of methods to gather information for making a decision about whether or not to accept a youth into their home. Some TFC parents reported asking the caseworker many questions about the youth or reading the youth’s records, in addition to meeting and visiting. Other respondents seemed to require little information to make the decision to accept a youth. TFC parents also recognized the pitfalls of over-reliance on a youth’s records or previous history. When TFC parents were asked what types of information they wanted about a youth they were considering accepting into their home, they mentioned characteristics related to the youth’s behaviours, their background, and family experiences. Certain problem behaviours were frequently mentioned as important factors in assessing their willingness to foster a youth. Several TFC parents specifically mentioned they wanted to know whether the child had been a “firesetter,” was “violent,” and if they acted out sexually. Other less commonly reported issues that were mentioned as important to consider included</p>	3	<p>No concerns</p> <p>Two studies were low risk of bias and one moderate risk of bias</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>There was a distinction between the idea that foster carers would have preferred more information and the suspicion that information was deliberately being withheld.</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Only three studies contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Study took place in the USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
being pregnant, lying, stealing, running away, and anger management issues. At times, TFC parents reported not receiving information they wanted about the youth. For example, 1 TFC parent reported learning that a child had a bedwetting problem that was not disclosed prior to placement. Another TFC parent said of a youth with attention deficit issues: "I didn't know that he had it or anything about it." Other types of information not received were explanations of why previous placements had disrupted or a youth's involvement in sexual activities. TFC parents had different explanations for why information they wanted was not received. In some situations, the information may not have been available in a youth's record or may not have ever been reported previously. Other TFC parents suspected that the placement social worker purposely withheld information from them because they wanted the child placed.						
Resource needs of youngsters arriving for TFC. clothing and personal items - TFC parents seemed prepared to provide personal care items for youth as needed, but often found that youth also needed new clothes. Suggestions for improving the adequacy of clothing included receiving a clothing grant when a child is placed (N = 5). Several TFC parents commented on how they took ownership of their youth's appearance. Providing for the youth's clothing needs seemed to make a positive impression on the youth. However, TFC parents were sometimes reluctant to invest so substantially in a youth newly-placed in their home.	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Study took place in the USA	Very Low
Issues transitioning youth to school - Some TFC parents reported issues transitioning youth from their	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
previous school to their new school e.g. difficulties getting registered. Others reported no problems in that transition.				Only one study contributed to this theme	Study took place in the USA	
Straightforward transition to new mental health, dental, and medical providers - mental health services transitions - In this TFC program, all youth were expected to receive weekly outpatient therapy. Transitioning youth to new mental health providers was made easier for most TFC parents because this agency's workers provide referrals to providers near the TFC home. The TFC parents also appreciated being able to choose the therapist they wanted to work with. Medical and dental services seemed equally straightforward. A TFC parent could have their caseworker transfer a youth's files to a provider of the parent's choice or the caseworker would help identify possible local providers. TFC parents reported few difficulties in logistics regarding securing services for youth in their home. TFC parents who were less experienced reported greater reliance on their caseworkers for help in navigating the process of getting settled, whereas more senior TFC parents knew the ropes well. Overall, TFC parents seemed satisfied with the quality of auxiliary services their youth received.	2	No concerns One study was low risk of bias, one was moderate risk of bias.	No concerns	Moderate concerns Only two studies contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Study took place in the USA	Very Low
Agency support in getting settled – good supportive relationships, training, respite, and referrals. The strengths of the program identified by TFC parents may have facilitated the getting acquainted stage of the transition process. These strengths highlighted various supports that were mentioned as being helpful to TFC parents. Eight TFC parents mentioned they had a good	2	No concerns One study was low risk of bias, one was moderate risk of bias.	Minor concerns Several distinct aspects of the support that foster carers found to be helpful was outlined here.	Moderate concerns Only two studies contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Study took place in the USA	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
relationship with their TFC worker. Training was mentioned by 5 TFC parents as being a beneficial source of support. Respite was mentioned twice and referrals were mentioned by 1 TFC parent. Six mentioned the staff, counselors, or social workers at this agency were strengths.						
Adjustment to the idea of family life. Youth transitioning from group care settings are adjusting not only to their foster family, but also sometimes to family life in general. Some youth seemed to lack experiences that are common in most families. For example, 1 TFC parent recalled having a youth in her home who admitted never before having a set bedtime. Another TFC parent was surprised by a youth's dietary habits. A TFC mother described her efforts to treat her foster youth similarly to how she treated her biological children as a "mainstreaming" process.	1	No concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Study took place in the USA	Very Low
Reasons for breakdown. When youth coming from group care or other settings transition to TFC, struggles in the transition can lead to placement disruptions. More than half of the respondents had experienced at least one disruption of a child leaving their home. Reasons cited for disruptions included lying, running away, skipping school, stealing, and sexual behaviors. From the descriptions provided by TFC parents, disruptions often occurred after an increasing build-up of problems over time. For example, being thrown out of school, or stealing. As youth problems escalated or maintained at high levels of intensity, TFC parents seemed to reach a breaking point.	1	No concerns	Minor concerns Several aspects that could lead to placement breakdown were described here. Some of which may require very different responses.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Study took place in the USA	Very Low
Evidence of positive transition. Although not specifically asked about, many TFC parents shared evidence of a positive transition for youth they fostered, and they were proud and happy to share their success stories. E.g.	2	Minor concerns One study had low risk of bias. One study did not make its methods of	Minor concerns Specific aspects of a positive transition were described here.	Serious concerns Only two studies	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
success at school. Stakeholders perceived qualified clinical successes. One example is from a caseworker who thought that the youth's participation was beneficial even though her stay in an initial foster home placement lasted only a few months. Another qualified success was described by this foster parent, who saw substantial improvements in functioning in a youth she served.		coding and thematic analysis explicit.	For example, clinical improvement vs success at school.	contributed to this theme.	Studies took place in the USA	
Creating relationships with birth families. The Circle Program was felt to be more likely to promote reunification with family or enter kinship care than among children in a generalist foster care placement. Factors contributing to the child's relationship with their family of origin included: valuing the unique knowledge brought by the parents, encouraging the attendance of family, and the usefulness of care team meetings.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns However, participation of birth families could be encouraged in one of several ways.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
Support that was helpful for retaining foster carers - Focus group data highlighted factors deemed to be influential to carer retention such as support, training, ongoing education and access to flexible funds to obtain services. Comments highlighted the value of participation in regular care team meetings. Carers spoke of their	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers	Minor concerns Theme covered several distinct aspects of support that could help to retain foster carers.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
commitment to their role as a Circle carer, highlighting the experience of support, training, and ongoing education.		do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>				
Access to flexible brokerage funds - These funds were described by carers as supporting children to participate in normative community activities, for example a dance class or organized sport. Where a child required a specialist assessment (e.g. speech therapy) that was not available through public funding within a reasonable time frame, brokerage funding could be used. A key message from carers was the importance of accessing such discretionary funds to meet a child's needs in a timely way.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
Carers valued and treated as professional equals. The Circle Program was described by some carers as elevating the role of the foster carer to one that is 'equal'	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to	No concerns	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
to the other professionals on the care team. This, combined with the Circle Program training, professionalized the role of the foster carer, and some carers reported increased levels of confidence in their competence. Carers also commented that the success of the Circle Program was linked to the professional support provided: feeling 'listened to', having their opinions 'valued' and being 'supported' in their role as foster carer. In the focus groups, carers discussed their role and participation in the Circle Program with passion and enthusiasm. The wellbeing of the carer was also a focus of care team meetings with one carer commenting that someone always asked her how she was at care meetings and 'They really want to know how I am'!		evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>		Only one study contributed to this theme.	Study took place in Australia	
The common purpose of the care team with an equal system of carers - The egalitarian nature and common purpose of the care team were features mentioned by a number of focus group participants as having significance in their experience of TFC.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
		<i>process was not described explicitly.</i>				
Training essential particularly in trauma theory, attachment and self-knowledge. Contents of training - Training in trauma theory, attachment and selfknowledge were also identified as essential components by foster carers and foster care workers alike.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
Key role of the therapeutic specialist (Circle programme). The key role of the therapeutic specialist - Therapeutic specialists were identified by all stakeholders as core to the Circle Program's success. Circle carers and foster care workers highlighted the value of this role in guiding assessment and the care of the child. The availability of the therapeutic specialist was considered a particular strength given their knowledge; and ability to assist carers in understanding the child and their needs. Their role was active in guiding the foster carer in their day to day response to the child and this was experienced as very supportive and was seen to facilitate	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
a more immediate and appropriate response in meeting the child's needs. The therapeutic specialist could also extend their focus to include the child's family of origin as from the commencement of placement the aim is for the child to reunify with their family if the family can meet their needs. As many of the families of origin had themselves experienced trauma, it is important that they be assisted to heal and change to be available for the care of their child/young person.		chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>				
Building a support network for the child. Feedback from focus groups and the survey highlighted the importance of building a support network for the child/young person. This network included teachers, extended family and others in addition to members of the care team.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
The hard and stressful work of fostering. How would foster parents and staff tolerate the intervention? - a feasibility worry was that the TFC-OY intervention would be difficult for foster parents to tolerate. This was confirmed. In addition, some staff found the work stressful.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
In weekly meetings and in the qualitative research interviews, foster parents reported that the youth were extremely difficult to parent. Despite training that focused on the needs of youth with psychiatric problems, the foster parents reported being surprised by the amount of emotional volatility in the young people they served, the low levels of what they perceived as emotional maturity, and high needs for monitoring and supervision. No parent or youth described an extended period of time when life settled into a comfortable routine. It always felt like stressful work to the foster parents. The experience was not easy for the TFC-OY staff either. One Life Coach was surprised by the low level of emotional functioning of youth in an office setting.		of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>		contributed to this theme.		
Key role of the skills coach (Circle programme). The skills coach component was uniformly appreciated by foster parents, the program supervisor and the youth. When asked about the skills coach component, the youth tended to report things the coach had done for and with them that were related to positive youth development. E.g. helping to find a job, getting a drivers licence, going to find a place to eat. Multiple stakeholders commented on the positive relationships that youth developed with their skills coaches.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Key role of the psychiatric nurse (Circle programme). A second component that drew positive comments from stakeholders was that of the psychiatric nurse. Care managers appreciated the medication and diagnostic review provided by the nurse. They provided numerous examples of how they used this review and knowledge in their interactions with mental health providers. While some youth did not understand why they were receiving psychoeducation about their mental health problems from a nurse, others greatly appreciated it, explaining that it changed how they monitored their symptoms and how they approached their psychiatric providers.</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in USA</p>	Very Low
<p>Role of the life coach (Circle programme). The role of the life coach was a difficult one to execute. Initially, the role was focused on interpersonal skills the youth needed to succeed in the foster home, but was later supposed to involve life planning and psychoeducation. Two life coaches worked in the program and both found their role frustrating in terms of completing what they felt they were being asked to do.</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in USA</p>	Very Low
<p>The family consultant role (Circle programme). The family consultant role was less well received. The family consultant made many unsuccessful efforts to re-engage biological relatives and other nominated individuals into the lives of youth in TFC-OY and executed one successful effort, involving an older sibling. The role was also expensive (using a master's level mental health professional). In the end, the principal investigator concluded that the family consultant role would be eliminated going forward and that needed family work would be conducted by the program supervisor.</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Changes suggested for the circle programme. Program changes needed? - Since it was decided that it was permissible to alter the intervention mid-pilot in order to have an intervention worthy of testing at the end of pilot period, two modifications to the protocols were made several months into the intervention: 1) redefined roles for team members; and 2) efforts to address emotional dysregulation. Some of the life coach's responsibilities were offloaded to other team members. The skills coaches became responsible for helping youth plan for more independent living and the psychiatric nurse became responsible for providing psychoeducation about mental health problems. These modifications were considered successful, as viewed by stakeholders in qualitative interviews at the end of the project. Most glaring was the need to develop intervention components to address youth emotion regulation problems. Six of the foster parents interviewed qualitatively reported that the young people served in their homes experienced severe emotional outbursts; typically youth were seen as quick to become emotional and remaining emotionally volatile for substantial periods of time. During the last six months of the pilot, TFC-OY staff explored the potential of using processes and materials from Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in TFC-OY to address youth emotion regulation problems. Staff received initial DBT training from a certified trainer and a DBT skills group was mounted with the foster youth to teach interpersonal effectiveness and mindfulness skills. The groups were well received by youth who attended them, but attendance was a problem, mostly due to logistics, such as distance from youth placements to the group site, work schedules, and</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.</p>	<p>Moderate concerns Several changes to the intervention were described however it was unclear where qualitative data were coming from for these changes and if themes were all in agreement.</p>	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in USA</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
transportation issues. By the end of the pilot, the intervention team concluded that any future trials or implementation of TFC-OY should be delayed until new intervention components were developed to address emotion regulation problems.						

Experience of carers, youth, and practitioners undertaking Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
A common language and focus and the multidimensional treatment foster care team: One of the main strengths offered by the OSLC model was a degree of focus or 'common language' (seen as crucial in a multi-disciplinary team) and clarity of expectations for young people: "We're all very clear about what we're working towards and it helps in not splitting that group around the child. (Team member)"	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010	Very Low
Crucial emphasis on rewards and punishments: The emphasis on rewards and punishments was generally regarded as crucial, both for its transparency and potential for setting and maintaining boundaries: "If they don't earn it, they can see it, there's something there that they can see, you can hold up in front of them and show them. (Foster carer)"	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
		the use of more than one analyst.				
The model takes the emotion out of the situation: Another strength was the perceived capacity for the model, with its relatively neutral and technical language, to 'take the emotion out of the situation' and to avoid escalation in the face of anger and outbursts: "In a way it stops people really feeling too criticised because it's like ... if someone says to you 'off model' that's like, 'Oh well, I can get back on the model.' (Team member)" "You need to be quite calm and not easily fired up, to be able to just walk away when they're ranting and raving and they're in your face and they're shouting at you, and just walk away and let them calm down. (Foster carer)"	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010	Very Low
Limitations of the MTFC model: Limitation 1) certain aspects of it needed to be 'Anglicised': Where they occurred, flexibilities tended to reflect either cultural differences or acquired practice wisdom. Within its UK context, some team members saw the programme being more holistic and less focused on 'breaking the cycle of offending', an emphasis sometimes couched in the language of 'leniency': "Helping that child develop ... in whatever way they need and meeting their needs to enable them to move to independence or whatever goes next to it. (Team member)". Limitation 2) it would work for some young people but not others; Limitation 3) the longer-term benefits of the programme were uncertain.	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.	Minor concerns The limitations covered three distinct areas, but there was no contradiction in themes.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010	Very Low
Sticking to the model as a team – adaptations of MDTFC's logic and philosophy. Following the spirit rather than to the letter:	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth	Minor concerns Variability in how the model was applied could lead to	Serious concerns Only one study	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>A clear majority of interviewees saw themselves and the programme sticking closely to what they understood as ‘the model’, while often disclaiming any detailed knowledge of it. This partly reflected the routinisation of practice and perhaps the strength of team ethos: I know ... as a team we work towards the model and it’s the Oregon model that we follow but it feels much more like we’re working to our team model. (Team member) Broad adherence reflected a number of factors. First, the model appeared to ‘make sense’ to most of those involved, with several foster carers claiming (though with perhaps some oversimplification) that this had been the basis of their own childrearing: It’s basically the way I brought my own children up, which is good children get lots of nice things and naughty children get nothing, but I do it with points. Second, the consensus was that, albeit with some flexibility (see below), the model ‘worked’ but that this required fairly strict adherence: We’re very close to the model on most things and whenever we stray I have to say that it kicks us in the teeth. (Team member) A third factor was that of external monitoring and reporting mechanisms, whether from the NIT or OSLC itself. While this sometimes involved elements of ‘presentation’ to outside audiences that differed from day-to-day realities, it also served to reinforce the programme’s logic and philosophy. Much of course, depended on how far the model and its weighty manuals were to be followed ‘in spirit’ or ‘to the letter’. For example, one team member argued that expectations of young people in terms of healthy eating and eschewing of hip hop or rap music were unnecessarily restrictive and perhaps ‘unrealistic’. While most foster carers came to find the award and</p>		<p>description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	<p>inconsistent application and standards. However, there was the idea of the model as a philosophy rather than a detailed set of statutes, which could aid adaptability.</p>	<p>contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
deduction of points reasonably straightforward, the challenges, such as balancing consistency and individualisation and handling value judgements, should not be underestimated: "My lifestyle to somebody else's might be totally different and what I accept in my house is different to what somebody else accepts in theirs. (Foster carer)" Additional challenges included what constituted 'normal teenage behaviour' and how far the focus for change should rest with 'large' and 'small' behavioural problems respectively. These issues were, however, usually resolved fairly easily, with foster carers happy with their degree of discretion.						
<p>Usefulness of the parental daily report: Parental Daily Reports were sometimes seen as 'a chore' (Westermarck et al, 2007), but almost universally valued for their capacity to concentrate minds on behaviours, to ensure daily contact between foster carers and the programme and help 'nip problems in the bud'. "It makes me think about if things have happened, how I can do them better or how we can both do it better. So it's reflection for me. (Foster carer)" The data yielded were seen as useful for identifying trends and one-off or recurrent 'spikes' that might reveal behavioural triggers, such as contact visits or school events and as having a potential 'predictive' value for disruptions and optimal transition timing (Chamberlain et al, 2006). There were concerns that the prescribed list of behaviours was in places too 'Americanised' (eg 'mean talk') and that self-harm (not infrequent within the programme) was not listed separately but under destructiveness, requiring annotation to distinguish it from instances of 'kicking the door in'. Similarly, there was no reference to eating disorders other</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Theme covered several issues with the parental daily report including the burden on caregivers, the overly negative focus on behaviours, Americanisation of the language, and lack of distinction for medical or severe problems. However, spikes in behaviour could be tracked, which were helpful to identify triggers.</p>	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>than 'skipping meals'. The question of whether behaviours were 'stressful' was clearly dependent to a degree on foster carers' tolerance and time of completion: "The next morning or the night time everything's died down and it probably isn't such a big deal ... [do] you give yourself that time just to calm down before you put it in the behaviour or should you do it when it happens? (Foster carer)" Concern was also expressed that the Parental Daily Report's focus on negative behaviours was not entirely congruent with the programme's aims of accentuating the positives (see below), a situation that was seen as having a cultural dimension, with one team member commenting, albeit as a generalisation, on how US counterparts in MTFC tended to be 'more upbeat about things' and hence less likely to dwell on negative behaviours.</p>						
<p>Engagement was crucial to outcomes but highly variable and prone to change over time: "She couldn't give a monkey's. It didn't matter what I'd say she was not gonna . . . And she stayed with me for three months and then she decided she'd had enough and went. (Foster carer)" More generally, however, engagement levels were thought to be high, with some respondents indicating surprise at the apparent willingness to accept a restrictive regime with its initial 'boot camp' withdrawal of privileges: "I find it bizarre that they engage with it really quite well ... I kind of think if I was a 13-year-old lad ... would I really want to be negotiating buying my free time, my time out with points? But they do ... and they stick to it. (Team member)"</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low
<p>Need for persistence and finding and tailoring the right rewards:</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Situations were described where young people would rail against restrictions and thwarted demands but ultimately comply. While the motivational value of an identifiable goal (such as return home) was recognised, sustaining interest day-to-day was equally important and required delicate judgements from foster carers as the following contrasting approaches indicate: "My young man likes to look at his points on a daily basis so we go through them with him and then we sit down and work out how he's gonna use his rewards and what he's aiming for next. I have to say that I don't sit down and discuss points with [young person] every night because she will just rip it up and throw it at me and tell me what a load of bollocks it is" Equally important, however, was finding the right rewards and appropriate means of earning them (although one young person was said to 'just like getting points'), something that might entail individual tailoring: "She needs to score points really, really highly, so whereas one foster carer might give one of the lads ten points for doing what she did, she may need to earn 50 for it to mean something. (Team member)" If this raises questions of 'inconsistency', it was justified in terms of motivation, individual pathways and progression through the programme (Dore and Mullin, 2006). Similar logic had meant 'massaging' points to prevent a drop in levels, where this might provoke running away or placement breakdown: "I think with some young people they ... just wouldn't manage being on level one and therefore it is slightly adapted to sort of manage that. (Team member)"</p>		<p>selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>		<p>Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	
<p>Are normal activities privileges? Transfer of placements into the programme also raised questions of how far previously 'normal' activities could be</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and</p>	No concerns	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
recast as privileges to be earned. Over time, this had reportedly given rise to some variations or changes of practice, for example, on televisions in bedrooms or consumption of fizzy drinks.		selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.		Only one study contributed to this theme	Data was likely collected prior to 2010	
<p>Need for redemption and engagement with point and level system:</p> <p>A key element of the OSLC philosophy is 'turning it around', allowing loss of points to be redeemed by subsequent good behaviour or positive reaction to the deduction. Although (some) foster carers felt this approach potentially made light of misdemeanours, the overall working of the programme was supportive of it: "Instead of giving her five points that she'd normally have I'll say, 'Well, you did that really well. I'll give you 15 for that today.' (Foster carer) You hear them talking about 'I really turned it around today' ... [or]'I'm working towards my points.' You actually hear the children saying, 'I know I need to be on this programme' . . . they ... have that insight. (Team member)" One young person had reportedly asked his foster carer not to let him out in case he got into trouble and forfeited a much desired holiday, something that was seen as a significant shift in thinking and timescales.</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low
<p>A behavioural model or an attachment model?</p> <p>Behavioural programmes are sometimes criticised for lacking depth or concentrating on 'symptoms rather than causes', a debate we explored in interviews. Foster carers</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth</p>	<p>No concerns</p> <p>This theme covers the reconciliation of the behavioural and</p>	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Only one study</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
tended to focus on their own specific role in dealing with behaviours and saw the addressing of any 'underlying' problems as being the responsibility of others, especially the individual therapist, as in 'I'm just trying to break a pattern but it's not actually solving why they do it.' Also emphasised strongly was the temporal focus on present and future, by comparison with attachment models 'looking backwards'. If in some senses, practice remained firmly within a behavioural framework, this was not seen as precluding consideration of attachment issues, whether at the level of understanding – 'I find it quite hard not to think about things in terms of attachment' – or in outcomes: "I think what's been helpful is people have sort of said, 'Oh, it's not an attachment model' and I just have been able to say to them, 'What do you think actually putting a containing and caring environment around a child does?' ... It's not the kind of ... Pavlov's dogs type thing that everyone thinks about when they think about behavioural models. (Team member)"		description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.	attachment models in MDTFC	contributed to this theme	Data was likely collected prior to 2010	
Importance of appropriate matching: While in principle, behavioural approaches tend to de-emphasise the importance of relationship, the crucial importance of matching (which tended to involve consideration of several young people for one (or two) foster carer vacancies) was widely recognised and seen as a key area of learning within the programme: "I think we're getting it right more often than not and I think that's reflected in the ... reduction of disruptions. When we do get it wrong we get it wrong very spectacularly! (Team member)"	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.	No concerns However, this theme offered no suggestions as to how matching could be improved	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Move on placements and step-down placements: Marrying MTFC's twin aims of providing time-limited 'move on' placements while effecting sustainable behavioural change required complex judgements as to the optimal timing of transitions. Opinion was divided on this (national guidance had suggested a shortening of placements from around 18 to nine months) between those emphasising the time needed to deal with 'long-term damage' or the dangers of 'relapse' and those worried about stagnation, disengagement or young people 'outgrowing the programme'. While practice wisdom and programme data were seen as aiding decision-making, follow-on placements remained a significant problem. In some instances, this had been resolved by the young person remaining with their MTFC (respite) carers, although this usually entailed the latter's loss to the programme. Consideration had also been given to the establishment of 'step-down' placements to provide a more gradual reduction in structure and support (NIT, 2008). However, such provision is challenging in terms of recruitment. Several young people who had left MTFC had subsequently kept in contact, and interestingly this included some early and late leavers as well as graduates.</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	<p>Minor concerns There was a lack of clarity regarding which approach had been most successful for move on or step-down placements.</p>	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low
<p>Foster carers satisfaction with the level of support and out of hours service: Foster carers were extremely positive about levels of support in MTFC – 'Just absolutely amazing', 'I have to say brilliant. 100 per cent brilliant' – and some commented on how this had prevented disruptions that might otherwise have occurred. 'Enhanced' (relative to 'mainstream' fostering) features included higher levels of</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No</p>	<p>Minor concerns Enhanced support covered several aspects that foster carers found to be helpful, particularly in comparison to usual fostering.</p>	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
contact with supervising (and assistant) social workers and a structured pattern of short breaks or 'respite care'. In addition to their primary role of granting some relief from pressures, these arrangements sometimes evolved into follow-on placements after disruptions, helping to provide important elements of continuity. Another crucial 'enhanced' feature was a dedicated out-of-hours service staffed by members of the team, which, though used fairly modestly (typically one or two calls per day), was highly valued for its provision of a crucial safety net: "There's nothing more reassuring ... that you can ring someone up and actually hear that person on the end of the phone, it's not some call centre or someone you've never met before. (Foster carer)" Use of the out-of-hours service ranged from serious incidents involving offending, (alleged) sexual assaults, suicide concerns and violence or damage in the foster home, to reassurance on medical issues and dealing with difficult behaviours.		apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.				
Value of therapists and skills workers While the roles of therapists and skills workers sometimes raised issues of co-ordination with foster carers, their capacity to ease pressures at times of difficulty was valued by carers.	1	Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.	Minor concerns It is unclear what was meant by "issues of co-ordination"	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	Minor concerns Data was likely collected prior to 2010	Very Low
Usefulness of the foster carers' weekly meetings	1	Serious concerns	No concerns	Serious concerns	Minor concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
the foster carers' weekly meetings. These served both to ensure fairly prompt attention to issues, but also afforded the opportunity for mutual support and problem-solving		Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.		Only one study contributed to this theme	Data was likely collected prior to 2010	
<p>Success of co-ordinated working</p> <p>There has been little research on the operation of teamwork within MTFC or its external relations. Despite significant staff turnover and some reworking of roles, the programme had also benefited from continuity in some key positions and a capacity to fill vacancies relatively quickly. From interviews and observation, internal roles appeared to be fairly clear and well co-ordinated, although the team's relatively small size had inevitably given rise on occasion to questions of flexibility, with tensions between willingness to help out and the maintenance of role boundaries (eg on provision of transport or supervision of contact): "On the whole, given that we have got a bunch of quite disparate professions ... we've got a conjoined CAMHS, education and social care team, there's a lot less conflict than I thought there might be. (Team member)"</p> <p>The workings of MTFC both facilitate and require high levels of communication, combining multifarious opportunities for contact with a need to pass on information regarding 'eventful' lives and high levels of activity on the programme. With occasional, and usually</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Some sense of difficulty co-ordinating the team and role boundaries despite the overall positive findings.</p>	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
fairly specific exceptions, team members regarded communication as very effective, while foster carers were generally positive about their participation: 'They do value your input and they value your knowledge and your sort of past experience.'						
<p>Leadership of programme supervisors</p> <p>The role of Programme Supervisor (PS) as key decision-maker – variously referred to as 'Programme God' or 'the final word' – was crucial within the team. While some team members reported taking time to adapt to this, it was widely acknowledged that the PS and indeed 'the programme' could act as a lightning rod to defuse conflicts involving young people and their foster carers: "Always it's [PS], says' ... in answer, so my [young person] wishes that [PS] would drop dead at any moment. But that takes a huge amount off of me because it's not me who's saying it. That's absolutely been brilliant. (Foster carer)"</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low
<p>Clash with the children's social worker</p> <p>Like any specialist programme, MTFC has faced challenges in its relationships with Children's Social Workers (often exacerbated by turnover among them) regarding the balance between a necessary transfer of responsibility on the part of Children's Social Workers while they continue to hold case accountability. Despite routinely sent information and discussions with the programme supervisors, almost all CSWs interviewed expressed some concerns, usually involving either not knowing of specific incidents (e.g. entry to hospital) or more ongoing matters, such as the content of counselling. For some, the concern was simply about being 'out of the loop', while for others it was the potential for exclusion from decision making and conflict with statutory duties: "It</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.</p>	<p>Minor Concerns</p> <p>Theme encompassed several aspects of difficulty in working with Children's Social Workers. Both in relinquishing control and stepping back too much.</p>	<p>Serious concerns</p> <p>Only one study contributed to this theme</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p> <p>Data was likely collected prior to 2010</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>seemed to me that the treatment fostering team pretty much took on responsibility for the case, which is fine, but if anything goes wrong then don't make me accountable." From a programme perspective, there were occasional references to Childrens Social Workers who 'found it hard to let go', or whose misunderstanding caused confusion. As one foster carer put it, 'they start telling these kids all sorts of things and you're thinking "no actually, they can't"', although it should be noted that some Social Workers were viewed very positively. A more common concern, however, was that some Social workers 'opted out' once the young person entered MTFC, although this was often acknowledged (on both sides) as understandable given the workload pressures facing children's social workers: "[. . .] was the sort of child I used to literally wake up worrying about and I don't now because somebody else is doing that worrying. (CSW)" Encouragingly, CSWs also referred to improving communication, with some plaudits for MTFC being approachable and responsive. The programme had attempted to improve liaison by visiting teams and by inviting children's social workers to attend meetings, although these offers had not been taken up, with CSWs reporting diary clashes and imprecise timings to discuss 'their' charges. It was also noted that the very specific workings and language of MTFC were not always well-integrated into Looked After Children (LAC) review processes.</p>						
<p>Social workers were positive about the programme even where placements broke down "He was a really, really difficult young man and they've really supported him and provided him with a stable home</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Unclear how participants were recruited and selected. No in-depth</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study</p>	<p>Minor concerns</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
environment, really, really firm boundaries which he's really needed . . . I think the placement's been fantastic. She would have met the criteria [for secure accommodation] in terms of running off ... self-harming ... And now the self-harming is very ... very limited. It changed his life around to be perfectly honest. Yeah, I'd go that far." This is not, of course, to say that time in MTFC represents any form of panacea, but recognition of its impact in often difficult circumstances: "He's only absconded three times in six months or so and it's only ever been running off from school and he's back by nine o'clock ... whereas before he was missing for days on end. (Team member) There are obviously still concerns about her emotional welfare and there will be, but she was a very, very damaged girl for lots and lots of reasons, but there was a time where I thought she just might ... not survive. (CSW)" The idea that even 'failed' placements might nonetheless carry some residual benefit for young people – particularly those in 'multiple disruption mode' was also expressed by some.		description of the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. No apparent triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst.		contributed to this theme	Data was likely collected prior to 2010	
Creating relationships with birth families. The Circle Program was felt to be more likely to promote reunification with family or enter kinship care than among children in a generalist foster care placement. Factors contributing to the child's relationship with their family of origin included: valuing the unique knowledge brought by the parents, encouraging the attendance of family, and the usefulness of care team meetings.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some	No concerns However, participation of birth families could be encouraged in one of several ways.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
		chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>				
Support that was helpful for retaining foster carers - Focus group data highlighted factors deemed to be influential to carer retention such as support, training, ongoing education and access to flexible funds to obtain services. Comments highlighted the value of participation in regular care team meetings. Carers spoke of their commitment to their role as a Circle carer, highlighting the experience of support, training, and ongoing education.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	Minor concerns Theme covered several distinct aspects of support that could help to retain foster carers.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
Access to flexible brokerage funds - These funds were described by carers as supporting children to participate in normative community activities, for example a dance class or organized sport. Where a child required a specialist assessment (e.g. speech therapy) that was not available through public funding within a reasonable time frame, brokerage funding could be used. A key message from carers was the importance of accessing such	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
discretionary funds to meet a child's needs in a timely way.		participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>				
Carers valued and treated as professional equals. The Circle Program was described by some carers as elevating the role of the foster carer to one that is 'equal' to the other professionals on the care team. This, combined with the Circle Program training, professionalized the role of the foster carer, and some carers reported increased levels of confidence in their competence. Carers also commented that the success of the Circle Program was linked to the professional support provided: feeling 'listened to', having their opinions 'valued' and being 'supported' in their role as foster carer. In the focus groups, carers discussed their role and participation in the Circle Program with passion and enthusiasm. The wellbeing of the carer was also a focus of care team meetings with one carer commenting that someone always asked her how she was at care meetings and 'They really want to know how I am'!	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
The common purpose of the care team with an equal system of carers - The egalitarian nature and common purpose of the care team were features mentioned by a	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
number of focus group participants as having significance in their experience of TFC.		the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>		contributed to this theme.		
Training essential particularly in trauma theory, attachment and self-knowledge. Contents of training - Training in trauma theory, attachment and selfknowledge were also identified as essential components by foster carers and foster care workers alike.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>Key role of the therapeutic specialist (Circle programme). The key role of the therapeutic specialist - Therapeutic specialists were identified by all stakeholders as core to the Circle Program's success. Circle carers and foster care workers highlighted the value of this role in guiding assessment and the care of the child. The availability of the therapeutic specialist was considered a particular strength given their knowledge; and ability to assist carers in understanding the child and their needs. Their role was active in guiding the foster carer in their day to day response to the child and this was experienced as very supportive and was seen to facilitate a more immediate and appropriate response in meeting the child's needs. The therapeutic specialist could also extend their focus to include the child's family of origin as from the commencement of placement the aim is for the child to reunify with their family if the family can meet their needs. As many of the families of origin had themselves experienced trauma, it is important that they be assisted to heal and change to be available for the care of their child/young person.</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i></p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in Australia</p>	Very Low
<p>Building a support network for the child. Feedback from focus groups and the survey highlighted the importance of building a support network for the child/young person. This network included teachers, extended family and others in addition to members of the care team.</p>	1	<p>Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in Australia</p>	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
		appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>				
The hard and stressful work of fostering. How would foster parents and staff tolerate the intervention? - a feasibility worry was that the TFC-OY intervention would be difficult for foster parents to tolerate. This was confirmed. In addition, some staff found the work stressful. In weekly meetings and in the qualitative research interviews, foster parents reported that the youth were extremely difficult to parent. Despite training that focused on the needs of youth with psychiatric problems, the foster parents reported being surprised by the amount of emotional volatility in the young people they served, the low levels of what they perceived as emotional maturity, and high needs for monitoring and supervision. No parent or youth described an extended period of time when life settled into a comfortable routine. It always felt like stressful work to the foster parents. The experience was not easy for the TFC-OY staff either. One Life Coach was surprised by the low level of emotional functioning of youth in an office setting.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low
Key role of the skills coach (Circle programme). The skills coach component was uniformly appreciated by foster parents, the program supervisor and the youth. When asked about the skills coach component, the youth tended to report things the coach had done for and with them that were related to positive youth development. E.g.	1	Serious concerns Qualitative methods were not appropriate to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention in terms of likelihood of	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in Australia	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
helping to find a job, getting a drivers liscence, going to find a place to eat. Multiple stakeholders commented on the positive relationships that youth developed with their skills coaches.		reunification. Researchers do not discuss how participants were selected for the study, and why these were the most appropriate or why some chose not to take part. Focus group methods were not made explicit. <i>Thematic analysis process was not described explicitly.</i>				
Key role of the psychiatric nurse (Circle programme). A second component that drew positive comments from stakeholders was that of the psychiatric nurse. Care managers appreciated the medication and diagnostic review provided by the nurse. They provided numerous examples of how they used this review and knowledge in their interactions with mental health providers. While some youth did not understand why they were receiving psychoeducation about their mental health problems from a nurse, others greatly appreciated it, explaining that it changed how they monitored their symptoms and how they approached their psychiatric providers.	1	Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in USA	Very Low
Role of the life coach (Circle programme). The role of the life coach was a difficult one to execute. Initially, the role was focused on interpersonal skills the youth needed to succeed in the foster home, but was later supposed to involve life planning and psychoeducation. Two life coaches worked in the program and both found their role frustrating in terms of completing what they felt they were being asked to do.	1	Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.	No concerns	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.	Minor concerns Study took place in USA	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
<p>The family consultant role (Circle programme). The family consultant role was less well received. The family consultant made many unsuccessful efforts to re-engage biological relatives and other nominated individuals into the lives of youth in TFC-OY and executed one successful effort, involving an older sibling. The role was also expensive (using a master's level mental health professional). In the end, the principal investigator concluded that the family consultant role would be eliminated going forward and that needed family work would be conducted by the program supervisor.</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.</p>	No concerns	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in USA</p>	Very Low
<p>Changes suggested for the circle programme. Program changes needed? - Since it was decided that it was permissible to alter the intervention mid-pilot in order to have an intervention worthy of testing at the end of pilot period, two modifications to the protocols were made several months into the intervention: 1) redefined roles for team members; and 2) efforts to address emotional dysregulation. Some of the life coach's responsibilities were offloaded to other team members. The skills coaches became responsible for helping youth plan for more independent living and the psychiatric nurse became responsible for providing psychoeducation about mental health problems. These modifications were considered successful, as viewed by stakeholders in qualitative interviews at the end of the project. Most glaring was the need to develop intervention components to address youth emotion regulation problems. Six of the foster parents interviewed qualitatively reported that the young people served in their homes experienced severe emotional outbursts; typically youth were seen as quick to become emotional and remaining emotionally volatile for</p>	1	<p>Minor concerns This study did not make its methods regarding coding and thematic analysis explicit.</p>	<p>Moderate concerns Several changes to the intervention were described however it was unclear where qualitative data were coming from for these changes and if themes were all in agreement.</p>	<p>Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme.</p>	<p>Minor concerns Study took place in USA</p>	Very Low

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<p>substantial periods of time. During the last six months of the pilot, TFC-OY staff explored the potential of using processes and materials from Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in TFC-OY to address youth emotion regulation problems. Staff received initial DBT training from a certified trainer and a DBT skills group was mounted with the foster youth to teach interpersonal effectiveness and mindfulness skills. The groups were well received by youth who attended them, but attendance was a problem, mostly due to logistics, such as distance from youth placements to the group site, work schedules, and transportation issues. By the end of the pilot, the intervention team concluded that any future trials or implementation of TFC-OY should be delayed until new intervention components were developed to address emotion regulation problems.</p>						