NATIONAL CFRP
Center for Fatality Review & Prevention

Involving People Who Have **Experienced Loss in Fatality Review**

Learning Together, Protecting Tomorrows



Key Funding Partner

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About the National Center

National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention



Communicate with Fatality Review Teams.



Provide Technical Assistance, Training, and Connection.



Develop Actionable Resources.



Support the National Fatality Review-Case Reporting Systems (NFR-CRS).



Agenda

Our Time Together Today

Making the Case

Why does family engagement matter?

Family Expertise

A voice at the fatality review table.

Opportunities

Engaging families who have experienced loss.

Considerations

What to consider when involving families in the fatality review process.

Questions and Answers

What questions do you have?



Making the Case

Why Does Family Engagement Matter?

Mentimeter Question #1

Go to Menti.com and enter code 8127 4901

When considering family involvement and fatality review, what word, phrase, or idea immediately comes to mind?





Family Engagement in Fatality Review

Key Features

- The intentional, structured, and trauma-informed effort to include family members and their perspectives in the review of a child's death.
- This effort incorporates relevant experience and contextual information not found in official records.
- By involving families in the fatality review process, recommendations, policies, and practices can be strengthened, which can inform prevention efforts and reduce future fatalities.

Impact of Family Engagement in Fatality Review

What the Research Literature Shows

Improved Communication

Family interviews improve communication between families and review teams and provide information not found in official records *(Kothari et al., 2025)*.

Positive Outcomes for Families and Systems

Meaningful engagement supports learning, feedback, and system improvement efforts *(Garstang et al., 2025; Shaw et al., 2025)*.

Stronger Prevention Insights

Family participation helps identify risk factors, service gaps, and social contexts that may not be apparent in records alone *(Kothari et al., 2025)*.

Challenges Remain

Additional evidence is needed regarding implementation, standardization, and long-term outcomes *(Garstang et al., 2025; Shaw et al., 2025; Kothari et al., 2025)*.



Family Expertise

A Voice at the Fatality Review Table

Partners Engaged in CDR

Common Team Membership and Records Reviewed



MCH Public Health



Healthcare Providers



Schools



District Attorneys



Child Welfare Agencies



Medical Examiners/Coroners



Law Enforcement



Mental Health Professionals



Community Advocacy Organizations



Emergency Response Agencies

Partners Engaged in FIMR Review Team

Common Team Membership and Records Abstracted



MCH Public Health



OB-GYN



Doulas



NICU Providers



Child Welfare Agencies



Medical Examiners/Coroners



Law Enforcement



Mental Health Professionals



Community Advocacy Organizations



Emergency Response Agencies



Expert Perspectives

Ensuring a Wholistic Understanding in Fatality Review

Multidisciplinary Experts

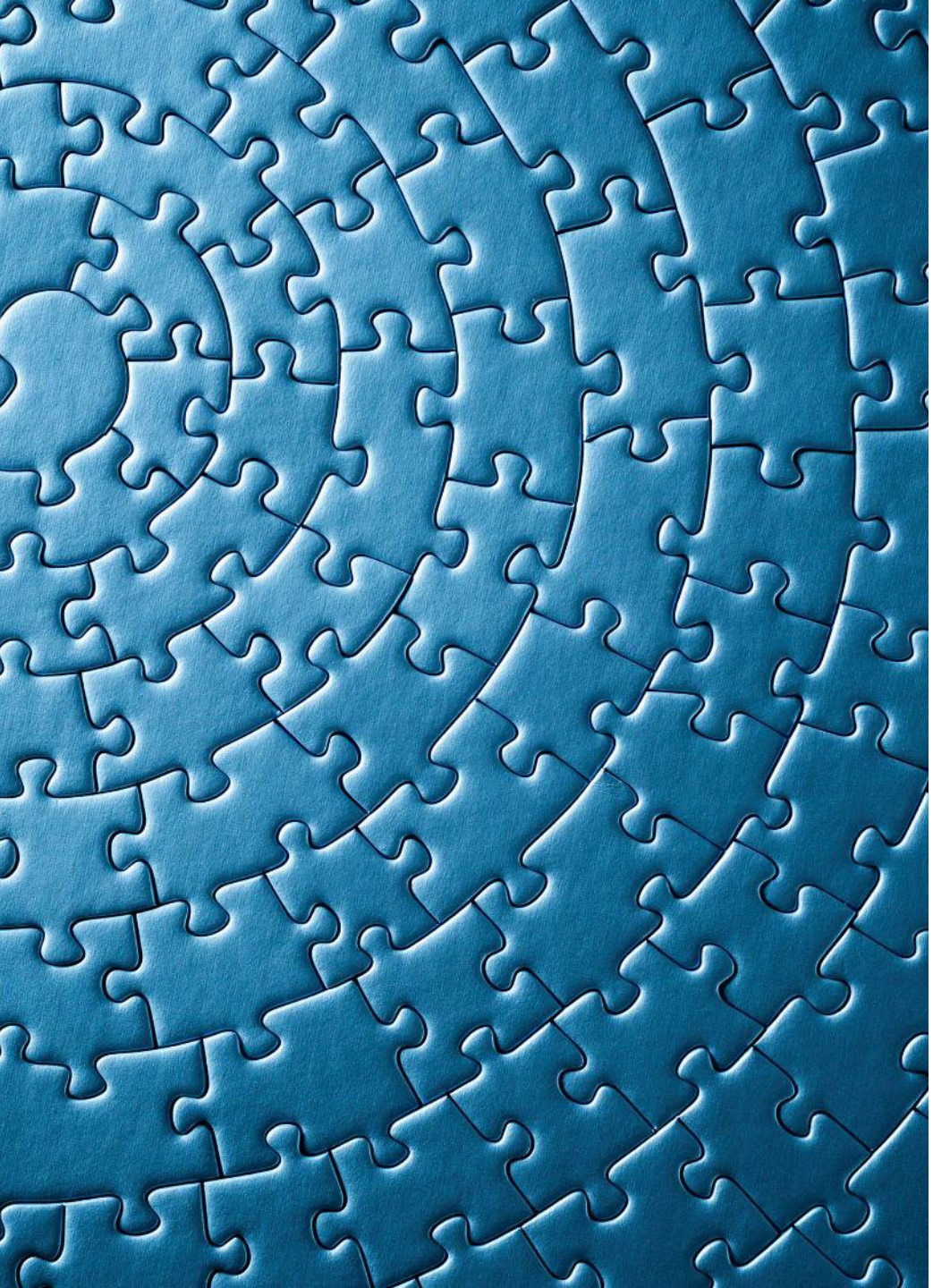
Fatality review convenes experts from many disciplines.

Critical Information

Expert members provide information teams need.

Necessary Interpretation

Experts interpret information from records in reviews.



Unique Expertise

Navigating Systems through Fetal, Infant, and Child Deaths

Expert

Only the family knows what it's like to navigate community systems before, during, and after death.

Critical Information

They can provide information no one else can.

Necessary Interpretation

They can reflect the family experience and feedback for prevention recommendations.



Strengthening Reviews

When Expertise Includes Experience

- Who else should be involved in the process?
- How can the review process be strengthened by including families?



Mentimeter Question #2

Go to Menti.com and enter code 8127 4901

How has your team included family expertise in their fatality review or prevention work?

- We have not started yet.
- We are exploring possibilities.
- Families occasionally provide input.
- Families regularly contribute to decisions.
- Families are partners in leadership and improvement efforts.



Opportunities

Engaging Families Who Have Experienced Loss



Strategies for Including Family Perspectives

Examples from CDR and FIMR

Family Interviews

Families share stories and provide important context and perspectives.

Fatality Reviews

Family members participate in fatality review teams to provide unique viewpoints.

Prevention Activities

Family members assist in the development of prevention work.

Family Advisory Committees

Families provide input into recommendations and future directions.

Engaging Families Who Have Experienced Loss

What Fatality Review Gains, and What Fatality Review Holds Loosely

Gain

- Critical insights.
- Person-centered approaches.
- Strengthened prevention and supports.

Hold Loosely

- Beliefs about agencies and systems.
- Efficiency.
- Professional jargon.

Engaging Families Who Have Experienced Loss

What Families Gain, and What Families May Have to Hold Loosely

Gain

- Safe place to tell their story.
- Community of prevention focused partners.
- Opportunity to create a better, safer future.

Hold Loosely

- Clear answers about why a death occurred.
- Timelines for systems change.

Mentimeter Question #3

Go to Menti.com and enter code 8127 4901

What do you think would be the greatest benefit of including family expertise in fatality review?

- Improved understanding of circumstances surrounding a death.
- Identifying and improving gaps in services or systems.
- Developing stronger prevention recommendations.
- Building trust and credibility with families.
- Ensuring fatality reviews remain person-centered.





Mentimeter Question #4

Go to Menti.com and enter code 8127 4901

What would be hardest for your team to "hold loosely" when partnering with families?

- Professional jargon and technical language.
- Assumptions about what families need.
- Existing review processes and traditions.
- Control over how information is interpreted.
- Expectations about timelines and outcomes.
- Concerns about risk or emotional impact.



Considerations

Involving Families in the Fatality Review Experience



Families are more than sources of information. They are people carrying the lifelong impact of loss and grief.

- Adapted from the work of Megan Devine and Joanne Cacciatore on grief and bereavement



Risks and Benefits

Balancing Experience Experts in Fatality Review

Family Interviews

What are the benefits of conducting family interviews prior to the meeting? What are the risks or drawbacks?

Fatality Reviews

What is gained by including family experts in fatality reviews? What risks are there to these experts or team?

Prevention Activities

What is gained by including families in prevention planning and activities? What are the risks?

Family Advisory Committees

What are the benefits of family experts serving in an advisory role to a fatality review program? What risks are there to the process or current structure?



Strategies for Engagement

Creating Safety, Respect, and Shared Purpose

Create Conditions That Reduce Re-traumatization

Recognize that participation may require revisiting painful experiences and ensure families can engage in ways that feel emotionally safe.

Honor Choice, Control, and Voluntary Participation

Families decide whether, when, and how they engage, with clear information and the freedom to decline or pause at any time.

Engage to Partner, Not Extract

Approach families as valued contributors whose experiences can inform learning, healing, and prevention, while providing meaningful value in return.

Mentimeter Question #5

Go to Menti.com and enter code 8127 4901

What resources, support or information do you need to start, or continue, engaging families in your fatality review efforts?





Questions

What Questions Do You Have?

Office Hours

2026 Sessions from the National Center

Date	Topic
9/15/2026	Documenting Deaths Related to Consumer Products
10/20/2026	Reviewing Deaths to Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs
11/17/2026	Working with Small Numbers to Catalyze Prevention
12/15/2026	Celebrating Success: Highlights of Prevention Successes

Visit https://ncfrp.org/news/ to register (each session requires individual registration).

Thank You for Your Time!

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