



EUROPEAN FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER ALLIANCE

*'Good partners work together.
Great partners complement each
other'*

Napoleon Hill

*No single organisation is responsible
for any major social problem, nor can
any single organisation cure it'*

John Kania & Mark Kramer



*'To be a voice for those who
have lost theirs'*

Voices

The European Family Justice Center Alliance (EFCJA)

“Eliminating domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse, and restoring hope and joy in the life of victims and their families”: that is the big dream of the European Family Justice Center Alliance and its members.

History of the European FJC movement

Domestic violence costs EU governments billions of Euros every year. Everywhere in Europe domestic violence is a major problem, affecting- in particular- women and children on an epidemic scale. In the last decade many countries have developed policies and programs to combat violence against women, still there are many challenges. Victims- often severely traumatized- are still expected to travel to a variety of organisations to get safety, help and support. They also need to tell their painful story many times to different professionals. Often this is an important reason not to seek help or to withdraw from help seeking attempts at an early stage. Often, organisations have multiple co-ordination meetings ‘about’ families in trouble instead of talking ‘with’ the family to find a comprehensive solution.

To try and develop an efficient and more effective approach of violence against women, a small but dedicated group of professionals from 6 European countries started the project ‘Family Justice Centers in Europe’ in 2013, with funds from the EU Daphne program. The project was based on the US Family Justice Center model, founded in 2002 in San Diego by public prosecutors Casey Gwinn and Gael Strack. The most important characteristic is its client centered approach. The model also shows a significant decrease in the number of fatal domestic violence incidents. Victims and survivors, served by the professionals within the FJC’s, express their positive experiences about the help and support they were offered. And most importantly: victims and their children can build up a new life with hope and without fear and violence.

This approach was a true inspiration for the pioneers of the European FJC movement. During the two years of the project the European partners focused on starting up 6 FJC’s in 5 European countries, with the aim to evolve into a European FJC model, open and adaptable to the context of different countries and regions. This European initiative was – and still is – a very intensive process and has led to an exchange of good practices, cooperation and collaboration. And it has helped a great deal in the development of FJC’s in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland. It even became the start of a real European FJC movement with engaged and dedicated front runners.

The European Family Justice Center Alliance (EFJCA)

To ensure the sustainability of the FJC developments in Europe, the original project team has founded the European Family Justice Center Alliance (EFJCA) in 2014. The EFJCA is a legal entity and the officially recognized network of the Family Justice Centers in Europe. It promotes the FJC model and provides a central platform for its members. As an umbrella organisation the EFJCA exchanges knowledge, experiences and good practices among its members. The EFJCA provides the Family Justice Centers and affiliated multi-agency models with customized tools, specialized methodologies and on-the-job-training, which leads to continuous improvement of the Centers and helps them to create better resources for victims of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual violence and their families.

Vision and mission of the EFJCA

The vision of the EFJCA is to develop a safe place for victims of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual violence, and their families, in all European countries and regions. A place where:

- all the needs of the victims, children and their families are met
- safety is assured
- children are protected
- perpetrators are held accountable
- the violence stops
- empowerment is increased
- families heal (and thrive)
- hope and perspective is realized
- and WE ALL WORK TOGETHER.

The mission of the EFJCA is to create a European network of Family Justice Centers and similar co-located multi-agency models, focusing on an integrated approach of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual violence, with close working relationships, shared training and assistance, collaborative learning processes, coordinated funding assistance and transformational leadership. The EFJCA is driven by the voice of victims, in all its activities.

The EFJCA subscribes to:

- the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
- the DIRECTIVE 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime
- the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.



*'Survivors should
not have to
adapt to what is
offered by the
service providers
or systems.'*

Voices

What is a Family Justice Center (FJC)?

A Family Justice Center is a multiagency, multidisciplinary service center where public and private agencies assign staff members to, on a full-time or part-time basis, to provide services to victims of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual violence and their families from one location.

The overall goal of a Family Justice Center is to ensure that clients have access to all necessary services, to enhance their safety and increase offender accountability. Victims and their families who report there can obtain legal advice, safety planning, make a statement, obtain accommodation planning, medical evidence of violence, transport assistance, trauma processing, etc. for victims and their children.

A Family Justice Center provides one physical location:

- to reduce the number of places victims must visit to obtain all the help and the services they need to put an end to the violence
- to reduce the number of times victims must tell their story
- to foster collaboration and a common approach of the different agencies
- and to increase access to services and support

The guiding principles

A FJC is defined by the following guiding principles:

- **safety-focused:** increase safety, promote healing, and foster empowerment through services for victims and their children
- **victim-centered:** provide victim-centered services that promote victim autonomy
- **kind hearted:** develop a FJC that values, affirms, recognizes and supports staff, volunteers, and clients
- **survivor driven:** shape services to clients by asking them what they need
- **empowered:** offer survivors a place to belong even after the crisis intervention services are no longer necessary
- **relationship-based:** maintain close working relationships among all collaborators/agencies
- **offender accountability:** increase offender accountability through evidence based prosecution strategies and/or evidence based treatment programs
- **transformative (willing to change):** evaluate and adjust services by including survivor input and evidence based best practices
- **culturally responsive:** commitment to the utilization of culturally relevant service approaches.



*'We must honor and respect, and
then we can help'*

Casey Gwinn & Gael Strack

Target groups of the EFJCA

The EFJCA focuses on different target groups.

- Naturally, the first group consists of the victims of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual violence and their families.
- Secondly the EFJCA focuses on professionals active in the field of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual violence:
 - professionals and volunteers working in the Family Justice Centers and affiliated multi-agency models
 - professionals from judicial and police services, medical assistance, social services, personal support projects, women’s services, youth services, income support and employment services, municipal services, etc.
 - policymakers and politicians on local, regional, national and European level.

How do you become a member of the EFJCA?

Network partners and organisations active in the approach of domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse and subscribe the guiding principles can become a member of the EFJCA. Applying for a membership can be done through e-mail or the EFJCA website. For more information regarding the membership you can contact the EFJCA by e-mail or phone.

What is the added value of a EFJCA membership?

EFJCA members are part of a European and even worldwide network and brand, making the local centers stronger, more visible and providing status, on a local, national and international level. The Alliance provides a lot of added value for their members through a range of activities, products and benefits.

On the one hand it offers:

- a platform for the dissemination of information and the exchange of good practices, knowledge and experiences, for example through:
 - a comprehensive website: www.efjca.eu
 - an annual European conference
 - regular regional meetings
 - trainings (including webinars) and instruments on a range of methodologies and on other topics of interest for the FJC’s and affiliated multi-agency models
- support, for example in:
 - ‘how to start a FJC’, including a manual and a buddy system
 - processes of fundraising, applying for proposals on a national or international level
- follow-up for all FJC’s in Europe, especially new ones

On the other hand it provides promotion and strengthening of the integration of the model of Family Justice Centers in Europe, on a professional, policy and political level.

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