**What is a Decision Team Staffing (DTS)?** A DTS is a multi-disciplinary staffing that is scheduled to enhance the assessment and analysis of risk and safety factors and determine the services and supports available to mitigate safety concerns and begin to reduce risk of future abuse or neglect. The overall goal is to safely reduce the number of children removed from their homes. Please note: the acronyms DTS (Decision Team Staffing) and DTC (Decision Team Consultant) Staffing are often used interchangeably.

**What is the purpose of a Decision Team Staffing?** The purpose of a DTS is to enhance the assessment and analysis of risk and safety factors through an expedited multidisciplinary team staffing process, to determine if a child can remain safely in their home. The overall goal is to arrive at a shared decision on the best approach to mitigate safety concerns and begin to reduce risk of future abuse or neglect by providing expedited services and assistance to vulnerable families.

**Which cases are appropriate for a Decision Team Staffing?** Child Protective Investigators should refer all cases that are being considered for in-home supervision or possible legal action to be scheduled for a Decision Team Staffing. Diversion cases will not be staffed unless we are considering a different pathway for the family.

**How do I request a Decision Team Staffing?** Decision Team Staffing requests are made to the DTC in person, by phone, or by email. When making a request please include the following information:

* Abuse Report Number
* Purpose of staffing (i.e. legal action, in-home supervision, seeking direction- if unsure of intended pathway).
* Date needed
	+ Please indicate if an emergency staffing is needed
	+ The majority of staffings will occur prior to the end of the following business day unless otherwise indicated
* Name (email address, if available) of any individuals/providers that should be invited outside of the regular attendees (see list below).

**Who will be invited to a Decision Team Staffing?** This list is not exhaustive; others can be invited if determined as appropriate. The CPI should inform the DTC, prior to the staffing, if they have particular individuals (e.g., current provider, guidance counselor) that they want to ensure be invited.

* CPI - DCF
* CPIS -DCF
* OPA - DCF
* OMC II -DCF
* CMA Staff Representative
* CLS
* Local Law Enforcement
* FIS (Meridian/Substance Abuse)
* DV Advocates
* FTC Coordinators
* MCRT staff
* CPT and/or CAC Representative
* School Personnel
* Providers

**What do I need to do to ensure I am fully prepared for a DTS?**  Prior to requesting a DTS you should be at a point in your investigation where you are comfortable discussing and making decisions about potential case direction. You should come to the staffing prepared to discuss the following information about the family: updated investigative information, developmental stage(s), strengths/protective capacities, exceptions to the problem, the family’s perception of the current situation, family and individual level issues/concerns, and safety planning activities. In addition, you should have completed the majority of family and/or collateral interviews. If needed, ensure that parents/caregivers have been drug screen beforehand and be prepared to share the results. If a forensic interview or medical exam was needed, it is helpful to have the results available for the staffing, preferably in a written report (which can be given to the DTC prior to the staffing), but verbal results are also acceptable. You should have an idea of a family’s willingness to participate with services, as well as, their level of compliance with services in which they may have already participated. If seeking potential legal action you should also be prepared to share with the team the impact that the alleged abuse/neglect is having on the child(ren).

**What should be done if a DTS is needed after regular business hours or when the DTC is unavailable?**   In situations where it is not possible to hold a DTS prior to deciding case direction due to unavailability of the DTC, the case should be staffed directly with your supervisor, legal, and/or the case management agency, depending upon the direction you are seeking. The case does not need to be re-staffed as a DTS once a decision has been made about case direction.

**What information should I expect to receive on the Decision Team Staffing Form?** Prior to the staffing occurring, the DTC researches the family’s criminal, abuse and service history, as well as current allegations. They then provide this information to the team as part of the staffing process. The DTC also documents the team discussion which will include at a minimum: investigative information, developmental stage(s), strengths/protective capacities, exceptions to the problem, the family’s perception of the current situation, family and individual level issues/concerns, safety planning activities, immediate case actions needed (with person responsible and date due) and service needs to be addressed at the FTC. The DTC will also clearly identify the team’s decision as it relates to case direction. If a case will be receiving In-home Supervision, a tentative date for the early engagement visit will also be included on the form (as arranged between the FCS and the CPI at the time of the staffing).

**How can I access the Decision Team Staffing Form?** The DTS summary is entered as a note in FSFN and the entire DTS Form is emailed as an attachment to the CPI and CPIS for inclusion in the case file. If you are unable to locate the information please contact the DTC directly (see contact information below).

**Contact Information:**

Kelly Bennett, Ed.S, NCC

DTC- Alachua

352-955-2055

kelly.bennett@pfsf.org

Stacy Merritt, MNM

DTC- Levy, Gilchrist, Dixie

352-493-6733 ext. 126

stacy.merritt@pfsf.org

Christiam Joseph, MSW, LCSW

FSU Training Coordinator

DTC- Circuit 3

904-254-9449 (cell)

cjoseph@fsu.edu

christiam\_joseph@dcf.state.fl.us