



# Establishing robust Multi-Family Groups: Why providing food matters



## Social eating connects communities.

University of Oxford, 2017.

Food for Thought: the Use of Food in Group Therapy with Children and Adolescents.  
Mishna F., Muskat B., Shames G. (2002).  
International Journal of Group Psychotherapy.  
Feb. 52(1) 22-47.

The strategic role of food in team building. Mitchell M., Culek C. (2025)

*“Going to MFG after work and having a meal and talking to people who knew what we were going through...it felt like the first time all day I could really relax.”*  
Former EASA Mom

When a young person experiences symptoms of clinical high risk for psychosis or symptoms of psychosis, the whole family system is affected. Caregivers, parents, siblings, and participants may feel isolated and alone. They often think no one else understands what they are experiencing, and the problems they are facing seem overwhelming.

Multi-Family Groups (MFG) are designed to support participants and their family members in learning practical skills to help them navigate the changes in their family. Participants walk away from the meetings feeling nourished, strengthened, and understood. They learn to use practical tools that break down challenges into manageable steps using a problem-solving structure. They practice celebrating successes together.

Research supports the importance of food in team building and boosting group effectiveness across a wide range of settings (see sidebar). Providing food during structured family psychoeducation interventions can be critical to engagement and ongoing attendance.

### Multi-Family Groups:

- Normalize each person’s experience
- Promote social interactions and social supports, even beyond the group
- Provide a welcoming space that supports skill development
- Reduce family stress and conflict
- Improve communication
- Are as effective as medication in addressing symptoms

## Resources:

Work with your team, supervisor, and agency leadership to problem-solve providing food for structured family psychoeducation interventions. Strong leadership support goes a long way!

In addition, local businesses will often donate food in support of community health and well-being.

Some teams have been successful in accessing small grants within their community to purchase food for groups and educational workshops. Here are some links that may be useful:

- <https://oregoncf.org/grants-and-scholarships/grants>
- <https://www.sdao.com/grant-resources>
- <https://thereserfamilyfoundation.org/apply-for-a-grant/>

Join our monthly Family Psychoeducation Consultation Call to exchange ideas with fellow EASA members. **1st Th of the month from 3 - 4 PM**