



Hard to Place: Intermediate Care

QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

NAME AND ADDRESS

The William George Agency for Children’s Services, Inc.
380 Freeville Road, Freeville, NY 13068

SERVICE LOCATION

380 Freeville Road, Freeville, NY 13068

RESIDENCE ID

20920132

VENDOR ID

00A09552

LICENSED CAPACITY

18

PERSONS SERVED

- Males
- Between the ages of 12 and 21
- Exhibited a pattern of significant behavioral and emotional dysregulation and present with significant mental health issues
- Have resided at the Agency for at least 90 days as part of the Hard to Place Program or the Sexual Harmful Behavior Program
- Demonstrated sufficient progress in treatment where they can manage symptoms in a somewhat less structured setting

QRTP STATUS AS IT RELATES TO FAMILY FIRST LEGISLATION

In order to be designated as a Qualified Residential Treatment Program, the Agency has had to meet all the requirements of Family First legislation as follows:

- COA Accreditation
- 24/7 medical and nursing services
- A trauma informed model of care

- Use of evidence based practices
- The capacity to offer residents and their families comprehensive family services through engagement, outreach, proactive discharge planning and 6 months of family based aftercare support upon discharge from the Agency. Aftercare support to be provided by our Regional Family Service Coordinators located throughout every region in Upstate New York.
- Conducting required criminal history record checks and child abuse register checks for all adults working on-site including the following: state and federal criminal history record checks, Statewide Central Register (SCR) database checks, NYS Justice Center Staff Exclusion List checks, and relevant out-of-state child abuse and maltreatment register checks for all employees, as required by OCFS regulations and policies (See 19-OCFS-ADM-21).

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE

The Hard to Place Intermediate Care Program (HTP-IC) is designed to meet the needs of boys who clinically no longer require an HTP level of care, but whose social skill deficits and emotional dysregulation impede their ability to successfully negotiate the more normalized peer environment present in our regular institutional program. Additionally, these residents will have a need for extensive family work and the development of age appropriate independent living skills. Some residents may also require specific attention to develop transition plans when their Permanency Plan is APLA (Another Planned Living Arrangement).

The multifaceted treatment focus of the program will include: social skills development, including an enhanced ability to effectively negotiate interpersonal relationships, and on-going therapeutic interventions and support to process difficult emotional issues, and acquire more adaptive coping skills. A significant portion of the program will include interface with the local community through volunteer opportunities, participation in community events or recreational activities and the practice of accessing community resources with guidance, and then independently. Residents will learn and practice independent living skills (ILS) with a dedicated ILS specialist and work closely with the Family Services Coordinator to create and work towards their permanency goal in the most appropriate time frame.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. To facilitate a therapeutic process by which participants assume responsibility for their disruptive and unsafe behavior.
2. To facilitate the process of recovery, including developing behaviors, attitudes, and thinking which support the formation of healthy, well-balanced relationships.
3. To facilitate healing from life traumas and understand how these experiences affect daily functioning.
4. To prevent reoccurrence of illegal, aggressive or abusive behaviors.
5. To help participants acquire new skills and replacement behaviors in order to get their needs met in non-destructive and healthier ways.
6. To help residents understand any underlying mental health issues and learn healthy ways to successfully manage any symptoms.
7. To strengthen the relationship between the resident and their family or discharge resource, identifying historic concerns and working with their family to create a healthy family dynamic.

8. To learn and practice the independent living skills necessary to live in the community successfully through psychoeducational groups, community services and activities as well as the participation in guided activities of daily living.
9. To develop a discharge and after care plan which clearly identifies each participant's continuing care needs, and puts in place a plan to support family reunification whenever possible and appropriate.

TREATMENT SERVICES

The treatment planning process is the responsibility of an interdisciplinary treatment team consisting of the Behavioral Health Clinician, Cottage Manager, Family Services Coordinator (if applicable), Case Planner (if applicable), teacher, a third party reviewer, OASAS counselor (if applicable), the Residential Department Head, clinical supervisor, consulting psychiatric nurse practitioner and consulting psychologist.

The parent, the child, and the referral sources are also involved in the development of an individual plan for each youngster, and are invited to participate in all formal treatment planning meetings which are chaired by the appropriate Department Head. Video conference technology, as well as teleconferencing, are also utilized when parents and/or referral source attendance is not possible.

Within 30 days of admission, an initial treatment planning meeting (entitled the Comprehensive Assessment and Treatment Plan) is held to review the psychosocial history, the appropriateness of placement, and to establish individualized treatment goals for each youngster, including a family goal. As part of the treatment planning process, the assigned Behavioral Health Clinician completes a battery of evidence based assessments with the youth, prior to the initial meeting, to screen for exposure to trauma, presence of PTSD and/or related symptoms, depression, risk and overall diagnostic impressions using the following:

- CSEC Rapid (Commercially Sexually Exploited Children), *Comprehensive if positive on rapid tool*
- C-SSRS (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale)
- CDI-2 (Child Depression Inventory, 2nd Edition)
- CRAFFT (Car, Relax, Alone, Forgets, Friends, Trouble)
- CANS-NY (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths)
- CPSS-V (Child PTSD Symptom Scale for DSM V)
- YI-4R (Youth Inventory, 4th Revision)

The Qualified Individual, coordinated and monitored by the referral source, will conduct a parallel assessment as per the requirements of Family First legislation.

Roughly every six months thereafter, a Treatment Plan Review meeting is held to evaluate and measure progress towards individual goal achievement, and to review permanency planning issues. The Treatment Plan Review meeting also serves as a Service Plan Review which county departments of social services are mandated to have for youth in placement.

In summary, the Agency's treatment planning process is in compliance with all state regulated requirements, and also provides an interdisciplinary, formalized process which offers the youth constructive feedback at regular intervals during the treatment experience as well as a forum for the youngster to express their view and experiences while in placement.

Clinical

Family, individual, and group counseling are considered integral to the treatment plan and process. Each resident in the program is the responsibility of the Behavioral Health Clinician who provides individual counseling for the resident. Most residents are seen in counseling individually on a weekly basis, and all residents participate in at least two group therapy sessions weekly. Family contacts and home visits are arranged by the Family Service Coordinator (Behavioral Health Clinician in their absence) in consultation with the referral source. Vocational guidance is also provided by the therapist in conjunction with the school. The Agency primarily employs trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TFCBT) as a model of therapeutic intervention as well as CBT, DBT, and Motivational Interviewing.

Psychiatric and Psychological

Evaluations are conducted as needed. Arrangements for evaluations are made with the consulting psychiatric nurse practitioner and psychologist through the Behavioral Health Clinician. Our consulting psychiatric nurse practitioner is fully involved in the treatment planning process and is responsible for prescribing and overseeing the provision of psychotropic medicine. Our consulting psychologist is also fully integrated into the treatment planning process and provides individual and group clinical supervision. Our psychiatric nurse practitioner is here full time Monday through Friday, and our consulting psychologist is here Monday through Thursday.

Substance Use

The Agency's Van Clef Outpatient Substance Treatment Program, located on campus, serves residents with diagnosable substance use disorders. Residents who have been impacted by addiction within the family may also receive treatment in the program. Van Clef is licensed by the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). Opioid overdose training is offered to Van Clef clients through the program's certification as a New York State Opioid Overdose Prevention Program.

Drug testing is performed periodically on children enrolled in the program, including in-house testing under the program's New York State Limited Service Laboratory Registration. Screening typically occurs after each off-campus visit, randomly, or when there is suspicion that the resident may have been under the influence of a mood-altering substance. Our primary goal is to help each youth achieve stable sobriety before discharge.

Independent Living Skills

A comprehensive Life Skills program focuses on career planning, communication, daily living, housing and money management, self-care, social relationships, work and study skills in preparation for community living and independent functioning. The Agency employs Independent Living Skills Coordinators who work daily with residents. Additional opportunities encompassed in this program include public library access, driver's education, attending job fairs, visiting college campuses, filling out job applications, resume building, cooking, money management and college preparation.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

New York State Public Education Program for students in grades 7-12.

The students' academic experiences are enriched through an extended day curriculum and an extended school year. This is a twelve-month program that serves children who are classified and have an IEP as well as non-classified students.

Classes are 6:1:1 or 6:1:2

Represents six students/one Special Education teacher/one or two Special Education paraprofessional (s). The small class size enables us to ensure that each student receives instruction that is targeted and appropriate to his educational plan.

The educational program will be departmentalized into either Middle or High School levels. The school program will teach a rigorous academic curriculum within the specifications of the New York State Learning Standards. The core subjects such as Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies, will be taught. Students are provided with a vast variety of supportive materials and/or resources. They are able to take advantage of three science labs, three computer labs and a technology lab. Art Education, Health, Culinary Arts, Woodworking and Physical Education are also available to our students. Students earn high school credits towards New York State graduation requirements that are transferrable to any school within the state.

An Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P.) is developed for each of our students. The I.E.P. identifies the educational goals and emotional and behavioral needs of each student. Other diagnostic tools and assessments used to identify our students' educational needs and strengths in addition to the required State academic assessments are:

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Third Edition
- Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test
- Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement Form B
- Woodcock-Johnson 3 Test of Achievement Form B
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III
- CELF-III
- Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test
- Conner's Teacher Rating Scale
- Social-Emotional Dimension Scale
- Test of Auditory Perceptual Skills-Upper Level Scan A
- New York State Alternative Assessment
- Teacher Made Tests
- Published Tests
- Informal Inventories
- Teacher Observation
- Review of Records
- Rubric Assessments
- Portfolio Assessments

Students are additionally assessed with 7th and 8th grade State Assessments, New York State Regents exams, TASC and some may be evaluated through the alternative evaluation methodology as provided by SED.

A Reading Specialist Teacher provides remedial reading instruction to our students. Students are taught word recognition and reading comprehension skills.

A Speech and Language Therapist provides the students with speech-language remediation. Work in language and social-interpersonal skills help the individual student to develop successful skills for daily functioning. Behavior modifications and communication skills are part of every student's program. An individual behavior plan will be developed to teach or modify targeted behavioral areas.

Our Vocational Training Program aims to teach youth core job readiness skills and provide hands-on job experience. Youth have opportunities to develop skills through various work experiences, training's and staff assistance. The experiences enhance employment skills through learning responsibility, independence, good work habits, time management skills, money management and teamwork. The

development of sound work habits, acceptance of responsibility, ability to relate to peers, feeling of accomplishment, accepting authority and direction, developing work skills, and learning about self are all important parts of the work process. Youth have the opportunity to experience working in sixteen different trades to include the following: automotive, building maintenance, campus inventory/warehouse support, carpentry, computer support, custodial, electric, equine management, food services, heavy equipment, hospitality, HVAC, landscaping, painting, plumbing, and upholstery.

Additional Services: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Adaptive Physical Education

MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical services are provided through The William George Agency's nurses, consulting licensed physicians, and local hospitals and health care centers. Intake physicals are performed within 30 days of admission and annual physical examinations are provided routinely. Other medical services, including dental and optometric are provided as needed.

RECREATIONAL SERVICES

A multifaceted recreational program is available to all youth, with daily structured and unstructured activities in a variety of venues. Structured and unstructured recreation takes place in the Boscowitz Field House. Adventure Based Counseling is offered at the James F. Purcell Project Adventure Building, an indoor ropes course facility and Equine Therapy also known as "rec riding" is conducted at our J. Brad Herman Equine Center. The recreation program is designed to be supportive, therapeutic and motivational. It offers activities that encourage development of sportsmanship, teamwork, physical fitness and a holistic approach to health and wellness.

STAFFING

The Hard to Place Cottages are staffed in such a way as to afford residents a high degree of physical and emotional safety allowing for the best possible treatment outcomes. Behavioral Health Clinicians (M.S.W. Degree) and Family Service Workers provide intensive individual, group and family therapies to the residents in their respective units. Cottage Managers act as staff supervisors and coordinators of their respective treatment teams. Youth Care Specialists provide coverage during the waking non-school hours. This coverage is scheduled in such a way as to afford a ratio of one staff member for every three children.

Youth Care Specialists generally work in two teams during the hours of 2:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Awake Overnights provide night coverage and security during the nighttime hours (12:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.). They work in teams of three in each cottage with one roving Administrator on Duty who provides additional support and supervision. Regular bed checks (every 15 minutes) are performed throughout the overnight shift to insure the safety of each resident, as well as regular cottage checks by the AOD.

The Hard to Place teams are clinically supported by the Director of Hard to Place Services, with consultations from the psychiatric nurse practitioner, psychologist and medical staff. The Overnight Administrator on Duty directly supervises the Awake Overnights.

STRUCTURE

Currently, this program itself encompasses Ed George (6 beds), Heizer (6 beds) and Terry House (12 beds) residential units. This cottage has one single bedroom, four double bedrooms and two shared bathrooms

on the second floor. The first floor of the cottage provides shared living space where there is a dining and kitchen area where all of the residents may eat meals together with the staff as part of the Activities Daily Living (ADL) program. In addition, it has a community room where recreational activities and socialization may occur. The cottage also contains a group room where daily groups occur.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All of our residential programs rely primarily on training and staff development derived from the following treatment modalities:

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)
- Motivational Interviewing (MI)
- Behavioral Health Clinicians/clinical staff receive ongoing Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) trainings as well as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) trainings. All Behavioral Health Clinicians are also trained in conducting and interpreting the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment New York (CANS-NY).

Monthly Campus Wide Trainings

- Policy and Procedures
- Medication Administration
- Mandated Reporting
- Suicide Prevention
- Substance Use and Abuse
- Sexually Harmful Behaviors
- Trauma Informed Care
- LGBTQ+
- Cultural Competency
- Effective Supervision
- Bullying
- Power Struggle Avoidance
- Nutrition
- The Debriefing Process

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)

- All of our staff receives initial TCI training upon hire.
- TCI refresher training every six months in agency wide trainings.
- Cottage Managers provide in-service TCI module trainings focused on Behavioral Management alternating with the in-service trainings provided by the Behavioral Health Clinician during weekly unit meetings.

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- All of our staff receives initial MI training upon hire.
- MI refresher training at various intervals within monthly agency wide trainings.
- Behavioral Health Clinicians provide in-service trainings within unit meetings focused on skills and strategies derived from MI.

Cottage Manager Training

- All of our Cottage Managers are certified as trainers in TCI.
- Eight hour in-service trainings are provided utilizing Robert Ireland's "How to Supervise Staff in the Residential Program".

SELF-EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The Agency is subject to a tri-annual program audit by OCFS, our regulatory and licensing agency, as well as OASAS as the Agency operates a licensed outpatient chemical dependency treatment clinic. In addition, SED does an annual school report card of the George Junior Union Free School District, which is a Special Act school district on our campus providing educational services to our residential population.

Finally, we maintain a Quality Assurance and Program Improvement Department which develops both child centered and program based outcome measures to evaluate treatment efficacy.

The Agency was accredited by COA (Council on Accreditation) in September, 2019 and designated as a QRTP in September, 2021.

INTAKE PROCEDURES

The child's Behavioral Health Clinician makes a referral to a screening committee who reviews the child's appropriateness for the program. The screening committee consists of the following administrative staff:

- Director of Residential Services
- Director of Hard to Place Services
- Director of Admissions
- School Superintendent

The principle issues that the committee would consider are the youth's treatment progress, their investment in the treatment process, their Permanency Planning Goal, the "fit" between the candidate and the program, the youth's ongoing treatment and permanency planning needs, and lastly the youth's own perception of their readiness to enter the HTP Intermediate Care Program. The agency would also seek to acquire feedback and consensus from the referral source and the family regarding the clinical appropriateness of the plan. Cottage assignments include consideration of the child's age, with the expectation that ages in a given cottage will fall within a 36-month range. Exceptions may be made after discussion, with the rationale noted; reasons would typically include consideration of a child's maturity or developmental level.

SUMMARY

The Intermediate Care program offers a structured (semi-secure), closely supervised, therapeutic environment featuring intensive clinical intervention with residents focused primarily upon the treatment of mental health concerns. This involves significant support surrounding the navigation of interpersonal relationships, as well as training in emotional regulation. A foremost task of residential services involves addressing social competency, an area in which many HTP residents typically present with serious deficits. The process of gaining social skills and confidence advances as the resident is engaged in other primary areas of treatment including psychoeducation, personal accountability, and identification and changing of cognitive distortions and maladaptive coping skills, processing traumatic events, family treatment, and associated clinical and educational issues. Areas of treatment are all interrelated thus creating even greater advantage for therapeutic milieu work. The long term goal of treatment is fostering personal responsibility through the development of increased self-awareness, healthy relationships, conflict resolution and more adaptive coping skills.

This program specifically has been created to meet the needs of individual residents who have completed our Hard to Place Program or our Sexual Harmful Behavior Program but due to significant deficits in social skills, emotional dysregulation, and ongoing mental health issues or the need for more supervision, require an intermediate level of care. The Intermediate Care program also includes intensive family work to hasten discharge, as well as more intensive ILS training to better prepare residents to live independently.