

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### HARD TO PLACE – SUBSTANCE ABUSE

#### 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

#### PERSONS SERVED

Males (9) & Females (9)  
Between the ages of 12 and 17 (at time of admission)  
Have a full scale IQ above 70  
Have a primary diagnosis of chemical dependency and a co-occurring mental health disorder  
Is either court mandated or has a willingness to engage in treatment  
Must be in sufficient contact with reality (not actively psychotic)  
Must not have a history of chronic criminal violence

#### LICENSED CAPACITY

18

#### RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE

The Substance Abuse Program is an eighteen bed program designed to treat adolescent males and females who are dually diagnosed with alcohol and/or substance dependence and a co-occurring mental health disorder including diagnoses related to serious conduct or behavioral problems.

Many of the youngsters in this program have a history of failed inpatient treatment in OASAS licensed short-term residential programs as a result of their non-compliance with program rules and expectations. The structure of our residential program is intended to offer residents a safe, stable and predictable living environment which will support and encourage their investment in treatment. Chemical dependency treatment will be provided by our on campus OASAS licensed clinic, but there will be a high degree of collaboration and an integrated treatment planning process between OASAS staff and residential staff. Our goal is to develop a seamless, unified individual treatment plan for each youngster in the program which effectively addresses both their chemical dependency and mental health issues, and serves to promote a lifestyle of abstinence from all non-prescription mood altering substances.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

1. To achieve and maintain abstinence from all mood altering chemicals.
2. To facilitate the process of recovery including developing behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyle changes which support stable sobriety.
3. To improve behavioral, emotional, and social functioning where chemical dependency has interfered with role performance.
4. To include families fully in the treatment process based on the concept of chemical dependency as a disease which affects all family members, to address issues of co-dependency, and to help families acquire the skills and behaviors which support sobriety.
5. To develop and implement an individual treatment plan for each youngster and family appropriate to their particular service needs.
6. To provide a treatment experience that promotes each youngster's healthy growth and development.
7. To develop a discharge and after care plan which clearly identifies each youngster's continuing care needs, and puts in place a plan to support the youngster's reintegration to family and community.

## **INTAKE PROCEDURES**

An initial telephone call is made by the referring agency to determine if a vacancy exists, to evaluate the appropriateness of the referral, and to expedite the screening and admission procedure. In order for a referral to be considered, complete written material must be received by the Admission Department (see "Required Information for Referrals"). A pre-placement interview may be arranged with the child, parents and referring agency worker.

The Admissions Department will communicate its decision regarding admission in writing within two working days following the pre-placement interview.

If the child is accepted, an application and medical forms will be forwarded. A child will not, under any circumstances, be admitted without all documents, consents and releases appropriately executed, or without essential case information having been supplied. 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.

If the child is not accepted, the reasons will be discussed. Reconsideration for therapeutic reasons will be made in a timely way, as requested.

## **REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR REFERRALS**

Social summary which includes:

- Biographical data – birth date and place, parents' names, religion, etc.
- Specific reasons for referral
- Developmental history
- Description of parents – personalities, marital history, relationships with child, etc.
- Siblings – relationship to child referred, where living, emotional adjustment
- Previous placements of child and adjustments and achievements
- Child's relationships with peers
- Legal status, custody, etc.
- Future plans for child as currently projected

Psychiatric evaluation, if applicable, conducted within the last year; should include a formal diagnosis and address issues of mental status, medication, dynamic formulation, prognosis and recommendations for treatment.

Psychological evaluation, completed within the last year, should include the interpretation of projective testing and intratest scatter of intelligence instruments.

Educational evaluation, including a current I.E.P. and specific recommendations.

Substance abuse evaluations, including history of substance use, diagnoses, history of receiving services and recommendations for treatment.

Medical history, including childhood illnesses, records of inoculations, immunizations, and hospitalizations, and reference to special concerns such as allergies.

Reports from other agencies and schools that have had contact with the child.

## **TREATMENT SERVICES**

The treatment planning process is the responsibility of an interdisciplinary treatment team consisting of the Cottage Director, the Cottage Manager, Family Worker (if applicable), the teacher, a third party reviewer, the OASAS counselor (if applicable), the consulting psychiatrist and the 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 60 days of admission, an initial treatment planning meeting (entitled the Comprehensive Assessment) is held to review the psychosocial history, the appropriateness of placement, and to establish individualized treatment goals for each youngster, including a family goal.

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 his view and experiences while in placement.

## **CLINICAL**

Each resident in the program is the responsibility of the Cottage Director who provides individual counseling for the resident. Most residents are seen in counseling individually on a weekly basis, at a minimum every two weeks. Family contacts and sessions are arranged by the Family Worker or the Cottage Director. Vocational guidance is also provided by the therapist in conjunction with the school.

The general treatment philosophy is that chemical dependency is a primary, progressive, and chronic disease from which treatment is most effective when intervention is effectuated at the earliest stage in

the disease process. This is especially true for adolescents as it is generally understood that disease progression occurs more rapidly in adolescents as they are less physically and emotionally mature. Oftentimes, the greatest challenge in treating adolescents for chemical dependency is the fact that they do not reach their “bottom” in the way that adults often do. Although it is indeed true that adolescents have not yet experienced the serious medical problems that years of drinking and drugging produce and typically have not lost jobs and spouses, there are on closer examination, clear costs and consequences related to their abuse of chemicals. Many have experienced legal problems as a result of their drinking or drugging; for some, placement is a direct result of their use and abuse of chemicals; oftentimes school failure is related to their chemical dependency; and all have experienced strained relationships with family and friends as a result of their pattern of use and abuse.

The program employs an abstinence based model of treatment with a goal of sobriety, understanding that sobriety, is not simply “not drinking or drugging”, but also a change in the behaviors, attitudes, and patterns of thinking which support addiction. The principles and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and other self-help groups are integrated into all aspects of the treatment process.

Prochaska and DiClemente’s “Stages of Change Model” serves as the framework for engaging youngsters in the treatment process, as well as the principles associated with Motivational Enhancement Therapy developed by William Miller and Stephen Rollnick. MET is a therapeutic approach based on the premise that clients will best be able to achieve lasting change when motivation comes from within the individual. It is a client centered approach which seeks to validate where the client is in the change process, and to have the client be a full partner in developing a plan for change and recovery.

Each youngster will participate in five groups weekly and at least one individual counseling session (either at OASAS or in the cottage). Some groups are psychoeducational and more didactic in nature; others are process groups which seek to identify, explore and discuss treatment issues and feelings on the part of group members about themselves, others or the group at large. As part of our plan to fully integrate treatment between OASAS clinical staff and residential clinical staff, all treatment groups will be co-facilitated by the OASAS clinician and the Cottage Director and the cottages host monthly family support groups.

## PSYCHIATRIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL

Evaluations are conducted as needed. Arrangements for evaluations are made with the consulting psychiatrist and psychologist through the Cottage Director. Our consulting psychiatrists are fully involved in the treatment planning process and are 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.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Agency maintains an outpatient clinic licensed by NYS OASAS to provide individual and group counseling to residents who have substance abuse issues, or who have had significant experience of family issues with substance abuse. It is located on our campus and fully accessible to all of our 19 cottages.

## ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

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. We employ a full time Independent Living Skills

Coordinator who along with the Cottage Director is responsible to ensure that successful linkages are established with community based services.

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Primary and Secondary Education Program for students ages 12 – 18 years.

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

Represents six students/one Special Education teacher/one Special Education paraprofessional. 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 modified academic curriculum within the specifications of the New York State Learning Standards. The core subjects such as Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, and Health will be taught. Teachers are provided with a vast variety of supportive materials and/or resources. They are able to take advantage of two science labs, three computer labs and a technology lab. Art Education, Woodworking and Physical Education are also available to all our students. The instructional approach would rely heavily on the use of repetition and rote learning, and the curriculum would be life skills focused (i.e. math would focus on budgeting, making change, etc.).

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

These students will likely be evaluated through the alternative evaluation methodology as provided by SED.

A Reading Specialist Teacher and a Special Education Paraprofessional 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 function as normally as possible. 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 Program provides our students the opportunity to experience working in fourteen different trades. These trades are: auto shop, carpentry, custodial services, equine management, food services, heavy equipment, horticulture, laundry, lawn maintenance, painting, the Pizza Express, plumbing and upholstery. These opportunities provide students with the necessary life skills to become independent members of society.

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, gynecological, and optometric are provided as needed.

## **RECREATIONAL SERVICES**

Social, recreational, and cultural activities are ongoing services offered to our residents. A multifaceted recreational program is available to all residents in this program, with daily structured and unstructured activities, the former including Adventure Based Counseling in the agency's indoor ropes course facility, and riding in the equine center. Boys and girls are also encouraged and directed to seek and participate in such activities on their own, to make full use of programs and facilities in the community.

## **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. Cottage Directors (M.S.W. Degree) and Family Service Workers (if applicable) 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. Child Care Workers 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 two children.

Child Care Workers 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 Institutional Services, with consultations from the psychiatrist, psychologist and medical staff. The Overnight Administrator on Duty directly supervises the Awake Overnights.

## **STRUCTURE**

This program itself encompasses Seidell and Massachusetts Cottages. Each of the residential cottages is divided into two separate floors. The shared living areas are located on the first floor with the residents' bedrooms on the second floor.

Within each residence there is a dining room, kitchen area, and utility room where all of the residents may eat meals and launder their clothes together with the staff as part of their ADL program. In addition, the cottages have their own community room where recreational activities such as pool, ping-pong and foosball are played during designated times.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

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

- Cottage Directors receive certification and ongoing training in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Continuous TF-CBT module trainings are held on a bi-weekly basis during weekly unit staff meetings and during in-service trainings for our school staff.
- Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment New York (CANS-NY)
- Clinical staff receives ongoing Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) trainings as well as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) trainings as they become available.

### Monthly Campus Wide Trainings

- Policy and Procedures
- Medication Administration
- Mandated Reporting
- Suicide Prevention
- Substance Abuse
- Sexually Harmful Behaviors
- Cultural Competency
- Effective Supervision
- Bullying
- Power Struggles
- Nutrition
- Use of Razors

### 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 TF-CBT trainings during our weekly unit meetings.

### Cottage Manager Training

- All of our Cottage Managers are certified as trainers in TCI.
- Eight hour in-service trainings are provided by Staff Training Associates' Robert Ireland on "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 Improvement Department which develops both child centered and program based outcome measures to evaluate treatment efficacy.

## **SUMMARY**

The Substance Abuse Programs are a highly structured semi-secure living environment for residents who have a primary chemical dependency diagnosis and a co-occurring mental health disorder. The main

objective of the program is to help youngsters develop stable sobriety as well as offer treatment in a stable and safe living environment within which the staff and consultants can attempt to facilitate these youngsters' progress toward more adaptive and socially successful functioning with respect to the achievement of personal goals and successful reintegration in to the community.

The program is oriented toward medium to long term care with an emphasis on a highly structured milieu and remedial education.