



VISIONQUEST- SAFE HOUSE

Overview

Exposure to trauma is a complex public health concern. Trauma has emerged as one of the most substantial upstream causes of health ailments in our world and is now being considered a crucial determinant of many difficulties later in the life course. Research demonstrates a strong association between exposure to adverse childhood experiences and later life health and well being. These difficult issues merit an innovative, comprehensive and integrated treatment approach.

The Safe House provides quality holistic services in a residential setting delivered through an integrative and therapeutic milieu. Differentiating therapy approaches are offered through a trauma informed lens. Provision of interventions are delivered within a nine-month window with the primary goal of stabilization for clients and to reach individualized permanency goals. The average length of stay is six months. Discharge goals include family reunification, kinship placements, foster care, or supervised independent living.

Population

The Safe House serves female youth ages 13-18 who have been identified as a risk to human trafficking, are survivors of human trafficking, victims of sexual trauma or who have displayed high risk sexual behavior. The Safe House has a capacity for eight girls.

Services

Each girl has individual treatment-based service plans and individual schedules. Initially, all programming will be on site and therapeutically-minded. As the girls progress through the program, opportunities to participate in community activities will be evaluated. Services provided may include the following based on the individual needs of the girls:

The Sanctuary Model®

The Sanctuary Model is a theory-based, trauma-informed, evidence-supported, whole culture approach that has a clear and structured methodology for creating or changing cultures in response to trauma. VisionQuest uses the Sanctuary model as an overarching framework within the fabric of our entire service delivery methodology. The environment created through Sanctuary's philosophical underpinnings encourages clients to begin to heal from adverse experiences. This healing promotes a readiness for growth and change.

Sanctuary's Trauma Informed Psycho-Educational Group Curriculums are designed to provide clients with an easy to use and coherent cognitive framework that can create a change momentum. The Sanctuary model is designed to be used as a compass through recovery that can help guide individual

treatment, staff decision making, and team treatment planning. Groups guide girls in how to think differently about their problems; organize the changes they need to make into more manageable bundles; help them develop pattern recognition for the ways in which their present circumstances related to past experiences; and help to develop resiliency.

The Clinical Director will provide Sanctuary Model psycho-education groups, activities, and a milieu committed to nonviolence.

Education

In collaboration with Waynesboro School District, the girls attend an on-site cyber school program. Classes for each girl are chosen in compliance with either their current IEP or regular education classes. The school program also incorporates life skills training and educational field trips. At the conclusion of one semester, each girl will be re-evaluated with the goal of mainstreaming them into the high school setting. Waynesboro School District also offers GED programming for those who are working towards their GED.

Yoga

An essential aspect of recovering from trauma is learning ways to calm down, or self-regulate. For thousands of years, yoga has been offered as a practice that helps one calm the mind and body. More recently, research has shown that Yoga practices, including meditation, relaxation, and physical postures, can reduce autonomic sympathetic activation, muscle tension, and blood pressure, improve neuroendocrine and hormonal activity, decrease physical symptoms and emotional distress, and increased quality of life. For these reasons, yoga is a promising treatment or adjunctive therapy for addressing the cognitive, emotional, and physiological symptoms associated with trauma, and PTSD specifically. Yoga-based activities are offered by off-site instructors through the Waynesboro YMCA

Health and Wellness Education

The Safe House Health and Wellness Center provides comprehensive holistic health services to assist the youth on their path to recovery. Services include comprehensive medical and dental care; health and sexual education services, exercise programs, beauty, hygiene, and other self-care services. Health and wellness activities also include spa night and psycho-educational groups with a nurse practitioner.

Community and Recreational Activity

Interaction with the community and involvement in recreation is essential to creating a normalized environment for our girls. These activities occur multiple times each week and allow the girls to practice communication skills and other tools that encourage positive interactions with others.

Casey Life Skills

Teaching life skills is an essential part of ensuring girls' success when they transition to adulthood and independence. VisionQuest utilizes the Casey Life Skills (CLS), which is a tool that assesses the behaviors and competencies youth need to achieve their long-term goals. The Clinical Director will administer this assessment to the youth entering the program. The CLS assessment identifies areas of strength and needs in permanency, daily living, self-care, relationships and communication, housing and money

management, work and study life, career and education planning, and looking forward. The CLS program then generates both the results and recommended learning plans to follow in all domains. Child Care Workers work with the girls on daily living activities such as dishwashing, meal planning, cooking, laundry, hygiene, and self-care, etc. The Chief Administrator, Clinical Director, and/or clinical personnel will facilitate all other life skills groups.

Therapeutic Approaches:

VisionQuest is committed to offering the most effective therapeutic services possible for the population served. Evidence based programming may include the following:

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy ® (TF-CBT)

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is a psychotherapy model designed to treat posttraumatic stress and related emotional and behavioral problems in children and adolescents. Components of the treatment model include psycho education and parenting skills, relaxation skills, affect expression and regulation skills, cognitive coping skills and processing, trauma narrative, conjoint parent-child sessions, and enhancing safety and future development. TF-CBT requires clinicians to be trained and receive regular supervision by outside clinicians and practitioners. TF-CBT will be provided by a therapist from the outpatient clinic.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - (CBT) and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy - (DBT)

CBT is geared towards improving decision making skills, managing emotions, overcoming emotional trauma, coping with loss and coping with stressful life situations. It is a preferred method of treatment for many mental health challenges. DBT is closely related to CBT; it builds on improvement of interpersonal skills and incorporates mindfulness, acceptance and tolerating stress.

Rapid Resolution Therapy®

RRT is an immediately effective, revolutionary and holistic psychotherapeutic approach to healing and positive behavioral change. RRT works to eliminate emotional pain and destructive behavioral patterns and resolve the psychological and physiological effects of trauma. RRT works with the understanding that the subconscious controls emotions, desires, memories, habits, thoughts, dreams and automatic responses. RRT believes that one may consciously understand the value of eliminating problematic emotions, thoughts or behaviors but unless the subconscious mind is reached, enduring change is unlikely. RRT therapists work to engage the subconscious mind and eliminate the ongoing influence from troubling past events. From here RRT works to release blocked energy and facilitate healing. RRT works to replace negative habits and painful emotions with positive actions and feelings of well-being.¹ Potential certification. RRT is provided on a case by case basis and through clinical recommendation of the treatment team by a trained RRT therapist.

The Seven Challenges®:

1

The Seven Challenges is a comprehensive counseling program for adolescents with substance abuse problems, listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). It is the only evidence-based substance abuse program for youth. It has been widely used in the community and in secure facilities all across the country. The program is developmentally appropriate: Instead of dictating behavior to youth, it presents a decision-making model and helps youth make their own informed decisions about their direction in life and use of drugs.

This program is offered on a case by case basis, as identified by the treatment team. The on-site Chief Administrator and/or Clinical Supervisor will actively engage youth in the group process.

Art Therapy

Expressive arts activities allow healing through different artistic modalities. Each client's individual experiences provide a unique narrative for a culturally dynamic approach to trauma and healing. Self expression is an important treatment aspect that, as part of a holistic approach to service delivery, can be integrated into healthy outlets and coping skills. A trained art therapist will be on-site, as deemed appropriate, and will provide opportunities for creative arts in order to increase awareness of self and others.

Medication Management

Select child care workers and other administrative staff, if necessary, administer medication according to the PA Department of Human Services approved Medication Administration Training Program.

Outcomes

VisionQuest uses the data system Care4 to monitor the effectiveness of this program through the measurement and tracking of both process outcomes and final outcomes.

Major client outcomes that VisionQuest will measure and report on are:

- Reduction of Trauma Symptoms
- Improved Individual Functioning
- Healthy Relationship Formation
- Improved Health and Wellness

By building a number of screening tools into an outcome tracking system, VisionQuest can monitor various components of its overall program on an ongoing basis as well as evaluating progress towards individualized goals and treatment.