



Creating a Culture Of Care

Sharing Our Strategies and Successes

Spring 2014 Newsletter

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Creating a Culture of Care is an initiative to minimize restraint, seclusion, and other treatment practices that may re-traumatize vulnerable youth in our care.



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Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
ADVANCING RECOVERY AND WELLNESS IN TEXAS

A Note From TNOYS

Introducing our second newsletter!



Dear Residential Treatment Center Staff and other
Creating a Culture of Care Supporters,

Creating a Culture of Care is an effort to strategically minimize the use of approaches such as restraint and other practices that are stressful on staff and can re-traumatize the vulnerable youth we aim to treat and heal. Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) has been working in partnership with nine residential treatment centers around the state as well as with the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. This initiative is guided by evidence-based methods, specifically the **Six Core Strategies to Reduce Conflict and Violence**, that provide a roadmap to help organizations change their cultures and become more positive places to be.

We are thrilled that so many Texas residential treatment centers are interested in creating cultures of care in their agencies. We welcome youth services professionals in all types of settings to read this and learn from our work to reduce restraint and seclusion by using trauma-informed care and strengths-based youth development principles. We hope that you find interesting lessons, ideas, and stories here! Please email me with any suggestions for future newsletters. Also, please check out our blog and social media for more information and resources.

Your work is so important, Lara O'Toole, LMSW LOTOole@tnoys.org or 512-328-6860

Announcements

Special Report: Talent Night

Heather Robison, clinical director at Meridell Achievement Center, says that engaging residents in discussions about activities has brought about positive changes in behavior. For example, during a Talent Show held over the spring break, residents participated enthusiastically and showed support for each other: "They cheered each other on and there was no bullying," she said. The Talent Show included about 100 residents of all ages. It was such a success that Youth Care Counselors are planning to do it again soon!

Humanitarian Award Announced

Roy Maas Youth Alternatives' 2014 Humanitarian Award goes to... **Dr. Steven R. Pliszka**, Chief of the Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio for his support over the past 25+ years.

Supervisor's Corner



The other day I was having coffee with a colleague and we got into a conversation about supervising direct care staff in residential facilities. Although my friend doesn't supervise anyone, he is curious about organizational relationships and people's passion for this work. He asked, "Have you ever dreaded supervision meetings?" To my quizzical look, he added, "I've been talking to some direct care staff who try to avoid supervision at all costs... and that seems very strange to me. What do you make of it?" Well, it turns out that these folks only get "called in" for supervision if there is a problem. I like Thom Garfat's ideas about supervising child care staff. He writes about the S.E.T. framework for thinking about the supervisory relationship, and applauds Youth Horizons (Montreal, Quebec) for having their "...mind 'set' on supervision".

As the agencies in our project move towards establishing and maintaining their Culture of Care, one way of assisting direct care or child care staff in integrating these new strategies can be by using Support, Education, and Training. Building on the relational approach to supervision we touched on in the last newsletter, and notions of systems approach, we know that the quality of our supervisory relationship impacts the quality of the direct care the youth receive. The meaning of our supervisory communications is the response we get.

As supervisors we must support our staff and model for them ways they can support the youth. Support in supervision includes being there for the staff, listening to them, and developing a relationship they can trust is going to be helpful to them in doing their job. Child care staff need support to do this challenging job; how to deal with difficult youth, and maybe even how to get along well with their peers. Supervisors must be able to maintain a positive and healthy attitude so the direct care staff can ask for support. And, supervisors also need to support the staff in their education as a child care worker.



Education of child care staff involves working with them to increase their understanding of the profession of child and youth care, their knowledge of aspects of the work (like trauma-informed care), and their awareness of their "use of self" in going about their daily work. Our goal is for these workers to be confident, compassionate, and competent in caring for the youth in our programs. As supervisors, we work with the staff to increase their education by identifying their training needs and providing learning opportunities like teaching new cognitive skills, practicing new behaviors, giving constructive feedback, and role playing effective ways to motivate youth to succeed in the program.

In our own education as supervisors, we must hone our abilities and skills in listening, teaching, sharing, problem solving (or, as I prefer to say it, "solution building"), and assessing the supervisee's S.E.T. needs. And, of course, as good supervisors we must know how to address difficulties with staff in a constructive and effective manner. As in many other schemas, we find that there is an interactional triad that describes good supervision. I find that in supervision I am trying to keep in mind at all times that I am juggling these three facets of supervision. As Garfat explains, child care staff "...may need support when they raise the question of how to deal with a specific client, they may need education to understand a client better or they may need training in order to do something more effectively."

In my own supervision I am always listening to my supervisee's teachable moments and trying to use reflective practice at a level that they can hear. Supervision is a relationship in which both people can learn and grow and many of the lessons can be mutual.

Send in your comments and questions about supervision and we will work them into this corner in upcoming posts!

Athletes For Change



“Always give the best that I have. If I should get tired, I sit down, rest a while.

Then I get back up, learn some more, never give up, never give up AFC 1, 2, 3 !”

Athletes For Change (AFC), a residential treatment center located in Texas just south of Dallas, has joined the Creating a Culture of Care initiative as our latest intensive support site. We visited them in January and learned about their programming. Believing that “teens in crisis deserve loving and supporting environments,” they have dedicated themselves to the guidance and care of these young people.

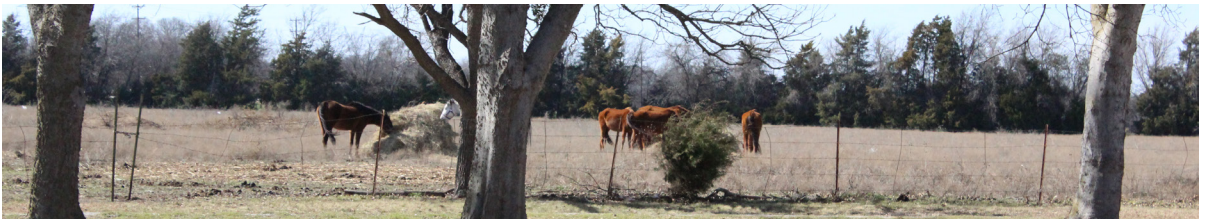
Athletes for Change was started by former NFL Philadelphia Eagles football player Dennis DeVaughn and his wife Maureen Murphy to bring together the professional sports community to improve the lives of troubled teens in the juvenile system.





It is one big team effort at AFC, and the staff has fostered supportive relationships with their youth by creating a "team sport dynamic" throughout the facility. The staff members are called "coach" by the youth "players," and staff believes this down-to-earth, non-threatening and relatable title engages youth in the program. These coaches are constantly helping their players by supporting and mentoring them in their quest for success. Coaches developed a list of program values by emphasizing the C.H.A.N.G.E. acronym (Compassion, Honesty, Accountability, Not Giving Up, and Education).

They believe in their C.H.A.N.G.E. program and incorporate the value system into the everyday lives of their youth. Mentoring is a big concept at AFC, and while the coaches offer excellent support and guidance to the youth residents, the RTC's practice of bringing some of the young people into leadership roles by designating them as "veterans" or "assistant coaches" allows for peer- to-peer counseling and mentoring to the other young people in areas in which they might need help. Besides being an original and innovative approach to youth work, AFC also offers a home-like environment that has abundance of fresh air and even some wildlife.



The additional house includes more team bedrooms while the educational center acts as a fully functional classroom including computers and monitors. The school is connected to the local school district and gives credits for classes such as basic English and mathematical courses offered in high school. AFC is giving the best they have to positively change the lives of the youth in their care with a unique and refreshing approach.

6 Core Strategies in Action:

What are RTCs Working on?

Hill Country Youth Ranch is continuing to work on the workforce development strategy by using their internal professional development services for ongoing trauma-informed care training as well as collaborating with an outside consultant to improve their trauma-sensitive treatment. They are also focused on upgrading and improving their debriefing techniques as well as updating their policy and procedures manuals.

Using data has been very helpful in decreasing EBIs at **Brookhaven Youth Ranch**. Other highlights include their prevention task force that includes youth and staff and their debriefing form used to record details about what contributes to each restraint. Their plans include adding more training and teambuilding for staff, adjusting shift-change to offset youth transition times, and increasing community contacts for youth.

Last year, **Meridell Achievement Center** welcomed new CEO Mark Richards on board, and recently welcomed Clinical Director Heather Robison. They are continually looking for ways to keep trauma-informed principles alive and important to all staff as they plan their roadmap to success.

Celebrating staff successes, managing risk for aggression through the use of individualized treatment plans, and moving from control to collaboration and support of youth in the program are all part of **Roy Maas Youth Meadowland Campus'** current progress in Creating a Culture of Care. Goals for this year include addressing compassion fatigue and time management, doing more sophisticated work with the data they are collecting, and providing more debriefing training for each cabin's staff.

Sinclair Children's Center has moved forward with this initiative by using supervision training, having weekly seclusion & restraint reduction team meetings, and recording all EBIs to use the data more effectively. Plans for this year include more training on Excel for the ED, more workforce development (exploring youth worker certification training), and continuing to work on reviewing and rewriting agency policy and procedures to ensure they encompass trauma-informed care.

Debriefing all restraints has been very helpful, according to staff at **Autism Treatment Center**. Leadership has incorporated trauma-informed care in staff trainings and hiring practices. The organization is posting monthly containment numbers and reviewing data in staff meetings; they are also celebrating progress with prizes and breakfasts. Goals for this year include training school staff, expanding this work to the San Antonio campus, and combining containment information with the safety committee's data.

Athletes for Change is just starting their work on the 6 Core Strategies. They are revisiting their policy and procedures manuals to ensure these documents reflect a trauma-informed approach. Their team is also developing a formal assessment tool to use with their youth. In the area of workforce development, they are training all staff in crisis prevention, as well as training child care staff in basic debriefing.

Staff at **Helping Hand Home** are consulting with expert Karen Purvis on Trust-Based Relational Intervention methods in order to implement more trauma-sensitive treatment services. They are also considering how to better support the personal responses staff may have to the trauma of this work. Additionally, they are hoping to create meaningful roles for youth by developing a fun youth council this year.

For over a year, **Children's Hope** has been working to get staff more excited and invested in their mission, expand their already-strong data analysis capacity, and make their debriefing process more than just a form to fill out. They are looking for ways to get feedback from youth on their program activities, and looking to host focus groups later this year.

How does TIC help you in your work with youth?

"Trauma-informed care has helped me understand how abuse and neglect have adversely impacted children and, as a care-giver, it has made me more sensitive in trying to meet their needs."

Mike, Youthworker at Brookhaven Youth Ranch

"We build relationships to have an element of trust - patients who have a trauma history often don't trust."

Andrea, RN, Meridell Achievement Center

"Trauma-informed care is beneficial because it allows our children to identify their issues and work through them, which seems to form less hostile, more interactive survivors."

Tiffany, Direct Care Staff at Hill Country Youth Ranch

"Using Trauma-informed care can build trust with a patient who hasn't had a history of building trust with adults in the past."

Gary, Meridell Achievement Center

"Every staff that we have comes in day after day to show love and warmth to each child... comfort them, praise them, encourage them, keep them safe, embrace their individuality. By all of us consistently showing up to do all of these things and more, our kids learn that there are adults in the world worth trusting."

Ashton, Therapeutic Child Care Specialist at Helping Hand Home for Children

"Trauma-informed care removes the emphasis from control to building true relationships."

Errol, Youthworker at Autism Treatment

Trauma-informed care "helps to de-escalate challenging behaviors in the least intrusive way."

George, Teaching Assistant at Autism Treatment Center