



Program Descriptions

Homeless and Transitional Age Youth Services

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04/16

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POPULATION SERVED

The Homeless and Transitional Age Programs are structured programs for adolescents ages 16-24, who are either homeless or transitioning to adulthood and live with mental health and/or substance use issues.

Referrals are accepted for youth residing in the City of Toronto. Emergency Youth Shelter Services are offered at 95 Wellesley Street East. The Redwood Program is located in the Greenwood and Gerrard area. Youth In transition, Connects, Project Going Home, Housing and Community Support are located at 95 Wellesley Street East, however services are offered in the community and on an outreach basis as needed.

Referral Process

Referrals are made directly to the programs and come from the youth themselves, or other services within the community, such as street outreach programs, police, probation, etc.

PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE

- Accessible
- Respectful/Non-Discriminatory
- Embrace Diversity
- Equitable
- Safe
- Strengths Based
- Relationship Based
- Partnership with youth and families
- Collaborative
- Transparent
- Flexible
- Efficient/ Effective
- Risk Reduction
- Accountable

MODEL OF INTERVENTION/APPROACH

The Homeless and Transitional Age Youth Services programs are committed to providing an evidence informed, client centered, strengths based, relationship based approach that is sensitive to issues of racial, cultural, religious and sexual diversity. Services are always provided within the framework of best practice. Services focus on the assessment of the client's goals, strengths and needs, and corresponding interventions to support the achievement of goals, meeting of needs and the enhancement of strengths.

A range of treatment models for individuals, families and groups is used, with particular emphasis on Trauma Informed, Attachment Based philosophy of care and interventions. Treatments such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Narrative, and Brief Solution Focused Therapies are some examples of models of therapy used.

STAFFING

The programs are staffed by individuals with the appropriate range of skills and abilities necessary to respond effectively to the needs of clients.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Access to multi-disciplinary consultation is available where indicated through the Agency's other program employees, and may include the consulting psychologist and psychiatrist.

COLLABORATION

In keeping with our belief in youth and family engagement, the client and parents/guardians/caregivers are seen as integral members of the service team. As such, they are involved in all major decision points in the development and review of the service at the Treatment Planning Meeting, and then regularly at Treatment Reviews and at service completion.

If other service providers (such as school, doctor, other agency, hospitals, etc.) are, or have been, or perhaps will be, involved in providing service to the client and parents/guardians/caregivers then, with the consent of the client and parents/guardians/caregivers, they will also be encouraged to participate as members of the service team.

PROGRAM SUMMARIES

Shelter

The Turning Point Youth Services Shelter provides at risk and vulnerable homeless and street involved youth ages 16-24, who identify as male, with food, accommodation and informal counseling in a safe, structured and inclusive environment. Referrals to the program come from the youth themselves, or other services within the community, such as street outreach programs, police, probation, etc. The Emergency Shelter is located at 95 Wellesley Street East, which is part of the vibrant gay village area in the downtown core and easily accessible by TTC.

The shelter provides services for up to 35 youth and consists of 5 dorm like settings with bunkbeds. There is a common area that is utilized for personal recreation and group activities and a large dining area.

The Shelter is staffed by a team of Shelter Youth Workers, with a minimum of 2 employees scheduled at all times. The program has access to the Agency's Clinical and Counselling Team for consultation and/or referral, as deemed appropriate.

The Shelter offers youth an environment, where they are supported to follow the routines, and participate in the programs, including a weekly Resident's Meeting. Programming within the Shelter focuses on addressing the needs of youth, developing independent living skills, reconnecting youth to community resources and recreation and leisure activities. Programming is provided through the Housing and Community Support Program connected to the Shelter.

The Shelter Program uses a client-focused, relational/strengths based approach to create individualized case management plans for each longer term client, developing and implementing individualized goals which recognize the unique strengths and needs of each youth. Psychiatric services are offered within the shelter on a bi-weekly basis. Clients can self-refer to psychiatric services. .

Youth are encouraged to reconnect with the Shelter following discharge for support as required.

Housing and Community Support

The Housing and Community Support Program is a day program for youth who are already connected to the Shelter Services. The program is operated as a component of the Shelter and is located at 95 Wellesley Street East.

The Housing and Community Support program is responsible for supporting the Case Management Plan developed with clients. The program works with youth to seek affordable housing, establish connections with landlords, access services within the community, develop independent living skills, relocate to more suitable, longer-term living situations, and to provide support once living independently.

Youth are able to reconnect with the program for follow-up as they feel the need and the program will connect with the youth for the first three months to check in and provide support as required.

CONNECTS Program

The CONNECTS Program is a short-term, specialized program for youth who have an identified or suspected concurrent disorder (combined substance use and mental health problems). As part of the support and stabilization the program provides, the youth can stay at local shelters where they receive food and accommodation in a safe, structured and inclusive environment. By becoming involved with the CONNECTS Program, the youth also have access to and the support of the two CONNECTS employees, one a Youth Worker and the other a Master's level Clinician.

Referrals to the program are usually made directly to the program by members of the Shelter team and employees at other shelter, housing, hospital or community programs in the city, or by the youth themselves. Interested youth do not have to have a formal diagnosis.

The focus of the program is on working with the youth and their family/care providers to develop a plan for stabilizing and supporting the youth by assisting them to recognize their needs and reduce the risks associated with their substance use and lifestyle. Youth are supported in developing life skills, reducing their isolation and (re)establishing family and community support networks. The program assists youth in securing permanent housing and, where indicated, to enter into longer-term and/or more intensive treatment.

CONNECTS employees can meet with youth multiple times per week, with or without an appointment, either at the program site at 95 Wellesley Street East, or in the community. Tailored to the unique needs of the youth, employees provide one-to-one and group counselling, as well as Case Management, referral to other services, and accompaniment to appointments and court appearances.

Once they have left the program, CONNECTS clients can still access the program employees for consultation and crisis support as well as referrals to appropriate services.

Project Going Home

Project Going Home supports individuals 16 years of age and older, and families, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within the City of Toronto. The goal of Project Going Home is to help clients reconnect with or establish support systems within their home community. The program is located within the offices at 95 Wellesley Street East.

The program provides the following services:

- Seeking accommodation for the client/family within their home community;
- Referrals to local supports and services that will continue to provide support ;
- Travel support in the form of toiletries and bag lunches to eligible clients;
- Provision of transportation as necessary.

Clients who return to their home community receive follow-up support to assist in their successful reintegration. Program employees will contact the client after returning to their home community by phone at least 1 week, 1 month and 3 months later to check in and ensure that their needs continue to be met.

Youth in Transition Worker (YITW)

The goal of the Youth in Transition Worker (YITW) program is to support youth in their successful transition out of the child welfare system into adulthood. Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who were

subject to a Crown Wardship order, legal custody order under section 65.2 of the CFSA, or formal customary care agreement immediately prior to the youth's 18th birthday, or who were eligible for support under the Renewed Youth Support Policy (RYS) at ages 16 and/or 17 (whether or not the youth actually received RYS) are eligible for the service.

The YITW specializes in working with youth with identified addictions and mental health concerns. They also specialize in working with youth transitioning from Children's Mental Health Residential Treatment programs, open custody/open detention facilities and youth who need support to access housing.

The YITW focus is to help youth develop and pursue their goals, and will support them to identify, access, and navigate adult service systems relevant to their specific needs. The YITW will also help youth to connect to existing supports and resources within their communities including, housing supports, education resources, employment services and training, life skills training (e.g. financial management, household management), health and mental health services, and legal services. The YITW will meet with youth in the community in a location most accessible to the youth. The worker will also be accessible via cell phone, through texting and email.

Referrals will be received from Children's Aid Societies, other YITWs, the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC), from youth directly and via outreach efforts at CMH agencies, as well as through the Youth Mental Health Court Worker (YMHCW), Youth Justice Court System and custody/detention facilities. Referrals can be received from any source provided the youth meets the eligibility criteria.

YIT employees can meet with youth multiple times per week, with or without an appointment, either at the program site at 95 Wellesley Street East, or in the community. Tailored to the unique needs of the youth, employees provide one-to-one support, as well as Case Management, referral to other services, and accompaniment to appointments and court appearances.

Redwood Program

Redwood Program is an eight bed transitional housing program for males ages 16 to 24 who are in need of housing support prior to being able to live independently. The primary focus and goal is to help clients gain the necessary skills to successfully live independently, and ultimately help them achieve their personal best. Youth are expected to be engaged in full-time school, employment, training program or some combination of the above.

Youth are expected to pay a contribution toward their living expenses which varies based on whether they are living on the main floor of the residence which accommodates five clients in two shared rooms where household items are shared, or in the second floor where there are three single rooms and clients are responsible for their own household items. Redwood is located in the Greenwood and Danforth area, with access to a number of community supports in the surrounding area including a library, schools, medical clinics and recreational centers.

The residence is staffed by a team of 4 Full Time Equivalent (F.T.E.) Child & Youth Workers, with one employee scheduled at all times. An overlap of staffing occurs once a week in order to provide life skills programming and house meetings.

Aftercare services are individualized, based on the needs of the client and family and negotiated as a component of the discharge Plan of Care.