

Counseling Enriched Classroom

Program Overview

The Seneca Constellation Program is a School-Based Counseling Enriched Classroom (CEC) managed in partnership between local School Districts and Seneca Family of Agencies to help students on site and in their communities to overcome emotional and behavioral challenges in order to be successful at their public school campus. Seneca Family of Agencies' counselors and therapists emphasize unconditional care of each student and are committed to our core values of Love and Compassion, Respect, Curiosity, Hope and Courage, and Joy.

Population

The CEC program provides mental health services for special education students in a particular classroom on the public school campus. These special education students have usually qualified for services under the ED (Emotional Disturbance) criteria and exhibit a range of behavioral and social emotional challenges that can best be supported in a therapeutic classroom environment. Students are placed in CEC classroom settings through the IEP (Individualized Education Plan)..

Staff

The typical CEC is staffed by a teacher(District or Seneca provided), a Seneca therapist, and 1 - 3 Seneca Mental Health Counselors dependent on classroom size and district contract. These individuals comprise the CEC treatment team.

Therapeutic System

Seneca values a safe and encouraging environment in which our clients can learn, grow, and develop confidence in their own capacities. The therapeutic system is strengths based and informed by our commitment to unconditional care in which we focus on three streams of a child's functioning: relational, behavioral and ecological. Our treatment team, along with collaboration from the student and their caregivers, develop treatment goals and identify specific replacement behaviors in order for them to begin the process of stepping down by joining their peers in mainstream classroom settings. Staff utilize a behavioral program that emphasizes positive incentives for appropriate social skills and classroom behaviors. Concrete coping skills are taught and practiced in the classroom. This is conducted with our goal of helping the student to develop healthy, authentic relationships with others, by SFA staff that hold an unwavering dedication to helping children and their families. A goal for all our students is to help them create strong bonds in their communities and implement well thought out plans for

transitions so that they can step down from our program and back into the mainstream. Upon enrollment in the Program, the treatment team works with family members, the youth, and school staff to conduct an initial assessment of the needs and strengths of the youth and family, in order to develop the foundation goals that will drive treatment. In addition to on-going individual therapy sessions with the student, the treatment team meets weekly to discuss individual student treatment plans and progress, in which they help break down broad goals into shorter term goals and then develop interventions made of concrete tasks. Students receive immediate feedback through a level system in their classroom aimed to teach and reinforce positive behaviors. The treatment team maintains documentation of the student's progress through team meeting minutes, which they complete and distribute to team members after each meeting.

The treatment team also keeps in communication with the guardian/family members, the youth and the other partners (program specialists, teachers, social workers, mental health workers, etc.) in between meetings as necessary, and follows up on tasks as needed. Mental Health Counselors support clients and families in accomplishing tasks determined in the Team Meetings and are available during all school hours.

Through every stage of the treatment process, we endeavor to fully engage caregivers, family members, and other key figures in the child's life. We seek to strengthen clients' networks of relationships and community supports such that clients have the support network needed to successfully transition from our services. Our staff maintain close communication with the important people in each client's life. The CEC treatment team regularly meets with caregivers to transfer skills to sustain progress and help maintain the client's long-term success. Interventions often include creating structure (routines, daily schedules, predictable expectations, etc.), developing rewards and consequences systems, and identifying possible tools and techniques to prevent future challenges.

Treatment Components

Assessment

In collaboration with our clients and their caregivers, the classroom therapist completes a comprehensive mental health assessment process in order to identify strengths and resources, needs and concerns, and potential pathways for success.

Plan Development

Based upon the assessment, we work with our clients and families to craft a highly individualized treatment plan based on individual strengths, behaviors, and needs. This treatment plan incorporates positive behavioral interventions, behavior modification, and clinical therapeutic approaches, as

described in our book Unconditional Care¹. The treatment plan provides a framework for intervention, and we formally review and revise it at regular intervals. Micro-level treatment planning and adjustments also occur on an ongoing basis via treatment team meetings, family team meetings, treatment reviews, etc.

Collateral Services

Through every step of the treatment process, we endeavor to fully engage care givers, family members, and other key figures in the child's life. Our staff maintain close communication with the significant people in each client's life, and our clinicians offer regular family therapy to each family.

Individual Therapy

Our Master's level, licensed or registered clinician conducts regularly-scheduled, weekly individual therapy sessions, supplemented with additional check-ins as needed. A major focus of therapy services focuses on building resiliency by identifying strengths, focusing on forming and strengthening healthy bonds with others and learning new coping skills. Therapy offers a confidential space in which the student can process difficult life events and build confidence that they can navigate and conquer adversity.

Crisis Intervention

Some of our clients struggle with self-regulation, aggression, and self-harming behaviors. When our attempts at prevention and early intervention aren't successful, staff utilize crisis intervention procedures in accordance with our proprietary Ahimsa Model to provide safety and help clients de-escalate.

Group Therapy

All students engage in weekly group therapy with our Master's level, licensed or registered clinician as a whole group, or as a sub-set of the whole group. The treatment team, along with the students, will identify topics or foci of the group therapy, which can include exercises, social skill building, transitions to the mainstream and/or to process their experience in the milieu. All group members will engage in active listening, creating mutually agreed upon group rules and practicing citizenship in the classroom.

Case Management/Intensive Care Coordination

Our clinicians provide case management services as needed to facilitate the utilization of community resources and supports.

¹ Unconditional Care book available upon request

Discharge Criteria:

A student is discharged from the program upon reaching treatment goals and exhibiting the ability to successfully transition to mainstream, or if it is determined that the student no longer benefits from the CEC. In either situation, an IEP is conducted to discuss the student's progress within the program.