

Guidelines for Determining Out of Home Care or Psychiatric Involvement

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. believes that all children and adolescents develop best and can be safely maintained within community settings. YAP employs a wraparound approach to working with our youth and families. The goal of wraparound services is to maintain youth within their home or as close to home or community as possible, in the most normalizing or age appropriate setting, in order to avoid unnecessarily restrictive or otherwise inappropriate placements. Wraparound services help children who might otherwise require an out-of-home placement to remain in the community with their families. As such, it our belief that restrictive institutional care should only be utilized for brief periods of stabilization.

Another aspect of wraparound services is the belief that it takes a team of invested community partners to help support a young person and family within the community. A critical component of our work with youth and families is to help coordinate and arrange for other supports that may assist or contribute to the youth's treatment but which are not specifically related to our services.

These (ancillary) supports may contribute to the youth and their family's medical, environmental, educational, and/or social well-being. Such services could include, but are not limited to, health care for medical conditions, housing assistance, job training, enrollment in school, assisting with appropriate behavior in school, community recreational activities through the YMCA, etc. YAP will only initiate or facilitate such community connections with the family's agreement and cooperation.

In the event that a young person's needs extend beyond what YAP services can contractually provide, the following steps should be taken:

- The family will be consulted about the need for other/additional services and action will occur upon agreement to that specific plan.
- The initial contact for referral will be made to the case manager or other referral sources from the referring agency, when appropriate.
- YAP will then work collaboratively with the case manager and the client/family to ensure a referral is made.

The appropriate documents will be sent to the identified agency upon receipt of release of information. We must work to ensure that at any given time, our youth have the most clinically appropriate and least restrictive services available.

When a Youth is a Danger to Self or Others

YAP has guidelines established to help staff predict, prevent and plan for crisis. However, there are occasions when youth may require professional intervention or assistance to keep them and others safe. In such situations, YAP staff are to advise families to contact their local Crisis Intervention Services or to take their young person to the closest Emergency Room for evaluation. YAP staff are encouraged to support families through these situations and work in partnership with them throughout the process, coordinating with other agency personnel as requested by family members.

When a Youth is in Danger

While we make every endeavor to safely maintain youth in their homes, there are occasions that may require removal. YAP has guidelines for all employees regarding their role as Mandated Reporters that must be followed, and employees are also required to be aware of any specific contractual reporting requirements.

It is YAP best practice to work with parents even if a youth is placed in another home or setting except when involvement of the family members other than the client would be clinically counter-productive or legally prohibited. Such determination may come from the young person (if over age 14), the referring authority, the court, or the Child-Family Team.