



Stepping Stones Day Program

Hillside Children's Center

The Stepping Stones Day Program offers a structured small group therapeutic environment that helps students overcome the emotional and behavioral challenges that interfere with learning, so that they may return successfully to their home district. The Stepping Stones Day Program is a collaborative with CiTi BOCES and Hillside Children's Center. Our special education teachers and specialist support staff from CiTi BOCES, and an on-site team of mental health professionals recruited and managed by Hillside Children's Center, will work together to promote participating students' independent functioning, along with their academic achievement and success, through the combination of psychotherapeutic interventions, mental health treatment, behavioral supports, and special education instruction. Our program is located at the Fourth Street School in Fulton, NY.

ABOUT THE SERVICE

Philosophy of Service: In the Oswego County Therapeutic Day Program we:

- (i) believe in and honor the intrinsic value of each student (utilizing a strength based approach to service provision);
- (ii) believe that family members are essential partners in their child's treatment and education;
- (iii) are committed to providing each student and family with the tools and resources they need to proactively manage feelings and behavior, to improve communication skills (with peers and adults) and to build their overall self-esteem;
- (iv) fosters the development of the academic skills students will need to be successful in a home school placement and ;
- (v) presents step-by-step alternatives to disruptive behavior patterns and other self-defeating practices that currently limit educational choices.

Our Therapeutic Day Program's education and mental health partners share a commitment to supporting students to return to less restrictive settings. From day one, discharge factors into all of our treatment and education planning decisions with students, families, and home districts.

We recognize that family engagement and involvement is critical to the success of students' individual treatment plans – as families play a central role in helping us to better understand each student's strengths, aspirations, and challenges, and to helping set and achieve all behavioral and learning objectives. We also recognize that we must earn families trust and buy-in, and have found that respectful yet determined outreach and relationship building can eventually demonstrate the value to families of becoming full participants in the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of their child's treatment plan.

Student Profile: The Therapeutic Day Program serves children and youth in grades K-12 who have behavioral and emotional challenges, and who would benefit from special education instruction and fully integrated onsite mental health services. Component districts must ensure that each student has a DSM Axis I diagnosis upon referral – and will also be asked to provide extensive background information on their previous educational placements and behavioral health care. Because family participation is critical to the student/youth's success in our program, we will begin extensive family outreach and engagement during the intake decision making process.

Program Outcome Goals: The primary goals of the Therapeutic Day Treatment Program are to:

- i. Maintain the student in a community setting – either by preventing residential placement or by facilitating the return of a student from placement – and by ensuring a safe learning environment for every student.
- ii. Successfully re-integrate the student into full day school programming in their home district - as part of collaborative planning between the program and the student's CSE.
- iii. Provide students and their families with the academic, psychological, emotional and social skills necessary to lead healthy, satisfying and successful lives – as measured by progress on a baseline /mid-point/endline measure such as the CANS, and/or other mutually selected measures

Student-specific Outcomes: Since all students come into our Therapeutic Day Program with their own unique clusters of challenging behaviors, emotional and behavioral outcomes will be individual specific. Within our overarching goal of returning students to a placement in their home district, students' outcomes will typically fall within the following areas:

- Improved self-regulation of affect – as measured by being able to manage depression, anxiety, impulsiveness and other affect related barriers to success at school
- Improved self-regulation of defiance and/or aggression – as measured by reductions in hostility, negativism, loss of temper, argumentativeness, anger, resentment, and deliberately annoying behavior
- Improved ability to attend to and participate in educational activities – as measured by a student's ability to listen when spoken to directly, follow through on instructions, and complete school work
- Improved peer relationships – as measured by reductions in aggression towards others, theft, blaming others for conflicts and problems; along with increases in the number of identified friends, ability to work in pairs or small teams, and the appropriate use of peer-oriented problem solving and mediation skills
- Improved attendance/reduction in days lost to suspensions or absenteeism – as measured by the number of days a student is able to attend school without unexcused absences / mandatory suspensions

Service Delivery Components: Our service begins with collaborative, comprehensive intake, assessment and treatment planning -- including:

- Proactive safety planning, behavioral and crisis supports with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as the foundational design of the full program;

- Family Engagement;
- Individual, Family and Group Therapy;
- Regular on-site Psychiatric Consultations and Medication Management;
- Academic and Special Education Instruction in 8:1:1 Enhanced Classrooms
- A mental health clinician embedded in each classroom team;
- Daily communication and collaboration between special education and clinical staff;
- Weekly Classroom Team Meetings;
- Other specialized therapies according to child's IEP • Weekly cross-program Staffing Sessions on Individual Students and;
- Discharge Planning right from admission.
- Bridging supports during transition to new educational placements

Close Coordination with External Agencies: Many students and families referred to our Therapeutic Day program will have existing relationships with formal and informal community-based services and supports. While families will be asked to work with the Therapeutic Day Program's on-site Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and Clinicians as their child's primary behavioral health providers while in the program, our Therapeutic Day Program team looks forward to drawing upon, and further strengthening, existing community resources in the development of treatment plans (including proactive safety plans). We will need to coordinate with them closely as therapeutic interventions progress, and will draw upon their insights into each student's strengths, aspirations, and priority needs. External providers will also play a key role in the discharge planning process, as they may likely be called upon to take the lead in providing ongoing mental and behavioral health supports (including psychiatric care).

Referrals: Students are referred to the Therapeutic Day Program by the Committee on Special Education in their local school district. Referrals should be submitted to Jim Huber, CiTi BOCES. Referring CSE's should follow the process described on the "CiTi BOCES Application Process for Placement/Services" sheet. In addition to requested items listed on that sheet, referrals to Day Treatment will be expected to contain documentation of DSM IV Axis I diagnosis (as required by OMH certification).

Once the referral packet is complete, active engagement with the component district, the family and involved community providers will ensure the best possible placement decision. The process will ensure that the Therapeutic Day Program is the right program to ensure the student's success in school, home and community. The process will also ensure optimal classroom cohesiveness and a positive therapeutic milieu for all participating students. Please see Intake Flow Chart for fuller description of the intake process.

We look forward to working with students, families, their home districts, and their community supporters. In the Therapeutic Day Program we believe in fresh starts and second chances – and we know how much our students look forward to developing the ability to succeed in education, employment, family and community life.

For further information about this program please call 315-593-8608.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Hillside Family of Agencies

585-256-7500

info@hillside.com

24 hours / day

FACILITY

Fulton

167 South 4th St., Fulton, NY

SUPPORTED BY

Local School Districts

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Gender: Both

RESIDENTS OF

Oswego County

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