

Ohio Registry of Effective Practices

Positive Education Program (PEP)

School: Positive Education Program

Partnering Agencies: Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board, Cuyahoga County ESC, School Districts

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Available for Program Consultation: Yes

Available for Presentations/Workshops: Yes

General Program Overview:

As one of Greater Cleveland's largest non-profit agencies, Positive Education Program (PEP) is committed to the community's children, youths, and families. PEP blends quality education and mental health services in partnership with families, schools, and communities. PEP's caring and competent professionals help troubled and troubling children and youth successfully learn and grow using the Re-ED (Re-education of Emotionally Disturbed Children) approach developed by Dr. Nicholas Hobbs. Re-ED provides a framework for a therapeutic environment where there are expectancies for normal healthy behavior, where competence is stressed, and where energy is focused on finding and building strengths that promote positive growth in troubled children. The Re-ED Philosophy is based on 12 principles that ground PEP's work:

1. Life is to be lived now.
2. Trust is essential.
3. Time is an ally.
4. Competence makes a difference.
5. Self-control can be learned.
6. Intelligence can be taught.
7. Feelings should be nurtured.
8. The group is important.
9. Ceremony and ritual give order.
10. The body is the armature of the self.
11. Communities are important.
12. A child should know some joy in each day.

Recently, PEP has begun working closely with the Sanctuary Institute in integrating practices that support children and youth touched by trauma. The seven commitments of Sanctuary are:

1. Non-Violence
2. Emotional Intelligence
3. Social Learning
4. Open Communication
5. Social Responsibility
6. Democracy
7. Growth and Change

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Evidence of Effectiveness:

PEP operates several programs including Day Treatment Centers, Early Childhood Centers, Day Care Plus, PEP Connections, and PEP Assist. Each of these programs is described below, along with data on effectiveness and contact persons.

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PEP Day Treatment:

Program Description

PEP operates eight-day treatment centers providing academic and partial hospitalization services for children and youth ages 5-22, who have been determined to have emotional and behavioral problems which are too severe to be managed in a public school setting. Each of PEP's day treatment center-based programs are accredited by CARF International, and are certified to deliver partial hospitalization (PH), community psychiatric supportive treatment (CPST), pharmacologic management, and mental health assessment services by the Ohio Department of Mental Health. PEP also operates the newly-opened Prentiss Autism Center, which is a non-PH academic and behavioral health program for school-aged children and youth, ages 5-22 with severe autism and other communication disorders.

The program model employed in PEP day treatment partial hospitalization allows for a great degree of flexibility, but four general treatment modalities are commonly used:

1. General milieu treatment to program for each student's ongoing adjustment at PEP
2. Structured group activities including journal writing, group meetings, and social-emotional psycho-education
3. Individual treatment programming in a group setting to develop skills in emotional, social, behavioral, and independent living skills areas
4. Individual counseling and tutoring

The lead staff in a PEP Day Treatment classroom are the teacher-counselor, licensed in special education, and the associate teacher-counselor, a qualified mental health provider. They play a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the Re-ED classroom environment in which students can learn and

grow. Teacher-counselors and associate teacher-counselors are joined in this effort by team associates, CPST case managers, and a variety of other professional and parent staff.

Data on Day Treatment Effectiveness

PEP conducts annual evaluations of Day Treatment student outcomes. The FY 2010 annual evaluation found the following:

- PEP Day Treatment students enrolled in partial hospitalization (PH) services had statistically significant improvements in Problem Severity, Functioning, Hopefulness, and Satisfaction as measured by the Ohio Scales.
- Statistically significant improvements were made on all three Ohio Scale instruments: worker, parent, and youth. This demonstrates that clinical improvement occurred as seen from the perspectives of PEP Day Treatment clinical staff, parents, and the youths themselves.
- Young adults enrolled in the Midtown Center for Youth in Transition PH program experienced significant improvement on the Quality of Life, Empowerment, and Symptom Distress scales of the Ohio Adult Consumer Form.
- Students enrolled in the non-PH Prentiss Autism Center demonstrated significant improvement on several scales of the Problem Behavior Inventory, including Attention and Activity Problems and Oppositional Behavior.
- A Parent Satisfaction Survey is administered to the parents of day treatment youths during parent conferences. Parents are asked to compare their overall satisfaction with PEP when their child was first placed with PEP to how they currently feel about PEP. In the FY 2010 surveys, 53% of parents were satisfied at the time of initial placement, while 86% were satisfied at the time of the survey, an increase of 33 percentage points. The majority of parents also stated that their expectations of PEP for their child and their family were met.

Day Treatment Centers Contact Person

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PEP Early Childhood Centers:

Program Description

PEP's Early Childhood Centers (ECCs) provide early childhood education and partial hospitalization services to children 0-6 years of age and their families. This program is designed to intervene early in the lives of children who are experiencing or posing serious emotional and behavioral problems for themselves and/or others, or who display developmental delays and other parent/child concerns.

ECC uses the Re-ED ecological approach to craft a better fit between the child and his/her social environment, incorporating best practice and evidenced-based interventions into the treatment plan. As an integral part of this approach, parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the program

with their child(ren). Children may be referred for a range of concerns that interfere with the child's ability to develop age-appropriate social-emotional skills. Such concerns may include:

- chronic temper tantrums
- physical and/or verbal assault of parents, siblings, and other children
- refusal to follow directions
- language delays and delays in self-help skill development
- autistic-like behaviors including an emotional component
- a general inability to benefit from or adapt to his/her present child care/educational placement.

Data on ECC Effectiveness

The FY 2010 annual evaluation found the following for the Early Childhood Centers Program:

- PEP ECC children had statistically significant improvements in all three Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) domains of the Childhood Outcomes Summary Form, Social-Emotional, Knowledge and Skills, and Appropriate Action.
- PEP ECC children also experienced significant improvements on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), including Total score and Externalizing, Internalizing, Somatic Complaints, Withdrawn, Sleep Problems, and Aggressive Behavior scales.

Early Childhood Centers Contact Person

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PEP Day Care Plus:

Program Description

Day Care Plus provides consultation services and technical assistance to child care providers, and support for families with children experiencing difficulties in the child care setting. Working with staff, parents and all agencies involved, DCP consultants develop a seamless and effective program for children experiencing social, emotional and behavioral difficulties. The program's ultimate goal is to maintain children successfully in their child care placements.

Day Care Plus has three primary objectives:

1. To improve the social, behavioral and emotional functioning of at-risk children in child care;
2. To increase the competencies of parents and caregivers of at-risk children in child care; and
3. To increase the competencies of child care staff.

Day Care Plus's distinctive capabilities were written about by the National Center for Children in Poverty in its series Promoting the Emotional Well-Being of Children and Families, where they identified Day Care Plus as a national model for its success in attending to early childhood mental health issues and providing services integrated into existing early childhood programs. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) publication, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, cites Day Care Plus as one of four national models of effective early childhood mental health consultation.

Data on Day Care Plus Effectiveness

FY 2010 Day Care Plus accomplishments include the following:

- Day Care Plus served 396 children in 114 early care and education sites.
- Day Care Plus succeeded in maintaining 394 children in child care for a retention rate of 99.5 percent. (Note that the industry standard is 85 percent, so Day Care Plus well exceeded the established standard of effectiveness.)
- Day Care Plus provided technical assistance to child care providers during 2,477 meetings/sessions held during FY 2010.
- Day Care Plus conducted 117 training sessions at child care sites and held individual meetings with 309 parents.

Day Care Plus Contact Person

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PEP Connections:

Program Description

PEP Connections coordinates services for children and youth ages 3 through 17 in Cuyahoga County who have been diagnosed with a serious emotional disturbance, have multiple problems and multiple needs resulting from their mental health issues, and are at risk of deeper system involvement and/or are returning to their families or the community from placement. Through collaboration between PEP and the child serving systems of Cuyahoga County, PEP Connections coordinates the efforts and services of multiple resources available to support the child and his/her family. Each family is assigned a PEP Connections care manager who provides intensive mental and behavioral health supports and services. The care manager employs an ecological approach to care utilizing a Wraparound Model which involves everyone who is influential in the life of the child. Through the child and family team, the group creates a plan which addresses both the individualized mental health needs as well as a family plan of care. This comprehensive plan is designed to address the child's full spectrum of needs.

Each child's planning team develops appropriate outcome goals at the start of involvement in PEP Connections and steadily works toward accomplishing those goals. Along with regularly scheduled

team meetings, this process often entails contact with school personnel and regular home visits to meet with parents or guardians. The care manager will tap extended family and neighborhood supports as well as draw upon resources provided by the County's health and human services community.

Data on PEP Connections Effectiveness

The FY 2010 annual evaluation found the following in regard to PEP Connections:

- Children and youths enrolled in PEP Connections had statistically significant improvements in Problem Severity, Functioning, Hopefulness, and Satisfaction as measured by the Ohio Scales.
- Statistically significant improvements were obtained on all scales of the Worker, Parent, and Youth instruments. This demonstrates that clinical improvement occurred as seen from the perspectives of PEP Connections care managers, parents, and the youths themselves.

PEP Connections Contact Person

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PEP Assist:

Program Description

PEP Assist is a consultation and training service provided to schools and programs designed to teach best practices for working with at-risk and special needs children in educational disability categories. Services are individually tailored to meet the needs of each district. Working in collaboration with schools, PEP Assist staff develops innovative programs and staff development opportunities so that children with severe and challenging behaviors may be served successfully in their school of residency. PEP Assist provides individualized student consultation, classroom consultation, staff training and resources, and communication assistance between parents, providers, and school personnel.

PEP Assist offers services to schools that increase the knowledge and skill base of their staff in working with children who present challenging behaviors. The mission is to keep challenging children in their home school districts by providing the teachers with the skills to work with them. PEP Assist provides an opportunity for teachers to increase their potential in doing what is right for children.

There are a number of ways a teacher consultation might be implemented. A PEP Assist staff member will assist a classroom teacher by conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). Through teacher, adult, and student perspective interviews, PEP Assist ascertains the most disruptive behavior and teases out behavior patterns and cycles. The PEP Assist consultant then facilitates a team approach with the teacher and other school team members to develop an effective behavioral

intervention plan. The consultant works closely with the teacher in the classroom to model techniques to implement the plan.

Other forms of teacher consultation include implementing components of structure and behavior management in a classroom. The PEP Assist consultant typically engages in the following activities:

- works side by side with the teacher to model techniques
- helps develop visuals for the classroom
- helps rearrange the physical components of the classroom
- assists in explaining changes to the students
- develops a behavior management system with rewards and consequences
- shows teachers how to "talk" to students who are demonstrating inappropriate behavior
- provides feedback to the teacher as suggestions are put into practice
- furnishes ongoing support to the teacher and other school personnel

As a result of PEP Assist consultation and modeling of techniques in their classrooms, teachers report that they feel better equipped to manage their most challenging students. Their knowledge of mental health disabilities has increased and they feel they have a better understanding of why these kids do the things they do. School districts that contract with PEP Assist on an ongoing basis have stated that the number of due process cases has decreased. For some of the families PEP Assist has worked with, their involvement has had a direct impact on their relationships with their school districts. PEP Assist has also been able, in some cases, to effectively connect families with additional mental health services in their communities. PEP Assist has been able to help teachers and families understand the impact that trauma has on the success of children in a public school setting. Overall, districts PEP Assist has worked with have found PEP Assist consultants to be professional, knowledgeable, and willing to go above and beyond to do what is best for kids.

Data on PEP Assist Effectiveness

Over the past two years PEP Assist has served 42 school districts and 526 individual children and their families.

During this time period, PEP Assist recorded the following case outcomes with the 526 children and their families:

- In 77 percent of cases (405 out of 526), children were able to remain in their original least restrictive environment (LRE) and in six percent of cases (31 out of 526) children were able to move to less restrictive settings.
- In only four percent of cases (21 out of 526) did children need to be moved to a more restrictive setting and only two percent of cases went to due process.
- Ninety-nine percent of all school districts served expressed satisfaction with PEP Assist services and many districts continue contracts from year to year.

PEP Assist Contact Persons

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Capacity and Resources:

PEP programs serve a culturally diverse mix of children, youths, and families most of whom reside in the Greater Cleveland area. During FY 2010, PEP served 2,061 children and youths of whom 62 percent are African American, 37 percent Caucasian and 2 percent other/unspecified (6 percent of these children and youths are Hispanic). Common DSM-IV Axis I diagnostic categories include Mood Disorders, ADHD, ODD, and Conduct/Disruptive Behavior Disorders. Over ten percent of PEP children and youths also have an Axis II mental retardation diagnosis. Age ranges of PEP children and youths are as follows: 0-5 years, 4 percent, 6-8 years, 8 percent, 9-11 year, 17 percent, 12-14 years, 27 percent, 15-17 years, 34 percent, and 18+ years, 10 percent. Eighty percent of PEP families are Medicaid-eligible.

PEP employs highly experienced and well-trained staff with experience in the areas of mental health, special education, training, and consultation. PEP professionals assist public schools in implementing behavioral strategies and positive interventions and supports through teacher consultation and training to teach new ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving in the classroom. PEP programming builds coping strategies, functional skills, and academic competence.

PEP resources include Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), a 5-day intensive training opportunity for working with challenging youth and the PEP Summer Institute, a 5-day training experience designed to develop education and mental health skills and competencies.

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Family and Community Partnerships:

PEP partners with families, school districts, Cuyahoga County ESC, and the ADAMHS Board. PEP collaborates with child serving systems to connect families with resources. Community partners include the County Department of Children and Family Services, the Juvenile Court, Mobile Crisis Team, Department of Youth Services, County Board of Developmental Disabilities, county school districts, local hospitals, community service agencies and mental health agencies.

PEP supports the critical role of parent-professional partnerships within the organization. PEP sponsors an internal Parent Advisory Council (PAC) whose role is to enhance the working relationship between parents and professionals. The PAC provides PEP programs with suggestions and feedback on new programs and service enhancement of existing programs.

PEP believes that effective parent partnerships are integral to better outcomes for students. Through re-education of key individuals in a child's ecology, including parents, teachers, relatives, professional people, and its own staff, PEP strives to support the establishment and maintenance of healthy balance in the child's ecology. PEP recognizes parents as the primary change agent and true experts on their children and PEP hires and trains parents as part of their programs.

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Sustainability Plan:

PEP has been in existence since 1971 and is funded by school district tuition, Medicaid, and funds from the Cuyahoga County ADAMHS board.

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