

Parent Handbook



Table of Contents

Welcomepage 3-4

Our Staffpage 3

Family Therapypage 6

Visits to the LTAI Girl's Home.....page 6

Family Visitationspage 6-7

Phone Calls and Mail.....page 7

Basic Carepage 7-8

Rights and Responsibilities.....page 8

Release and Discharge.....page 8

Client Rightspage 9

Factors for Early Dischargepage 10

Grievance Policypage 10

Important Notespage 11

Welcome

Welcome to Let's Talk About It (LTAI) Girl's Home. The information in this handbook is for families with daughters who have just entered the program. As a concerned adult, you certainly want to know about the treatment program. Please feel free to ask your individual therapist and other staff for additional information that you need.

Our program is designed to help youth make changes in their behavior and learn effective ways to deal with the demands of life. We want to help youth have the best possible relationship with family members, other young people, teachers, authority figures, and all persons that they come in contact with. In addition, we want to help families reunite and have healthy, productive and prosperous relationships.

We need and want your assistance in helping your young person. We want families to understand our program; work with us in bringing about needed changes; and maintain communication/contact with your young person.

There are four values that all LTAI Girl's Home residents are expected to show themselves and others:

1. Helping and Caring
2. Trust
3. Respect
4. Responsibility

Young people need to draw on these values in order to have the best possible relationships and lifestyles. With the help of you, the family, LTAI Girl's Home staff, and the treatment team, each youth will get the help she needs. Prior to coming to LTAI Girl's Home, these young people have had trouble forming positive relationships, which is the reason our program focuses on responsible and caring relationships in all areas of the youth's life.

Group Therapy takes place three days per week. During these sessions residents will be provided the opportunity to work through their issues and learn more responsible ways of managing their behavior, which may have previously damaged relationships, led to feeling poorly about self, and created the problem behavior that made placement necessary.

Family involvement is an important part of the program. Each family is assigned a therapist who will be your main contact person. One of our goals is to assist your family in developing strong family relationships and effective communication skills. We hope that you will visit your child and have family sessions at least once a month while your child is in our care.

In addition, we expect the family to be involved in the treatment process. Therefore, we are requesting that all families be involved in the Initial Treatment Planning and Twelve Week Planning Meetings. The Treatment Planning Meeting occurs quarterly during your youth's stay. Your assigned Therapist will alert you of these dates and times well in advance so you

can prepare for a visit. Transportation is available for these meetings for Kalamazoo County residents.

Residents are expected to take responsibility for their behavior, work on improving themselves, and be helpful and respectful to other group members, family members, and treatment staff. We have a level system which residents use to show themselves and others, the progress they are making. Because we want residents to work on their problems and reunite with their family (or in a more family oriented environment) as soon as possible, we view every minute and activity as an opportunity to work on bringing about positive change. Residents write up requests for all home visits and activities, which are beyond the basic program. Youth need to convince their group and the staff that they are working on improving themselves, that they are using the help that others are providing, that they are helping other young people, and that they have specific goals and plans for every community and family visit.

We have found that when staff and families work together, using this program to help each resident, we can make gains on all difficulties that young people face. As family members, you will come in contact with various members of the treatment staff. Families have found it useful to understand the roles, or in other words, exactly what each staff person is responsible for.

Again, welcome to LTAI.

Kimberly Thorpe, LMSW
Chief Administrator



Our Staff

LTAI is well equipped with trained staff to meet the needs of the residents and their families. The following is a list of the full time, part time and contracted staff and their duties and responsibilities.

Chief Administrator & Owner
Kimberly Thorpe

Chief Financial Officer & Owner
Eliakim Thorpe

Operations Manager

The Operations Manager is responsible for the day to day operations of the residence; orientation of each new residents; coordination of services for each young lady with DHS workers, local schools, and other agencies; coordinates staff schedule to ensure sufficient staff coverage for the Girl's Home at all times; coordinate home visits and maintain database.

Direct Care Specialist

Responsible for 24 hour care of residents; maintaining order in the residence; mediate and assist residents with resolving conflict when necessary; oversee the completion of chores; prepare nutritional meals for residents; some accounting duties; transport residents to and from school, appointments, and activities; ensure that all residents are participating in tutor/study time and group and individual counseling; and teach meal preparation, laundry and other domestic chores.

Therapist

All Therapists are licensed with a minimum of a Masters Degree in Counseling. Therapists conduct individual and/or group therapy. Therapist will set up contact with family members, visitations and family sessions. They will also assist residents with the development of personal goals, review progress, and ensure that basic needs are met.

Educational Liaison

The Educational Liaison is responsible for assisting residents who have learning disabilities with receiving access to special education services. This includes but is not limited to school, higher education, conferences, tutors, study time and one-on-one progress notes, and attendance and/or reports from teachers. The Educational Liaison is also responsible for assisting residents who exhibit any learning disabilities with proper diagnoses and counseling and help for the disability. Each young lady will write a "plan for success" that will include higher education, trade, business or entrepreneur classes/school.

Family Therapy

During your daughters stay at the LTAI Girl's Home you and your family will be expected to participate in the family therapy sessions which will be led by the Therapists assigned to your family.

The purpose of these sessions is for your family to gain a better understanding of the real issues that the family is facing and develop an action plan to change the situation and further improve family relationships.

Visits to the LTAI Girl's Home

Pre-planned family visitations are every 1st and 3rd Sunday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., unless otherwise court ordered. LTAI may provide transportation **upon advance request** for Kalamazoo County residents (only). The Operations Manager must be notified of transportation needs.

Visitation at the Girl's Home is limited to members of the family with which the resident will be placed with upon her discharge from LTAI Girl's Home.

Family Visitations

Home/Family Visits are considered after a five week review. Thus, home passes are not permitted for a minimum of five weeks. Exceptions *may* be made during major holidays. Resident must have no record of restriction over the five week period in order to qualify for a weekend/day family pass. Resident is only allowed one (1) pass per five week period. Further, the "Home Visit Request" form must be completed in a timely manner, and resident must take the following steps:

1. Resident must obtain a home/family visit request form from staff;
2. Resident must arrange an agreed upon date with her family;
3. Resident must write at least three goals with the action steps (for accomplishing the goals) for every home visit;
4. Resident must submit her home/family visit request to the Program Director for approval;
5. Once the Program Director and Therapist make a decision, the Resident will be notified;
6. Form must be completed a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the requested home/family visit.

Upon successful completion of the home/family visit and to be considered for future visits the following must be completed:

1. Resident takes the appropriate form on the visit to discuss her visit goals and completes the necessary homework/tasks for addressing the goals.
2. Parent/guardian writes specific comments in the space provided (or on a separate sheet) explaining the overall success of the visit.
3. Resident is required to add her comments, then submit the form to the Program Director within 24 hours of returning from the visit.

Phone Calls and Mail

As your daughter's time is quite structured, it is generally not easy for you to reach her by phone. Phone calls can be monitored if trust is a concern with the resident. Residents will be allowed to use the telephone on designated days and times, unless otherwise court ordered. The Operations Manager is available to speak with you about your daughter during the week.

Cell phones are prohibited and will be confiscated if resident possess one.

Residents are encouraged to write letters to family members at home. We encourage you to send letters and cards as another method of communicating with your daughter. Occasionally, residents are asked to read their mail with staff present if therapeutic concerns arise.

Basic Care

School

Your daughter will be attending one of Kalamazoo Public Schools, a charter school or an alternative school. After educational testing and examination of past school records and consultation with the family and DHS Workers, and the LTAI Girl's Home Educational Liaison will develop a schedule of classes that meets your daughter's academic needs. Tutoring and study time is also provided through our Title One Program. Your daughter is required to study a minimum of one hour 4 days a week.

Medical and Dental

All medical and dental needs will be met while residents are placed at LTAI Girl's Home. If residents have not had a physical or dental exam within the past 12 months we will schedule the necessary appointment.

Clothing

It is important that your daughter has an ample supply of clothing. As a policy, we ask that you not bring anything that is expensive or of great sentimental value. Further, it is our policy that we will not replace any item(s) damaged, lost or stolen.

Basic Care (continued)

Food

Your daughter will receive three balanced meals a day and 2 snacks at LTAI Girl's Home. You may bring food when you visit if you wish, but please make the Operations Manager aware in advance.

Truancy or Other Serious Incidents

Your daughter's safety is very important to us. Therefore, if your daughter is truant from the program or is involved in any serious problems including injury, a staff will immediately call you (parent/guardian), the DHS worker or Probation Officer, police, Operations Manager, and Therapist.

If truancy occurs, a meeting will take place to determine your daughter's continued placement with LTAI or if discharge is necessary.

Rights and Responsibilities

It is the right and responsibility of all people involved in the LTAI Girl's Home, whether they are residents, staff, or family to be helpful, honest, respectful, and take responsibility for their behavior. We know to be true that when residents, staff and family members work together we can make significant progress on any problem that exists.

Release/Discharge

Your daughter will be released from the LTAI Girl's Home when she has demonstrated a change in attitude and behavior, and has progressed with personal and family goals.

The average stay at the LTAI Girl's Home is nine to twelve months. Progress depends largely on the willingness of your daughter to accept help on personal and family goals.

Family sessions and home visits in the community will help your daughter make a successful transition back to the community. **Please note that the judge or court referee must approve all releases.**

Another component of our program is the ***step-down program***. This program allows young ladies to come from other facilities to work on specific goals for a minimum of nine months in order to transition fully back into the community.

Client Rights

1. Each resident has the right to a nurturing, safe environment, including the right to adequate food, housing, clothing, and medical care and treatment services.
2. Each resident has the right to participate in programs of education, group and family treatment, social development, recreation, and religious observance.
3. Each resident has the right to review her Updated Service Plan, Integrated Treatment Plan and to be an active participant in the treatment process.
4. Each resident has the right to freedom from physical, sexual and verbal abuse, ill treatment, harsh and degrading punishments. If a resident believes that such has occurred she should report immediately to her Therapist and/or Program Director.
5. Each resident has the right to send and received mail to anyone. If exceptions are necessary the reason shall be determined by the Treatment Team and shared with the family.
6. Each person has the right to visitation from anyone on the authorized visitors list and off-site visiting privileges compatible with the individual treatment plan.
7. Each resident has the right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support and supervision.
8. Each resident has the right to have a designated staff person as an advocate.
9. Each resident has the right to utilize the client grievance procedure. (see Grievance Policy)
10. Each resident has the right to know and understand the basic rules of the facility and upon entrance be provided with verbal and written explanation of these expectations so that acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are clear. (See Basic Rules)

Reasons for Early Discharge

The four behaviors listed below may lead to your daughter's escalation and/or placement at a more restrictive setting, such as the State Training School or detention center:

1. Assault on another person, resident, or staff; attempts to harm herself.
2. Theft and/or destruction of property of others on or off site.
3. Failure to demonstrate a sincere effort to change her life around, i.e., a pattern of truancy from home, school, or place of employment.
4. Dismissal from the education setting.

Grievance Policy

LTAI Girl's Home is dedicated to providing quality services and treatment programs for youth and families. We constantly strive to improve and update our programs as resources dictate. We are particularly attentive to feedback received from referral agencies, parents and youth. The following grievance procedure is in place for addressing concerns, disagreements and complaints.

If a referral agency, parent or youth desires to file a grievance, the following steps must be followed:

1. The concerned party presents the problem to the appropriate staff person within three working days of occurrence.
2. If the problem is not resolved or the appropriate staff person could not be determined, the concerned party should then present the problem to the Operations Manager within three business days.
3. The Operations Manager will respond to the resident's grievance within three business days.



