



## IN-HOME CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES FAMILY THERAPY AND FAMILY CARE (ALLEGHENY COUNTY)

Children and families with education, mental health and family support needs are searching for a better quality of life. Wesley Spectrum Services helps them to become independent, responsible and caring members of the community by providing an array of high quality special education, mental health and family services. These services give children and families the strength to learn, to live and to love, resulting in stronger families and stronger communities.

### Philosophy and Purpose

Parents want to do what is best for their children, but family integrity can be threatened by unemployment, poverty and stress or challenged when a child is aggressive or emotionally disturbed. Wesley Spectrum's In-Home Family Therapy draws on the strengths of the family to show them how to care for one another through family-focused, structural and strategic in-home therapy.

### Eligibility

All services are ordered by juvenile courts and Children, Youth and Family (CYF) to help adjudicated, at risk or neglected children, ages 8 to 18, who live in Allegheny county. Children, who are placed in homes in another county, may receive services when they transition back to their homes in Allegheny County.

### Availability

We have about 180 clients at any given time. If space is not available, we will work with the probation officer or case worker to determine what is best for the family, to wait for services through Wesley Spectrum or be referred elsewhere.

### Referral

When children are removed from their homes, family therapy is often ordered before the child can return. Adjudicated youth are often counseled to develop anger management and behavioral skills. These children are referred through CYF or county juvenile courts, by either caseworkers or probation officers. Some families request therapeutic services. Treatment is not necessarily voluntary.

### Intake

After a child's case is referred to us, an intake coordinator will review the child's situation to determine what services will meet the family's needs. We gather information, do a comprehensive assessment, including mental health, and then accept the referral. A first interview involving all family members usually takes place within a week, depending on the family's level of cooperation.

### Funding

Wesley Spectrum Services contracts with the county to fund our services. There are no fees to clients.

### Accreditation and Licensure

Wesley Spectrum is accredited through the Council on Accreditation and licensed by the Department of Public Welfare. Most of our therapists are credentialed with master's or bachelor's degrees, and all supervisors are master's level. Our culturally diverse, highly experienced staff receives continuous training and supervision in order to insure that they deliver services in a manner that is respectful and sensitive to cultural differences.

### Treatment Approach

Most families do the best they can, using their strengths and available resources and supports. At certain points in their lives, as family dynamics change, they can experience difficulty and become trapped in fixed patterns of interaction. Wesley Spectrum respects the integrity of each family, helping them work from their strengths, rather than focusing on weaknesses. Wesley Spectrum's In-Home Family Therapy works to help unify families providing intensive, family-focused, structural and strategic in-home therapy. Our experienced professionals are eager to meet the challenge of family unification. They look at each child individually, and provide therapy within the context of each family's strengths, needs and culture.

Client/family centered service planning and measurement are at the core of our service delivery process. Individual treatment plans are reviewed and updated periodically during the course of treatment. We measure each client's progress toward his or her individual goals, reevaluating goals when necessary. If progress is not occurring, we can then restructure the patient's program of services.

### Services

In-home, short term therapy is provided to solidify families so children and adolescents can return to or remain in their homes. Our teams of master's and bachelor's level therapists and counselors



# Strength to learn, to live, to love

work with six or seven families, and conduct two to 12 hours of in-home sessions – two to three times a week – providing maximum flexibility in a range of intensity levels. Our staff is available 24 hours a day and on weekends, to aid in a crisis. Most contracts are for three months, but can be reauthorized for longer treatment in certain cases.

Therapy involves as many family members as possible. Activities can include: family counseling about relationships, communication and problem solving; parenting and child development education; an assessment of family functioning; behavioral contracting; and substance abuse assessment. We can also provide support for housing, food and other basic needs. We also make referrals and advocate for the child and family in schools, community resources and other human service agencies.

We also help families accept and cope with a child living outside the home. We can tap into a large array of services to help families, including mental health counseling, drug and alcohol services, special education and partial hospitalization programs.

Children and adolescents who have deep-seated emotional issues may benefit from six weeks or more of Anger Management support groups. Here, experienced counselors teach teenagers and children how to control their anger and use appropriate behavior with peers and adults. After therapy, these young people are more likely to function better in the community.

In Allegheny County, Wesley Spectrum practices the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice, under which young people are directed to provide restoration to their victims through payment, apologies or corrective actions. The young people gain a sense of redemption and the community gains a sense of safety and strength.

## Outcomes

After completing treatment, families should have the skills they need keep the family safely together and to successfully manage their family and daily life. At discharge, goal attainment, length of stay and changes in mental health functioning of the identified client (pre/post scores on the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale) are measured to determine the overall impact of the service. Child and family satisfaction with services is also measured. Wesley Spectrum Services also collects data on whether discharges were planned or unplanned and if the client was discharged to a more, the same or a less restrictive setting. This outcome data is then aggregated across clients and used to help us improve the quality of our services.

## Discharge

When a family has met its goals, is unified and the child is safe, the case can be closed. This decision is made by CYF in conjunction with Wesley Spectrum therapists and the family. The unified family should be ready to care for the children and meet its ongoing needs, operating from a base of wholeness and strength.

## Aftercare and Follow Up

Prior to discharge an aftercare plan is developed with the family. The aftercare plan identifies any services that will be needed post discharge and how those services will be arranged for the family. We check in with the family by phone at three months and six months following discharge. At that time, we assess if there has been follow through on the aftercare plan and if family needs additional services, or readmission for further treatment.

## Contact Information

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