



SHELTER SERVICES

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

Sometimes teens must leave their homes, at risk for neglect, abuse or abandonment, or because they are a danger to themselves or others. In Wesley Spectrum's residential shelters, we provide them with a therapeutic living environment until a permanent living arrangement or treatment program is secured. Without this program more children would be lacking guidance, in danger or homeless. Children need a safe place to live, so they can grow and learn to their full potential, becoming productive individuals who contribute to their communities.

Eligibility

Youth aged 13 to 18 living in Allegheny County can stay in our residence shelters. These teens are involved with Children, Youth and Families (CYF) in trying to secure a safe, temporary living arrangement.

Availability

We can accommodate 27 youth in three nine-bed shelters in the East Liberty area of Pittsburgh. There are two for females and one for males. 15 counselors are assigned to each house in a 24 hours rotation, with three counselors on any given shift. We take as many young people as space permits and treat all eligible youth without favoritism. If space is not available, CYF will make the referral to another agency.

Referral

All youth are referred through caseworkers with CYF or Juvenile Court. Anyone who feels a child or family is in danger should contact their county agency. Children's participation is not necessarily voluntary.

Intake

CYF intake coordinators contact Wesley Spectrum Shelter Services if a child needs temporary shelter and we provide immediate 24-hour access to safe shelters. Our staff members work collaboratively with county caseworkers to find the best long-term living arrangement for each child. We also work with information gathered from teachers, doctors, case workers and parents, to determine the child's short-term and long-term needs.

Funding

The Children, Youth and Families agency in Allegheny County covers all costs. There are no fees to clients or families.

Accreditation and Licensure

Wesley Spectrum is accredited through the Council on Accreditation. We are licensed by the Department of Public Welfare. 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

Wesley Spectrum Shelter Services achieves the best outcomes for each child by basing our decisions – every step of the way – on what is best for this individual child. We call this Kid-Centered Decision Making and it encompasses Kid-Centered Planning, a Kid-Centered Environment and Kid-Centered Measurement.

As part of Kid-Centered Planning, our Shelter Specialists and supervisors work with county case workers to meet each teens emotional, physical, familial, educational and recreational needs and goals. Each month, as part of Kid-Centered Measurement, we review each youth's advancement toward his or her academic, social and behavioral goals, issuing individual service plan progress reports. We review and update these goals as needed. We use a holistic approach to assess and coordinate mental health therapy and other services. Each residence is a Kid-Centered Environment that is warm and welcoming, an atmosphere in which a child feels able to communicate, form relationships and build self esteem.

Each child has a Wesley Spectrum Shelter Specialist who provides counseling in a long-lasting relationship, helping the teen and his or her parents feel valued and supported. Their diverse backgrounds ensure that a child's personal and cultural identity is nurtured. Once children begin to trust adults and build relationships, they can begin to deal with their problems, learn and grow.

Services

Teens who are at risk, a danger to themselves or others, need a safe, temporary place to live. In our shelters they can live safely,



Strength to learn, to live, to love

with nutritious meals, clothing and clean rooms, as they attend school and enjoy recreation. All shelter residents receive drug and alcohol and mental health assessments, and can easily tap into other Wesley Spectrum services as needed, including anger management and therapy.

They attend classes from 8:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., five days a week in the shelter school. The shelter school operates under the Allegheny Intermediate Unit in cooperation with Pittsburgh Public Schools, which provides five teachers and an art teacher. Together we help children meet specific academic goals for their individualized educational plan.

If directed by CYF, we also coordinate the child’s visits home, also arranging and supervising visits from parents. If we see a need within family, we direct CYF to that need. These needs may be met by other Wesley Spectrum Services.

Outcomes

The desired results of our shelter service are crisis stabilization and timely discharge to the most appropriate long term setting to meet the child needs for safety, well being, and permanence. At discharge, goal attainment, length of stay, the number and intensity of new relationships formed, any crisis interventions needed and changes in the mental health functioning of the child (pre/post scores on the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale for youth who have remained in the program more than 30 days) are measured to determine the overall impact of the service and if other services will be needed post discharge.

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. When a child is discharged, they also complete a client satisfaction form. This outcome data is then aggregated across children served and used to help us improve the quality of our services.

Discharge

CYF sets a discharge goal for each child, which can involve a return home, a foster care family, treatment program, a permanent placement, or independent living arrangements. Some have continued their education in college. Ideally, we try to work with the child and family through any transitions, easing fears and helping to prepare for permanence.

After Care and Follow Up

Prior to discharge an aftercare plan is developed which identifies and recommends services that may be needed post discharge.

Contact Information

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