

MENTAL DISABILITIES BOARD OF VISITORS

SITE REVIEW REPORT

ALTERNATIVE YOUTH ADVENTURES OF MONTANA *BOULDER, MONTANA*

AUGUST 29, 2003

Gene Haire

Gene Haire, Executive Director

October 30, 2003

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES.....	4
<i>Overview of Services</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Group Home Services.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Day Treatment Program</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Staffing / Staff Training / Supervision</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Special Treatment Procedures</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Medication Management.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Charts / Treatment Plans</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Abuse / Neglect Reporting and Investigation.....</i>	<i>8</i>
RECOMMENDATIONS	9
AGENCY RESPONSE	10

INTRODUCTION

● **Mental Health Facility Reviewed**

Alternative Youth Adventures of Montana (AYA)
Boulder, Montana

Kimberly Gardner, LCSW, LAC, Administrator

● **Authority for Review**

Montana Codes Annotated, 53-21-104

● **Purpose of Review**

1. To assess the degree to which the services provided by the AYA Program are humane, decent, comprehensive, and of high quality.
2. To recognize excellent services.
3. To make recommendations to AYA for improvement of services.
4. To report to the director of the Department of Human Services and the Governor regarding the status of services provided by AYA

● **Review Team**

Board Members: Kathleen Driscoll, Vice-Chair

Staff: Colleen Nichols, Paralegal
Gene Haire, Executive Director

● **Services Reviewed**

Mental Health Center

Therapeutic Youth Group Home
Child and Adolescent Day Treatment

● **Catchment Area**

Montana (AYA also serves out of state children and adolescents)

● **Review Process**

1. Interviews with AYA program staff
2. Informal discussions with resident representative
3. Review of treatment records
4. Review of written descriptions of treatment programs
5. Observation of treatment activities
6. Inspection of physical plant

ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES

Overview of Services

- Alternative Youth Adventures of Montana (AYA) is an intensive program for adolescents with serious emotional disturbances ages 13 - 17. Residents and a small number of community youth participate in the on-site day treatment program. The program provides a comprehensive mix of residential, educational, and clinical services.
- Two therapeutic youth group homes (Journey Home for Boys and Journey Home for Girls) with a total capacity of 16 residents. At the time of this site visit, 16 children were living on campus.
- On-site day treatment program operating 6 hours / day, 5 days / week offering education (teacher and aide provided by the local school district); individual, group, and family therapy, social, life, and vocational skills training; and therapeutic recreation.
- AYA employs 34 full-time and 4 relief staff.
- AYA uses a combination of cognitive and reality therapy, motivational enhancement, and behavioral contracting combined with character education and conflict resolution techniques.

Physical Environment

Strengths

- Attractive physical facility. AYA programs occupy several refurbished buildings on the spacious campus of the old Boulder River School and Hospital.
- All areas are well maintained, clean, bright, cheerful, and orderly.
- Resident bedrooms provide ample living space and opportunity for privacy.
- Each home has a fully equipped kitchen where residents and staff prepare family style meals.
- Outside ropes course and surrounding grounds provide space and opportunities for exercise and recreation.

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- None

Recommendations

- None

Group Home Services

Strengths

- Excellent philosophy, assertively communicated to staff, modeled by leaders, continually reinforced.
- Small size of program allows for a family feeling and focus on individual attention.
- Good orientation of children to the AYA level system and how they can progress through the program.
- Effective incentives built in to daily life in homes and day treatment.
- Excellent integration of therapy, addiction treatment, medical services, and other adjunct services into the basic Journey Home experience.
- Good coordination with outside agencies for pre and post AYA program interface.
- Service to the surrounding community is a part of the program – children regularly participate in various service activities.
- The “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens” approach appears to be well understood by the children and used to very effective advantage as a touchstone for treatment.

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- None

Recommendations

- None

Day Treatment Program

Strengths

- There appears to be good coordination between AYA and the local school (school provides Special Education Teacher and Aide).
- Good education-centered structure for Day Treatment program.

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- None

Recommendations

- None

Staffing / Staff Training / Supervision

Strengths

- Staffing ratios allow good individual attention and safe supervision (~1:5)
- Motivated, skilled staff; and very supportive administrative and clinical leadership
- Good initial and ongoing training of direct care staff in areas including adolescent development, behavioral strategies, psychopathology, cultural sensitivity, crisis management, and milieu management.
- Journey Homes director and team leaders are highly motivated and skilled. Attention to active guidance and supervision of direct care staff is emphasized.
- Excellent communication and coordination of work of treatment teams, Journey Home staff, and Day Treatment.

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- None

Recommendations

- None

Special Treatment Procedures

Strengths

- AYA uses Crisis Prevention Institute Training (CPI) <http://www.crisisprevention.com/> to guide staff behavioral interventions with residents.
- AYA does not use mechanical restraints, but uses physical holds per CPI.
- There appears to be a high degree of concern and professional monitoring of special treatment procedures. Good process of debriefing after each incident.
- Five instances of physical holds per CPI from January 2003 through September 2003. All well documented.

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- None

Recommendations

- None

Medication Management

Strengths

- Good system of medication documentation by nursing staff.
- Good guidelines for staff management of the “student self-administration” of medications.
- Excellent relationship with contract psychiatrist

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- None

Recommendations

- None

Charts / Treatment Plans

Strengths

- Good charting system involving three notebooks for each child that appears to work for AYA.
- Excellent intake assessments.
- Excellent identification of treatment team members – individual staff identified by name, not title.

- Excellent treatment plan format, including statements of “rationale” for goals and interventions.
- Excellent treatment team meeting documentation.
- Clear, well explained treatment plan review process – reasons for continuing or revising treatment strategies are described in detail.

Areas Of Concern

- None

Questions

- None

Suggestions

- Include individual treatment team member names (instead of just title) under “person responsible” on treatment plans.

Recommendations

- None

Abuse / Neglect Reporting and Investigation

AYA is working with BOV to revise its policy #1.6, titled: CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT so that it complies with the requirements of 53-21-107, MCA 2003.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NONE

AGENCY RESPONSE

AYA concurs with the Board of Visitor's report. The Child Abuse & Neglect policy #1.6 has been expanded to provide more thorough information on AYA's guidelines for investigating, determining the validity of allegations and resolving allegations of abuse and neglect. The updated policy is attached.

We want to thank the Board of Visitors for their interest in our program and for their generous time and interesting questions. We enjoyed the site visit and are proud of the results of the site review. The process of the site visit and policy review provided a welcome opportunity for us to evaluate the treatment philosophy and the efficacy of our program as well as time to pause and take a moment to review our entire operations for ourselves as well. Thank you!

Kimberly C. Gardner, LCSW, LAC
Administrator

