

**Youth
Dynamics, Inc.
Wolf Point**

October 7, 2011

2011

A Site Review Report of the Services Provided by Youth
Dynamics, Inc. in Wolf Point.

**Mental Disabilities Board
of Visitors Site Review**

Overview

Mental Health Facility Reviewed:

Youth Dynamics, Inc.
Wolf Point

Authority for the Review

Montana Code Annotated, 53-21-104

Purpose of the Review

1. To learn about the targeted case management/outpatient services provided through YDI in Wolf Point Montana;
2. To assess the degree to which the services provided by YDI, Wolf Point are humane, consistent with professional standards, and incorporate Board of Visitors Standards for mental health services;
3. To recognize the role of the services provided through YDI, Wolf Point in the continuum of services in eastern Montana;
4. To make recommendations to YDI for improvement of services based on the Standards; and,
5. To report to the Governor regarding the status of services provided by YDI.

Site Review Team:

Staff:

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Board:

Betty Cooper

Consultant:

Mary Chronister, Ph. D

Review Process:

- Interviews with staff and clients of the services in Wolf Point
- Observation of treatment activities
- Review of treatment plans
- Informal discussions with clients of those services provided through YDI
- Inspection of the physical plant at both locations
- Review of medication records
- Review intake and discharge process

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QUESTIONS – STANDARDS

Organizational Planning and Quality Improvement

Planning:

Does Youth Dynamics have a Strategic Plan?

Strengths/Observations:

The site review team received a copy of the YDI Service Philosophy Procedure. This document is used to guide planning efforts and assist staff and the public to be aware of the agency's philosophy for providing services. While this is not a strategic plan, it contains excellent information and reflects the goals and guiding principles of the organization. In interviews, staff also provided the site review team with examples of the ways the agency involves staff and families in the process of evaluating current services and guiding future services.

Staff reported that leadership creates the strategic plan at a biennial management team meeting where organizational goals are set. The CEO solicits input for the strategic planning process during monthly meetings with clinical directors. Staff interviewed noted that they had ready access to their supervisor that their ideas were well received and they believed their ideas were used to create the plan. Supervisors participate in Service Area Development (SAD) planning and each year provides a SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) plan to leadership for annual planning purposes. The Case Management Program Manual also has a section (page 17) describing the "Ongoing Quality Improvement" process which appears to be fairly robust.

Suggestions:

Carry on the good work currently in place to continue a strategic planning process that sets measureable objectives with timeframes.

Is the Youth Dynamic strategic plan developed and reviewed through a process of consultation with staff, clients, family members, other appropriate service providers, and community stakeholders?

Strengths/Observations:

Yes. The process for the strategic/operational planning process appears to involve and include staff, clients, families, service providers and community stakeholders. Although it was reported to the site review team that families don't actively participate in the strategic planning process. Both the Service Philosophy Procedure and interviews with staff indicate involvement at all these levels.

Suggestions:

Continue this good process for developing strategic/operational planning and find opportunities to further encourage families/clients to participate.

Does Youth Dynamics have operational plans based on the strategic plans, which establish time frames and responsibilities for implementation of the objectives?

Strengths/Observations:

The operational plan was not requested by the site review team. Information provided to the team demonstrates that YDI uses information gathered through client surveys, stakeholder information, Board of Visitor Site Review Recommendations and other sources to develop services focused on specific areas of need. The illustration provided in the Agency Overview document identifies the link between the Agency Vision & Mission, Strategic Plan, Operational Plan, Agency Principles and Goals.

Quality Improvement:

Does Youth Dynamics have a quality improvement plan to evaluate and improve all of its activities related to services to clients and families?

Strengths/Observations:

The program has a Quality Improvement Program and Quality Improvement Committee. Clients and families have the right to participate in the program and are encouraged to do so through the survey process, although it was reported to the team that families don't actively participate in the strategic planning process. Staff is invited to become involved whenever possible to enhance the agency decision-making process - in the strategic planning process, quality improvement and operational planning.

Quality Improvement planning is done by agency leadership and during quarterly 'State of the Agency' meetings held using WebX so all staff can participate. The process is reviewed during the annual 'all staff retreat' – where staff training also occurs. Training for staff is continual and the Web-X technology is an efficient training tool. YDI is well run; clients/families are valued and quality services are a priority for staff.

Are designated staff of Youth Dynamics accountable and responsible for the continuous quality improvement process?

Strengths/Observations:

The Case Management Program Manual identifies staff and supervisory positions that are expected to be responsible for specified pieces of the quality assurance process. The organizational chart should identify the Quality Assurance Director by title.

Is Youth Dynamics able to demonstrate a process of continuous quality improvement that directly affects health and functional outcomes for individual clients?

Strengths/Observations:

Family/client interviews and the materials provided by YDI to the site review team were helpful to answer this question. The treatment planning process is client/family centered and is created through an evaluation of the needs of the client, client strengths and supports, and outcomes created through direct engagement of family/clients.

Information provided to the team before the review included a list of services that have been added to the agency during the past 10 years -- including expansions into four communities during 2010 in response to service needs in those communities.

Rights, Responsibilities, and Safety

Rights, Responsibilities:

Does Youth Dynamics define the rights and responsibilities of and provide verbal and written information about rights and responsibilities to clients and family members?

Strengths/Observations:

Client/family rights and responsibilities are explained during the intake process and are ongoing as part of the treatment planning implementation. All rights and responsibilities are reviewed and implemented.

Suggestions:

Clients/families should receive a copy of the rights and responsibilities information if not during the intake process then as part of the first visit with the client/family.

Recommendations:

Create a 'take home' packet that includes copies of the Client Partnership Agreement, a list of community resources, a copy of the Service Philosophy Procedure; advocacy information (including Board of Visitors, Mental Health Ombudsman and DRM contact information) and a copy of the Grievance Procedure, to ensure that clients/families do not have any question or misunderstanding about their rights and responsibilities.

Does Youth Dynamics actively promote client access to independent advocacy services?

Strengths/Observations:

The site review team provided informational poster and brochures for the reception area and bulletin board. This information was not readily noticeable in the reception area and staff did not seem aware that the information was easily available to be provided to clients/families.

Suggestions:

Include information about the Board of Visitors and Mental Health Ombudsman on the client rights form and a copy given to the family. Display pamphlets/brochures/posters and make them available in the office and take to homes, schools, and other treatment locations.

Does Youth Dynamics have an easily accessed, responsive, and fair complaint / grievance procedure for clients and their family members to follow?

Strengths/Observations:

YDI provided a copy of the agency grievance procedure, and the policy is described to client/families during the intake process. Staff interviewed reported that the grievance procedure is included in the information provided at intake. However, team members did not find one in the intake paperwork. During interviews with staff and family the team asked if the process was well known and easy to follow, each group responded that if a client/family had a concern/complaint/grievance the relationships established between the family and the agency made it very easy to discuss and resolve issues before the grievance process would be needed. A family member interviewed by the team commented that the relationship of trust between the staff and families served was strong enough to address and resolve issues before they would reach the level of concern/complaint/grievance. The Client Partnership Agreement contains a section about the Grievance Procedure but a written copy does not appear to be one of the items in the intake materials.

Suggestions:

If the grievance/complaint process/procedure was posted in the reception areas of the offices, clients/families would have no doubt about the process.

Recommendations:

Include a written copy of the grievance/complaint process with in the intake documents.

Does Youth Dynamics provide to clients and their family members at the time of entering services written and verbal information about assistance available from the Mental Disabilities Board of Visitors in filing and resolving grievances?

Strengths/Observations:

Information provided to the site review team spoke to the Case Manager contacting advocacy groups as needed to assist clients/families. However services information provided to the team did not include information about the Board of Visitors.

Suggestions:

Provide information about the assistance/advocacy available from the Board of Visitors, Mental Health Ombudsman and DRM with contact information to families during the intake interview process to assure that clients/families are aware of advocacy services.

Safety:

Does Youth Dynamics protect clients from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by its staff or agents?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff interviewed reported that they were very familiar with the YDI reporting process and requirements to report to Child Protective Services (CPS). Staff is well trained on the process/procedure to record date/time of incident, submit complaint in writing, follow-up on incident with actions taken, and provide ongoing training for staff about the need to report and the reporting requirements. The site review team reported their impression that abuse, neglect, and exploitation by YDI staff would be unusual. Staff members work in close proximity to one another, school personnel, and/or family members in an environment of openness. The culture of the organization suggests that inappropriate behavior toward clients would be reported immediately and completely. The only way to guarantee safety would involve severely limiting staff contact with clients, e.g. no time one-on-one.

Suggestions:

Staff training and communication is very good in this area, keep up the good work.

Has Youth Dynamics fully implemented the requirements of 53-21-107, Montana Code Annotated (2011) with regard to reporting on and investigating allegations of abuse and neglect?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff at the Wolf Point office demonstrated to the site review team that they have been trained to report and investigate allegations of abuse and neglect of clients. The Director and staff as a team are engaged with the clients and watchful for signs of abuse/neglect. Information provided to the site review team did not indicate full implementation. Higher level supervisors who handle grievances may implement the requirement to report to the Board of Visitors. Staff interviewed did not seem to be fully aware of the statutory requirement to report critical incidents to the Board of Visitors.

Suggestions:

Include information about the statutory requirement to report critical incidents to the Board of Visitors and include information about the assistance and support both the BOV and the Mental Health Ombudsman can provide to clients/families.

Recommendations:

Include information about the requirements of 53-21-107, MCA, ARM, Montana Mental Health Standards and other important mental health documents in orientation materials.

In investigations of allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of clients by its staff or agents, does Youth Dynamics thoroughly analyze the events and actions that preceded the alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation – including actions and/or non-actions of its staff or agents?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff exhibited good working knowledge of reporting through the chain of command and follow-up for action, resolution of reported incidents. However the team did not have information specific to the analysis that would follow the investigation.

After an allegation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a client by its staff or agents is determined to be substantiated, does Youth Dynamics debrief all related circumstances – including all staff and supervisory actions or non-actions that could have contributed to the abuse, neglect, or exploitation – in order to decrease the potential for future recurrence?

Strengths/Observations:

The site review team and members of the staff discussed the debriefing process during the site review interview. Ideally this analysis would take place during supervision and/or staff meetings and would be documented in the client file. Supervisors responsible for dealing with allegations may have documentation that was not reviewed during the site visit.

Suggestions:

Assure that the Quality Improvement process includes a review of all related circumstances after the allegation is resolved and training is provided as needed.

Is the staff of Youth Dynamics trained to understand and to skillfully and safely respond to aggressive and other difficult client behaviors?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff interviewed reported that they have received training in the MANDT system, a series of proactive interventions to prevent aggressive behavior, and the Boys' Town curriculum¹, which is based on social learning theory.

Suggestions:

Conduct periodic 'checks' with staff through informal exercises to remind staff to be aware of safe ways to address aggressive/difficult behaviors.

Does Youth Dynamics give clients access to staff of their own gender?

Strengths/Observations:

The community is rural and the office very small, assuring gender balance on staff presents a challenge, the office has both male and female Youth Case Managers, but just one therapist. Clients can have access to a case manager of their own gender but not a therapist. Choice may not be possible in this small community. The agency does employ Telepsychiatry and that may be a way to respond to requests

¹ <http://www.boystown.org/educators/education-model>

for access to same gender staff.

Suggestions:

Whenever possible give clients a choice of providers.

Does Youth Dynamics use special treatment procedures that involve behavior control, mechanical restraints, locked and unlocked seclusion or isolation, and time out?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff interviewed assured the team that these special procedures are not used by YDI. The staff calls 911 if physical controls are deemed necessary to protect people and/or property.

Does Youth Dynamics debrief events involving special treatment procedures, emergency medications, aggression by clients against other clients or staff, and client self-harm; is there retrospective analysis of how such events could have been prevented; are staff and clients supported during and after such events?

Strengths/Observations:

Site review team members reviewed the information presented to BOV before the site visit, and determined that these areas are covered by policy/procedure, but staff interviews did not provide any additional information. The team did note that regular supervision and staff meetings provide staff an opportunity to debrief events involving aggression by the clients/family.

Suggestions:

Assure that any such event is documented in the client file.

Client / Family Member Participation

Does Youth Dynamics identify in the service record a client's family members and describe the parameters for communication with them regarding treatment and for their involvement in treatment and support?

Strengths/Observations:

This is an area of true strength for YDI not just in the Wolf Point area but across the agency. Home visits, outreach and open communication are strengths. Families are a crucial component of the treatment planning document and process, clients and families provide the anchor for treatment. Communication is clear, and frequent. Interviews with client family members indicated that families are confident about the strength of the communication process. YDI does this very well.

Do Youth Dynamics assessments, treatment planning sessions, and treatment reviews proactively include the participation of clients and – with consent - family members?

Strengths/Observations:

Clients/families are the cornerstone of the treatment planning process. The definition of 'family' is broad and includes biological parents as well as extended family if biologic parents cannot be primary caregivers. Inclusion of family involvement in the client treatment plan was very evident.

Suggestions:

Keep up the good work.

When a diagnosis is made, does Youth Dynamics provide the client and – with consent – family members with information on the diagnosis, options for treatment and possible prognoses?

Strengths/Observations:

Client/families are invited and encouraged to be active participants in every aspect of the treatment plan implementation including education about diagnosis as part of the treatment plan.

Does Youth Dynamics proactively provide clients, and – with consent – family members a copy of the treatment plan?

Strengths/Observations:

The team did not ask this directly of the client/family members interviewed. Team members did note however that the agency requirement that family be involved in the development of the plan; the timelines for reviewing and renewing the plan indicated that client/families are very aware of the treatment plan.

Suggestions:

Continue this good communication with clients/families and assure that a copy of the plan is provided to them.

Does Youth Dynamics review exit plans in collaboration with clients and – with consent - family members as part of each review of the individual service plan?

Strengths/Observations:

The site review team had limited time to review treatment plans for clients of YDI, the plans reviewed did contain goals toward client/family self-determination. Goals to 'graduate' services were part of the plans reviewed. Interviews with families receiving services through YDI indicated that one primary goal of treatment in each treatment plan is for self-determination/exit from services. Plans are reviewed every 90 days and goals are updated regularly.

Suggestions:

Continue good work.

Does Youth Dynamics promote, encourage, and provide opportunities for client and family member participation in the operation of the following components of the provider?

Does the service have written descriptions of these activities? Participation in developing the strategic plan and plan for continuous quality improvement

- advisory groups
- participation in public meetings
- interviews and selection of prospective staff
- peer and staff education and training
- family and client peer support

Strengths/Observations:

The team did not observe this level of family participation, and the materials provided to the site review team did not include written information to describe these activities.

Suggestions:

Include client/family participation in the strategic planning process through the relationship of strong communication already established between staff and clients.

Does Youth Dynamics promote, encourage, and provide opportunities for client and family member participation in the evaluation of components of the services, client satisfaction with services, effectiveness of communication with clients and families and that treatment outcomes are measured?

Strengths/Observations:

Clients/families are integral to the operational planning for the agency. Satisfaction surveys are ongoing, communication between clients/families are strong components of the treatment planning process, with family/client recommendations for services key.

Suggestions:

Continue staff training to enhance the communication between staff and clients/families in this area of measuring and communicating client/family satisfaction with services to the Quality Improvement Committee.

Cultural Effectiveness

Does Youth Dynamics have a Cultural Effectiveness Plan – developed with the assistance of recognized experts - that includes defined steps for its integration at every level of organizational planning and that specifically emphasizes working with American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

Yes, information provided to the BOV includes a Cultural Competency Procedure with a plan to do a self-assessment and complete a report. The Plan that is cogent, clear and implemented by leadership and staff. YDI has specific policies in place that address cultural issues – Code of Ethics, Cultural Competency and Cultural Sensitivity. Many of the staff at the Wolf Point office are enrolled Tribal members who seemed to be familiar with cultural traditions, attend Tribal Council meetings, and traditional social activities in the community.

The employee orientation handbook summarizes the agency's commitment to cultural effectiveness: *'Youth Dynamics shares in the commitment of the Montana Constitution, Article X² which recognizes that Native Americans have a distinct and unique cultural heritage and the state is committed to preserve their cultural integrity. Youth Dynamics will adhere to the intent of the Native American Child Welfare Act. (ICWA, Public Law 85-608, 25 USS), which includes preferences and rights of Native Americans in the Delivery of Client welfare services.'*³

Does Youth Dynamics define expectations for staff knowledge about cultural, ethnic, social, historical, and spiritual issues relevant to the mental health treatment of the people served, with a specific emphasis on American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

Yes, these are clearly stated in the Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Competency policies. Each staff member interviewed seemed to be very familiar with and respectful of American Indian approaches to mental health treatment. Several staff members are involved in traditional activities in the community including healing ceremonies.

Does Youth Dynamics provide staff training conducted by recognized experts that enables staff to meet expectations for knowledge about cultural, ethnic, social, historical, and spiritual issues relevant to the provision of mental health treatment of the people served, with a specific emphasis on American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

The Cultural Competency Procedure includes training. A staff member stated that available training tends to be more applicable to towns and cities and not sufficiently applicable to this office's rural reservation setting. Tribal members appear to be the best resource to meet this need in this community

Suggestions:

Continue using the good community relationships already established to keep this expertise available for staff and clients/families.

Do treatment plans take into account individually-identified cultural issues, and are they developed by a culturally competent clinician or in consultation with such a clinician?

Strengths/Observations:

Yes, treatment plans are very individualized and account for cultural considerations and staff demographics suggest that consultation regarding American Indian issues is readily available.

² <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/Constitution/X/1.htm>

³ http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/comp2/F095-608.html

Observation and interviews indicated good informal communication among staff members. Staff awareness of individual/identified cultural issues is reviewed by the Director who is an enrolled member of a tribe and who practices ceremony and social gathering.

Other cultural issues, such as sexual identity, may not be addressed adequately. When asked about this topic, the therapist seemed uncomfortable initially but discussed appropriate ways to address the issue in treatment.

Has Youth Dynamics developed links with other service providers / organizations that have relevant experience and expertise in the provision of mental health treatment and support to people from all cultural / ethnic / religious / racial groups in the community, with a specific emphasis on American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

The office is located on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, nearby service providers also serve Indian people. The BIA social work supervisor interviewed said his office refers clients to YDI services throughout the state and that he finds YDI staff easy to communicate with. Altacare provides in school services and the relationship between YDI and those services is based on the individual needs of the clients/families served through the treatment plan. Staff participates in IEP meetings at the school if the family needs the assistance. Staff interviewed also spoke of the close relationship between YDI and Children's Protective Services (CPS). The treatment planning process is key here to using all community resources.

Does Youth Dynamics have a plan for recruitment, retention, and promotion of staff from cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds representative of the community served with a specific emphasis on American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

Yes, this is an area of strength; many of the staff interviewed spoke of Wolf Point being their 'home' community. It is also one of the Guiding Principles in YDI's Cultural Competency Plan. The fringe benefit package including Web-X staff training, staff-to-staff respect all let staff pursue their individual strengths – these are the greatest assets a Director can provide to staff.

Suggestions:

Keep up the good work, a job well done.

With regard to its own staff, does the leadership at Youth Dynamics monitor and address issues associated with cultural / ethnic / religious / racial prejudice and misunderstanding, with a specific emphasis on prejudice toward and misunderstanding of American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

The leadership appears to do a good job in this area because they have hired and retained a number of American Indian employees who have first-rate knowledge and experience. The issues of cultural / ethnic / religious / racial prejudice and misunderstanding are well covered in the ethical and cultural policies. One member of the site review team reflected: "It is interesting that I could not tell who on staff was an enrolled tribal member and who was not. While reflecting my ignorance, this observation also suggests that the team is very well integrated with regard to cultural/racial background."

Does Youth Dynamics assess the demographics of its catchment area and identify underserved cultural groups, with a specific emphasis on American Indian people?

Strengths/Observations:

Most referrals are generated by the school system and the BIA and IHS. The agency gathers data on outcome measures for Indian children and shares this information with state and tribal governments.

Staff Competence, Training, Supervision, and Relationships with Clients

Competence and Training:

Does Youth Dynamics define minimum knowledge and competence expectations specific to working with people with mental illnesses for each staff position providing services to clients?

Strengths/Observations:

Minimum knowledge and competence are addressed in the Initial Training Procedures document provided to site review team. YDI has one of the better processes for defining their basic expectations for staff knowledge and ensuring that staff is competent in those basic expectations, either prior to or soon after, starting to work with clients and family members. Team members indicated some uncertainty based on the information provided about training specific to the types of diagnoses and symptoms staff might expect to encounter with their child/adolescent clients. The Employee Orientation Handbook identifies agency expectations for staff competencies and training that set standards for staff knowledge and competence.

Does Youth Dynamics have written training curricula for new staff focused on achieving optimum knowledge and competence expectations specific to working with people with mental illnesses for each position providing services to clients?

Strengths/Observations:

Minimum knowledge and competence are addressed in the Initial Training Procedures document provided to BOV.

Does Youth Dynamics train new staff in job-specific knowledge and competence prior to working with clients OR requires new staff to demonstrate defined optimum knowledge and competence specific to working with people with mental illnesses prior to working with clients?

Strengths/Observations:

New employee orientation training is 25 hours and includes shadow training. Some staff interviewed indicated that they believed the initial orientation process was a bit too broad, and left them a bit underprepared for the specific issues related to working with children on/near the reservation, cultural issues, and poverty. Supervisory staff report that that issue is being addressed and future trainings will include more site/region specific focus.

Suggestions:

Continue to update employee orientation and include site/region client/family need specific focus before working with clients/families.

Does Youth Dynamics provide staff opportunities for ongoing training including NAMI-MT Provider Training, NAMI-MT Mental Illness Conference, Mental Health Association trainings, Department of Public Health and Human Services trainings, and professional conferences?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff interviewed reported that they are offered regular training on mental illness via Web-X and participate in choosing training topics. Staff feels supported and eager to learn as much as they can to better serve the clients. An annual all staff retreat provides an opportunity for staff to meet, set annual goals for the agency and access training.

Does Youth Dynamics periodically assess current staff and identify and address knowledge and competence deficiencies?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff meets regularly in one on one meetings with supervisors and with the Area Manager to discuss issues, training and proactively work through potential problems. Performance appraisals are completed regularly. Access to training appears to be good and training thorough. Staff reports great satisfaction at the access and feedback they have from their supervisors.

Supervision:

Does Youth Dynamics train supervisors and hold them accountable for appropriately monitoring and overseeing the way clients are treated by line staff?

Strengths/Observations:

During the site review interview the supervisor reported that training is solid. Client safety and appropriate implementation of the treatment plan is key. The team was left with the impression that the supervisor would take appropriate action if it was discovered that a staff member failed to keep healthy boundaries with clients and families.

Does Youth Dynamics train supervisors and hold them accountable for appropriately monitoring, overseeing, and ensuring that treatment and support is provided effectively to clients by line staff according to their responsibilities as defined in treatment plans?

Strengths/Observations:

Yes.

Relationships with Clients:

Does Youth Dynamic staff demonstrate respect for clients by actively engaging; demonstrating a positive demeanor; expressing empathy, and calmness; and, validating the wishes of the clients?

Strengths/Observations:

The site review team had the opportunity to informally observe interactions between staff in the office and a client of the services while interviewing a family member to answer this standard. The child was obviously very comfortable with the staff in the office, responded very well to staff. The parent appeared to be comfortable with the relationship between the staff and the child.

Treatment and Support

General:

Is a written treatment plan in place and being implemented for every client receiving services from Youth Dynamics?

Strengths/Observations:

A treatment plan is in place for each individual client/family. The agency recently transitioned to an electronic record for maintaining treatment plans. The team had difficulty navigating this system and as a result had a limited look at plans. The information included in one of the files appeared to be general, perhaps applying to any child with the diagnosis, and not particularly individualized. The agency process and procedure for creating treatment plans left the impression with the team that the plans are individualized. YDI has a checklist for Case Managers that is used to make sure files are complete.

Family members interviewed spoke to the process used to create the treatment plan, the process used to evaluate the plan and fact that the plans written for their family members were individualized, included significant participation by the family and client; that outcomes were established and progress measured.

Is a written discharge plan in place for every client receiving services from Youth Dynamics?

Strengths/Observations:

The time allotted to review treatment plans wasn't long enough to provide a thorough analysis of the process. Discharge criteria are listed in the program manual. Families interviewed reported that treatment plans for their family members included discharge/transition/graduation criteria. YDI provides services to children who will either graduate from services or if necessary transition to adult services. The therapist stated that the agency will try not to discharge clients as long as services are needed.

Does Youth Dynamics link all clients to primary health services and ensure that clients have access to needed health care?

Strengths/Observations:

Staff interviewed reported that primary health services are difficult to access. Wolf Point does not have a Pediatrician and the nearest Child Psychiatrist is in Glendive. Indian Health Services provides services for some of the clients/families in YDI services and the agency works as closely as possible with the primary care physicians who do serve the community.

Suggestions:

Continue the collaborative relationships in place and to the extent possible expand those relationships to include access for clients/families to pediatric care.

Does Youth Dynamics proactively rule out medical conditions that may be responsible for presenting psychiatric symptoms?

Strengths/Observations:

This small community is challenged by access to health care for the pediatric clients served by the agency. YDI works to arrange psychiatric and psychological care when needed as near to the client/family as possible. Staff reported an understanding that medical conditions may be responsible for presenting psychiatric symptoms and the value of seeking medical opinions as needed.

Evidence-Based Services:

Does Youth Dynamics provide treatment and support to clients that incorporates the following SAMHSA-identified evidence-based practices: Illness Management and Recovery, Assertive Community Treatment, Family Psychoeducation, Supported Employment, Integrated Treatment for Co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders?

Strengths/Observations:

The services provided in Wolf Point are primarily targeted case management for children and adolescents under age 18, some SAMHSA-identified evidence-based practices are incorporated in the YDI treatment planning process. YDI does use a treatment model based on social learning theory⁴ developed by Boys' Town. This model has been the subject of many research studies and shown to be effective.

When asked about substance abuse issues, staff reported that clients/family can be referred to inpatient treatment centers out of town. The supervisor said that Indian people (clients and families who need the services) are more likely to use traditional healing ceremonies than to participate in 12 step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

The information provided to the site review team indicates that YDI does provide client/family psychoeducation. The treatment planning process should indicate whether treatment for co-occurring disorders is indicated and the agency should be co-occurring capable.

Suggestions:

Incorporate modules to address substance abuse treatment in co-occurring disorders in staff training/continuing education. Collaboration with community resources to provide staff support and training to address co-occurring disorders is optimum.

⁴ <http://www.boystown.org/educators/education-model>

Access and Entry

Is Youth Dynamics convenient to the community and linked to primary medical care providers?

Does Youth Dynamics inform the community of its availability, range of services, and process for establishing contact?

Strengths/Observations:

The office in Wolf Point seems to be conveniently located, well established and well connected to the communities in this corner of Northeastern Montana. The agency seems to be well known and well connected to the community it serves. Many services are provided out of the office. The agency standard is that at least 50% of services be provided outside the office. Staff members, case managers and therapist, travel to several different towns to provide services close to clients/families. Staff members estimated 800 miles of travel per month.

For new clients, is there timely access to psychiatric assessment and service plan development and implementation within a time period that does not, by its delay, exacerbate illness or prolong distress?

Strengths/Observations:

It appears so, yes. Family member and outside providers that we interviewed provided positive information about YDI's ability to engage in issues when requested. Time guidelines are very specific in YDI's written procedures. I did not obtain independent information about how long it takes from time of referral to implementation of the service plan. Again, the nearest child psychiatrist is located 100 miles away. Client/family interviews indicated that clients accept the limitations presented by the frontier nature of the community and that the agency does provide good, timely access to services within those limitations.

Does Youth Dynamics ensure that clients and their family members are able to, from the time of their first contact with the agency, identify and contact a single mental health professional responsible for coordinating their care?

Strengths/Observations:

The case manager is the direct single contact for communicating with the family and coordinating implementation of the treatment plan.

Does Youth Dynamics have a system for prioritizing referrals according to risk, urgency, distress, dysfunction, and disability, and for commencing initial assessments and services

Strengths/Observations:

Staff interviewed recognized that clients/families may come to them unannounced without prior service. The staff skillfully assesses the client/family needs and responds appropriately. The agency works closely with the BIA, Indian Health Services, Child Protective Services, and Tribal Social Services to provide services. Urgency for access to initial assessment wouldn't be an issue for targeted case management services provided through YDI.

Continuity of Services through Transitions

Does Youth Dynamics review the outcomes of treatment and support as well as ongoing follow-up arrangements with each client and - with consent - family members prior to their exit from the service? Does YDI provide information on the range of relevant services and supports available in the community for those transitions?

Strengths/Observations:

YDI is well connected in this small community and exit from services occurs when the client becomes an adult, graduates from the treatment program or moves from the area, staff is very aware of the resources available that are appropriate can assure projected successful outcomes. Staff did express frustration that many of the clients have difficulties finding the financial support to transition into adult services. Independent living is particularly difficult for many clients.

Does Youth Dynamics proactively facilitate involvement of service provider in transition planning, when a client first comes into services and then follow-up after the transition?

Strengths/Observations:

The staff works collaboratively with other services in the community to assure a good transition can occur, within the limitations that exist in this rural community.

Suggestions:

One member of the staff suggested that stronger planning and more collaborative transitions for incarcerated youth being returned to the community and YDI services would be helpful to both the agency and the client/family served.



Alicia Pichette, Executive Director
Mental Disabilities Board of Visitors
P.O. Box 200804
Helena, MT 59620-0804

Dear Alicia:

Let me first thank you and Leigh Ann for taking the time to meet with me regarding the site review and report on 12/20/11. It was great to meet both of you and to have some time to discuss the Board's observations and conclusions. I certainly appreciate how complimentary the Board was and, of course, agree fully with the recommendations and suggestions. In fact, as I mentioned, your conclusions were much the same as those made by our CARF accreditation team a few months ago. The advantage to Youth Dynamics, in this circumstance, is that we have already begun to address these areas.

To specifically describe our intent:

- We will continue to develop a take home packet for parents and families. We will be calling this packet a Client/Family Handbook and it will include at least the following information:
 - * A copy of our Client Partnership Agreement
 - * A copy of our Service Philosophy policy
 - * A listing and contact information for several advocacy options including the Board of Visitors, the Mental Health Ombudsman, and Disability Rights Montana.
 - * A copy of our Client Grievance Procedure
 - * A copy of our Client Rights procedure
- We will include the above in our intake procedure with families as well as detailed explanations of their rights and responsibilities as clients of Youth Dynamics.
- We will also include an explanation of our responsibilities to report to the Board of Visitors any sentinel events that occur while they are receiving services from YDI.
- We are going to develop and implement procedures to more systematically include stakeholders including clients and families, local agency representatives, BIA, etc. in our annual strategic planning process.

I hope this course of action is acceptable to the Board. As with all of our contacts with the Board we feel like our response to your suggestions makes us a better provider of mental health services.

Before closing, I would like to thank the Board members for the respectful and professional manner in which they conducted the visit and forward to them our appreciation for, not only their suggestions, but also the manner in which they approached the site visit. Our local staff thoroughly enjoyed each of you and, of course, extend an invitation to return any time. Like we discussed, maybe you could make a bit more time available to spend at our site if this is at all possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter J. Degel".

Peter J. Degel, PhD
Executive Director

Cc. Bonnie Adee

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