

Muskingum County

Judge Eric D. Martin

Program Name

Therapeutic Family Support Group

Program Intervention

Love & Logic, I-FAST

Primary Service Location

Community

Program Description

The Therapeutic Family Support Group is a program that enhances the court's existing diversion program. Families attend weekly three-hour sessions for six weeks. The program serves low-risk youth in the diversion program as well as their families using the Integrated Family and Systems Treatment (I-FAST) model facilitated by Thompkins Treatment Inc. The program is broken down into two components - Family Intervention and Parenting Support. The juveniles also participate in activities during a portion of their 3-hour session. One of the program's key components is a family mission statement that the family creates together and works as a team to achieve. Based on participant feedback, this is one of the most influential pieces of the program. The family mission statement gives the families a chance to see their goals and aspirations from a different perspective.

Outcomes

- 89% of the youth successfully completing the program have not been adjudicated on new charges.
- Schools reported discipline incidents were reduced by 64% for participants successfully completing the program.

Lessons Learned

- Since the class is completely voluntary, it helps get people there if we provide dinner.
- We originally had the class for 8 weeks and we were losing people, so we decided to do 6-week program, which remains well attended by families.
- Incentives help! Knowing that families are getting rewarded at the end of the 6-weeks keeps them engaged.
- Three families were greatly helped by referring them for additional services which may not have happened if they were not involved in our program.

Program Snapshot

(As of June 30, 2016)

Gender:

62% Male, 38% Female

Race/Ethnicity:

85% White, 15% African American

Age Range:

9-17

Offense Level: Misdemeanor, Status & At-Risk Youth

Youth Re-offense Risk Level:

Low

Other Screens and Assessments:

OYAS Diversion Tool & Ohio Scales

Program Start Date:

March 11, 2015

Received Services:

13 Youth, 22 Parents, & 8 Siblings

Program Completion Successes:

9 Youth, 16 Parents, & 3 Siblings

Average # of Service Units:

20.25 Direct Service Hours Per Successful Youth & Family

Program Partners:

- Thompkins Treatment Inc.
- The Center for Innovation and Data Services

Program Information Contact

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Grant Administrator
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Muskingum County Early Successes – TFS Group

“The Therapeutic Family Support Group has provided our participants with an opportunity to really make a difference in how their family functions as a whole. It gives support and encouragement to tackle the tough *issues* that may be detrimental to a family setting, without even knowing it. I fully believe that if we give these families the tools to succeed in these 6 weeks, and help them understand what they need to provide a stable household, the chances of the youth going through the juvenile justice system will decline dramatically.”

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“The program has been a great resource for the families of Muskingum County. One of the families that Creative Options was involved with reported the program assisted them with skills and knowledge as well as connections to other families experiencing similar issues. This is a useful and needed resource that Creative Options hoped for future families.”

Ronda Hollingshead, L.S.W., B.S
Muskingum County Adult and Child
Protective Services

“The Courts are helping youth gain self-worth, self-pride because finally, they know what it feels like, to have someone believe in them. Yes, sometimes consequences have to happen to those that refuse to embrace change, but even then, I believe they will never forget that change can happen, and that they were offered hope.”

Renee Dunkin
Counselor, Solace

Youth Success Story – Travis had been referred to the Diversion Program by Zane Grey Elementary School in October 2014 due to his behavior. Travis had been suspended or removed from school multiple times. I met with Travis and his parents and found out that they were having behavior issues at home as well. His parents were struggling with co-parenting Travis and his sister because of their anger with each other. The entire family attended the Therapeutic Family Support Group and successfully completed in May 2015. I collected his school records for the 2015-2016 school year and Travis had 3 office referrals the entire school year. I had also spoken with his mother in the community and she stated that he was having a great year at school and his behavior at home had improved.



Program Success Story – The Therapeutic Family Support Group has served 13 families from Muskingum County; each of the families brought their stories and obstacles that the group must address in order to break down the barriers. When these obstacles are brought to the attention of the program staff, we communicate by setting up a meeting to develop a plan to help the families. Besides the incredible counseling and activities, we work though, some families have been in need of household items such as table, dishes, stove, etc; in which we were able to find donated items and help in the delivery of those items. Other families needed help with establishing additional counseling services to which we provided the numbers and contacts to get appointments scheduled. Another family needed help with summer programming fees, and we made the appropriate referrals and the youth is attending a camp and the fees were paid by another agency. Our program has success because we go the extra mile to make everything in their lives more workable.

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