Residential Counselor’s Role and Responsibilities

and

Linkage with Family Action Services

**Purpose:** The intent of the following policy is to clarify aspects of the counselor’s role regarding their daily routine, responsibility for serving youth and coordinating services with the Family Action Counselor/Case Managers.

**Policy:** Residential Counselors should ensure that the service needs and program requirements for all youth in shelter are addressed including making efforts to engage youth and parent/guardians with Family Action Counselors/Case Managers as deemed beneficial to the process of family reunification.

**Procedure and/or Process:**

1. Each day upon arrival at the shelter, the counselor should determine if there are new admissions since the counselor's last workday at the shelter, and review the program log book.
2. The counselor should review the participant records of all new admissions to initiate the Needs Assessment process paying special attention to the suicide risk assessment, medical history, legal charges and initial parent contact. Any information that may require additional follow-up should also be considered and noted at this time in the participant file.
3. The counselor should make contact with newly admitted youth at the first opportunity to introduce themselves and to briefly orient the youth to the counselor's role in the shelter and to discuss what to expect during the shelter stay.
4. The counselor should make contact with the parent(s) to introduce themselves, to orient the parent(s) to the counselor's role in the shelter, to discuss what to expect during the shelter stay, and to schedule an appointment for the family.
5. The counselor should try and complete the Needs Assessment process within 72 hours of the participant’s admission. If the counselor is unable to make contact with the parent/guardian, or the parent/guardian is unable to come in for an appointment within this time frame, the counselor may try to glean needed information through phone contacts with collateral sources and should not let delays in meeting with the parent/guardian slow down the assessment process.
6. When the counselor meets with the parent/guardian, the counselor should review the information provided by the youth. A completed Needs Assessment will include information gathered from the youth, collateral information from other resources as applicable and the parent/guardian perspective.
7. A Needs Assessment are completed on all participants who are admitted into the shelter. However, if the participant has had a previous shelter stay or is a current non-residential participant, the counselor should retrieve a copy of the previously completed Needs Assessment to review and update as needed.
8. After completion of the Needs Assessment, the counselor should develop with the youth and parent/guardian an Individual Plan within 7 days. The counselor should obtain signatures of agreement as a part of this process. The counselor should follow the CDS policies on Individual Plan. In cases where the parent is not accessible in person, efforts should be made to involve the parent by telephone to obtain involvement and agreement with the Plan. The counselor should not let delays presented by the parent/guardian slow down the completion of this process.
9. The counselor should initiate ongoing interaction and contact with the youth's parent/guardian throughout the youth's shelter stay.
10. The counselor is responsible for documenting case activities on progress notes, filed in the participant record. This includes telephone contacts, consultations, letters sent, completion of the Needs Assessment and planning process, no shows or cancellations, justifications for required services not being provided, and the residential counselor’s case management and counseling session notes. All counseling related sessions should be documented using the BIRP format outlined in CDS policy on Progress Notes.
11. It is the counselor's responsibility to ensure that all sessions are scheduled and provided. The youth may have to stay back on occasion from an outing or other planned event to accommodate a scheduled individual or parent/guardian session. Providing required services and sessions are priorities for the residential counselor.
    1. Provide a minimum of 5 days per week groups’ counseling sessions for all youth, unless otherwise specified by the youth's Individual Plan. Document group in the group log book and in the progress notes in the participant records of each youth that participated in the group. Progress notes should reflect the youth's participation and any significant occurrence or behavior noted. Justification for a group not occurring, or a youth not attending group on a specific day, should be clearly documented in each youth's participant record.
       1. Maintain a “group sessions” notebook to include: topic, activity, names of participants in group in addition to the documentation maintained in the individual participant record.
    2. It is the goal of the program to schedule and provide individual sessions with all youth in shelter as specified by the youth's Individual Plan, and as needed. Document in the progress notes using the BIRP format the youth's participation, focus of the session, outcome, and plans. Justification for individual sessions not occurring should be clearly documented in the progress notes. The youth's Individual Plan should guide the focus of these sessions, and documentation should reflect progress in completing plan goals.
    3. It is the goal of the program to schedule and provide parent/guardian sessions 1x per week, or otherwise specified by the youth's Individual Plan, and as needed. Document in the progress notes using the BIRP format the parent/guardian's participation, focus of session, outcome, and plans. Justification for parent/guardian sessions not occurring should be clearly documented in the progress notes. The youth's Individual Plan should guide the focus of these sessions, and documentation should reflect progress in completing plan goals.
    4. Ongoing interaction and involvement with the parent(s), throughout the youth's shelter stay, is a priority. Efforts should be made to accommodate special scheduling needs of the parent/guardian.
12. Each day the counselor should review all youth's participant records and the program logbook to keep informed and updated on the activities and actions of all youth since the counselor's last work day. Interaction by the counselor with youth care workers is recommended as well to keep informed and to receive pertinent feedback.
13. Residential counselors will take the initiative to call the non-residential counselor/case manager to ensure the proper coordination of services. While the youth is in shelter, the residential counselor will provide daily case management, ensure record documentation is complete and meets program and QA and accreditation standards, initiate consultations at major decisions points and/or as needed, and ensure satisfactory dispositions from the shelter.
14. For youth who have open non-residential cases, the residential counselor should engage in ongoing consultation and collaboration with the non-residential counselor/case manager. Non-residential counselors/case managers will maintain responsibility for court related matters, and the residential counselor should seek direction and provide feedback to ensure compliance and effective outcome of the shelter stay. The non-residential counselor/case manager should maintain contact with the youth throughout the shelter stay.
15. For shelter youth being referred for non-residential services, consultation by the residential counselor with the non-residential counselor/case manager should occur prior to shelter discharge. Consultation should facilitate the referral and connection of the youth and parent(s) with non-residential service providers before the youth leaves the shelter.
16. The counselor should have ongoing and regular consultation with the immediate supervisor to review participant cases and to facilitate successful outcomes and discharge planning. Counselors should seek direction from their immediate supervisor concerning the established record review process in their assigned shelter.
17. The counselor should consult with pertinent program staff, i.e. shelter staff, supervisor, non-residential staff, and youth and parent/guardian, to determine the appropriate discharge date for the youth. The counselor should complete the Disposition/Aftercare Plan in accordance with CDS policy on Disposition/Aftercare Plan at a minimum to reflect progress; aftercare plans and need for referrals.
18. The counselor should attempt to schedule and meet with the parent/guardian to discuss discharge plans. During this session the counselor should review the completed discharge summary, provide feedback, make recommendations and referrals, and discuss strategies for the future. The counselor should inform youth care workers of the planned discharge date and time. Parent/guardian and youth should sign the discharge summary and be provided with a copy at the time of discharge.
19. The counselor should review the participant record prior to the youth's discharge from the shelter to determine documentation needs and to ensure that all forms have been completed and all signatures have been obtained.
20. The residential counselor is responsible for the following at discharge: 1) final review of the participant record; 2) ensuring that all Centralized Intake paperwork has been completed and signed; 3) completion of the counseling section on the Mother Sheet 4) notifying the non-residential counselor/case manager as applicable of the discharge date and plan; and 5) following the established procedure for supervisory review of the participant record.