



YFSVA YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES OF VIRGINIA, INC.

BEHAVIOR THERAPY PROGRAM GUIDELINES IN-HOME SAFETY POLICY

Prior to families being admitted to receive behavior therapy services from ASSET, each child must receive a complete Assessment to determine both the child and family's eligibility for services. The Assessment must be completed by a BCBA, BCaBA, LMHP or LMHP-E. When conducting the Assessment, the Assessor should not only assess the child's eligibility for services, but should also assess the family's willingness to be an active participant in services. ASSET is charged with not only providing services directly to the client but also in helping the client's parent or guardian in managing the client's behaviors and in gaining skills that will ultimately help the client be more independent. These goals can only be accomplished if the parent or guardian is willing to fully participate in program guidelines.

Program guidelines require that behavior therapy services are provided in a safe and clean environment. Families receiving behavior therapy services agree to provide a safe and clean environment where services are to be rendered as a condition of receiving services. While standards of safety and cleanliness can be somewhat subjective, general standards are listed below:

- Alcohol, while a legal substance, should not be consumed in the presence of the client or staff where services are being rendered.
- Smoking of cigarettes, cigars, vaping or other items should not occur in the room where services are provided
- Weapons must be removed from service area
- Illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin, etc. will not be tolerated
- Work area must be free of lice, bed bugs and pest such as mice or other rodents
- Insects such as ants, roaches, centipedes, etc. in large numbers
- There needs to be space to sit or properly conduct direct care sessions
- Carpet and furniture must be free of odorous stains
- No pet urine or feces should be evident in service area
- Pets should be removed from the immediate service area.
- Appropriate attire must be worn by all family members during sessions. Family members must be fully clothed and not wear overly revealing attire

Program guidelines should be presented at the beginning of services, stating that the home must be clean and safe for each direct care session. The best time to address issues of safety and cleanliness is prior to services beginning.

If there is a shooting or stabbing or other incident in the immediate neighborhood, staff should make their clinical supervisor and manager aware immediately. It will be left to the discretion of the supervisor to determine if a change of venue for service delivery is warranted. Changes may include time of day at the same location or selecting an alternate location such as a public library, child care facility or center (if applicable) or other family member's residence. The client's parent, guardian or authorized adult must be present where services are provided. If the clinical supervisor believes that a change in location is warranted, the supervisor must first request the desired change of venue to the clinical director for the director's approval prior to making the change.

Some families receiving behavior therapy services may be challenged by financial constraints that impact their ability to provide the ideal environment to render services. Staff at all levels should be made aware of and trained regarding the multitude of challenges some families face. Staff at all levels are to be especially sensitive to challenges related to income, culture, religion, education, up-bringing, or mental health related issues that may impact directly or indirectly the family's ability or willingness to address issues related to maintaining a safe and clean environment.

When the BCBA, BCaBA, LMHP or LMHP-E conducts the initial Assessment to determine the family's eligibility for services, the Assessor should check the area in the home where direct care services will be rendered and make a determination if the area provided meets the agency's standards for safety and cleanliness as outlined above. The Assessor is to also provide the parent or guardian with the program guidelines that state what the standards and expectations of the family are. The Assessor is to also make certain that the family clearly understands expectations and program guidelines by both discussing these issues and having the family sign that they have read, understand and agree to the program guidelines. If at the time of the assessment the Assessor has concerns about the safety and or cleanliness of the area, they are to discuss these issues with the parent or guardian to see if they are willing to make necessary changes to comply with the program guidelines. If there are concerns, it is important in this process not to make the parent, guardian or family feel as though they are being judged. Our concern is for the child and family, and we are trying to ensure that services can be provided in an environment that gives the client the best chance of success to achieve desired goals and objectives. If the environment is deemed to be an issue that is impacting the client's behavior, this may be an area that the parent or caregiver can be advised on as part of parent training if appropriate. If the issues are deemed significant to the point of hindering services, the Assessor may communicate to the parent that the agency also provides Mental Health Skill Building Services for adults. However, the adult must have a formal diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Bi-Polar Disorder or Clinical Depression and have Medicaid Insurance coverage in order to qualify. If after exploring all options (the parent's willingness to address the safety related issues, parent training or other community related services) the Assessor still has concerns, they are to complete the Assessment and contact the clinical director for further guidance.

The best time to address safety concerns is during the initial Assessment while determining the client's and family's eligibility for services. This is also the time to set standards and expectations going forward. In some instances the home will be approved for services but safety violations will occur after services have started.

If services have already begun, but direct care staff feel that the home is not safe or clean they need to report to their manager and clinical supervisor, and the supervisor should communicate with the family directly to try to correct the issue. Families will be given an opportunity to correct the issue prior to services continuing. If after 30 days the family is unwilling to correct the issues, the clinical supervisor will report recommendations for termination or interruption of services to the clinical director for the director's approval prior to implementation and for further guidance.

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