

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality is an extremely important part of our treatment. Parents are requested not to question their child about conversations or events that occur in either rap groups or one-on-one sessions that are conducted by the staff. The confidentiality rule of the program is: **WHAT YOU HEAR AND WHAT AND WHOM YOU SEE HERE, REMAINS HERE.** Open Meetings, parent conferences and parent rap discussions are also covered by this rule.

Host home parents share in the therapeutic process of the host kids in their home. For kids to be treated without preconceived notions of what they are like, it is critical that parents not talk to other program parents about the kids in their home. Parents are also not in a position to know why staff makes the decisions they do. **NO TALKING BEHIND BACKS** - Staff, families, or clients - by name or by influence, neither positive, negative, nor neutral comments.

In that state and federal law requires confidentiality and that the canons of good therapeutic practice also require it, violation of these policies could result in the immediate dismissal of your family from the program.

Any information that is requested by outside agencies with regard to your child must have the parents' written consent if the child is under 18 years of age and the client's consent if over 18.

### II. Temporary Home Policy

Temporary homes are an important part of the program. Agreeing to have newcomers in your home not only provides a secure and emotionally warm environment for the newcomer to grow and become stronger, but also enables your child to practice "The Basics" as well as experiencing the satisfaction of being responsible for and helping a newcomer, a vital part of his/her therapy.

The program requires that you make your home available for newcomers as another family did when your child was in need. Assignments will be made for clinical and security reasons at the discretion of staff. You may be required to take more than one child into your home to support the program. We ask that you agree to maintain the following standards for:

1. Fire safety,
2. Sanitary conditions,
3. Adequate provision of food and water,
4. Sleeping accommodations, and
5. Willingness to provide a secure and emotionally warm home environment.

We further require you to adhere to all the rules of the program. Drugs and alcohol, poisonous chemicals or anything that could be used as a weapon must be locked up.

We also highly recommend that you procure a standard homeowners insurance policy that covers personal liability, if you do not already have this coverage.

In the event of an emergency you may use physical restraint or seclusion on a client only if absolutely necessary to protect the client from injuring himself/herself or others, but not as a punishment or for your own convenience, or as a substitute for activities. In the event an emergency arises, you are required to inform staff as soon as possible using the pager system.

### III. Alcohol Use by Parents

Alcohol and drugs (including prescriptions) are to be locked up while the client and their newcomers are in the home. At no time during the client's program are parents or other family members to drink alcohol or do illegal drugs in the presence of the client or newcomers. Parents are not to drink alcoholic beverages within 4 hours of coming to parent raps and Open Meeting.

#### IV. Transportation

Parents will be required to furnish transportation for their children and host children to and from the host home, program and school. Car pools are encouraged but are entirely for the convenience of the parents. Arranging car pools is the responsibility of the parents, not staff. Parents are required, when making dropoffs, to wait until the children have entered the building before driving off. Out of town parents are responsible for making arrangements for transportation from school to the program.

#### V. Siblings

Siblings must be interviewed by staff between 14 and 21 days after the client enters the program. They may not attend Open Meeting until they have been approved and not earlier than 21 days. Approval decisions will be made in the next staff meeting. If the sibling is found to be "not in the best interest of the client" because of their drug use, the parents will be informed. Program policy is that they come into the program or move out of the house before the client returns home.

Approved siblings are encouraged to participate in Open Meetings, family conferences, and sibling raps, held in conjunction with parent raps on Monday nights. Siblings may sit in on the client's talk after 3 talks have been earned.

#### VI. Family Conferences

Family conferences will begin when the child makes second phase or earlier if their family therapist feel it is necessary and will continue throughout the remainder of the client's program and can be requested by parents, clients, or staff. These are by appointment only and should be scheduled 72 hours in advance. In order to make optimum use of the time when parents are normally available, our staff is scheduled in on Monday evenings, Friday evenings, and weekends. Because of the amount of activity taking place during these hours, we ask that parents not make last minute requests for conferences or save business items until these times. A phone call to staff during business hours is preferable.

#### VII. Client's Commitment to Program

Clients 18 years of age and over, by law, must sign themselves into the program and can sign themselves out. Parents make the financial and legal commitment for them. Underage clients can be signed in by their parents and cannot sign themselves out. However, underage clients are encouraged to sign an agreement indicating an understanding of the rules and a personal commitment to the program. Reasonable restraint will be used if child tries to leave the program or host home.

#### VIII. Non-Interference Agreement Policy

Both parents' signatures are required on the Treatment Agreement. If parents are divorced, both parents are encouraged to participate in the child's program. A non-interference agreement should be obtained from the parent not having custody if not participating.

#### IX. Open Meeting and Parent Raps

Attendance at Open Meetings on Fridays and at Parent Raps on Mondays are required by parents throughout their child's program. The goals of the Parent Raps on Mondays are to give parents information necessary for them to understand the program, to better understand and interact with their child, and to support and help them work their own program of recovery from the family disease of chemical dependency. Parents will learn the same tools for communication, rational thinking and personal growth their child learns. The raps are designed to follow a sequence and there are six mandatory new parent raps that parents will be required to make up if missed.

#### X. Client Property Policy

A. Stashes: Parents should call the program before bringing drugs or paraphernalia to the building. Evidence of drug usage or drug related activities, theft, or other incriminating behavior will be turned over to the proper authority. None of these items will be returned to the client or the family.

B. Non-stashes: Any items brought in as part of the druggie past will not be returned to the child. It should be emphasized that the client is giving up these items as part of his past and, therefore, parents are encouraged to dispose of them. Anything of value (jewelry, car, etc.) will be turned over to the parents.

C. Articles of Clothing: New or valuable clothing should not be given to your child when he is not living at your home. Properly label all articles of clothing. We cannot be responsible for lost clothing, shoes or other items left in a temporary home or otherwise lost while your child is participating in the program. "Want list" should be closely censored before bringing requested articles to the child. There is a difference between "wants" and "needs".

D. Refresher, Away From Home: Articles (such as purses, wallets, watches, etc.), collected when your child is placed on a refresher or is away from home, will be returned to you at the next possible Open Meeting by a designated Staff Member.

#### XI. Diagnostic Testing Policy

Children entering the program will be administered a series of diagnostic tests. The information obtained will be used to better assess the nature and extent of your child's problem. All information obtained will be held in the strictest of confidence in accordance with State and Federal Law. The fee for diagnostic testing is included in the Program Fee.

#### XII. Financial Policies

We will fully discuss with you the financial policy prior to entering your child into our program.

The total program fee should be paid within 8 months for in-town families and 9 months for out-of-town families. Interest of 1 1/2% per month will be charged on any late program fees. No refund will be made if parents pull child from treatment.

A monthly food fee is charged to cover the meals which the child eats at the program and a monthly host home fee is charged to cover the expenses of the host parent(s) while the child is living outside his/her own home. These fees are payable in advance at the beginning of each month.

Interest at the rate of 1 1/2% per month will be charged to the Food and Host Home Fees that are 30 days past due.

In the event that the Program Fees and/or the Food and Host Home Fees are not paid and collection procedures are instituted it is understood that confidentiality with respect to enrollment is waived.

In the event legal action is required by Kids Helping Kids to enforce any right or privilege hereunder, Kids Helping Kids is entitled to recover a reasonable sum for attorney's fees in collection of any sums due in any consultation or representation in any other matter.

#### XIII. Adult Supervision

At no time during a child's program is s/he to be left without adult supervision. One parent must remain with the child and foster children while at home and out (i.e., dentist trips, doctor's trips, etc.). Extended family members who are working the program with the client may substitute for parents for the adult supervision. Refer to the Parent Rules for the requirements to becoming a "program parent" (#21).

#### XIV. Snow Plan

Safety of children and parents is always a high priority and weighed against the need for the parents (especially those whose children are on first phase) to participate in the program. The schedule will go unaltered if possible, but when roads are dangerous, Monday and Friday meetings may be canceled. At times the need to cancel is not obvious until late in the day. Every attempt will be made to personally contact parents by phone when a change is made. Cancellations will be announced on WLW radio (700 AM) station and out-of-town parents are encouraged to tune in when the weather is questionable.

During or after heavy snowfalls, policy is to open, if feasible with a one or two hour delay, giving parents more time to get the children in, and possibly closing early in order for parents to get the children home before dark. In extreme snow emergencies it may make more sense to close. This will be at the discretion of staff. In such a case parents with children in their home will be contacted personally and if having the children in their home presents them with hardship, staff will attempt to arrange dropoffs.

#### XV. Chain of Command

To facilitate efficient communication parents must understand and follow our chain of command. Speak with your child's peer counselor or another available peer staff member to have rules clarified or to discuss problems that you are having in the home with your own child or newcomer. If asking about permissions, please, ask to speak to a senior staff member. If you are having problems with a junior or senior staff member call the staff coordinator or program director. Problems with the staff coordinator, clinical staff, or regarding general policies should be discussed with the program director.

Any major concern you feel is not being taken care of despite efforts to resolve them can be brought to the attention of the executive director.

For financial or insurance questions call the Administrative Assistant.

#### XVI. Vacations

Parents are to remain in town and available to staff. When a child reaches 5th phase s/he can put in a permission to vacation with family. No vacations until 5th Phase. This vacation is for the purpose of strengthening family relations and may be taken at home. Only one (1) Open Meeting may be missed.

#### XVII. Medical Policy

The program requires that every entrant be medically capable of participating fully in the program. Every entrant in the program will receive a complete physical examination and laboratory tests to screen for any physical problems. Normally, routine results of the examination and tests are not shared with families unless problems are discovered or additional tests are needed. Parents will be billed for any additional tests and prescriptions if treatment is needed and are responsible for submitting these charges into their insurance company. For the sake of continuity non-essential medical or dental care during the first two phases is discouraged.

All medications and prescriptions must be checked by staff before they may be administered to kids in the program. The physician maintains responsibility for any and all medications prescribed. After phase 1, we require children to be taken to their own physician when problems arise.

There is a sick room at the program, but if the child is sick with the flu or severe cold symptoms, parents are encouraged to keep him/her home in bed, away from the group, until BETTER. Staff should be notified. In the event that an urgent medical problem arises while the client is in attendance at the program or in a temporary home, the client will be taken to a designated hospital emergency room for care and the parent(s) notified as soon as feasible. Parents will receive a bill for the services rendered.

Your child or the foster children in your home are responsible for having the linens washed that they used while in our sick room and to return them promptly.

Because our Medical Director is on staff at St. Elizabeth, South, children who need treatment **MUST** be taken there.