



Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

*A Parent's Guide to:
Partial Hospitalization Program*

Welcome to RESOLVE Behavioral Health Services

You and your child have been asked to attend an interagency meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to identify treatment and educational services that meet your child's strengths and needs.

During the meeting, a team of people will discuss available options to meet your child's need. This team will consist of representatives from the school district, the Intermediate Unit, and County agencies. You are welcome to invite anyone you feel would be an important member of this team. You are an important part of this team and this meeting. Your opinions, observations, and goals are needed so that the team can agree on a suitable plan.

The following questions and answers are commonly asked by parents. It is our hope that the following information is helpful to you. If you have a question that is not covered, please feel free to call Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 at 610-252-5550, Extension 6216.

What is a Partial Hospitalization Program?

A Partial Hospitalization Program is a licensed mental health program. The term hospitalization is used in the title as a way to indicate the intensity of the program. Clients enrolled in a Partial Hospitalization Program will receive many of the same services available in a psychiatric hospital without having to stay overnight in a hospital. Partial Hospitalization is not an educational placement; instead, it is a medical placement.

Who is referred to the Partial Hospitalization Program?

Children and adolescents in grades kindergarten through high school can be referred to a RESOLVE Partial Hospitalization Program. Any client who is referred needs to have a psychiatric evaluation that "prescribes" the Partial Hospitalization services. Generally speaking, children referred to the Partial Hospitalization Program have some emotional or behavioral problem that is serious enough to need these intensive services.

What staff is involved in the Partial Hospitalization Program?

RESOLVE uses a four-staff model for each of its sites. The four people, assigned full-time, include a mental health treatment specialist, a mental health worker, a special education teacher, and an associate teacher. Other people involved with the program include a psychiatrist, a school psychologist, clinical supervisors, and an educational supervisor.

Will education be provided within the Partial Hospitalization Program?

Yes, access to education is provided the entire day. Remember, referral to the program is based on emotional or behavioral problems that often interfere with education and these problems are the primary focus of the treatment team. However, as problems begin to lessen, opportunities for education to occur begin to rise, and a student's ability to absorb and attend increases as well. Efforts to provide education always take place within the context of the treatment goals, meaning that emotional and behavioral goals are always being pursued with education, the "testing grounds," to see if therapeutic efforts are working. When emotional and behavioral problems no longer interfere with the educational process, the client is ready to be discharged to a less restrictive environment.

Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, in partnership with the school districts it serves, is a leader in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in providing effective and high quality mental health services, combined seamlessly with standards-based academic programs designed to improve achievement for all students placed in the Partial Hospitalization Program.

If the psychiatrist or school district recommends this program, do I have to enroll my child?

No. The decision to use a Partial Hospitalization Program is a very personal one. We hope that you will consider the recommendations of others; however, the decision is ultimately yours to make. **Placement in a Partial Hospitalization Program is voluntary**, meaning that your child cannot be “forced” into the program. If you decide that the Partial Hospitalization Program is not in the best interest of your child, the interagency team at Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 will be happy to assist you in identifying other available options.

How long will my child be in the Partial Hospitalization Program?

The length of stay in the Partial Hospitalization Program varies for every client. Some clients come to the program with relatively minor problems that are resolved quickly. Other clients come to the program with more complex problems that take longer to resolve. The Partial Hospitalization Program is not designed to be a long-term placement. Instead, it is designed to assist children and families through difficult times, to be followed with discharge to less restrictive forms of treatment and education. Interagency meetings are held every 20 days of treatment as a way of assessment and planning, and continual stay in the program is a topic that is discussed.

Length of stay often depends on how hard the client is willing to work, how involved the family is in treatment, and the relationship the child has with the treatment team.

At any time, you have the right to withdraw your child from the program. This can be done simply by signing the Request to Withdraw from Treatment form.

Will I, as a parent, get a chance to be involved in the treatment program?

Not only will you get a chance to be involved, but your involvement will greatly assist the treatment team and potentially lessen the amount of time your child needs this service. Along with the client, parents are the most important people in the treatment process. Your involvement will help the site team get to know your child much more quickly and allow solutions to be identified much more readily.

Opportunities for parents to get involved include 20-day treatment review meetings, family therapy sessions, meetings with the psychiatrist, home visits, and parent support groups.

Do we have to use the psychiatrist assigned to the site?

Yes. However, this does not limit you from keeping your private psychiatrist. The mental health license provided to RESOLVE requires a psychiatrist to be directly involved with the program. The RESOLVE psychiatrist will be involved in assessing, diagnosing, and treating your child. However, if you chose to keep a private psychiatrist, the RESOLVE psychiatrist will be expected to consult with the private psychiatrist and direct any opinions or treatment recommendations to the private doctor for consideration.

What role does the psychiatrist play?

The psychiatrist is a medical doctor. Typically, the psychiatrist assists with making a diagnosis, developing a treatment plan, monitoring medications, and planning discharge. Typically, the psychiatrist is not the person who provides individual or group therapy sessions.

Does the RESOLVE program “cure kids” of all problems?

The RESOLVE treatment programs use evidence-based therapy approaches to help children and families. Even so, these approaches have limits in regard to what can be accomplished. The RESOLVE staff members believe in “going the extra mile” for clients and families and in assisting them to reach their full potential. As symptoms decrease, clients are discharged to less restrictive services.

Are restraint techniques used within the program and, if so, under what conditions?

Each year, all RESOLVE staff members are required to be certified in the use of passive restraint techniques. Restraint procedures are used only as a last resort and only when a client is an immediate danger to themselves or others. Restraints are not to be used in any other circumstance other than an immediate danger being present. We do not use mechanical or pharmacological restraints.

The use of restraint techniques is a very serious topic. Staff are provided extensive training and support in the use of verbal techniques, assessing the function of behaviors, and in creating a safe environment. All of this is designed so that staff, whenever possible, can intervene in a situation early enough to avoid the use of restraints.

Is my child "mentally retarded" because they attend this program?

No. Mental retardation is defined as significantly sub-average intellectual functioning with impairments in adaptive functioning. Children are referred because of problems associated with depression, anxiety, attention difficulties, and acting-out behaviors. These types of problems do not make a person mentally retarded. If a Life Skills Class and Partial Hospitalization Program is needed, the RESOLVE program is able to accommodate a child with mental retardation in a specially-designed Partial Hospitalization Program.

How often is therapy provided?

Therapy is occurring every moment your child is at the program. The program is designed in such a way that therapy is occurring, on different levels, all day long. Each day, your child will be part of group therapy sessions. Some of these groups have a specific purpose; for example, groups on depression, anxiety, or substance abuse. Other groups are more open-ended and clients are able to bring their own concerns. Groups may also take the form of therapeutic activities; for example, the climbing gym, Touchstone Theater, and teambuilding activities. Individual therapy sessions are provided on an as-needed basis and can occur every day if the client's needs dictate this. Family therapy sessions are provided as agreed upon by the parents.

Can we have outside therapy providers?

It is possible to have outside services in addition to Partial Hospitalization. However, in some instances, this may be difficult. Partial Hospitalization is considered to be an “inclusive” service, meaning that all of a client’s and family’s needs can be met with this service. In the instance when needs cannot be met completely by the Partial Hospitalization Program, these needs will be established and addressed through the interagency process.

What if I need help with my child at home?

The RESOLVE staff, during home visits, family therapy sessions, or 20-day meetings, can assist you and your family in developing a plan that meets the needs of your child and family.

The two most important aspects of the RESOLVE program are the quality of relationships that can be established with clients and parents, and the level of communication that is maintained. At any time, if you have questions, concerns, suggestions, or just the need to talk, do not hesitate to approach a RESOLVE staff member. Our interest is in respecting you as an equal member of the treatment team.

“The Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 declares itself to be an equal rights and opportunity agency. As an equal rights and opportunity agency, it does not discriminate against individuals or groups because of race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status or non-relevant handicaps and disabilities as defined by law.”

For information regarding this statement, or special accommodations, please contact Dr. Dennis Riker, Director of Human Resources and Research Services, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, 6 Danforth Drive, Easton, PA 18045-7899, (610) 252-5550, TDD/TTY Hearing Impaired (610) 252-3786.