

## **YBGR School Based Services Information Handout for Educators**

School based services is a partnership between the Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch (YBGR) and your school to provide specialized mental health services to students and their families. YBGR is a licensed mental health center. Our partnership involves YBGR hiring two mental health staff, including a master's level program therapist and a bachelor's or equivalent level behavior specialist.

### ◆ **What does that mean for you as an educator?**

Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch and your school have agreed to house a therapist and behavior specialist in your school. School Based services has a smaller caseload, averaging 10-15 students compared to a school counselor who sometimes is responsible for 100's of students. They work directly in the classroom and sometimes need to schedule times outside of the classroom for individual and group therapy.

The **program therapist** offers Individual, Group and Family therapy to address more in depth and intensive issues with your students to meet their social/emotional/behavioral needs that may be affecting the classroom, school, and home or community environment. The therapist will work with the student's teacher(s) to identify appropriate times to meet with the student. There may be times when the therapist helps the student within the classroom setting. Therapists are not tutors nor may they offer educational assistance to students.

The **behavior specialist** works with school staff to identify areas where a student needs more support. Perhaps, a teacher has a student who struggles during reading or math. The teacher may recognize that if this student has additional structure from the behavior specialist the student will be successful. A student may struggle at recess or during lunch, the YBGR staff can work this time into their schedule and offer support during these unstructured times, such as modeling and teaching coping skills to the youth. Behavior Specialists are not tutors nor may they offer educational assistance to clients. Their role is to provide social, emotional and behavioral guidance and structure.

### ◆ **What are the benefits for having YBGR staff in your school?**

The therapist and behavior specialist are trained to work with students who have emotional disturbances. The benefit of these two staff being in your school is the **additional support** for teachers, paraprofessionals, and students.

The intention of school based services is to provide mental health support to youth during the school day in the school setting. Often, these students are pulled out of school to see outpatient therapists or other mental health professionals. By utilizing school based services, **attendance often increases, students engagement in mental health services often increases**, as does **family involvement** at school.

### ◆ **What do YBGR teams need from teachers and school personnel?**

School based staff need **REFERRALS** from teachers, principals, school counselors, paraprofessionals, and other school staff. YOU are the experts on which students need

additional support. School based staff rely on these referrals to identify the students most in need of mental health services.

School based staff need a **TEAMWORK** approach. As mental health workers, school based staff are required to complete quarterly treatment plans for each student on their caseload. They will be asking for your input and need your willingness to offer support. This relationship is reciprocal. A teacher may want additional input on how to work with an identified student. School based staff are willing to give feedback and help in brainstorming ideas on how to best address student's needs. Additionally, school based staff need access to the identified students for in-class intervention as well as for pull-out services when needed.

◆ **How does a child qualify for YBGR School based services?**

There are two qualifying factors for this program: meeting SED criteria and a funding source. School based staff are trained to determine these two factors. Once a student is referred for services, YBGR staff work with parents and guardians to determine eligibility.

Students that are determined to be **Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED)** by the YBGR therapist in mental health terms qualify for services. Students do not have to be identified as meeting the requirements for Special Education services to receive these services.

Students on Medicaid are financially eligible for school based services. Medicaid funding ensures the student will be able to have therapist and behavior specialist services. In addition, our staff follows up on any private insurance benefits or HMK/CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Plan) that may be available to pay for services. Staff also offers a sliding-fee scale to parents who may be interested in services but do not have any insurance benefits. Please know that most private insurance policies will only pay for the program therapist services and often times behavior specialist services are not covered.

◆ **Do schools pay for YBGR staff to be on school campuses?**

Schools do not pay a direct cost for YBGR staff to be in your school. However, there are in-direct costs such as space, office supplies, and copying that are provided by school districts.

◆ **What are the goals for the partnership between the school and YBGR?**

The primary goal is to help at-risk students be successful behaviorally, socially, emotionally, and academically. We aim to keep students in their own communities and in the public school setting!

For more information contact your site YBGR team or contact:

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