

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Returning to school for many is an exciting time, but for some it can be stressful, and even more so during a global pandemic. For many students, school will look different this year due to the many changes that have taken place to help keep them safe.

Here are some ways that parents and caregivers can support their students:

- Open and honest communication – regularly check in with your child to see how they are doing
- Acknowledge and validate their concerns
- Reassure children about the safety measures that are in place at their schools
- Discuss changes as they happen
- Maintain sleeping, eating and household routines to help foster a sense of stability
- Help your child stay focused on the positives, such as getting to see their friends and teachers

Southeastern's Counseling and Children's Services is available to help students and families during this time. Southeastern provides school-based, home-based, outpatient and telehealth services to help provide emotional support and guidance to students and families. Southeastern is here to help.



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SOUTHEASTERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE PLAY BASED THERAPY SERVICES

By Christie Lueth

Southeastern Behavioral HealthCare is in the second year of the Early Childhood grant and now has 12 clinicians who have completed training for play based therapy and are working on obtaining their supervised hours to become Registered Play Therapists (RPT). Southeastern has three clinicians trained in Theraplay and one RPT. Southeastern provided play therapy to 229 children during the first year of the grant and provided play-based services to the rural Headstart programs in Watertown, Madison, Brookings, Flandreau, Garretson, and Baltic.

Play therapy, a method of therapy that is particularly beneficial for children ages 3-12, is a method of meeting and responding to the mental health needs of children. A play therapist is trained to observe the child's behavior during the play sessions, explore issues with the child, make a diagnosis and construct activities. Theraplay uses elements of play therapy, but its focus is on working with both parents and child together to build or repair attachment in the relationship.

Over the last several months, the program has made several adaptations so that therapists can continue to meet the needs of children during this time of COVID-19. Over 200 play kits were delivered to children and families during the pandemic so that clinicians can provide guided activities with children during telehealth visits. Clinicians can also meet with families over the phone or can set up an outdoor play station to meet with children outdoors. The program is continuing to take referrals for play based therapy. Please contact Christie Lueth at 605-336-0510 or sdecmhc@southeasternbh.org for more information.

EXPERIENCE OF GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

By Jen Johnson, MS

Southeastern Behavioral HealthCare recently had nine therapists get certified in Grief Therapy and will be starting its first Experience of Grief Support Group in October. Grief can be defined as the thoughts, feelings and behaviors connected to the loss of something important. When we talk about grief, it is most often in the context of bereavement. Grief can feel very lonely and isolating and it can affect us on a variety of levels. While no two people experience grief in the exact same way, there can be similarities. This support group will focus on helping people who have experienced grief and loss connect with others who will be able to understand and relate to what they are going through. This will be a safe and supportive environment where group members can talk to others about their pain and loss. The support group is aimed to help group members:

- Process thoughts, feelings and experiences related to grief
- Increase understanding of the grief process
- Understand triggers to their grief
- Build healthy coping skills

For more information, please contact Jen Johnson at 605-950-2831.

TRANSITION HOUSE

By Tina McCorkell

Southeastern was awarded funding from the Department of Social Service, Division of Behavioral Health for Supported Housing for Addiction Recovery and Empowerment (SHARE). Southeastern also partnered with a local Sioux Falls landlord to renovate 11 apartments for this program. The units are in a secured wing of an existing building and come fully furnished with a small fridge, microwave, linens, and hygiene products for participants to use. Apartments have a full bathroom in each room, and each participant has access to a free washer and dryer. Participants will be provided with meals each day and will have access to on-site case management and groups such as Life Skills and Budgeting.

The Transitional Housing Program will provide safe and stable housing coupled with intensive coordinated services for adults who are struggling with symptoms of a mental illness and substance use. The program will provide stable housing so that participants can focus on their health, well-being, and recovery. While in the program, participants will work with a case manager to develop a treatment plan to set goals to help them gain the skills, knowledge and supports to be able to live independently. This will include attending mental health and addiction treatments, looking for and maintaining employment, and getting connected with community resources. Participants will be provided with transportation to work, treatment and other appointments, and will have access to on-site staff to help them achieve their treatment plan goals.

For more information on the Transition House please contact Kim Hansen at 605-271-2376 or kimh@southeasternbh.org.

EDUCATION & INTEGRATION – TRANSITION PROGRAM

By Anthony Helland

Education and Integration's (E&I) Transition Program has been serving young adults ages 18 to 21 for two years. During this time, the program has supported 10 individuals on their transitional path towards adulthood and welcomed other students at E&I to take part in the groups that are offered by the program.

As a year-round program, these young adults receive consistent support and access to enriching curriculum that is geared toward life skills, employment preparedness, healthy living, and money management. Laura Plummer, classroom teacher for the Transition Program, recently gathered reflections from program participants about their favorite program activities and the personal achievements that they have made. A few of the favorites include, cooking opportunities, money math, hands-on independent living skills, paid work opportunities at the school such as working in the kitchen and coffee shop, volunteering, and business tour connections. Some of the achievements that were acknowledged by the transition students include finishing high school credits and graduating, utilizing coping skills, building self-confidence with employment skills, and learning numerous skills to help them be successful in the adult world. Having the opportunity to assist students prepare for adulthood is what Southeastern's Transition Program is all about, while the students' realization of that readiness is what makes this program so rewarding to be a part of.

For more information about the Transition Program, please contact Anthony Helland at 605-335-8956 or Anthonyh@southeasternbh.org.

DONATIONS!

Southeastern is so grateful for all of those who donate to our organization! With your support, we are able to provide services that enhance the emotional and behavioral well being of children, adults and families and in turn strengthen our community.

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