



Developmental Disabilities Child & Family Clinical Resource Team Orange County Department of Mental Health

About the Team

The Orange County Department of Mental Health's Developmental Disabilities Clinical Resource Team exists to support school-aged youth (ages 4-21) with developmental disabilities and challenging behaviors that significantly impact learning, daily routines and the family's ability to function. Specializing in autism spectrum disorders, the team operates from the scientifically validated principles and methodologies of Applied Behavior Analysis and partners with parents/guardians to define and understand the function of problem behaviors and provide prevention, intervention, and replacement skill strategies. The team primarily works with children enrolled in the Coordinated In-Home Supports (CIHS) Project, families and mentors employed by the six providers of community habilitation however; limited funding is available to provide service to others.

Scope of Service

- conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA)
- develop strategies and/or plans to prevent, replace & reduce problem behaviors
- instruct and model strategies and components of plans implementation
- monitor for integrity of plan Implementation and effect
- revise plans as needed based on data analysis
- participate in team meetings (with sufficient notification & availability)
- provide group training and clinical consultations on a variety of topics
- conduct a functional behavior *analysis* of problem behavior when safe and appropriate

Team Composition, Assignment and Next Steps

The team consists of part-time licensed or certified professionals experienced with this population under contract with the county. Disciplines include behavior analysis, special education, occupational therapy, and mental health counseling. Children and families are assigned to a primary team member based on best match to presenting need, availability, and geography. Other team members may be pulled in to provide assistance.

Upon receipt of signed consents, the team member assigned will contact the parent/guardian to schedule an initial set of home visits to begin the FBA, a systematic way of gathering information, define and understand the problem behavior within the environment in which it occurs. This process should take approximately six to eight weeks from initial contact and typically includes:

- review of educational/clinical assessments and plans; habilitative plans
- parent/caregiver interview and where appropriate, input from the child/youth
- observation of behavior at home and sometimes school
- baseline data collection by parent/caregiver
- analysis of information and best guess about why the behavior occurs and what keeps it going
- connect with medication prescribers, therapists, teachers and other school personnel when needed

The outcome of the assessment process leads to one of the following next steps:

Short Term Limited Consultation-Simple strategies, information and training will meet the need. Examples: structuring the home environment, visual schedules for task completion, social stories, etc.

OR

Ongoing Consultation-An increasing or imminent risk to self and/or others is verified, the child is enrolled in the CIHS Project, plans are developed.

- Behavior Intervention Plans are written to reduce problem behavior; they contain proactive and reactive strategies. Some may include NYS OPWDD Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention-Revised (SCIP-R) interventions to be used only when other strategies have failed and there is imminent danger. Requirements include parental informed consent plus training for SCIP-R certified mentors on the specific interventions included in the plan. Use of the interventions must be reported and documented.
- Learning Support Plans are written to specify the methodology for teaching/shaping new skills/alternative behaviors to replace or compete with problem behaviors.

Limitations

Service is generally only available afternoons, evenings and weekends. Team members are typically fully scheduled with appointments at least two weeks out.

This is *not* a crisis response service. In a crisis call Mobile Mental Health @ 888-750-2266 or 911.

While school observations can be conducted, the team cannot develop plans for school implementation.

The team is bound by professional ethics of each discipline and the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts.

Plans are written or revised when supported by data

For situations beyond the expertise of team members and/or when the function cannot be determined and it is unsafe to conduct a Functional Behavior *Analysis* and/or when a higher level of care is required, every effort will be made to refer out to a more appropriate resource.

Expectations of Parents-Commitment, Communication & Consistency

The team is respectful of parent/caregiver time, but for optimal success:

- Take advantage of the many free educational opportunities available annually. Those with children enrolled in the CIHS Project are required to take a minimum of four hours annually; and
- Provide data as requested so that a plan can be developed and reviewed for effect. There are a variety of methods and tools; the team will make every attempt to simplify this process, provide support and guidance; and
- Implement the strategies and/or plans developed to foster consistency; and
- Respond to the team's contacts through your preferred method of communication in a timely fashion. Three documented contact attempts with no response and/or multiple missed appointments without cancellations may result in service suspension; and
- Promptly speak up about concerns; initiate contact with the clinician assigned or team leader; and
- Communicate significant changes ASAP (contact information, school placement; medications, etc.)

For more information go to www.orangecountygov.com/718/

Or contact *Christine Smallin, LMSW, MA*
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