

YOUTH TREATMENT PROGRAM

The Youth Treatment Program (YTP) is an innovative residential treatment program serving young people from San Luis Obispo County who are struggling with their present living situation and need a different living structure to recover and become stable.

YTP is located in a restored Victorian home in residential San Luis Obispo California. This home is a seven-bed group residential care facility with services authorized by the California Health and Safety Code. The services provided by YTP are contracted by San Luis Obispo County Mental Health for AFDC eligible youth that reside in our county. Referrals are accepted from County Mental Health, Child Welfare Services, and Juvenile Services. Our community-based residential care and psychological services are provided to youth between the ages of 12-17 and non-minor dependents. The typical length of stay is dependent on the individual and family needs.

YTP's mission is to help empower each youth to live, work, and grow in their community. To this end, the goal for youth living at YTP is reunification with family and/or to achieve permanent, life-long connections with caring adults. Placement at YTP allows youth to remain in their home community and maintain their access to family, schools, and friends to continue participation in jobs, sports and extra-curricular activities within their community.

YTP is a restorative, trauma-informed treatment program. Treatment is rooted in the most current research on the neurobiology of human behavior and how developmental stress and trauma changes the brain and interrupts the formation of healthy attachments and relationships. The program's philosophy assumes changing behavior requires changing the brain.

The program is centered on the principle that youth heal (and behavior changes) in the context of adults who are safe, regulated, predictable, empathic, and attuned. YTP is focused on how to create the conditions for the youth's brain and body to restore as much calm and self-regulation as possible as the foundation for growth, learning and intrinsically motivated behavior change.

Youth that feel better, do better; youth that feel safe with adults, behave better. Often neurologically-activated in either a fight, flight or freeze response (survival physiology), these youth have not learned how to rest and thrive in the trust of adult care. Survival physiology originating out of a need for physical and emotional safety (related to chronically elevated cortisol and adrenaline levels) shows up in behavior as resisting adult authority, aggression, secrecy, avoidance, stealing, hoarding, and overeating, etc.; this physiology can also show up in behavior as isolation, depression and compliance—in the primal search for adult approval.

YTP staff are trained to work with these youth to find more effective ways for them to meet their needs for physical and emotional safety. “Repairs” or “Restorative tasks” are opportunities for the youth to learn new skills and change their neurobiology within the context of healthy adult relationships. Working through ongoing relational ruptures and repairs create opportunities to learn how to build trust with adults—which is at heart of how growth and change occurs at YTP. This restorative, trauma-informed approach concentrates on “connection before correction” and strives to build a sense of alliance (rather than compliance) with each youth—where youth are able to trust the care of adults and also trust adults’



Transitions-Mental Health Association
Post Office Box 15408, San Luis Obispo CA 93406
Phone: (805) 540-6500 • Fax: (805) 540-6501 • info@t-mha.org



limits as care.

As a structured, therapeutic program, YTP offers a variety of services to meet the goals of the youth and their family:

- Weekly individual, group and family therapy
- Evidence-based treatment modalities
- “Sensory Sanctuary” to calm and regulate the nervous system (with staff support)
- Equine therapy
- Treatment Team Meetings/Child Family Team Meetings
- Education within the public school system; support through school meetings, IEPs, and tutoring for homework
- Medical/dental services
- Psychiatric consultation and Medication Management through County Mental Health.
- Recreational, art, and social activities within the community (i.e. gym; sports; music; yoga; dance; martial arts)
- Independent living skills training & vocational assistance
- Health/sex education
- Referral to outside therapeutic resources when applicable, such as Drug & Alcohol Services

In conclusion, the restorative, trauma-informed approach is aligned with the strength-based principles of wholeness, wellness, stages of change, and resiliency at the heart of the *Wellness & Recovery Model*—a model brought to life at Transitions-Mental Health Association.



Transitions-Mental Health Association
Post Office Box 15408, San Luis Obispo CA 93406
Phone: (805) 540-6500 • Fax: (805) 540-6501 • info@t-mha.org

