

COMPASS PROJECT

(CHILDREN OF MISSISSIPPI AND THEIR PARENTS ACCESSING STRENGTHS-BASED SERVICES)

PURPOSE: To enhance coordinated, community-based children's mental health services in the Jackson area at the service delivery, administrative, and policy levels. This will be accomplished by bringing together current public and private not for profit child serving agencies (mental health, education, juvenile justice, education, vocational rehabilitation, protective services, non-profit agencies) in a consortium with permeable boundaries between agencies and with the power to use funds flexibly to meet the needs of individual children and families.

PHILOSOPHY: All services are driven by Wrap Around Principles and Best Practices in children's services. These include: 1) Individualized services based on children's and families' needs, not on artificial program stipulations. 2) Strengths-based partnerships with families. 3) Culturally competent, neighborhood centered and family-focused interventions. 4) Collaborative partnerships among agencies and families' informal support systems. 5) Unconditional services and attitudes. 6) Accountability to stakeholders by providing demonstrated outcomes.

GOALS:

- 1) To strengthen family ties and functioning.
- 2) To enhance the adjustment of youths with serious emotional disturbances , as evidenced by decreases in symptoms, better school functioning, less demand for long term residential care, and decreased contacts with the juvenile justice system.
- 3) To reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and long term residential treatment stays.
- 4) To strengthen inter-agency cooperation and creativity.
- 5) To serve as a clinically effective, cost efficient model that can be replicated in other areas of Mississippi.

WHO WOULD BE SERVED: Hinds County youths with serious emotional disturbances and their families. Youths with serious emotional disturbances are defined as:

- 1) Less than 22 years old.
- 2) Diagnosed, or diagnosable, using DSM-IV criteria with disturbances of thought, mood or behavior.
- 3) Having deficits in their adaptive functioning.
- 4) Receiving, or in need of, services from at least two agencies.

SERVICES: Services would include, but not be limited to:

1. Round-the-clock crisis intervention
2. Intensive home based interventions, including, but not limited to, therapy, respite, concrete assistance and one-to-one supervision.
3. Intensive Case Management
4. Diagnostic and Evaluation Services, including early identification and prevention services.
5. Family support, education and advocacy.
6. Multi-Agency Planning Team.
7. School-based services.
8. Therapeutic Foster Care
9. Traditional mental health services.

BENEFITS:

1. Increased satisfaction of youths and families.
2. Community and family ties are preserved and regular development is not compromised.
3. Reductions in violent and delinquent behavior.
4. Savings from reduced dependence on expensive longer term residential treatments and hospitalizations can be reinvested in the system to serve more children.
5. Decreased bureaucracy and replication of services.
6. Increased accountability of providers to funding sources and tax payers.

FUNDING SOURCE: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services which is a division of Health and Human Services. This is a five year grant, increasing from \$1,000,000.00 during the first year to \$2,500,000.00 during the peak years. A 1:3 match is required during the first year, with this becoming 3:1 by the fifth year. Applicants are expected to plan for alternate methods of funding services by the end of the five year period. Such alternatives might include medicaid waivers, re-allotting monies that are saved from decreased dependence on long term residential care and hospitalizations, or using other state dollars that can be incorporated into the state's Mental Health Plan.

REFERENCES: Several states have used these funds in an exemplary fashion. Two of the best examples are Kentucky and Wisconsin (Wrap Around Milwaukee). Outstanding practitioners of Wrap Around principles are Kaleidoscope in Chicago, Project Wrap in LaGrange, Illinois and any of several projects sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Three Mississippi programs, Mississippi Families as Allies, Mississippi Connections in Hattiesburg, and Hope Haven in Jackson, have been recognized locally and nationally for providing excellent services using Wrap Around principles. Unfortunately, these programs have financial restraints in being able to provide all support necessary for a comprehensive system of care. Duke University has a good research base supporting the efficacy and cost efficiency of community based children's mental health services that are based on Wrap Around principles. More details on these programs are available upon request.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Share with us your perspective of the needs of these Jackson area youths.
2. Encourage communication and coordination among policy makers and legislators dealing with education, mental health, juvenile justice and child protective services. Many people are trying to do many good things, and services are often replicated while huge service gaps remain.
3. Share with these same individuals the importance of Wrap Around principles in children's mental health services. Some of these ideas go against traditional thinking and our intuition, but **THEY WORK!!**
4. Assist in identifying possible sources of match and ways to maintain funding at the end of the grant period.
5. As you have opportunities, support the importance of these principles and this project in public appearances and statements.
6. Family members are needed to assist in the design, implementation and evaluation of services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Joy Hogge, Ph.D., Director, Children's Mental Health Services
Catholic Charities, Inc.
748 North President St.

Jackson, MS 39202
(601) 948-4493 ext 102 (will be paged if not there)
joyhogge@aol.com