

Alternatives For Youth



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Alternatives For Youth is a partnership between the Suffolk County Department of Social Services, Suffolk County Department of Probation, Suffolk County Office of Mental Hygiene, and the Suffolk County Youth Bureau.



Alternatives For Youth (AFY)

A Parent Driven Program For Families

**TO ENROLL IN THE AFY PROGRAM
CONTACT PROBATION:
631-853-7889**

**Alternatives For Youth Program Office:
3555 Veterans Highway, Suite R
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ALTERNATIVES FOR YOUTH FAMILY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you feel the need to express dissatisfaction with EAC's Alternatives For Youth Program, you have the opportunity to do so. You can contact the Program Director to discuss your issues.

Rick Wolf, LMSW
Program Director
631-648-2700x222

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive from the Program Director, you can contact the Regional Director.

Andrea Ramos-Topper, LMSW
Regional Director
631-439-0480

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive from the Supervisor, you can contact the EAC Vice President.

Rebecca Bell
Vice President
516-539-0150

Suffolk County Mental Health Single Point Of Access (SPOA)

SPOA is for families where the youth has a psychiatric diagnosis and the family is in need of intensive family counseling. SPOA Workers meet with the family a minimum of three times a week, coordinating your child's care through a network of agencies in Suffolk County. SPOA offers a number of diverse services to meet your families needs. Your Case Manager can provide their brochure and DVD upon request. SPOA can work with the family for up to a year.

EAC Peer Specialist Aftercare

While Peer Specialists can work with your youth for initial 30 days of the program, they can also provide aftercare services, remaining a strong, positive role model in your youth's life.

The Peer Specialist meets with your family during the last visit with your AFY Case Manager so there is a seamless transition from one service to the next.

The Peer Specialist continues to engage the AFY youth in recreation activities and support the strides that have been made during the first 30 days. Peer Specialists focus on confidence building skills and promoting positive choices in your youth's life.

For more information please contact:

Demishia Owens, Deputy Director

648-2700x221

CHANGES TO PINS LAW

In April 2005, the PINS process was radically changed by the state of New York. Here are some of the changes.

Diversion is now MANDATED by state law.

"Diversion" means that Probation is responsible for assuring that all possible efforts have been made in an effort to improve family functioning, keeping the family from needing to go before a judge. This includes any and all forms of counseling, parent education, evaluations, school interventions, and more.

- New York State has now mandated that the Suffolk County Probation Department is the lead agency responsible for the delivery of services for families seeking PINS petitions.
- There is no time limit for service.
- A family remains in the diversion program until either:
 1. The diversion program is assessed to be no longer needed due to marked improvement in behaviors.
 2. The diversion program is assessed to be ineffective and unlikely to be effective with continued involvement.
 3. The case can also be terminated if a parent or school is assessed to be uncooperative or non-compliant with the program's directives.
- If #2 occurs, the family can be referred to the Committee overseeing PINS Diversion. They will review the case for further recommendations. Even if the case is referred to the Committee, they can simply refer the family back to the diversion program for continued attempts. In rare circumstances they can refer a family on to Probation for Diversion through the Department of Probation.
- Parents/Guardians/School Districts are mandated to cooperate with diversion services and sanctions can follow if they fail to comply. For example, if a parent doesn't follow through on a referral or a school district fails to convene a required CSE, the parent or district could be viewed as failing to comply.

RUNAWAYS and PINS LAW

- If a child runs away the new PINS law mandates that the parent/guardian immediately file a missing persons report with their local police department. The Family Court no longer issues routine warrants for runaways.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AS A PARENT

- It is important the you go into this process with patience and an open mind. It will be difficult and emotionally trying at times. The County is mandated to respond based upon State law and the State has given the Oversight Committee the right to decide what services would best serve the youth.

OVERVIEW OF AFY SERVICES

The Alternatives For Youth Program starts with immediate, home based, crisis intervention for your family. An AFY Case manager will attempt to contact you within 24hrs of receipt of your referral from Probation and will offer to come to your home within 48 hrs after speaking with you.

AFY wants your family to succeed. While the AFY Case Manager is working with your family, we have an umbrella of services to help you along the way. It is a partnership between parents, the adolescent and the AFY Case Manager from day one.

1. Our primary focus is to get you immediate assistance and keep your family together.
2. All visits with the AFY Case Manager occur in your home.
3. AFY Case Managers will have consistent phone contact with the family.
4. For 30 days, AFY Case Managers will work with your family to help you get out of crisis and build supports in your community.

YOU ARE IN CONTROL

1. The program is completely voluntary. If you feel you cannot make the commitment to AFY services or do not like the services offered, you can withdraw at any time.
2. You can reapply for AFY services at any time if crisis occurs again.

Family Intervention Plan

1. Families will set their own goals with the assistance of the AFY Case Manager, focusing on core issues that continue to put the family in crisis.
2. With the assistance of the AFY Case Manager, families get to choose their own goals. This plan is based on family strengths.

AFTERCARE SERVICES

EAC's AFY Program works with your family for approximately 30 days to link you to different community resources. At the end of that time, AFY families may still need a helping hand. That's where AFTERCARE services come in. Aftercare Services provide longer term care for your family, typically 3-6 months, but can be up to a year to help keep your family on track.

There are four different types of aftercare, depending on your family's particular needs. They include:

- Family Service League Supportive Case Management
- DSS Preventive Services
- Suffolk County Mental Health, SPOA Services
- EAC Peer Specialist Aftercare

Family Service League (FSL) Supportive Case Management

FSL's aftercare program was specifically designed to incorporate families that have been through the AFY program so they continue to get the help they need. The FSL Case Manager meets with your family during the last visit with your AFY Case Manager so there is a seamless transition from one service to the next. During the next 3-6 months they monitor your family's progress to provide support and refer you to any additional services if needed.

DSS Preventive Services

DSS preventive aftercare is for families that are in need of "concrete services" from DSS. These include families that need assistance with housing, childcare, have/or had an open CPS case, or need assistance with applying for DSS benefits. The DSS Case Manager meets with your family during the last visit with your AFY Case Manager so there is a seamless transition from one service to the next. DSS Aftercare Case Managers works with the family, providing services typically for 3-6 months, but can be for up to a year.

AFY TEEN ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Teen Enrichment Program

In addition to the Peer Specialists working solely one on one with your youth, AFY has developed a social network called the Teen Enrichment Program comprised of male and female Peer Specialists, Case Managers and the Parent Resource Manager working hard to engage your youth in positive recreational and educational activities.

This includes both one on one and group outings. It can be as little as a one on one trip to the diner to talk or as big as climbing Mohonk Preserve touring NYC.

Twice a month, hold events for AFY youth that is both fun and educational. These events are an opportunity for youth to engage in a group that offers social support and positive activities. It provides AFY youth with an opportunity to express themselves, obtain knowledge on various topics related to their development, and socialize with other youth.

Topics include:

Anger Management	Substance Abuse Discussion
Resume Building	Interviewing Skills
Sex Education	Touring NYC
Hiking at Monhonk Preserve	Movies
Bowling	Minigolf

There is also a specialized peer group for young women. The **G.I.R.L.S. Group** focuses on teaching adolescent girls to make healthy choices in their life.

For further information on the program and topics contact:

Jessica Lugo, Case Manager @ 648-2700 x218.

PEER SPECIALIST SERVICES

While Peer Specialists play an integral part in the Teen Enrichment Program, they are also mentors for your adolescent. During the initial 30 days of the program they will meet with your adolescent to listen to him/her and act as a **POSITIVE ROLE MODEL**. Peer Specialists are extremely successful in engaging difficult youth that initially do not want to be part of the AFY process. By simply engaging them in recreation activities (such as playing sports, going to movies, taking them out to eat, etc.) they are able to get them to speak about their problems and get them involved in working with their families in the AFY process.

Supports Offered

- **Parent Training:** In addition to our crisis intervention services, we offer short term parent training services on issues specific to your needs.
- **Family Mediation:** Families needing more formal conflict resolution services will be referred to EAC's Community Mediation Center for Family/PINS mediation services.
- **Linking to Community Based Services:** Community services include educational advocacy, mentoring programs, mental health services, drug treatment and recreational services.
- **Medical Services:** Families may need medical services to meet their physical health needs. EAC works with the Department of Health to facilitate exams.
- **Immigration Services:** EAC staff can assist legal residents who are non-citizens in obtaining citizenship.
- **Additional Supports in your community:** EAC will assist you with finding supports in your community based on your individual needs. These include but are not limited to youth resources, community centers, food banks, WIC, domestic violence support.
- **Emergency Services and information:** EAC will leave you with our resource kit. At your fingertips you will have contact information for a wide variety of emergency and support information.

The AFY HOTLINE 631-707-5677

The HOTLINE is ONLY for families already enrolled in the program.

Why does Alternatives For Youth Have a Hotline?

The purpose of the Hotline is to provide your family with immediate assistance after business hours (9am-5pm) or on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) when you need immediate advice on difficult situations.

When should I call the hotline?

You might call the hotline when:

- You need help with planning how to get through a difficult situation with their child and cannot wait until normal business days/hours.
- You are unsure whether or not you need to call the police and require direction.
- You need assistance with how to calm your child down.
- You need a phone number for crisis services (such as hospitalization, Stony Brook, mental health).

When should I NOT use the hotline?

- To cancel appointments. Please leave a message on your assigned Case Manager's office voicemail, or cell phone.
- To give a non-emergency update. Please wait until normal business hours and call your assigned Case Manager.
- To schedule appointments. Please wait until normal business hours.
- To leave a message for your assigned Case Manager. Please leave a message on their office voicemail or cell phone.

When to call 911

- If your child's whereabouts are unknown and/or they have runaway from home, please immediately call 911 and file a missing person's report.
- If there is an incident of physical violence/abuse, immediately call 911 and get a police report.
- If someone is injured or if your child is threatening to harm themselves or others, call 911.

PARENTING SUPPORT

AFY's Parent Resource Manager offers short-term parent training services on issues specific to family need. These are offered both in group settings. **As part of the AFY program Parents are required to attend at least one class that pertains to their family issues.**

Courses include, but are not limited to:

Some Topics Of Our Parenting Group Workshop Curriculum

- Anger Management for Parents
- Eliminating Conflict By Setting Boundaries
- Your Child & Substance Abuse
- Being Internet and cell phone Savvy
- Pizza For Parents: Come and Share Your Stories

* and many, many more. Detailed calendars explaining each class will be provided to you at your intake appointment. If there are transportation issues you can have these done in-home.

*****All classes are also offered in Spanish*****

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMS
OFFERED CONTACT:**

JOHANNA LOPEZ

PARENT RESOURCE MANAGER

631-648-2700X212