



Targeting Emotional Aptitude Mindfully (T.E.A.M.) Grades 9-12

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to:

- Provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Meet the needs of our students who suffer from anxiety, depression, and school refusal
- Create a therapeutic learning environment in the high school
- Enable students with the tools and resources necessary to access the general education curriculum
- Increase the opportunity for students to interact with typically developing peers
- Increase the opportunity for students to transition back into the mainstream learning environment

Mission

The Westwood Regional School District takes a team approach as it places an emphasis on educating the “whole” child and is committed to effectively educating students with anxiety, depression, school refusal, trauma and social/peer issues. Our grades 9-12 program utilizes a therapeutic approach to address the individual needs of each student. It is our mission to appropriately support our students to not only meet their academic goals, but to also help them reach their full potential socially and emotionally in order to become successful members within society.

Vision

A therapeutic environment where individuals with mental health needs can learn, develop, and grow socially, emotionally and academically as they continue to work through their challenges to meet with success in all facets of life.

Therapeutic Learning Environment

We take a holistic approach to educating our students within the T.E.A.M. Day School starting with the physical environment. The T.E.A.M Day classroom is painted and decorated with a color scheme that is proven to reduce anxiety and stress, while promoting peacefulness and serenity. Furthermore, we have created a relaxed learning space equipped with sensory lighting, himalayan salt lamps, and soothing diffusers to ease anxiety. In addition, our learning environment provides comfortable flexible seating through an oversized couch, bean bag chairs, and extra large pillows. Moreover, our room is equipped with independent study carousels that provide students with the privacy they need should they choose to complete their work in a more secluded space as well as tables that facilitate and promote collaborative group work.

Therapeutic Supports:

Our T.E.A.M. Day School offers a variety of supports specifically tailored to meet each student's unique needs, while utilizing a mindful approach to education. In addition, we have two licensed Mental Health Clinicians on staff to deliver counseling services, daily check-ins, and on-site screenings if needed. Furthermore, our licensed therapists visit the homes of students to reduce the rate of school refusal and increase student attendance. In tandem with our licensed clinicians, we run Social Skills groups both during and after school hours. Moreover, the T.E.A.M. Day School provides the opportunity for individualized student schedules that are specific to each student's needs, while also providing ongoing behavioral data analysis of the student's progress.

Highlights:

- Individualized student schedules, tailored to student needs
- Home visits to reduce school refusal and increase student attendance
- Social Skills groups
- Daily check-ins
- On going behavioral data analysis
- Weekly team meetings to discuss each student's current progress
- Licensed Mental Health Clinicians on staff
- On-site screenings if needed
- Individual, Group, and Family Counseling services
- Small Class Sizes
- Therapeutic Learning Environment
- Modified School Day (9:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.)
- Mindfulness approaches integrated into instruction
- Art Therapy
- Therapy Dog

Curriculum

Students within the T.E.A.M Day School are educated using the district approved curricula that is aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and is modified according to their Individualized Education Plan. Each individual course curriculum can be accessed via our Atlas Curriculum Maps.

Mental Health Agency Partnership

Westwood Regional School District has partnered with CarePlus to deliver mental health services to our students while also supporting their families. Through this partnership, we are afforded connections to outside resources and services such as outside counseling, psychiatry services, support groups and in home therapy. Furthermore, we have the direct line to connect families with Perform Care and crisis interventions such as Crisis Mobile, should they need these supports in a time of need.

In addition to the supports provided to our students and their families, CarePlus also provides the Westwood School District with professional development opportunities for our staff. In educating our staff members we take away the stigma of mental illness and provide our teachers with the knowledge base necessary to understand the challenges our students are experiencing. Furthermore, our professional development opportunities equip our teachers with the tools necessary to effectively educate students as they re-enter the mainstream environment.

SUMMARY

Through the T.E.A.M. Day School Program, we are able to achieve the following:

- Effectively meet the needs of our emotionally fragile students through a placement in their home district
- Reduce or eliminate the number of hours a student is on extended home instruction
- Provide therapeutic supports to students to equip them with the tools and resources to manage their mental health challenges while accessing Westwood's curricula
- Progress monitor the students' progress and develop a transition plan back into the mainstream setting

Resources:

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