

RTC Family Tip Sheet

You are the expert of your family needs. As your child experiences serious mental health challenges, it affects the whole family. Consider the family goals that will best achieve improvement for the family relationships. Placing your child temporarily out of the home is not a sign of weakness on your part as a caregiver. It is recognizing the need for more assistance in helping your child and ultimately your family, be more successful throughout life.

Thinking through the need of a residential treatment center (RTCs) placement

- There are several ways to access a residential intervention for your child: Community Resource Collaboration Groups (CRCGs), the Relinquishment Avoidance Program (RTC Project), or private placement. Work with someone who has experience with placement options.
- Start as early as possible. If your child is 17 by the time they enter, it may be too late.
- Keep lots of records. You will need them if you want to apply for Disability (SSI) later.
- RTCs receive payment for services through insurance, private or public (Medicaid). Be sure you have spoken with your provider to see what your options are and then bring those up to the state placing agency.
- There are **never** any 'silly' or 'wrong' questions. If you do not get the answers you need at first, ask for an administration or program coordinator for those answers. If it is possible, see if you can be connected with someone or a support group who have had youth in placement. Do not be afraid to ask for a connection if you need to.

Referral

- The referral to a residential treatment facility will depend on the placement facility's policy: a private facility referral will depend on your insurance; Waco Center for Youth's referral come through your local CRCG; placement through the RTC Project will come through your Local Mental or Behavioral Health Authority (LMHA/LBHA) directly to the program which is housed in the Children's Behavioral Health Division of the Health and Human Services Commission.
- The eligibility/referral process should be explained to you in detail. If your first contact is not able to guide you successfully, ask for someone who can, whether a staff on the RTC project at the state level or a Family Partner on the local level. Make sure your questions about the process are fully answered.
- Know the time between referral and placement will vary depending on severity of need or bed capacity. Finding the appropriate placement up front will be advantageous to more successful outcomes.
- Certain documents are required to be filed for a referral. Work with someone to assist you to complete these. Usually, psychological testing is needed before placement. Your insurance may need to assist you with this.
- The time between referral and placement can be trying in the home. There should be someone providing you therapeutic support during this time. Make sure you have support. If behaviors escalate, seek help from the LMHA/LBHA or your psychiatrist.
- Remember, NEVER GIVE UP!! You may hit roadblocks in the process, however, there are always ways to get to the same outcome. If you don't get the answers, you need when you first reach out, ask that resource if they may know of other resources. Keep going until you find the right resource for you and your child to get the appropriate help.

Placement

- Once a placement is located, never be afraid to ask all the questions you need to feel comfortable. Your youth may have their own questions that need to be answered. Provide space for that. It will make them feel valued and heard.
- Communication, Communication, Communication!! The clinical staff may have "textbook" knowledge; however, your lived experiences will guide the progress of the treatment. If you feel communication is lacking, address it.
- Remember you are the expert of your child. Make sure the staff know the possible triggers and refusal points your youth may exhibit. This will inform the staff of possible crisis situations they may can head off before they escalate.
- Note who your youth mentions is making a difference in their lives. Make sure the RTC knows there is a significant staff in your youth's life. Ask your youth what makes them relate to them.
- Remember, this is your youth. His/her improvement should be priority by all involved. Anything you request or recommend, should be taken seriously. If not in the best interest therapeutically, you should be explained why.
- Stay involved with your youth daily and speak with the staff to hear both sides of any situations before you act. However, if you feel there is a need speak up, by all means, know you should. We can never be too involved.
- This process should be based on the strengths of your youth and your family. Sometimes when times have been tough at home, it is hard to identify those strengths. Make sure this is addressed during placement. Any directive or redirections to your youth should be addressed in a strength-based manner.

Transition

- Start talking about what your family will need to transition your youth back into the home successfully. This is the ultimate goal you are working toward and should be planned from the beginning. Since the average stay is noted as six months, working on what is needed to take place prior, allows both the youth and family to make adjustments earlier in the process.
- Home is not a temporary placement of a weekend or two, the RTC is the temporary placement. Your youth needs to feel their RTC experience is only for therapeutic purposes to help ensure more positive life experiences. Home "visitation" will most likely be introduced to your family.
- Make sure there is adequate support provided for when your youth is back in the home. A referral to a local mental health authority in your area should be given if you are not currently enrolled with them. In addition to the therapeutic needs of your youth being met, your need for support is also important. A Certified Family Partner can provide this. Be sure and ask the LMHA/LBHA for a family partner.



Are you a family member of a child or youth that has a mental or behavioral health condition? Are you interested in standing with other families to provide a united voice for systems change? If so, please contact us to learn more about Texas Family Voice Network.

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