

NJAMHAA MEMBERS' SHARE THEIR INNOVATIVE SERVICES FOR



This edition of NJAMHAA News is the first of a new format. Member providers will be invited to share information on their programs based on a theme identified for each issue. For the current edition, the theme is innovative services for youth.

NJAMHAA thanks the members who provided the information below and looks forward to highlighting many other members' programs and their impact in future issues of NJAMHAA News.

Rutgers Health - University Behavioral Health Care's (UBHC's) School and Community Based Programs

Through these programs, the UBHC staff is partnering with school districts across the state to identify problematic behavior and intervene during the early stages to assist parents and school personnel in developing comprehensive strategies for addressing these behaviors, explained

Sonia Rodrigues-Martó, MA, LPC, ACS, Program Director. The broad range of services consists of individual, family and group counseling; psychoeducational groups for children, parents and school staff; after-school programs and in-school suspension counseling; crisis

intervention; psychiatric consultation and medication management; consultation for child study team

evaluations; staff development workshops and consultation; drug/alcohol prevention programming and assessment; and case management and integration with community programs.

"We customize our programs to meet the needs of every student, community and school district. We also provide a wide array of professional

development opportunities to school staff and workshops for parents in addition to our clinical services," Rodrigues-Martó said, adding that this is the only program in the state that brings child and adolescent psychiatrists to provide weekly consultation and medication management in schools.

"We also collect data to track trends among issues gaining prevalence in schools and then turnkey that information to provide staff and parents with professional development about the current issues facing the school and community. Additionally, we have weekly team meetings in our programs to track each student's progress and to identify any areas that need further improvement or development," Rodrigues-Martó added.

Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services' HOST Program - Homeless Outreach Support Team

Bridgeway has received a five-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services



Administration to implement this program, which will be unique in its sole focus on underserved adolescents (16 to 24 years old) living with serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance, as well as those with co-occurring substance use disorders. "Through HOST, Bridgeway will provide evidence-based treatment and supports, assertive outreach and early intervention services to assist each individual to navigate through the complexities of the homelessness and mental health systems," Lisa Giannascoli, Director of Marketing and Development, explained.

"HOST will utilize technology by working with our partners in emergency rooms, shelters and police departments to notify us when a homeless person is identified. Once notified, HOST staff will provide rapid assessments and linkages with housing and services," she said.

Bridgeway developed a living room in its Elizabeth office to serve as the HOST Hub where homeless individuals can drop in to use computers and other resources and receive care management. The program will utilize Critical Time Intervention (CTI), a time-limited case management model to help individuals strengthen their support networks. "CTI has been proven to decrease homelessness, hospitalizations and re-arrests, and increase individuals' ability to successfully transition back into the community," Giannascoli said. "Ultimately, we will connect individuals to the local continuum of care and housing authorities so they can access appropriate supportive housing."

Trinitas Regional Medical Center's Adolescent Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Program, Child and Adolescent Outpatient Unit
Atara Hiller, PsyD, Psychologist,



Coordinator, created this program in 2014 to provide more effective and efficient treatment to teens at high risk, who present with suicidal and self-harming behaviors and co-morbid difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, interpersonal difficulties, school avoidance, substance use, eating disordered

behavior and trauma symptoms. "These clients often have a significant history of utilizing and cycling through higher levels of care and/or languishing in

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treatment for long periods of time without much improvement. This delay causes frustration and further depression in teens and their families and burnout among clinicians," Dr. Hiller said.

The adolescent DBT program consists of individual therapy for teens, individual parent coaching sessions, multi-family skills groups, telephone coaching and a DBT consultation team. "It is innovative in allowing greater access to high-quality, evidence-based treatment to teens and families who cannot otherwise afford out-of-pocket treatment costs," according to Dr. Hiller. "Moreover, the program is the only one of its kind to offer DBT in Spanish, thereby expanding the reach of this beneficial service."

Since its inception, the adolescent DBT program has served more than 100 English- and Spanish-speaking families, and the program continues to grow. "Research on the adolescent DBT program at Trinitas has shown that its clinicians have been effective at helping clients achieve their treatment goals and reduce the need for higher levels of care, with high levels of retention and satisfaction with treatment," Dr. Hiller said.

New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders' (NJCTs') Tim Howard Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy is the only program of its kind in the nation. "It helps level the playing field for teens with Tourette Syndrome [TS] and it promotes self-advocacy, self-leadership,

resilience and grit—all important skills to succeed," said Executive Director Faith Rice. Established in 2014 for the New Jersey TS community, the Academy has been attracting teens from throughout the U.S., Canada and even Australia.

This intensive, four-day program takes place on Rutgers University's Busch Campus each August. Participants learn about the brain mechanisms behind TS, the psychological disorders that present challenges, coping skills and the social aspects of having a stigmatized condition.

"For many participants, the Academy is the first time they have an opportunity to spend time with other teens diagnosed with this often misunderstood neurological disorder. The coaches serve as mentors and role models who, through the sharing of their own experiences with TS, are instrumental in our participants'

growth and success," Rice said. "The Academy provides an intentional space to build critical skills that will empower young people with TS to excel and, through that success, inspire others. Teens become advocates for themselves and others. They face their next school year with a newfound confidence, new sense of self and newly acquired coping skills. They also leave the Academy with new friends, connections and contacts they can reach out to for support."

Community Access Unlimited (CAU's) Transition Opportunities Program (TOP)

Through its Transition Opportunities Program (TOP), CAU, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, provides a comprehensive array of residential and support services to youth (13 to 21 years old) who are aging out of the child welfare system.



"Members receive independent and transitional living services to prepare them for a self-reliant adulthood. Depending on individual need, services can include day programs, supervised housing, community services, daily living skills, case management, advocacy/outreach, education assistance, planning and counseling. TOP strives to create new services when unique needs arise," said Joanne Oppelt, Assistant Executive Director, Business Development.

"TOP is more than just a set of youth services. It's a movement to empower and shape youth at risk into confident, independent adults," Oppelt said, adding that TOP offers support and education in sexuality and relationships, civil rights, social advocacy, parenting, drug and alcohol awareness, vocational skills and more. Oppelt emphasized that referring to the youth as "members" fosters their sense of autonomy. "Choice is essential to CAU's approach to supporting youth, and we train our staff to nurture while giving individuals the space to make their own decisions," she added.

"When our youth members successfully complete our TOP program, we rest assured knowing they have the tools they need to go out and achieve their goals. Our members, dare we say, come out on top," Oppelt said.

Jewish Family Service of Atlantic and Cape May Counties' (JFS') Vocational Services Program

The JFS vocational program is a pre-employment program for high school students (14 to 21 years old) with disabilities. Through interactive workshops, participants develop "soft skills" for obtaining and maintaining jobs. Topics include communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, problem solving, financial planning, résumé building and job-specific social skills. Participants work directly with job coaches to develop résumés, are trained on using public transportation and receive assistance in completing job applications. After completing the skills sessions, participants have opportunities to participate in work sampling and internships, according to Nina Stolzenberg, PhD, Director of Vocational Services.

In addition to pre-employment training, JFS job coaches specialize in finding the right match between each employee and a job. They are trained vocational specialists who assess job tasks and provide supplemental training on or off site. They stay involved to ensure the employees meet business needs while respecting the employers' values and standards.

"This program creates positive change for individuals. This vulnerable population is given unique opportunities to gain one-on-one support, as well as comprehensive workshops catered to their abilities and learning styles. Program participants have shown significant increases in confidence, and improvement in communication skills, teamwork and problem solving. Upon program completion, consumers perceive themselves as workers and are properly prepared and even excited for opportunities in the workforce," Dr. Stolzenberg said.

