

# ABRAXAS

## SPECIALIZED TREATMENT PROGRAM @ SOUTH MOUNTAIN

Abraxas Specialized Treatment Program, formally known as The Open Residential Firesetting and Sexual Behavior Treatment Program, now not only works with youth with firesetting and sexual behavior issues but also with youth who identify with the following issues: neglect, abuse, disruptive attachments, various mental health disorders and those identified as high risk for trafficking. Until these issues are adequately addressed, youth may work to process trauma or manage stress in unhealthy ways. This can result in children displaying acting out and significant behavioral issues.

The treatment approach is in part determined by the etiology of the behavior. Residents learn to take responsibility for their behaviors, develop a thorough understanding of their behavioral cycles and explore the life experiences that may have contributed to their behaviors. Additionally, they increase their awareness of others and the impact of their behaviors, and develop a relapse prevention plan as they prepare to transition from the program.

Residents learn about and are required to maintain appropriate boundaries, learn to develop age appropriate social skills, as well as establishing and maintaining healthy attachments. Residents also develop an understanding of their triggers, high risk situations and seemingly unimportant decisions. Due to the age range of the population served in the program, as well as the fact that residents are treated in an open environment, special consideration is paid to the potential risks to other residents and to the community and is a significant factor in determining the appropriateness of placement.

The treatment process at Abraxas is designed to address these issues with youth in an individualized manner. Therapeutic staff works with youth to develop healthy boundaries, establish appropriate attachments, cultivate age appropriate social skills, expand coping strategies, process trauma, and develop an understanding of and correctives for their behaviors. Youth are provided with numerous age-appropriate and experiential learning techniques to express themselves in more socially appropriate ways. This includes community service events, field trips and challenge course activities.

The Abraxas Specialized Treatment Program at South Mountain is equipped with three master's level clinicians with extensive experience in working with children and families utilizing the TF-CBT model. Leadership, clinicians and all other staff members are trained specifically to utilize a trauma informed approach outlined by the Sanctuary Model. The program is now in its second year of certification by the state of Pennsylvania as a Specialized Treatment Setting for youth who are at risk for sex trafficking or human trafficking. All staff that work within the program are trained to utilize the Child Victims of Human Trafficking Screening Tool. This tool increases our means to identify those that are victims or have a vulnerability to human trafficking. Youth participate in weekly awareness and prevention group curricula through A21 Trafficking Awareness based upon their level of need. These sessions address safety, identification of risk factors, safe use of social media and resources available to provide assistance upon discharge.

### ADMISSION CRITERIA:

Dependent or Delinquent  
Male Youth between the  
ages of 11 - 16

### CLINICAL SERVICES:

The clinical program is facilitated by a Master's level clinical director and overseen by a consulting psychiatrist.

#### THE PROGRAM IS BASED ON A FOUR PHASE CURRICULUM:

- Phase I: Introduction, Disclosure of problematic behaviors
- Phase II: Impulse Control, Affect Management, Thinking Errors and Cognitive Distortions
- Phase III: Moral Reasoning and improving Empathy Development
- Phase IV: Critical Advanced Skills (Triggers and Cues and Relapse Prevention)

Upon admission and prior to discharge, every youth receives a psychiatric evaluation. Various evidence and competency based curricula are utilized throughout the course of treatment.

- Sanctuary Model® Psycho-Ed Groups
- Boys Council
- Aggression Replacement Training (ART®)
- Pennsylvania Victim/Community Awareness
- Structured Sensory Interventions for Traumatized Children (SITCAP)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- PTSD Residential Treatment Curriculum
- Casey Life Skills
- A21 Trafficking Awareness

Youth participate in daily group counseling and have individual sessions once a week with a counselor and bi-weekly with a clinician. The program offers an individualized emphasis on trauma recovery and issues related to PTSD.

### ASSESSMENTS:

— Casey: Life Skills Training — Psychiatric Evaluation at Intake & Discharge — Child Victims of Human Trafficking

### EDUCATION:

All students attend the private, licensed, onsite school which is Pennsylvania Academic and Career Technical Training (PACTT) affiliated. Certified Special Education teachers are on staff as well as regular education teachers to provide support to students by adapting assignments and assessments to meet the individual developmental needs of each student. Upon arrival, students are assessed and placed in the elementary/middle school or the high school classrooms depending on their age and ability level. Both classrooms are designed to closely parallel public school practices to ensure positive academic performance upon discharge from the program. Cooperative learning and hands on manipulatives are commonly used to supplement lessons. Students visit the onsite library to encourage reading and literacy improvement outside of the classroom. Students are consistently rewarded for academic accomplishment, achieving honor roll and maintaining positive behavior in the classroom. For older or more academically advanced students, preparation programs are offered along with PSAT and SAT testing to prepare for post-secondary education.

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:

Family involvement is highly encouraged and paramount for successful reintegration upon completion of the program. Families are encouraged to visit youth bi-weekly for family conferencing sessions which are facilitated by the youth's counselor and directed by a Master's level clinician. Families are contacted by both the facility and the youth weekly to discuss treatment progress. In the event that families are unable to visit the program, conference sessions are made available via telephone or video. Transportation assistance is provided on a case by case basis.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE & RESTITUTION:

The Specialized Treatment Program has community partnerships with numerous local fire departments, universities and animal shelters. These partnerships provide educational opportunities, community awareness/engagement, and community service hours. Youth can earn \$200+ in six months towards court ordered restitution. Participation in these activities helps youth experience and develop empathetic thought, which is a significant factor in reducing recidivism.

### DISCHARGE PLANNING AND REINTEGRATION:

Aftercare planning begins upon admission and is the primary focus of the fourth and final phase of the program, Relapse Prevention and Planning. Youth work with treatment staff to develop a detailed relapse prevention plan to support youth in transitioning from the program. Youth are encouraged to participate in a series of day and/or home passes to help them integrate the concepts they have learned throughout treatment in their home community. Counselors work with referring agencies and families to determine available resources in their area and make recommendations specific to the youth's treatment needs.

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**Abraxas**  
Youth & Family Services  
**CHANGING BEHAVIOR.  
CHANGING LIVES.**

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