

Program Title: Silver Linings Respite Care

Organization: Southeast Health Group

Program Abstract (50 words max, please):

Silver Linings Respite Care provides temporary relief to parents and caregivers from the physical and emotional impacts of caring for youth ages 7-17 with special behavioral health needs. Services are designed as a supplement to outpatient mental health therapy, and have been shown to prevent repeated hospitalizations and even youth suicides.

Program Description (Include program development, program information, staffing requirements, pertinent data and start-up costs.): **Please limit to 2 pages, and remember to address all criteria specified.*

Silver Linings Respite Care provides temporary relief to parents and caregivers from the physical and emotional impacts of caring for youth ages 7-17 with special behavioral health needs. Services are designed as a supplement to outpatient mental health therapy, and have been shown to prevent repeated hospitalizations and even youth suicides. In the words of the youth served:

“If it wasn’t for respite, I would have killed myself; I haven’t cut in six months because of respite.” --17 year old female has grown to accept other people’s opinions on topics that are tough for her, such as suicide and cutting.

“It’s okay to cry here; they won’t judge you.” --14 year old female hasn’t been hospitalized in almost two years.

“After my last hospitalization, I wanted to jump out of the car, but because of the respite staff and therapist, I didn’t.” --16 year old male had a year-long stretch without cutting or being hospitalized.

“I’m able to talk about what makes me angry now, and I can tell you my different moods. I know what triggers me and I’m learning how to cope.”--10 year old male, self-named “Dark side”

Our mission is to provide support and relief for caregivers and families residing in Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties in southeastern Colorado. We aim to promote quality care, increase quality of life, and contribute to the overall success of caregivers, individuals, and their families. We believe all individuals are entitled to acceptance and inclusion, regardless of the challenges they may face. We believe caregivers are incredibly selfless, and are deserving of opportunities for self-care and rest.

Parents and caregivers can schedule respite services on a regular basis, or access crisis respite as the need arises. According to program director BriAnn Appel, “What I noticed is when we get kiddos from crisis, they think it’s going to be this typical inpatient, residential facility, and they are surprised we aren’t wearing medical garb. They see a colorful, relaxed setting and feel welcome and accepted, instead of feeling ostracized and punished. This program relieves stress for families, and keeps the kids safe.”

The Youth Respite program is staffed by 2.0 FTE Youth Respite Care Specialists and supported by a team of masters-level, licensed social workers, licensed professional counselors, bachelor-level case managers and care coordinators, peer specialists and drivers. Youth Respite is billable for Medicaid members. Services are currently available at the 122 North Main Street location in Lamar, and SHG plans to replicate this program in a

newly-acquired facility in Rocky Ford in the next few years. Staff are available to transport youth to the respite facility if families are unable to provide their own transportation.

Since its inception in August of 2019, 40 unique individuals have been served in the Youth Respite program, which represents 10% of all youth enrolled in outpatient services. Of that group, 22 were females (ages 8 to 16), and 18 were males (ages 6 to 17). Nearly half were between the ages of 6 and 11, and the other half were between the ages of 12 and 17. In terms of race, 83% were Caucasian, 10 % were African American and 7% did not report race. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of youth utilizing youth respite services were Medicaid members, and 3% were self-pay. Major Depressive Disorder was the most common diagnosis among the group, representing 58% of youth served.

Services include: family therapy and support; emotional identification and regulation; stress management; care coordination; relaxation training; coping skills; case management; and overnight accommodations. Staff use art, music, and bibliotherapy as expressive tools. Board games assist with problem solving, conflict resolution, sharing, and communication. Cooking activities and group meals help teach life skills. Staff regularly teach meditation and mindfulness exercises. As many as eight youth at a time attend respite, which provides opportunities to practice sharing, conflict resolution and empathy. At the respite program, coping skills and behavior regulation are taught in real time.

Youth Respite staff customize services to meet individual and family needs. Over the 23 month period of operation, utilization varied among participants: 24 youth have received one week or less of respite services; 11 have received services from two to 6 weeks; 4 received services for 7 to 9 weeks; and 1 received services over a 16 week period.

Thank you for considering this program for the 2021 Golden Light Bulb Award.