

## TARGET in Link

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guidelines for Education and Therapy (TARGET) is an evidenced based practice designed for youth who have experienced some sort of trauma.

TARGET focuses on shifting the way a person processes information and emotions so that s/he is able to live life and make sense of memories without being trapped in an alarm state. Using graphics and simple language, TARGET describes the stress response system as an "alarm" in the brain that is triggered by trauma or extreme stress. When the brain becomes stuck in "alarm" mode a person cannot access the brain's capacities for clear thinking, and therefore reacts to all types of current stressors as survival threats. We teach the youth to do an SOS (Slow Down, Orient Yourself, Self-Check) in order to help shift their thinking and be able to focus on the activity in front of them.

### Steps to complete an SOS

Step 1: **Slow Down** (Take Time for Self-Care: Clear Your Mind; Relax Your Body)

Step 2: **Orient Yourself** (Bring Your Mind & Body into Focus) Scan every area in your body for tightness/tension/pain and let this go: Tune In Use your 5 senses to pay attention to the immediate environment: Get Centered Focus on the people you're with and why you all are here now: Social Support

Step 3: **Self Check** (How much Distress? Personal Control? Re-Set the Inner Alarm)

### Distress Thermometer:

1=Best You Ever Felt 5 = Okay 10 = Worst You Ever Felt

### Personal Control:

1=No Control 5 = Some Control 10 = Totally in Control of Your Life

Family & Children Services is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian, human service organization begun in 1903. Its mission has remained constant "...To support, strengthen and preserve the safety, well being and dignity of children, individuals and families".

The Agency receives funding through contracts with Community Mental Health programs and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, insurance reimbursements, fees for service and contributions. We are accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children. The Agency is licensed by the State of Michigan as a Child Placing Agency, Child Caring Institution (Children's Therapeutic Group Home), and Substance Abuse Program.

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## Link Services



"Services that Support the  
Promise of Success"



## Link Program (Social Emotional Learning)

For children and youth (6-17) who have a mental health diagnosis or a developmental disability and are in need of developing social and emotional skills to assist them in engaging in community activities, at home and in school.

The Link program provides intensive community-based services which emphasize skill development and utilization of natural support systems within the community. Children and youth participate in structured activities which promote their social, educational and recreational needs with the goal of integration into existing community resources. The program offers curriculum based learning embedded in groups focusing on art, music, recreational sports, and adventure (independent living groups are available based on the demand for the group).

The program operates utilizing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and TARGET: Trauma Affect Regulation models.

### Schedule

The curriculum runs for 10 weeks semesters in duration and youth may participate in consecutive semesters.

### Fall, Winter, Spring (September – June)

Programs run Monday through Thursday (sometimes Friday) from 5:00pm – 7:00pm. Transportation to and from program is provided.

### Summer (June – August)

Summer program runs morning and afternoon. Youth may participate in the morning session only or in both a morning and afternoon session as indicated in their individualized treatment plan.

### Staff

The ratio of staff to children and youth is normally 1:3. Staff represent a variety of academic backgrounds and professional experiences and are trained to deliver the curriculum and support the children's emotional and behavioral needs while in program.



## Positive Behavior Support

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is an approach that we use to help a child experience success in our Link program, as well as school, home, and other settings through setting consistent expectations for specific behaviors and locations, and then rewarding those behaviors immediately and consistently for all youth.

Youth will learn their "STEPS" and our goal is for every youth to be able to identify each expectation and make the connection on the appropriate skills to use in various locations and environments.



Youth are taught lessons on the "STEPS", and every time a staff observes a youth displaying one of the program's STEPS, the youth is rewarded with the STEPS ticket. At the end of each Link group, all youths tickets will be put into a drawing for an individual PBS prize.

PBS is about "catching" a youth doing something positive and rewarding it. The youth gets attention and reward as positive reinforcement for doing the right thing and will focus on repeating that behavior.

PBS works because it gives youth positive goals to work towards instead of only focusing on negative consequences to avoid. Positive reinforcement fulfills strong basic psychological needs of every child as well as setting a more positive and healthy tone for the Staff-Youth relationship.

Positive Reinforcement and Acknowledgement are some of our most important tools in PBS.

- It is Consistent
- It is Predictable
- It's Fun!

