

From Triggers to Transformation: Custom Plans with Youth Voice

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About your Presenters

My name is Avery Schweitzer. I currently am a temporarily licensed mental health counselor. I have worked at Tanager for almost 4 years now in a variety of roles. I have worked as a direct care staff, counselor, and therapist.

My undergraduate was received at the University of Northern Iowa in Family Services. I started at Tanager Place right after graduation and pursued my masters while working here. My masters was completed last May at Grand View University in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. I am now working towards my full licensure while working at Tanager.



About your Presenters

My name is Tonya Hotchkin. I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Registered Play Therapist. I have worked at Tanager for over 16 years now in a variety of roles. In my career I have worked as a direct care staff, crisis counselor, BHIS worker, FSRP, and therapist.

I am an avid lover of my three children, coffee, art, poetry, music, the outdoors, sports and Tanager.

AND May 1st, We'll be releasing our first book –
Together We RISE
Wellness and Resilience Framework



Intentional Welcome

- Introduce yourself....
 - How are you arriving in this space today?
 - One thing you hope to feel more of today?

Learning Objectives

Participants of this workshop will be able to meet the following learning goals:

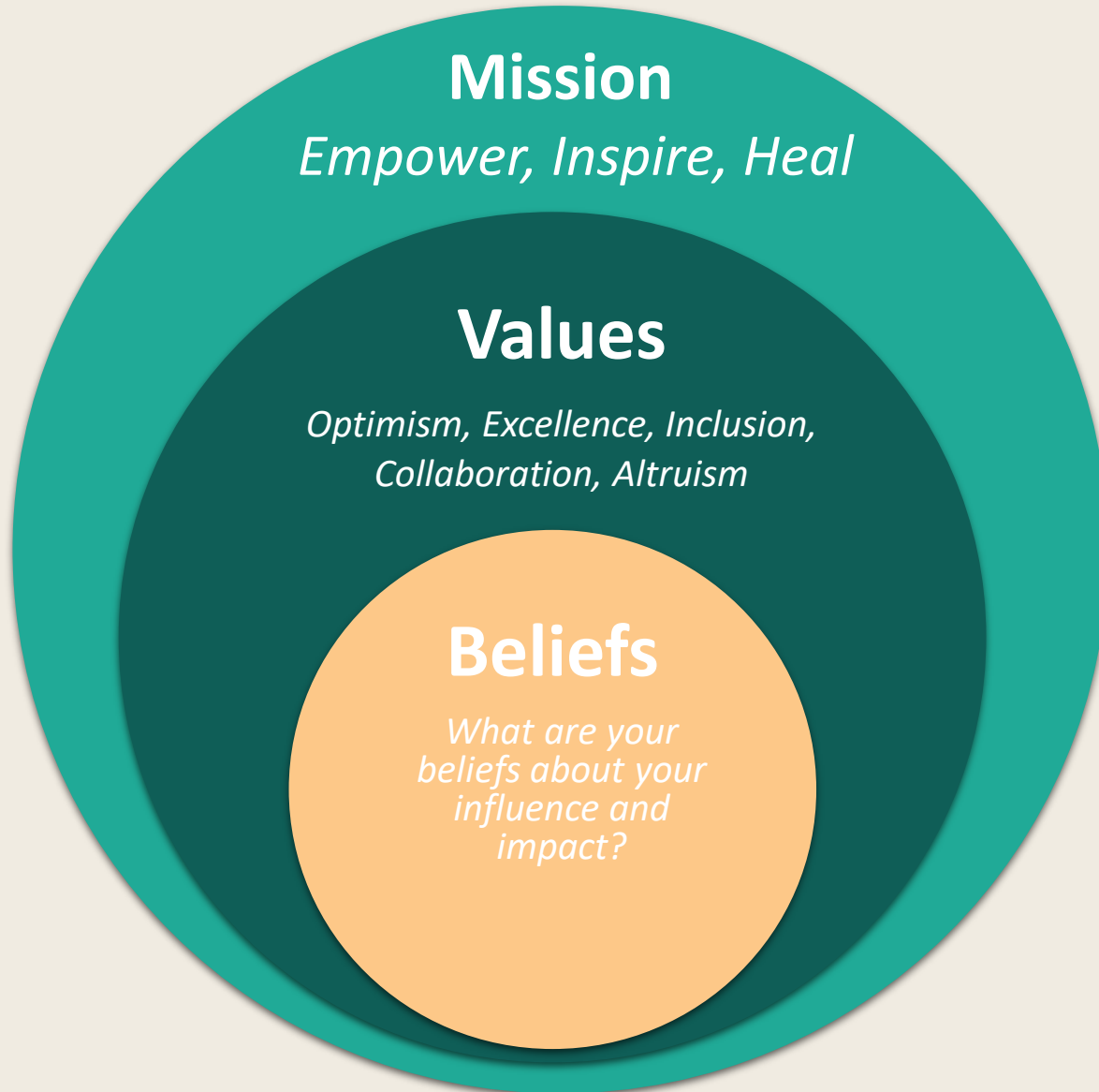
- Understand the key components that go in to personalization process of IRP plans including collaboration with youth.
- Understand how to implement an IRP in a treatment setting and the impacts on the milieu.
- Learn the benefits a personalized Individual RISE Plan can provide to the youth we serve.



Direct Care Staff and Youth Well-Being are Inseparable

- Direct Care staff function as attachment figures - especially in times of stress
- Direct Care staff shape nervous systems - presence, tone, pacing, and predictability all matter
 - Kids borrow calm from Direct Care staff before they build their own
 - Direct Care staff decisions land in bodies before they land in policies
- Every interaction regulates or dysregulates the space - neutral is not neutral—impact is constant
- Direct Care staff are primary culture setters - what we model becomes the norm
- Direct Care staff are a key source of psychological safety - safety is built through consistency, repair, and trust

Start with Why



RISE: Wellness and Resilience Framework



A systemic framework for supporting others in managing, restoring and rising throughout life.

RISE: Wellness and Resilience Framework

 Relationships

 ndicators of Wellbeing

 ocial Emotional Development

 nhancements



Welcome to RISE

Tonya Hotchkin, LMFT, RPT, CTRP-C

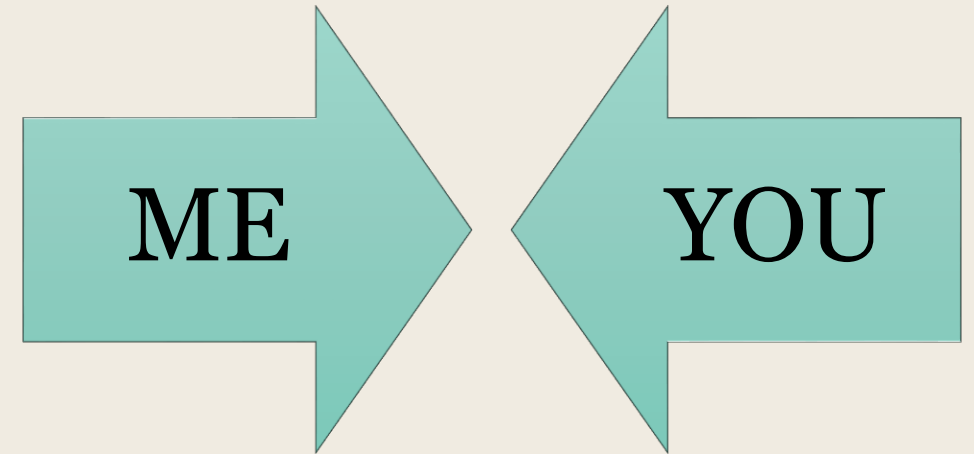
VP Clinical Programs at Tanager

Creator of RISE™: Wellness & Resilience Framework

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Sawubona

- “I see you”
- Zulus have learned how to embrace another person’s soul and how to find and heal other people’s dark corners and wounds. They have learned how to feel and listen to other people.
- Acknowledging someone’s worth and humanity
- Response: “Yebo, sawubona,” meaning – we/I see you too.



What do you see?



- Did you choose to see what you saw?
- Once you saw it, what was it like to find something else?
- Are you able to shift back and forth to see both?
- What do you think impacts a person's perception?

What you Pay Attention to Grows

- Everyone has an ego
 - You are the best at proving yourself right
 - Reality vs. perception
- During times of stress, chaos, crisis, unknown, there is increased drive from ego
- Everyone has an internal story being narrated by
 - Ourselves
 - Our interactions
 - Our relationships
- Internal narratives shape perceptions and beliefs and become our “truths”



Beliefs about humans...

- **Everyone has greatness within them.**
Each person carries inherent value, gifts, and potential. Sometimes we just need the right conditions to shine. The true self in every human being is good. Every person is needed for what they bring to the world.
- **We all want to be our best selves.**
When someone isn't doing well, it is often because of unresolved pain or unmet needs. At our core, we long for connection and belonging. Everything we need to create positive change already exists within us and around us—it grows through relationships that offer safety, compassion, and hope.
- **The world is deeply connected.**
Our lives are woven together in ways both visible and unseen. What nurtures one of us ultimately nurtures us all. When we act with care and altruism, we strengthen the web of humanity that holds us.
- **Every moment offers a chance to build resilience and wellness.**
Growth is not reserved for milestones—it lives in the small, ordinary moments when we choose to show up with care, presence, and authenticity. Because we are holistic beings—mind, body, and spirit—our wellbeing depends on practices that help us live from the core of who we truly are.

This or That

- Coke or Pepsi
- Morning or Night
- Planner or Improviser
- Direct or Passive
- Task-first or People-first
- Beach or Mountain



RISE: Wellness and Resilience Framework



RELATIONSHIPS

The elements for engaging in authentic relationships rooted in emotional intelligence

EXPERIENCES	Understanding the influence of life experiences on brain functioning
THE YOU INTERVENTION	Cultivating personal insight to offer a centered expression of self
CHARACTERISTICS	Applying practices of intentional engagement

Experiences Shape Us

- Life experiences influence the overall emotional, social, mental and behavioral growth of humans.
- Experiences shape our private logic and how we navigate the world around us.
- Research indicates that adaptive experiences and relationships can create and cultivate neuropathways centered on well-being and resilience.

How do we mitigate
the things that get in
the way of Sawubona?

You can't lead others past the point of your own healing...

- The YOU Intervention - Lambert's Common Factors Model
 - Relational characteristics
 - Your personal way of being
 - Communication patterns and styles
 - Attachment history
 - Experiences
 - Conflict styles, etc.
- Your curiosity and desire to see and know the youth
- Your desire to create environments of connection and belonging for youth

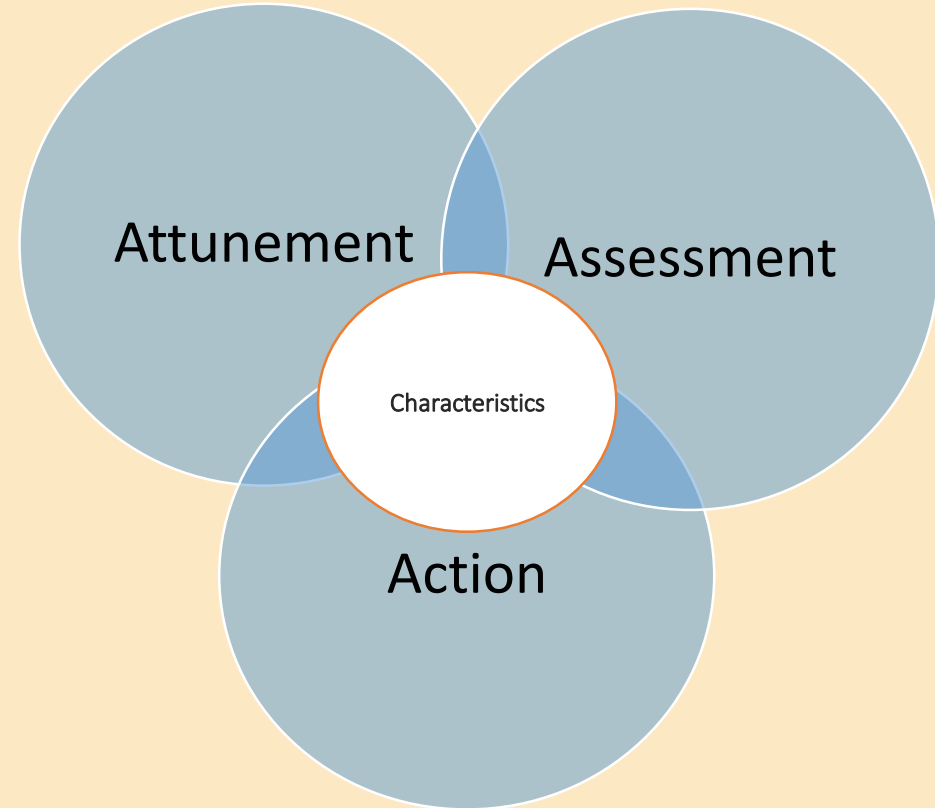
Power of Connection & Belonging

- When people feel a part of community they are motivated by those relationships and desire to be their best selves
- If they don't feel a part of community, they will burn it down just to feel it's worth
 - We REQUIRE connection – whether it is 'positive' or 'negative' – we will engage the way that is most effective in getting a felt sense of connection



3 A's

- YSW use the 3A's = Attunement, Assessment and Action to offer the characteristics required for impact and influence.
- Requires constant curiosity of the space
 - Is it a safe, growth oriented, learning space?
 - Is it strengths based?
 - Is it a space of inclusion and equity?
 - Does my assessment match their needs?
 - Are my actions aligned with the needs?



Actualizing the 3 A's

An IRP is an Individual RISE Plan. At Tanager, we create an individualized RISE plan that applies to each youth who admits into our care. These plans are then individualized to meet their needs as we get to know them more.



Getting To Know The Youth

- Page 1:
 - Hobbies
 - Interest
 - Strengths
 - Support people

Getting To Know The Youth

- Page 1:
 - Love Language
 - Understanding a young person's love language helps us engage them intentionally in ways that builds trust and strengthens connection.
 - Apology Language
 - Using a youth's apology language allows us to intentionally repair harm in ways that feel genuine to them, restoring trust and modeling healthy accountability.
 - Birth Order

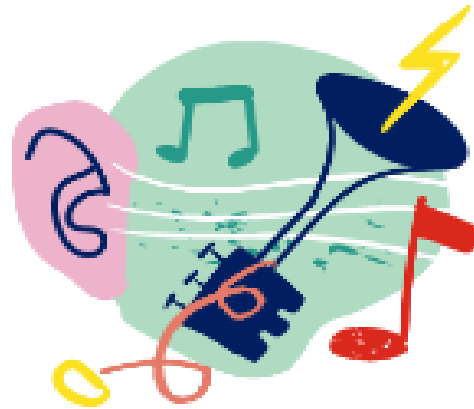
Love Languages Assessment:

<https://5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language>

Apology Languages Assessment:

<https://5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/apology-language>

Avery



Hobbies/Interests

- Music
- Drawing
- Diamond art
- Walks
- Movies



Love Language

- Words of Affirmation 36%
- Acts of Service 27%
- Quality time 21%

Apology Language

- Planned change 32%
- Expressing regret 20%
- Requesting forgiveness 20%

Support Persons

- My best friend, mom, dad and sister

Birth Order

Oldest

Strengths

- Empathy, reading, creative and supportive

Deepening Youth Exploration of Self

- Page 2:
 - Warning signs
 - Triggers
 - Coping skills
 - What is helpful
 - What is not helpful.

Deepening Youth Exploration of Self

- Page 2:
 - C-SSRS – Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale Results
 - Gives staff an idea of what the youth's baseline is.
 - Private Logic
 - Beliefs about ourselves, others and the world around us.
 - Attachment Style
 - Anxious, Avoidant, Disorganized, Secure
 - Attachment Tendencies
 - Potential patterns within style

Avery



Private Logic

- I am not enough, no one likes me, and I am not worthy.

CRSSA Baseline

- Moderate Risk

Attachment Style

Avoidant attachment

Triggers

- Loud noises and feeling rejected or excluded.

Attachment Tendency

- Peers: push and pull
- Staff: pull

Warning Signs

- Going silent, pacing, tapping leg, staring off, and raising my voice.

What is helpful?

- Talking with me or trying to distract me and offering me coping skills

New Me Activities

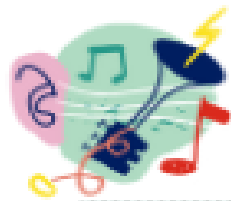
- Walks, music, coloring, and painting

What makes it worse?

- Don't touch me without asking and leaving me alone.

Engagement Plan

- The next page outlines an Engagement Plan designed to guide staff in intentionally connecting with youth. This plan provides individualized strategies and ideas based on each youth's previously identified needs and interests, helping staff build meaningful, supportive relationships.



RISE Programming

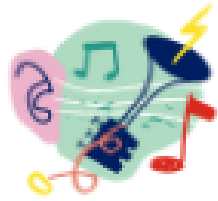


Cultivating Relationships Engagement Plan

- When Staff are engaging with Avery it is important to ask her specific questions about herself. If you can remember things about her life and use them as a means to connect, she will feel listened to.
- Being aware of Avery's warning signs and triggers will show that you are acknowledging her. Offer her time to process 1:1 and actively listen to what she is saying. Demonstrate compassion and empathy, as well as welcome Avery's emotions and help her feel that emotions are OK.
- Avery appreciates when others engage in activities with her and are silly/playful. Laughing together is very important.
- Encourage her and acknowledge her hard work and focus on the positives. You should help Avery find her strengths and encourage her to use them.
- When Avery is gone, welcome her back and let her know that she was missed. If you can, create a hello and goodbye routine with Avery.

Metacommunication Plan

- The next page outlines a Metacommunication Plan designed to guide staff in intentionally communicating in ways that highlight strengths and help youth feel seen and understood. This approach connects staff observations and insights to the youth's awareness, supporting them in recognizing patterns between their choices, underlying needs, and personal growth.



RISE Programming

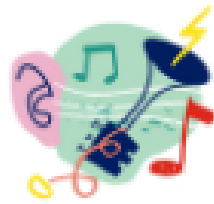


Cultivating Relationships Metacommunication plan

- Staff will not engage in power struggles with Avery and metacommunicate the 'with window':
 - "Avery, I don't want to power struggle, we both want different things - how can we move forward"
 - "Avery, I want you to have control and power, you've had to live your own life a long time - how can we make this work with cottage norms"
 - "Avery, you are in charge, I don't want to take away your power - how can we work together to find a solution"
- If Avery becomes verbally aggressive toward staff, staff will validate Avery's frustrations and ask what she needs to make things better. Staff will metacommunicate the following common themes:
 - "It feels frustrating when things don't go the way you would prefer."
 - "You want to be in charge right now. What do you need to feel like you can be in control while meeting cottage norms?"
 - "This is overwhelming. Right now, it feels like nothing matters but I know you are someone who wants to do well."

RISE Programming Plan

- This page consist of:
 - Indicators of Well-being Plan
 - Safety
 - Connection and Belonging
 - Meaning and Purpose
 - Efficacy
 - Social and Emotional Development Plan
 - Awareness
 - Affect Management
 - Relational Rhythms
 - Healthy Choices
 - Cultivating Enhancements Plan
 - Mind
 - Body
 - Spirit



RISE Programming



Cultivating Indicators of Wellbeing

- Give reminders for transitions and prepare for changes in schedule
- Validate and provide empathy.
- Engage Avery in random acts of kindness
- Cultivate ways for them to help when needed
- Let Avery lead a project or initiative

Cultivating Social and Emotional Development

- Help me recognize that I am not my thoughts. (Thoughts come and go.)
- Help me establish personal values and goals
- Mentor around healthy decision making (stop and think, impulse control, problem solving)
- Provide movement

Cultivating Enhancements

- Encourage me to go outside
- Encourage me to journal
- Connect to expressive arts
- Provide frequent movement activities

Clinical Profile

- The last page of the IRP:
 - Life tasks
 - Friendship, work/school, love/family, self, and spiritual/existential
 - Goals of misbehavior
 - Attention, power (control), revenge, and proving inadequacy
 - Crucial C's
 - Count, Connect, Capable, Courageous
 - Personality Priorities
 - Pleasing, superiority, control and comfort
 - Conflict styles
 - Accommodator, Problem Solver, Avoider, Compromiser
 - 16 Personalities - Energy level
 - Introvert, ambivert, or extrovert

Avery

Functioning at Life

- Avery struggles the most with the self life task. Staff should help Avery explore things they like about themselves and their strengths. They should also help Avery explore her strengths and how she can use those to make positive choices.

Goals of Misbehavior

Primary: Proving Inadequacy

Secondary: Control

- Avery has a lot of negative self talk and does not think highly of herself, she may be validating her own beliefs by doing some behaviors. Avery wants to feel in control so staff should give her choice when safe to do so.

Crucial C's

Low in capable and count

- Staff should highlight Avery's achievements, help her try new things, give her opportunities to lead/teach, teach her independence, show she is valued and cared for, and teach her about healthy relationships.

Energy - Ambivert

- Avery like to socialize and is an outgoing kids. She feels like she can make friends with people and strike up conversation. She will at times though feel socially drained or need to take space.

Conflict Style

Accommodator 86% & Problem solver 75% & Avoider 58% & Compromiser 27%

- Accommodator strengths: Strives for peace
- Accommodator areas for growth: Sometimes gives up own values or beliefs
- Problem solver strength: welcoming to differences in views
- Problem solver area for growth: Overanalyzing leads to burnout

Personality Priorities

Primary: Pleasing

Secondary: Control

- Staff should offer lots of encouragement, follow up with Avery when they MEET expectations and praise them, explain your expectations and reasoning, offer choices, and acknowledge when they feel out of control

How to Individualize an IRP

- There are different plans that we can add to an IRP once we get to know youth. This is helpful for individualizing the youth's IRP and meeting the youth where they are. Some examples of individualized plans include:
 - Phone plan
 - Engagement AB plan
 - Porch plan
 - Wind-down plan
 - Peer boundary plan
 - Transition plan





RISE Programming



Cultivating Relationships

Phone call plan

- Avery can call family whenever needed (there is no maximum amount) but we would like to see her take the following steps before calling family:
- First check in with staff about what the topic of this phone call is.
- If Avery is feeling emotional/is going to be having a more confrontational/emotional conversation on this call she needs to take the following steps.
 - Avery will seek out a coping skill and use it for 15 minutes to see if it helps.
 - Making a plan for after the phone call if necessary.
 - After taking these steps, Avery can then make a phone call to family.



RISE Programming



Cultivating Relationships

Engagement Plan

1st Shift:

During the following times, Avery will have an opportunity to engage in connection and relationship building with the following options:

- 8:00am-8:30am- Avery may choose to eat breakfast with 1 preferred peer and/or 1 preferred staff. During this time, Avery may choose to engage in social chat conversations via the Chat Cards.
- At 8:30, Avery will re-engage with normal programming until the next opportunity for connect time.
- At 10:00am-11:00am, Avery may choose to complete Wellness time [after deep clean is finished] with 1 preferred staff and 1-2 preferred peers. Avery and those peers will choose which wellness activity they would like to participate in and staff will assist and participate in this with them until 11am. Avery and peers will then re-engage in normally scheduled programming.

2nd shift:

- At 3:00pm-4:00pm, Avery may choose to complete Wellness time [after deep clean is finished] with 1 preferred staff and 1-2 preferred peers. Avery and those peers will choose which wellness activity they would like to participate in and staff will assist and participate in this with them until 4pm. Avery and peers will then re-engage in normally scheduled programming.
- 6:30pm-7:00pm: Avery may choose to work on their Assigned treatment binder or choose from the following connection opportunities with a preferred staff member [to be identified as to who at the beginning of shift]. If Avery chooses a connection activity with a preferred staff member, they can choose from the Connection Cards, an Intentional Grounding walk, or 1:1 time in the Art Room. [Once we know the Avery more, we can tailor this to be specific to their interests]. At 7pm, Avery will re-engage in normally scheduled programming.
- At 8:30pm: Avery may choose to complete a structured wind down time activity with staff. This can be a sensory or regulating activity 1:1 in their room until 9pm. At 9pm, staff will leave Avery in their room to continue with their room time expectations.



RISE Programming



Cultivating Relationships

Porch plan

- If Avery needs to take space from cottage she will be allowed to walk out of cottage and go to the porch to take space alone.
- Prior to taking space on the porch Avery will touch base with staff and let them know the why behind it.
- She is able to be left alone outside but NEEDS to be sitting at the picnic table on the porch.
- Staff need to be body positioned to be able to maintain supervision.
- Staff should be going outside to check on her every 5 minutes to see if he is ready to come back inside or if he needs anything. Or else she will ring the doorbell when he is ready to come inside.
- This overall time can not exceed 15 minutes max.
- Avery can do this ONCE per shift with the expectation of rejoining cottage programming afterwards.
- Staff will check in with her after she comes back in to see how she is feeling regarding the reason why she took space



RISE Programming



Cultivating Relationships

Wind Down Plan

- Avery will now have a wind down plan.
- From 8:00pm - 8:30pm staff will remind Avery to make any phone calls, finish any hygiene, or other tasks that need finished up so she is ready for her wind down time with staff.
- From 8:30 - 8:45pm staff are to process and spend some one on one time with Avery prior to going to sleep as this is the time she feels the most unsafe.
- If Avery has her percentage to stay up for an extra 15 minutes after bed then she can do this from 8:45pm - 9:00pm but this would be an individual activity such as journaling, etc.
- If Avery cannot use her plan appropriately or is refusing to go to bed/in to her room after wind down time then the plan will be discontinued,



RISE Programming



Cultivating Relationships

Peer Boundary Plan

- CLIENTS NAME and OTHER CLIENTS INITIALS will be kept on a peer boundary plan until healthy positive boundaries have been established.
- CLIENTS NAME and OTHER CLIENTS INITIALS should always be podded in to separate groups at all times possible to prevent negative interactions.
- If in large groups, like group or meals, staff should be having them sit across the room/space from each other to ensure healthy boundaries.
- If the peers are refusing to be separated then staff should be body positioning in between them or right next to them to ensure healthy boundaries.



RISE Programming



Cultivating Relationships

Transition Plan

- Staff will talk with Avery prior to any visit and discuss how they are feeling, what they expect during their visit, and help calm any nerves they may have. Staff will make a plan with her if necessary.
- Staff will debrief with Avery after any visit to check on their feelings, discuss any highs and lows from the visit, etc.
- Staff may also engage with Avery in an activity or game prior to visit or after return from visit to help better support them

Co-Creating an IRP

- Co-creation begins within the first 48 hours of a youth's arrival to Tanager. The initial IRP is developed during this time and shared with staff. Youth are invited to actively participate in the first meeting to create their IRP, with the therapist facilitating a session to gather their input and ensure their voice is reflected in the plan.
- After the initial IRP is established, any new plan developed for a youth will be created collaboratively. If a youth is unable to participate in the creation of the plan, the therapist will review it with them during the next session, invite their feedback, and make adjustments when appropriate to ensure their perspective is considered.

Youth Interview/Statements:

“I think IRP’s are helpful because they help staff to get to know up better and give us support that is personal to us.” – AK, age 14

“My IRP is important to me and my staff so staff know what I want without asking me because in the moment sometimes I can’t tell them what I want.” – JE, age 14



Staff Interview/Statements:

“All components of an IRP are extremely helpful when building relationships with youth. I find the conflict style and love languages the most important while working the floor. The conflict style helps to see how the youth will interact with staff and peers while upset and gives insight into how to communicate with them. The love language helps with relationship building and finding ways that play into connection utilizing the youths preferred methods. ” – Past direct care staff/current cottage supervisor

“I think the attachment styles, conflict styles, and triggers are very helpful to know when youth are heightened. It helps us know the best way to support them and instantly can boost connection when they are in crisis”. – Current cottage staff



Review and Integration of IRP

- Our interdisciplinary team meets weekly to review each youth in the program. During these meetings, we assess the plans currently in place and identify any additional supports that may be beneficial.



Review and Integration of IRP

- Direct Care staff use the IRP daily to build meaningful relationships and guide responses during times of crisis.
 - By understanding a youth's preferred supports, staff can encourage connection during a crisis, such as offering to contact a trusted support person.
 - By knowing a youth's triggers and early warning signs, staff can intervene proactively to help prevent escalation.
 - By understanding a youth's "new me" activities, as well as what makes situations better or worse, staff can meet them where they are and provide individualized, effective support during distress.
 - By recognizing a youth's love language, staff can intentionally foster meaningful connection. Similarly, understanding their apology language allows staff to thoughtfully repair and restore relationships after conflict.



Time to Color



Meraki



Tanager

Moana



Institute of Learning



Questions??

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Scan to access session materials!



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