

## **270 – CHILDREN’S OUT-OF-HOME SERVICES**

EFFECTIVE DATES: 07/01/16, 10/01/21

APPROVAL DATE: 08/12/21

### **I. PURPOSE**

This Behavioral Health Practice Tool applies to ACC, ALTCS E/PD, DCS/Comprehensive Health Plan (CHP), DES/DDD (DDD), and RBHA Contractors. This Behavioral Health Practice Tool is an optional resource for the Fee-For-Service Programs and is not a requirement for the Fee-For-Service Programs. This Behavioral Health Practice Tool intends to:

Operationalize the use of Child and Family Team (CFT) Practice in Behavioral Health Inpatient Facilities (BHIFs) and Behavioral Health Residential Facilities (BHRFs) and Therapeutic Foster Care provider settings to ensure that children and adolescents receive treatment interventions that are consistent with the Arizona Vision and the 12 Principles for Children’s Service Delivery. Refer to AMPM Policy 100.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

The Arizona Vision and the 12 Principles for Children’s Service Delivery clearly articulate as a core value that services be provided in the most appropriate, integrated setting responsive to the child’s needs. At the same time, AHCCCS recognizes that there are children and youth whose needs, in spite of intensive community-based service provision, can only be adequately and safely addressed through the use of targeted, short-term out of home treatment intervention. When community-based services are not effective in maintaining the child in his/her home setting, or safety concerns become critical, the use of out of home treatment services can provide essential behavioral health interventions to stabilize the situation. Risks and benefits are explored in any discussion about utilizing out of home treatment services as an intervention.

#### **A. PROCEDURES**

Contractors shall ensure that behavioral health providers follow these 12 essential elements related to serving children and youth in out of home settings:

1. Prior authorization and utilization review processes evaluate the needs and goals identified by the CFT. When initiating a request for out of home services, the behavioral health provider with the CFT is responsible for following the prior authorization process established by the appropriate Managed Care Organization (MCO) to ensure that a determination of medical necessity is made prior to initiating out-of-home treatment services. The prior authorization and utilization review process must function as a supportive resource to the CFT. As a routine part of this process when prior authorization results in a denial of out of home treatment,

- recommendations of alternative services that are congruent with the child's/family's needs are to be provided to the CFT for consideration. (Refer to ACOM Policy 414).
2. The primary goal of out of home treatment intervention is to prepare the child and family, as quickly as possible, for the child's safe return to his/her home and community settings. Service programming, therapeutic strategies, and discharge planning must reflect this goal and be focused on assisting the child/youth to successfully function in the community setting to which s/he will be returning. Therapeutic treatment interventions must target the behaviors and symptoms that have limited the child's ability to live successfully in community settings. Behaviors and symptoms need not be fully resolved before a child can successfully transition back home or to a less restrictive community setting. Continued care with intensive home and community based supports should be utilized to continue the progress made in the Out of Home (OOH) setting. Return home should be based upon the family being provided the resources necessary for maintaining the child in his/her home setting. These may include, but are not limited to, working in partnership with the family while the child is receiving out of home treatment services and providing access to community-based formal and informal supports, including in-home services upon the child's return to home. The most appropriate setting for long term therapeutic work is the family/home-like environment and surrounding community in which the child lives (Refer to AMPM Policy 320-V and AMPM Policy 320-W).
  3. Every child receiving treatment services in an out of home setting must be served through a CFT (refer to AMPM Behavioral Health Practice Tool 220). AHCCCS is committed to the provision of behavioral health services to children and youth through CFT practice, which identifies the strengths and cultural preferences of the child/family while also identifying and addressing their needs. Whenever out of home treatment services are required, it is imperative that a CFT be formed, if one is not already in place. While most children entering out of home treatment settings will have a functioning CFT at the time of admission, for those children without a team in place out-of-home service providers must work with the community behavioral health provider and referral source to initiate the development of a CFT.

The out-of-home service provider works with the CFT in addressing the needs of the child and family. An existing CFT expands to incorporate members from the out-of-home service provider treatment team. The CFT shares information with new team members about what services, activities, and treatment interventions have worked in the past for the child and family, as well as information about those treatment interventions which were not successful. In situations where Department of Child Safety (DCS) is the guardian, family members should be included in the CFT process as determined by DCS. (Refer to AMPM Behavioral Health Practice Tool 260).

While the child is in the out of home setting the out-of-home treatment team is expected to participate fully in CFT meetings and integrate CFT practice into aspects of their programming. Scheduling meetings is based on the availability and convenience of family members and are not scheduled solely at the discretion of the

out-of-home treatment team. Service Plans for children receiving out of home treatment intervention must be aligned with the CFT's Service Plan. When the out of home treatment goals have been met, or significant progress has been made and treatment can continue in the child's home and community, the focus of the CFT turns to planning for the child's return to his/her community.

4. The behavioral health provider shall encourage and support the family to be an active partner involved in all aspects of the child's out of home treatment. Out-of-home service providers must work with other members of the CFT to continually pursue an effective level of engagement with the family, which may include reaching out to extended family members. The child's family must be included in the assessment process, the setting and prioritizing of treatment goals, the review of ongoing care, and transition planning prior to the child's discharge. The family's involvement must be considered a treatment priority and addressed in the Service Plan.

The primary goal of family driven work is to partner with the child and family in developing the best kind of relationship they can have. This may include mending or strengthening the relationship between the child and family. Home visits can provide families with opportunities for practicing what is learned while the child is receiving out of home treatment services. It is imperative that out-of-home service providers collaborate with community providers to ensure the child does not experience any disruption in care while transitioning into and out of residential treatment services. (refer to AMPM Policy 320-V and AMPM Policy 320-W).

5. Every child receiving out of home treatment services must be treated within the context of their family system. Each family should be encouraged to view the child's out of home treatment services as a therapeutic intervention designed to support the entire family as an inter-related unit. By developing an understanding of the dynamics of their child's behavior the family can acquire new skills and improve ways for relating to their child which can result in a renewed sense of confidence, competence and optimism as parents. Children and youth who do not have an identified family to return home to must be assisted in developing ties to their community, including non-family resources and/or caregivers who can meet their needs.
6. Community behavioral health and out-of-home service providers must develop well-defined tools to ensure development of appropriate treatment interventions, collaborative service planning, and successful coordination of care. Behavioral health community providers and child serving agencies must be well informed about the roles and responsibilities of the out-of-home service providers in the AHCCCS System of Care. Likewise, out-of-home service providers must ensure their workforce is well educated about AHCCCS System of Care practice approaches and service planning expectations when collaborating with child welfare, education, law enforcement, primary care providers and other child-serving system partners who are involved with the child and family. The development and implementation of internal policies and procedures must promote and expect ongoing collaboration and

coordination between these behavioral health service providers and other child-serving agencies. (Refer to AMPM Policy 541).

7. Out of home services are utilized as a treatment intervention rather than a “placement” and continuity of care must be maintained. Out-of-home service providers are required to integrate the services they provide with community-based programs to effectively stabilize the child’s and family’s situation. It is essential that they serve as resources to the CFT to reinforce and enhance community-based services, supports, and treatment interventions as part of a seamless, community-based continuum of care.

Out-of-home service providers are encouraged to individualize treatment interventions and support existing therapeutic relationships that were present prior to the child’s entry into out-of-home treatment. Additionally, out-of-home service providers should utilize the skills and expertise of their workforce in helping to support the family and school during the child’s transition back to his/her home community. Continuity of service providers has been shown to facilitate successful transitions between settings.

Children simultaneously transitioning from out of home treatment services into the AHCCCS Adult System of Care may require additional supports and detailed transition planning. This is especially critical when the child has no family support in the community (Refer to AMPM Behavioral Health Practice Tool 280) .

8. A strengths-based, culturally competent approach must be used in all aspects of out of home treatment service delivery. Out-of-home service providers must recognize and appreciate the diverse range of characteristics among children and families in Arizona such as language differences, cultural needs, sensory impairments, cognitive limitations, and other developmental and health-related conditions.

Assessments conducted while a child is receiving treatment in an out of home setting should identify and document individual/family strengths, as well as available community resources. Findings from previous outpatient assessments completed by behavioral health or other child-serving systems are taken into consideration and include input from the CFT. Out-of-home service plans identify the child’s needs and strengths and are responsive to the presenting concerns that led to the child’s receipt of out of home treatment services.

Treatment interventions contain a strengths-based approach and encourage the further development and enhancement of both the child’s and family’s individual and community strengths in order to support the child’s transition back to his/her home or community. Cultural considerations should be addressed when formulating a treatment approach. Out-of-home service providers may involve the use of cultural guides (e.g., members of spiritual, community or tribal organizations) to help tailor accommodations to various spiritual and cultural norms. Discharge and transition plans must reflect identified strengths, cultural priorities, and include natural

supports, when possible, in conjunction with professional services. (Refer to AMPM Behavioral Health Practice Tool 220).

9. Out of home treatment services and support interventions are highly individualized to the needs of each child and his or her family. Programming and treatment interventions within out of home settings must be highly individualized in addressing each child's and family's specific needs. Treatment interventions are based on functional assessments and their success is evaluated in terms of functional outcomes specific to the child. When multiple out of home treatment options are available, the child is matched to the program and setting most conducive to his/her presenting concerns and individualized treatment needs as identified through the CFT process. Transition back to the community must be well-coordinated between the out-of-home and community behavioral health providers. Transitional discharge approaches that incorporate active family involvement and graduated periods of time spent at home while the child is receiving out of home treatment services are often successful. Creative arrangements that maximize this integration of home and out-of-home services should be incorporated into treatment delivery whenever possible. (Refer to AMPM Behavioral Health Practice Tool 280).
  
10. Effective treatment interventions in out of home settings are delivered by competent and supervised individuals. Out-of-home service providers must be competent and well-trained as documented by education, experience, training, and certification/licensure. Given the complexity of needs and presenting concerns that surface during the delivery of out of home treatment services, providers at all levels require sound clinical supervision to ensure that treatment interventions and Service Plans are effectively assisting the child and family in meeting treatment goals and outcomes. Clinical supervision must be provided as required by licensure. Goals of supervision are to promote the professional growth and development of staff (skills/knowledge grounded in best practices), to monitor staff performance and competence and their adherence to agency, licensing and accrediting requirements, and oversight of legal, ethical, and cultural concerns. Therapists, case managers, support staff, and care providers at all levels must receive regularly scheduled and focused clinical supervision. (Refer to ACOM Policy 407).
  
11. Out of home treatment settings, as referenced in this Behavioral Health Practice Tool, provide services and supports that are flexible in responding to changes in the needs of the child. Out-of-home service providers must work collaboratively with the CFT to identify and address the changing needs of the child and his or her family while the child is receiving treatment services in an out of home setting. As new situations arise, the Service Plan goals, treatment interventions, supports and services, and/or discharge plan may need to be modified. (Refer to AMPM Policy 320-O).

Service providers must demonstrate a continuing commitment to serve individuals after admission into treatment, regardless of any challenges that arise. Program policies and procedures, organizational values and staff development should be aligned to minimize coercive and/or law enforcement intervention. Crisis plans shall

address alternatives to law enforcement involvement when appropriate and the use of de-escalation techniques.

12. Out of home settings must provide, to the extent possible, as natural and home-like environment as possible. Out-of-home service settings should support the ability of the child to sustain existing positive relationships with family, friends, teachers, neighbors and members of the faith-based community. When possible, continued participation should be arranged for activities (e.g. school, recreation, church) that the child was involved in prior to receiving out of home treatment services. Parents and guardians generally have the right to participate in decision-making about their child's care, including but not limited to phone calls and family visits. Therapeutic activities should be mindfully planned to allow children to practice skills and behaviors that will help them in family, school and other community settings.

#### **B. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION EXPECTATIONS**

Contractors shall establish their own process for ensuring that all Out-of-home service provider clinical staff working with children and adolescents understand the expectations outlined in this Practice Tool. Whenever this Practice Tool is updated or revised, Contractors must ensure their subcontracted BHIF, BHRF, and TFC agencies are notified and that provider agency clinical staff are retrained as necessary.

Supervision regarding implementation of this Practice Tool should be incorporated into other supervision processes Contractors, and their subcontracted BHIF, BHRF, and TFC agencies have in place for direct care clinical staff.

All agencies providing out of home treatment services to children shall ensure that required trainings are completed and documented, according to AMPM Policy 320-W, and A.A.C. R9-10 as applicable based on licensure setting.