

Intensive Community Services (ICS) Therapeutic Group Care

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH)
Division of Children, Youth and Families (CYF)



Therapeutic Group Care (TGC) provides: out of home treatment to youth and young adults with mental health needs whose behaviors have been difficult to maintain in a family setting. (Note: Specific age range varies from program to program).



- It is a 24-hour staffed treatment environment where the youth stay temporarily while receiving treatment services.



- The youth continue to attend school in the community.



- Youth will progressively spend as much time at home as clinically indicated in order to practice skills and build a good bridge back to home and community.
- TGC providers are independent agencies that are contracted by DMH to provide this service.

Service components and interventions include:

- Culturally sensitive comprehensive assessment to understand youth and family strengths and needs.
- Development of treatment goals based on youth and family strengths and needs.
- Risk assessment (including substance use and suicide) and safety planning.
- Individual therapy.
- Family therapy.
- Planned respite, when available.
- Group therapy with peers.
- 24-hour staff available for support.
- Appropriate access to community activities to build skills with support.
- Ongoing transition planning and support.
- Medication administration.
- Time spent with family is supported.

The TGC staff include:

- Program Director.
- Clinician.
- Direct Care staff (1 staff for every 3 youth).
- Occupational Therapist.
- Psychiatrist (can prescribe, when needed).
- Nursing staff.

Treatment Process

A primary goal is to ensure the youth and family stay as connected as possible by creating strong treatment plans with families that link TGC interventions directly to the family's home setting.

- Therapeutic Group Care Staff work collaboratively with families to support skill development and ties to community (i.e. school, support groups, etc.).
- TGC staff will also provide family therapy, parent trainings, and opportunities for families to learn behavioral interventions that can be safely used within the home setting.
- TGC staff will develop safety plans with families that can be used at home, in school and community.
- If there is an Intensive Home-Based Therapeutic Care team (or other home-based team) in place, the TGC will work collaboratively with that team.

Role of Family

While the youth is in group care treatment, full family involvement in the assessment and treatment process is required and critical to success in the service.

Note: if youth is over 18, family involvement is contingent on young adult's permission.