



## **Program Description**

### **Prevention, Access, Self-Empowerment and Support Program (P.A.S.S. Program)**

P.A.S.S. is an innovative, curriculum-based, statewide prevention program that works with teens who experience challenges in their daily lives, or whose parents are seriously and persistently mentally ill. Participants report having emotional issues revolving around building and maintaining relationships; anger management; feelings of frustration; distraction; lack of self-control; poor decision making; inability to finish tasks and an overall lack of focus. The therapist data indicates that some of the participants have serious challenges with aggressive, suicidal and/or self-destructive behavior and substance abuse.

P.A.S.S. is sponsored by Monroe and Orleans County Offices of Mental Health. The program is managed by Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI) a unique non-profit management services organization. The primary source of funding for this program is New York State Office of Mental Health Reinvestment dollars. This multicultural initiative has been in existence since 1996 and has documented positive changes for participants.

P.A.S.S. utilizes a strength-based approach to helping individuals, families and communities to develop the resources needed to maintain healthy lifestyles. It focuses on the development of a culturally competent, inclusive system of support that fosters self-help, empowerment, advocacy, support, and education. Junior and adult mentors help the adolescents apply the strategies taught in the program to their unique life situations. Ongoing parent support groups and contacts with schools and other community programs complete the circle of support.

The overall approach to the project and services is based on the philosophy that:

- Adolescents can be taught and empowered to make informed choices.
- Adolescents can be assisted in developing and utilizing self-help skills that are “tools” to improve their probability of success in today’s society.
- Program graduates can serve as effective peer advocates, mentors, or role models for youths experiencing challenges.
- Services provided in partnership with both parents/guardians and adolescents, can create an avenue for improved communication between parent and teen.

- A culturally competent and culturally supportive approach to working with youth can reach those who typically do not respond to other service approaches.
- By strengthening support and increasing families' knowledge of information, systems and supports within their communities the whole community will benefit.

### **Key Program Components:**

- A. **The Curriculum:** This dense curriculum, covers a variety of topics and lessons, and is designed to provide participants with tools and skills to cope with the stressors of daily life. The environment is intense and conducive to learning, as the adolescents engage in highly structured activities over the course of nine contact days (three-day overnight workshops, three times a year). Consultants, junior mentors and adolescent guests from different cultures and educational backgrounds present the core curriculum content. A wide variety of mediums are used. This highly participatory curriculum engages the adolescents in self-expression, public speaking, debates, role-play, martial arts as a means of discipline, daily morning exercises focusing on healthy lifestyles, and self-advocacy.
  
- B. **Adult Mentors and Junior Mentors:** Mentors are carefully screened, interviewed and trained prior to participation in the program. The mentor guidelines provide a comprehensive guide for being an effective mentor and advocate. Mentors and program administrators have developed culturally competent knowledge, attitude and skills of the participant's identities, and techniques on how to engage with adolescents within the context of their culture.
  
- C. **Family/Guardian Support Services:** Prior to the workshops for participating adolescents there is an initial 3-day training for both mentors and parents. This training focuses on the role of the mentor as a friend; expectations of both parents and mentors are reviewed. Parents receive information on family support networks in their localities; professionals from the healthcare field provide a general overview of the delivery system, and symptoms relating to emotional challenges in young people. Both parents and mentors are given an overview of the topics in the curriculum and the methods used for delivering the curriculum. This mentor and parent training orientation to the PASS program provides a safe venue for parents and mentors to meet each other. Parent Support Group sessions are subsequently held one evening per month from 6 – 9 p.m. throughout the duration of the program.

- D. Program Location: Program workshops are offered in a retreat style setting at various hotels around the state. This approach allows the adolescents and parents to be removed from their natural environment where they can be immersed into the philosophy and concept of the P.A.S.S. Program without interference from daily challenges.
- E. Program Evaluation: Throughout the program, feedback is sought from participants about their sense of personal improvement; from mentors, parents and other individuals involved in the adolescent's life regarding their perception of participants' growth and development. Individuals usually report dramatic changes seen in the adolescents. As one Psychiatrist puts it, "I have seen more changes in this kid over a three-day weekend than in the past three years we have been working with this child". A school administrator from a New York City High School points to one of his most challenging student as one of his proudest ally in advocating changes among gang members. A suicidal adolescent from a Rochester now proudly speaks of how "I now choose life..." while the parents speak of a "D and F" student having a report with mostly "B's" and some "A's".

Since 2002, PASS program participants have completed the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition. The data support the fact that the program positively impacts the self-concept of the participants. This is demonstrated along several dimensions of the instrument – intelligence, school status, happiness and satisfaction, and the behavioral adjustment dimension. These results are being seen in adolescents that face extremely difficult emotional and psychological challenges.

#### **Lessons learned and implications for program design:**

- One obvious lesson learned from our interaction with participants in the PASS Program is that when adolescents are prepared to make informed choices and are supported in implementing their positive choices, their chances of accomplishing their goals are greatly improved and the impact of the challenges they face can be diminished.
- Culture is essential to the process of providing care. The PASS Program staff is cognizant of their own cultural identity and attitudes and the impact that it has in their relationship with participants, especially when the youth has a different cultural or ethnic background.
- One must be constantly aware of the "power" that we as caregivers bring to the encounter process and how it hampers the development of true partnership.

- Staff needs to be passionately committed to their work with youth and believe in the “can do” philosophy of the program.
- It is important the program embraces the recovery philosophy that entails respect for each individual’s ability to make informed choices and have the opportunity to learn from failures.
- Parental involvement is critical and must have a focus on using the family’s strengths in partnership with the professional team.
- The power of peer support is fostered by employing Junior Mentors who have already experienced the program. Their role is to conduct youth-to-youth sessions (without adult involvement), serve as role models and become a part of the adolescent’s support system.
- The focus on teamwork helps build self-confidence and the necessary self-help and advocacy skills.
- The program’s holistic approach includes experiential activities that engage youth on a physical, emotional, and inter-personal level as well as integrates tutoring and a focus on the value of individual learning. Basic etiquette is taught and practiced. Self-awareness is fostered to help youth learn to manage their behavior, get out of their comfort zone and discover their personal power in an emotionally safe environment.
- The PASS program uses an emersion model that employs an intensive overnight “retreat” experience that reinforces the principles taught.

P.A.S.S. facilitates a process that encourages adolescents to “change” themselves. One of PASS’s mantra to the adolescents is “We will show you the door; but only you can walk through it.” Most of the adolescents entering PASS have been labeled a “problem child” by society and have internalized that negative self-image. The anecdotal stories make it clear that most failed to recognize the power they had, to not only influence their own sense of self (behavior, attitude, actions) but the world around them as well. The program’s curriculum and the adolescents’ experiences with supportive individuals have created positive internal changes and a renewed sense that they too can enjoy positive outcomes.

**P.A.S.S. PROGRAM - WORKSHOPS 2018**

	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHERE</b>
<b>Workshop #P</b>	<b>July 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Friday - Sunday Noon</b>	<b>Parents/Guardians</b>	<b>Grand Island, NY</b>
<b>Workshop #1</b>	<b>Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Thursday – Sunday Noon</b>	<b>Adolescents</b>	<b>Grand Island, NY</b>
<b>Workshop #2</b>	<b>October 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Thursday – Sunday Noon</b>	<b>Adolescents</b>	<b>Grand Island, NY</b>
<b>Workshop #3</b>	<b>December 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Thursday- Sunday Noon</b>	<b>Adolescents</b>	<b>Rochester, NY</b>
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>December 8<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm Saturday</b>	<b>Parents, Guardians, Family &amp; Friends</b>	<b>Rochester, NY</b>

**\*All parents of selected applicants are expected to attend the Parent & Mentor Training and Orientation Workshop in July (Parents and Guardians only.)**

**\*Transportation, lodging and food will be provided for the Parent & Mentor Training and Orientation Workshop.**

**\*Please begin to make tentative arrangements – i.e. Time off work if applicable, and Daycare arrangements, etc. to attend.**

**\*Selected applicants usually do much better when parents attend this workshop and also take an integral role in the adolescent’s participation in the program.**

**Please submit (mail or fax) completed application by [Monday May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018](#).**

**MAIL or FAX APPLICATION**

**Coordinated Care Services Inc.  
Cultural Competency & Diversity Initiatives  
Attn: PASS Application & Recruitment  
1099 Jay St. Building J, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Rochester, NY 14611  
or**

**FAX: (585) 328-5211**

**CONTACT:**

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