

Southwest Counseling Services

Rock Springs, Wyoming



*Everyday Solutions
for Everyday People*

Wyoming Citizen Review Panel

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"WE ARE FAMILY. . ."

Clients feel a sense of family in their residential treatment with other clients; staff members of this organization and others who collaborate with the organization feel a sense of family through their professional affiliations and work.

The reader of this report is reminded that while this is a review of the named facility, this process captures systemic issues not specific to the organization. Suggestions for improvements are *italicized*.

Access to services

- For residential treatment, in the Women’s Addiction Program (WAP) there is little or no wait time for services:
 - Clients and collaborators report that within two hours to one week of seeking the services, or being sentenced to the program, they were enrolled and working their programs.
- By all accounts, there appears to be good working relationships between this program and other service providers in the area:
 - Further, it appears that it is this organization specifically that often times reaches out to others to initiate many of those working relationships.
- If clients stay in the community after completing their program(s), they can seek continuing aftercare services should they need them.
- “We become like a second family;” both clients and company workers indicated that feeling about each other.
- In order to process their own feelings, staff of this company is able to make use of the services offered by the organization.
- Contract psychiatrists work with the organization at the College Hill company location. In addition, a full-time Advanced Nurse Practitioner with Prescriptive Authority is employed by SCS.
- Clients of the organization have access to medical services through a physician’s assistant (PA) that is employed by the organization:
 - Every client beginning services gets an exam unless they are pregnant:
- If a client is pregnant, she is scheduled with College Hill Women’s Center, with whom Southwest Counseling Services has an excellent relationship to provide prenatal care and delivery of the babies.
- Open access days and hours are available to people wanting to “walk in” and seek services:
 - For some, depending on the severity of the situation, clients can begin receiving services in just minutes.
- “We realize that it takes all of us as a team to assist the clients:”

- Program leadership sees the role of management and providers to get in the “figurative hole” with the client and help the client climb out of the hole, not just stand on the edge and “shout” at the client to crawl out on their own.
- Most clients in the long term residential program are dual diagnosis.
- Clients can be and are referred to this program by the following, among others:
 - Probation;
 - Court(s);
 - Voluntarily;
 - Attorneys;
 - Family members, and the
 - Emergency room:
 - Sometimes it is necessary to use the “social detox” program when a client presents at the hospital.
- Good coordination between the WAP program and the College Hill Women’s Health Center¹ assures beneficial and timely services for clients.
- *Dental services for clients are difficult to obtain in this community because dental providers often will not take Medicaid:*
 - Typically, chronic substance abuse users, particularly methamphetamine users, have extensive dental problems
- Rosen Recovery Center, a program of Southwest Counseling Services is a medium stay, 3 - 6 month option for those clients who are appropriate.
- Foster parents for the Wyoming Department of Family Services, who were acting as foster parents for one client’s child, worked closely with the client as they transitioned the child back to the mother who was in WAP.

“My passion is the family; they are afraid and we have to involve them, we can’t alienate them.”

¹ More information about the College Hill Women’s Health Center can be found at www.chwhc.com.



- One service provider commented that clients have greater accountability and other tools to work on their addiction recovery after completing treatment, even if they do at some point relapse.
- By all accounts, the WAP program, and it appears other services offered by Southwest Counseling Services, are very productive programs. *However, when a client becomes disenchanted with this program, for whatever the reason founded or not, there are limited resources in the area of this magnitude to choose from for clients.*



Quality of Services

- Clients of Southwest Counseling Services have access to psychiatry services provided by a psychiatrist who contracts with the company.
- Clients report that they are able to have input into the services they receive and their individual case plans.
- Of the clients interviewed, all reported that this community is open to and understanding of the mental health and substance abuse treatment services.
 - No reports of discrimination.
 - No reports of language barriers.
 - No reports of any denial to receive treatment services.
 - No reports of any denial to receive treatment services based on any physical barrier limitations.
- Not only do clients have input into their individual case plans, they are also able to have appropriate input into how to improve the program.
- Case managers seem to be creative and able to effectively address about any request for assistance that is needed.
 - This once included a case manager arranging for and hosting a funeral for the parent of a client. The services were held in the

auditorium of the facility and the case manager was able to accomplish all of this for a total cost of \$250.00.

- Staff and other clients learned sign language to assist a client with her autistic daughter.
- Another example of using available resources in the community and collaborating for the benefit of the client involves engaging the local child development center to assist children of clients with behavioral problems.
 - Additionally, it appears that the WAP program has a good working relationship with:
 - Head Start, and the local 
 - Parent Education Center.
- For the benefit of the client, it appears that collaborating agencies have a great deal of trust with company staff members.
- As explained by staff, there are six levels to the WAP program and each one involves personal work, even in the form of writing papers:
 1. Pre Entry Level:
 - i. Client is required to do one paper on what the issue is that got them to treatment.
 2. Candidate Level:
 - i. Client is required to write an autobiography, one page per year for every year of their life.
 3. Third Level:
 - i. The program becomes more individualized.
 4. Support AP Level:
 - i. Clients have a two (2) hour pass; attend meetings and look for sponsors.
 5. Positive Support Level:
 - i. Clients have a four (4) hour pass to try and find employment.
 6. Reentry/Completion Level: 

- i. Typically, the program takes 9 - 15 months to complete.
- Services are individualized for each client putting children first whenever possible demonstrating the emphasis this program places on family.
- Southwest Counseling Services has several long term employees who are invested in the client population that they serve, and in turn the company invests in their clients as well:
 - It appears the organization recognizes and realizes the value of their employees, and
 - Company places an emphasis on continuing education.
- A past clients parent died recently; the client had been out of the program for a year, but was able to come back and get support needed to get through the death of the parent.
- A probation agent for the clients interviewed has seen clients graduate from other programs, relapse and be successful upon completion of this program. Further, the probation agent:
 - Participates in staffing's, and
 - Sits in on groups when schedules allow:
 - This encourages clients to be accountable.
 - Is part of the treatment team, and
 - Is provided a dedicated work space within the program.
- Another great example of collaboration to provide quality services is the case manager(s) working with child support services for WAP clients and their children.
- While the organization does some outreach through events such as recovery month and other prevention activities, *one client interviewed wished there was a way to more fully engage families so that they understood what clients were going through in treatment and what substance abuse and mental health services were all about.*
- With regards to recovery models, professionals in this organization feel that it can take some chronic abuse clients 4 - 6 months just to “thaw out” making the long term treatment option needed,

“This program is just as tough as you make it.”

Client Comment

especially in the case of the instances of long-term Methamphetamine use

- As cited earlier, professionals estimate that 80% or greater of the long term WAP treatment clients have co-occurring disorders. This is one of the reasons for having the psychiatric element in this program.
- Professionals also feel that they practice a “holistic approach;” which results addressing a large spectrum of issues, for the “whole person.”
- A long term abuser and program participant refers to this program as a more positive experience than previous treatment programs.
- EMDR² is done with certain clients and professionals in the community who have experienced trauma.



Coordination of Services

- Great coordination between case manager and the Wyoming Department of Family Services, Child Protective Services Unit.
- The case manager interviewed in relation to the cases reviewed, tries to accompany clients to most appointments and functions:
 - Maintains a good professional working relationship so that the case manager can get services faster (personal communication and knowledge of others).
- The organization has five case managers:
 - One case manager does intake;
 - One works detoxification;
 - One works with male clients
 - One for WAP, and
 - One works with single women.

“...you are like a totally different person now!”

Child of a Client Comment

² EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing; more information on EMDR can be found at www.emdr.com.

- Case managers and clinicians meet regularly:
 - In the morning to coordinate, and
 - Sometimes in the afternoon if needed.
- The WAP staff follows up with other service providers for clients when they go to another community.
- There appears to be good coordination and respect between this program and the courts.
- Additionally, there also appears to be good coordination between WAP and the Family Resource Center.
- Treatment team meets four times a month:
 - The probation officer assigned to the WAP program meets twice monthly with the rest of the team.
- While not specific to this review of the Southwest Counseling Services WAP program, but regarding coordination of the organization with others, a mental health counselor has an office in and goes to the local DFS office on half days to see foster parents, foster children, and other DFS referred children.



Systemic Issues

- *Low income housing is needed in this community specific to the clients who complete this program:*
 - *A person has to be clean and sober at least three years and sometimes ten years before qualifying for low income housing; this excludes a great number of clients coming out of the WAP programs.*
- *Services for the homeless with disabilities could be enhanced in this community.* Despite this statement, one story relayed to reviewers clearly indicated how service providers from all related agencies rally together to do what they can for the homeless.

- *As with most communities in Wyoming, this community could benefit from more Medicaid providers particularly in the area of dental services.*
- One professional interviewed say a need for more domestic violence counseling opportunities for abuse victims possibly in the form of support groups. The community does have a shelter offering a six week bed but the professionally saw the need for more group support and possibly transitionally living.

When a client relapses, the staff doesn't just stick them back in the same program and say "redo this;" an individualized program is created to the extent possible to assist the client in succeeding.

