



BraveLife (BLI) Intervention Resource Directory

Prepared by

Westchester County Department of Social Services

Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service Ravazzin Center

The Children's Village

March 10, 2021

This directory was prepared by Fordham University, in work with the Westchester County Department of Social Services, and The Children's Village with funding from Mathematica, Inc. under contract to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation under Contract Number HHSP233201500035I/75P00119F37041. The Mathematica project director is M.C. Bradley.



Westchester
gov.com

George Latimer
Westchester County Executive

**the children's
village**

Giving Kids the Chance of a Lifetime

Table of Contents

Employment.....**3**
 Academic and Career Services3
 Job Search and Employment Assistance4
Education.....**5**
 Youth Bureaus5
 Educational Advocacy Services6
Well-Being**7**
 LGBTQIA2-S7
 Respite8
 Disability Assistance9
 Psychological Services10
 Juvenile Justice Systems.....11
 Substance Abuse12
Housing**13**
 Homeless Shelters13
 Permanent Housing14

Employment



Academic and Career Support

Academic and Career Support organizations are essential to have within a community. The goal is to assist people seek employment information and find out about career development training opportunities. Since different factors may affect a person's success in their academic or career path, these organizations assist youth in different ways to help them reach their goals. This includes working closely with each individual to provide access to the proper services and direct them to full-time employment. Areas of focus should include:

- Readiness skills - Communication, time management and problem-solving skills
- Paid internships and trainings – Opportunities to gain skills and experience
- Financial literacy – Learning how to maintain a budget and build savings

Organizations should focus on matching employers to employees and ensure everyone is treated equally with no discrimination with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, or any other factors. Training may be provided to help give individuals the skillset required to reach their goals. Standing beside each member and supporting them through this process can ensure a successful transition into the next chapter of their lives.

Preparing cover letters, resume assistance and mock interviews can help build confidence to become a stronger candidate for positions they may be seeking. Arranging internships and trainings allows them to gain valuable work experience. With this experience they can not only develop and refine skills but also explore different career paths. Effective financial planning can aim to teach the value of money and how to budget correctly.



Job Search and Employment Assistance

Employment assistance programs are very beneficial, especially for youth. The job search process can be very overwhelming to tackle alone, as there are numerous paths to choose from and there are many factors that go into the employee selection process. This program can assist individuals look into different employment options to find the right career for them. Counselors are available and provide referrals and resources for individuals as well as families. Employment organizations prepare youth in foster care for job interviews by teaching professionalism and helping them explore employment options.

Ideally, employment services could demonstrate how to search for employment, whether it be online or by networking. They can also assist with the application process and make sure it's a smooth transition. Networking and training opportunities help improve the youth's position as a strong candidate. Ultimately, the goal is that youth are able to support themselves financially and make a positive impact in their desired field. The proper guidance and skills acquired during this program can help them succeed.

Education



Youth Bureaus

Youth Bureaus help individuals acquire skills that would benefit them as they enter adulthood. Programs have grown to extend services to include arts and crafts, activities, and working with mentors. Educators have realized the struggle that students may have with academics, which is why Youth Bureaus have developed an after-school program. Assistance is available to each student not only for academics but to also discover new skills and learn the importance of character building and exposing students to diverse interests. Some programs include:

- Art
- Dance
- Board games
- Environmental programs
- Media production

Many educators volunteer at Youth Bureaus to ensure students have a safe place to go. The organization also provides student advocacy assistance and teaches determination to represent and support themselves. Youth Bureaus provide essential programs that can offer a place of learning and excitement for young people. The skills learned by youth in these safe zones may not only be beneficial to them academically, but they could help them pick up new hobbies they may not have thought to pursue, or may even serve as inspiration for a potential career path.



Educational Advocacy Services

These services assist with academics and preparing for higher education. The goal is to promote excellence in students' academic achievement as well as personal growth. Education programs give people the opportunity to learn the importance of character building and leadership skills to strengthen and improve themselves. Breakout sessions should also be available to build a sense of community. Educators are available to advocate for students and help in college readiness programs.

Community involvement is essential, and counselors help the students engage in public relations. Providing support for equal access with academic and extracurricular activities assists with a great educational experience. Students have the opportunity to learn the importance of education and focus on areas of strength. With technology rapidly growing, programs should also expose each individual to a variety of evolving disciplines. One of the major concepts of the mission of an advocacy organization is to ensure students get the proper resources and receive a positive learning experience. These resources may help prepare individuals for academic and personal success.

Well-Being



LGBTQIA2-S

LGBTQIA2-S (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirited; “hereinafter “LGBTQ+”) organizations continue to expand and offer services and engage in community building. Services include the importance of the LGBTQ+ history and celebrating pride and diversity. The LGBTQ+ community welcomes each individual and provides them with a safe haven to express themselves. For individuals who are not comfortable with in-person interaction, there are also online services via video or chat rooms that offer peer support. The goal for this community is to provide a sense of well-being, confidence, and expression to each individual.

Another important component of this community is to provide support to guard against discrimination. The purpose of educators and mentors is to help reduce the risk of any potential substance abuse or suicide. These confidential groups allow people to discuss matters including:

- Sexual orientation – The sexual or romantic attraction to people based on their sex
- Gender identity – How one perceives their gender, as opposed to their biological sex
- Acceptance – While feeling welcomed in one’s community is important, it is essential for an individual to accept themselves and their identity

Members of the LGBTQ+ community may feel isolated during the process of discovering themselves. Nobody should have to go through this alone; this is a place where each member is valued and respected. LGBTQ+ organizations strive to build a sense of community and promote education and advocacy.



Respite

Respite provides in-home support services to assist individuals and families who are faced with disabilities. Counselors provide therapeutic activities to focus on self-esteem and social skills. Case managers can be assigned to help avoid hospitalizations or out of home placements. Different interventions can be used to meet the needs of individuals and families. It is important for youth to be exposed to different cultures and have the opportunity to experience recreational outings within the community and surrounding areas. Areas of focus include:

- Mental Health Treatment
- Parenting skills
- Domestic violence

The major goal of a program such as Respite is to assist caregivers and give them a break for a limited amount of time to provide relief. Caregivers may often be faced with many competing responsibilities, which could lead to increased stress. This may not only have a large impact on their lives, but also on their family. With counselors providing therapy and support services, it limits the amount of conflict and improves family functioning. This can allow the family to become more of a unit and focus on strengthening the family bond.



Disability Assistance

Disability Assistance programs focus on providing income for housing, food, and childcare. Programs may be developed to provide care to people of all ages and diverse backgrounds that may encounter significant challenges. Someone's disability should never be an obstacle that prevents them from succeeding.

Disability Assistance programs also provide counselors to assist with services that accommodate an individual's language, respect their culture, and understand their needs. Special education and related services are available for each individual. The counselors are not only there to advise and inform clients of their rights but to also make the home care process easier for them and their families. Disability Assistance programs can help provide individuals the tools necessary for them to work towards a successful future.



Psychological Services

Mental health services include working on emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Both short-term and long-term services are available to clients depending on their needs. These services are provided by highly trained staff including:

- Social Workers
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists

These mental health professionals are committed to providing the best services that are tailored to the clients' needs. The community can provide services to accommodate each population. There is a wide range of services that can be offered to treat conditions such as depression, anxiety, and trauma.

When starting therapy, the goal is to establish a relationship and building rapport. Counselors are trained to be respectful, caring, and empathic in order to create a healthy relationship. Together, the counselors and clients can work on their specific needs and identify social, emotional, or environmental factors that may cause any barriers. Treatment plans are developed to achieve goals one step at a time. It's important to also have a diverse staff in order to accommodate each client for their uniqueness and deliver the best care with respect, empathy, and cultural sensitivity. Ensuring the safety of each individual and preparing them to move forward is the overall goal.



Juvenile Justice Systems

Many programs are designed specifically to cater to the needs of youth within the justice system. Departments seek to create a more fair and effective justice system. Within these programs, the youth take part in community-based prevention projects that promote individual change. Additionally, alternative schooling may be offered to the youth to see if they perform better in a new environment that uses a different curriculum. These methods are done to help youth follow a more positive path.

The benefit of preventative programs is keeping young people out of the justice system and giving them a chance to adapt to society. When preventative programs are unsuccessful, youth may be referred to placement services. These services can assist placing the youth within the foster care system to residential placements. Detention centers are geared more towards keeping the youth remanded in an adolescent facility. Additional programs can be beneficial to provide structure and make it possible for the youth to remain at home. The overall goal is to provide mental health through advocacy, community education and direct services.



Substance Abuse

Substance abuse programs are dedicated to seeing the disease of addiction go into remission. Individuals within substance abuse programs should have the assistance of a counselor to provide guidance down the right path and lead them to success. Counselors can provide the foundation and tools to help youth live sober lives after treatment. Both staff and clients should be open minded and honest with respect for diversity. Substance abuse counselors should be promoting honesty, stability, and most importantly empowerment.

Within substance abuse programs, there are a variety of interventions with structured opportunities to make changes in the individual's life. Individuals who suffer from substance abuse may not realize the impact their actions have on the people that are close to them. Each intervention is used to provide examples of destructive behaviors that may impact the youth and their loved ones. Rehab programs encourage the family/loved ones to collaborate and be a part of the recovery process. Treatment plans can be critical to assisting with goals. A true partnership with youth, family, and their support system can help lead to a successful recovery.

Housing



Homeless Shelters

The mission of homeless shelters is to decrease the growth of homelessness, which has been partly fueled by the mounting cost of housing. Organizations aim to find permanent and supportive housing and break the cycle of poverty. This includes opening food pantries, soup kitchens, and providing meals to families. These services not only provide individuals with shelter, food, and clothing, but they may also offer training so that the youth can work towards living independently.

Services continue to expand to meet the needs of the diverse client population. Shelters help alleviate hunger and homelessness by providing food and temporary housing. Housing is an essential part of life promoting safety and a sense of well-being. It is suggested that shelters offer onsite support services for their clients. Counselors can encourage and lead clients towards permanent housing. Educating clients on advocacy and assisting them through the process can ensure a smooth transition and help build a bridge with outside resources. With a wide variety of resources offered, individuals and families can be provided with permanent housing and stability.



Permanent Housing

Housing programs work with individuals to provide stable housing for themselves and their families. In order to better accommodate the community, specific housing can be provided to young adults, teen moms, etc. Housing and social service departments work together to establish a community development approach. A case manager can be assigned to everyone to help them ease into the transition and obtain stability. Case managers typically review the clients' background and take into consideration:

- Family size
- Current income
- Job location

Obtaining permanent housing can be difficult depending on an individual's current financial status. This is where case managers play a major role in the process. Counselors work with clients to provide housing vouchers and assist them with the search criteria. Rules and guidelines are provided to ensure the safety of everyone. Giving individuals the housing they need can help youth focus on their academics and future career, as it may alleviate some of the stressors associated with finding a place to live.