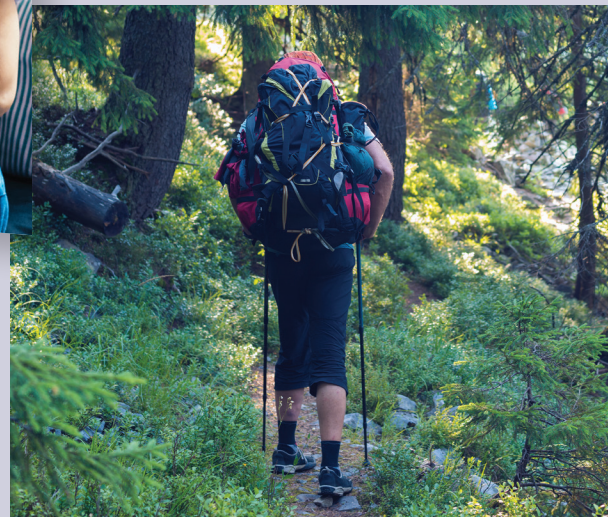




**Independent Educational  
Consultants Association**



# Program Descriptions for Teens with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

After visiting a wide range of therapeutic programs, families can rely on an IECA member to guide them through the critical process of finding the right program for their child.

The level of placement recommendation is determined by a very thorough process that includes the independent educational consultant working with the family, records review, and speaking with professionals that are involved with the case. Listed below are program descriptors for the continuum of care that is available.

## **NON-RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS**

These programs are designed to serve youth and young adults who can benefit from community-based treatment including, but not limited to: outpatient therapy, recreational therapy, community service, academics, mentoring, coaching and support with addictions. These programs are overseen by a licensed clinician, and when offering academic credits, must have appropriate accreditation.

Day treatment models such as intensive outpatient and partial hospitalization, as well as community-based mentoring and counseling models which include in-home and community interventions, may be typical of this category.

## **OUTDOOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (WILDERNESS PROGRAMS AND OUTDOOR THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS)**

These programs subscribe to a diverse treatment model that incorporates a blend of therapeutic modalities, but do so in the context of wilderness environments and backcountry travel. The approach has evolved to include client assessment, development of an

individual treatment plan, the use of established psychotherapeutic practice, and the development of aftercare plans. Outdoor behavioral health programs apply wilderness therapy in the field, which contains the following key elements that distinguish it from other approaches found to be effective in working with adolescents: 1) The promotion of self-efficacy and personal autonomy through task accomplishment; 2) A restructuring of the therapist-client relationship through group and communal living facilitated by natural consequences; and 3) The promotion of a therapeutic social group that is inherent in outdoor living arrangements.

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## **THERAPEUTIC BOARDING SCHOOLS**

These schools generally provide an integrated educational milieu with an appropriate level of structure and supervision for physical, emotional, behavioral, familial, social, intellectual and academic development. These schools grant high school diplomas or award credits that lead to admission to a diploma granting secondary school. Each school will vary in their approach to the emotional and behavioral needs of the child and we urge parents to review this approach with the professional that has been working with their child to ensure appropriate placement. Placement at these boarding schools can range from 12 months to 2 years depending on the program's therapeutic components.

## **SMALL RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS**

These programs are designed to serve fewer than 30 students in nurturing, often family-like settings. Small residential programs offer a holistic therapeutic milieu which is based upon the relationships formed and the social dynamics created in small, intimate environments. These programs offer appropriate levels of structure and supervision for the emotional, social and

academic development of their students. They often incorporate life skills training, academic instruction, outdoor adventure, recreation, and family involvement into an experiential living environment. Small residential programs often maintain an area of specialty for the students they serve.

## **RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS**

The focus of these programs is behavioral support. Medication management and medical monitoring is generally available on-site. These facilities treat adolescents with complex psychological and behavior issues. Most are Joint Commission (JCAHO) accredited. They provide group and individual therapy sessions, are highly structured, and offer recreational activities and academics.

## **TRANSITIONAL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS**

These programs are designed to serve young adults over the age of 18 years who could benefit from a safe, supportive environment and life skills training as they transition into adulthood. Many offer access to community-based self-help groups such as 12-step

programs and may have a psychiatric component. Generally, these programs offer educational programs that are linked to community colleges or universities or provide schooling at their location. Volunteering, employment arrangements, community service, and re-integration into the community at large are general components of the programs. Many operate on a small residential model and transition to a community-based, independent living apartment model. Young Adult Programs are designed to work exclusively with young adults and may not be able to be fully licensed or accredited as an entity, but have therapeutic services that are overseen by a licensed clinical professional.

IECA member consultants who specialize in therapeutic placements have extensive experience with mental health diagnoses, adolescent behaviors, substance abuse, emotional disabilities, and learning differences. They are able to help families during a time of crisis and offer support and direction to recommend the best intervention and solution.

**To find an IECA member consultant, go to [www.IECAonline.com](http://www.IECAonline.com).**



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3251 Old Lee Highway • Suite 510  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-591-4850  
[www.IECAonline.com](http://www.IECAonline.com)  
[info@IECAonline.com](mailto:info@IECAonline.com)

