



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (YDP)

84 Pine St., Floor 4
Burlington, VT 05401

223 Lake St.
St. Albans, VT 05478

Program Overview

The Youth Development Program (YDP) is a monthly case management program designed to support youth who have experience within the foster care system as they transition into adulthood. YDP aims to provide resources and skills to eligible youth in Vermont so that they have the opportunity to rise above risk factors, find resilience, and thrive. We provide strengths-based services that are fully driven by youth-identified goals. In our work with youth, YDP aims to promote healthier and better-connected young adults, families, and communities.

YDP is a community-based program providing monthly case management services for youth between the ages of 14 and 23 in Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties. Participating youth are expected to meet with their Youth Development Coordinator (YDC) once per month. Services are voluntary and youth may end services at any time.

A Youth Development Coordinator's role is to:

- Support youth with setting goals, exploring interests, connecting with natural supports, and transitioning to adulthood
- Provide financial resources through flexible funding to support youth goals
- Assist with extended foster care to financially support foster parents and other supportive adults to care for youth beyond their 18th birthdays
- Provide leadership opportunities to empower and inspire youth to advocate for improvements in the child welfare system

Eligibility Criteria

Youth eligible for the Youth Development Program:

- Are between 14-23 years of age (eligibility ends on a youth's 23rd birthday)
- Reside in:
 - Chittenden,
 - Franklin, or
 - Grand Isle County
- And meet one of the following:
 - Youth is currently in DCF custody
 - Youth was in DCF custody at age 14 or 15 and reunified to caregiver
 - Youth was in DCF custody when age 16 or older

Referrals

A referral to the Youth Development Program can be submitted by anyone. The YDP referral form can be found at <https://www.spectrumvt.org/what-we-do/skills-program/> and submitted to referrals@spectrumvt.org.

If you would like assistance with completing a referral, please contact Kat Thompson, Intake Coordinator, by email at KThompson@spectrumvt.org or by calling (802) 825-2196.

If you have questions prior to submitting a referral, please contact Leslie Schwartz, Director of the Youth Development Program, by email at LSchwartz@spectrumvt.org or by calling (802) 324-3944.

Program Values

The Youth Development Program values the experience, knowledge, and skills that youth bring to their lives and to the world. YDP strives to support youth in identifying and working toward the goals they have for themselves. Youth Development Coordinators collaborate with youth to create individualized plans of care, which are the drivers for care provided by YDP. Youth Development Coordinators draw from a range of frameworks including Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC), Bowen Family Systems theory, motivational interviewing, and more to provide individualized services that meets youth and their families where they are.

Program Services

Case Management and Life Skills

- Develop an individualized Plan of Care to support youth with identifying, setting, and achieving goals

- Coordinate care with DCF, school, mental health providers, family, justice system and more
- Assist youth with accessing additional community supports, connections, and resources
- Make referrals to other service providers as needed
- Utilize flexible funding to explore interests and support with goal development. Funding is limited and is available on a case-by-case basis. Funding should align with youth goals as outlined on their Plan of Care

Extended Foster Care

- YDP Adult Living Partner (ALP) Agreement: Facilitate housing agreement between youth and a supportive adult to support youth who are enrolled in school or who are employed to maintain safe and stable housing while in YDP to pursue transition goals identified in their Plan of Care
- YDP Independent Living Stipend: Supports youth to live independently while they participate in YDP and pursue transition goals identified in their Plan of Care

Leadership and Advocacy Opportunities

- Join the Statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB): a collaborative and project-focused team of youth and adult supporters working to improve the foster care system in Vermont while building skills for youth and elevating youth voices
- Develop leadership and advocacy skills through participation in panels, presentations, trainings, and community conversations with DCF staff and foster parents
- Attend conferences and internships through the New England Youth Coalition, FosterClub, Foster Youth in Action, and more

Engagement Expectations

Youth electing to participate in the Youth Development Program are expected to meet with YDCs on a monthly basis and partake in the planning of, engage with, and/or complete the following:

- **Plan of Care:** updated every *six months*, this document defines youth's goals and guides youth's work in the program
- **Intake Assessments:** updated *yearly*, this document provides a yearly snapshot of youth's life, goals, and progress

- **Safety/crisis plans:** updated *as needed*, this document supports youth by identifying triggers, coping skills, natural supports, and resources to support youth in moments of crisis and/or maintaining stability

Meetings are scheduled for one hour. YDCs are able to meet with youth in the community, at their homes, the YDP offices, or remotely through Microsoft Teams Video Meetings and phone calls. YDCs reserve the right to move the meeting site if there are any safety concerns related to an identified meeting space.

Program Staff

YDP consists of a Program Director, one Intake Coordinator, and four full-time Youth Development Coordinators. The team is also supported by Spectrum's Chief Clinical Officer.

Leslie Schwartz, BA
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Intake Coordinator
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Kthompson@spectrumvt.org

Chris Smith, M.S. LCMHC LADC
Chief Clinical Officer
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Youth Development Coordinator
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Youth Development Coordinator
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Mvanollefen@spectrumvt.org

Taylor MacHarrie, BS
Youth Development Coordinator
Chittenden County
802-363-7423
Tmacharrie@spectrumvt.org

Communication Policy

Each Youth Development Coordinator has a program cell phone to communicate with youth. YDCs are able to communicate through text, email, and phone calls for scheduling and coordinating purposes. Emails and phone calls are to be used for scheduling and quick check-ins, whereas meeting times are reserved for larger updates and conversations.

Youth Development Coordinators are available through the above contact methods weekdays during business hours. YDCs strive to respond to outreach within a 24-hour period, but this may vary depending on availability.

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency or crisis you can call:

Chittenden County

- First Call: (802) 488-7777
- Howard Center Community Outreach: (802) 488-7778
- Burlington Street Outreach: (802) 488-7013

Franklin County

- NCSS Crisis: (802) 524-6554, press 1

Cancellation Policy

We ask clients to communicate as soon as possible to cancel or reschedule meetings. If you are more than 15 minutes late to your meeting, your YDC reserves the right to cancel the meeting and will contact you to reschedule.

If we are planning to meet in the community or at your residence, we ask that you respond to outreach confirming the meeting one hour prior to meeting start. YDCs will not travel to a client meeting unless the meeting is confirmed in advance.

Discharge Policy

YDP is a voluntary program, and youth may choose to end services at any time. Youth will be closed from YDP services:

- When youth reach the age of 23,
- If YDC loses contact with youth and is unable to reach them for 60 days (see policy below),
- If youth's behavior or communication compromises the safety of staff including physical violence, serious threats of physical violence, and/or verbal threats of harm toward staff.

After 60 days of no contact, YDCs may contact youth and/or guardians to inform them of following discharge policy:

- After 60 days of no contact, youth may be closed from YDP services. Youth will be informed of a date to meet by to prevent closure. Youth closed from YDP services are able to re-refer at anytime, so long as they continue to meet current eligibility criteria.

Mandated Reporting and Duty to Warn

In accordance with legal reporting obligations, all Spectrum employees, interns, and volunteers are mandated reporters. They shall report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") within 24 hours (33 V.S.A § 4913), and suspected abuse of vulnerable adults to Adult Protective Services within 48 hours (33 V.S.A § 6903). The employee, intern, or volunteer should also immediately bring it to the attention of their director. Reporting to a director does not relieve one of the legal responsibilities of reporting the abuse with the DCF within 24 hours.

To avert a serious threat to health, safety, or property, Spectrum may use and disclose information to prevent a serious threat to the health and safety of an individual and/or the health and safety of the public or another person, or to property, pursuant to applicable law. Vermont law provides employees who make a good faith report pursuant to the foregoing reporting obligations with immunity from civil or criminal liability.

Substances, Alcohol, Nicotine, and Tobacco Use Policy

- Clients are expected to refrain from use of substances, alcohol, nicotine, and tobacco products during meeting times.
- Clients are expected to refrain from purchasing and selling substances, alcohol, nicotine, and tobacco products during their YDP meetings.
- If a client is under the influence of substances during a meeting, YDCs have discretion to end meetings if client is unable to meaningfully orient themselves to the meeting.
- YDCs reserve the right to move the meeting site if there are any safety concerns related to an identified meeting site.

Tobacco-Free Policy

Because we recognize the hazards caused by exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, as well as the life-threatening diseases linked to the use of all forms of tobacco, it shall be the policy of Youth Development Program at Spectrum Youth & Family Services to provide a tobacco-free environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of oral tobacco products or "spit" tobacco, and it applies to both employees and nonemployee visitors of Spectrum.

Definition:

1. No use of tobacco products will be allowed within the facilities of Spectrum Youth and Family Services at any time.
 - The decision to not provide designated smoking areas outside the building will be at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

- No use of tobacco products is permitted within the facilities or on the property of the Youth Development Program at Spectrum Youth and Family Services at any time.
- 2. No tobacco use in any company vehicle.
 - There will be no use of any form of tobacco in Spectrum vehicles at any time.
 - There will be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting people on Spectrum-authorized business.
- 3. Breaks
 - Supervisors will discuss the issue of taking breaks with their staff, both smokers and non-smokers.
 - Together they will develop effective solutions that do not interfere with the productivity of the staff.

Procedure:

- 1) Employees will be informed of this policy through signs posted in Compass facilities and vehicles, newsletters, inserts in pay envelopes, the policy manual, e-mail, and/or orientation and training provided by their supervisors.
- 2) Visitors will be informed of this policy through signs, and it will be explained by their hosts.
- 3) Youth Development Program staff can access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) who can help employees who want to quit tobacco by helping them access recommended cessation programs and materials. More detailed information from Human Resources regarding EAP is available.

Weapons

Weapons are defined as any object or substance designed or used to inflict a wound, cause injury, or incapacitate, including but not limited to, all firearms, pellet guns, air pistols, air rifles, any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, or any other knife having a blade of three or more inches, black jacks, metal knuckles, nunchaku, fireworks, explosives, and biological agents. Replicas and facsimiles of weapons are also considered weapons and are therefore prohibited. The use of implements or substances not commonly used as a weapon or not expressly prohibited by this section may be a violation of this policy if used as a weapon. The use of a chemical irritant (e.g., pepper spray) will not be a violation of this policy if used solely for self-defense.

- Possessing or using weapons, ammunition, explosives, hunting devices, flammable substances, or other dangerous devices is prohibited on Spectrum property or vehicles.
- No client may be allowed on Spectrum premises (or vehicles) with a weapon. If a client does carry a weapon for self defense, your Youth Development Coordinator will work with you to identify a safe storage option.

- Spectrum understands that some families may have weapons in their homes. Weapons must be stored safely in locked containers when appropriate for Spectrum staff to visit the home.
 1. Firearms must be stored according to the Vermont Secure Storage Law. As of July 1, 2023, Vermont law requires gun owners to store firearms in a locked container or equipped with a safety device whenever a child or “prohibited person” is likely to gain access to them.
- Spectrum reserves the right to contact law enforcement if the circumstance calls for it.

Accessibility

The Youth Development Program is committed to serving all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, and marital or civil union status. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Compass will consider reasonable accommodation whenever possible for all persons. However, accommodations made must not impose undue hardship on Compass at Spectrum, in conformance with state and federal laws.

Fee and Insurance Reimbursement Information

Families will be served free of charge regardless of health insurance status. Services will be billed directly to Medicaid if the youth is enrolled in Medicaid. If a family is not currently enrolled in insurance and would like to access benefits, Youth Development Coordinators can support with this connection.

Consent and Agreement to the Use and Disclosure of Health Information for Treatment, Payment, or Healthcare Operations

I understand that as part of my care, YDP originates and maintains records which may describe my health history, symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and any plans for future care or treatment. I understand that this information serves as:

- A basis for planning my care and treatment.
- A means of communication among the professionals who contribute to my care.
- A source of information for the program to bill DCF for services I receive through the program.
- A means by which a third party can verify that services billed were actually provided.
- A tool for routine healthcare operations such as assessing quality and reviewing the competence of health care professionals and the services that are offered.

The *Notice of Privacy Practices* provides a more complete description of information uses and disclosures (release of, or access to, your information). This document outlines that I have the right to review the notice prior to signing this consent. I understand that YDP reserves the right to change their notice and practices. However, prior to a material change taking effect the

agency will publish an announcement of the change at every agency facility, on its website, and in the local paper. I understand that a new notice will be distributed to me.

I understand that my records are subject to confidentiality imposed by state and federal regulations. I also understand that alcohol and drug abuse client records are protected by 42CFR part 2, and that records may not be released or disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations.

I understand that I have the right to request restrictions as to how my health information may be used or disclosed to carry out treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. I understand that the organization is not required to agree to the restrictions requested; however, if YDP agrees to the requested restrictions, they are bound by our agreement.

I consent to the agency's use and disclosure of protected health information about me for treatment, payment, and health care operations. I understand that I may revoke this consent in writing, except to the extent that the agency has already taken action based upon my prior consent.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is important. Federal (42 CFR, Part 2 for substance abuse related issues) and State laws protect the release of confidential information. No information can be disclosed to anyone outside of this practice without your written consent except in certain cases, such as the following, where youth workers are mandated to report to appropriate agencies or individuals:

- 1.) Vermont law requires youth workers to report actual or suspected cases of abuse involving children and vulnerable persons including the disabled and elderly.
- 2.) Youth workers will take appropriate actions if you are in imminent danger to yourself or others.
- 3.) Youth workers reserve the right to disclose to appropriate personnel credible threats of violence or harm made against identifiable victims, including persons and property.
- 4.) On rare occasions, youth workers may be required to comply with a court-ordered subpoena to testify or provide records.
- 5.) Youth workers may need to convey medical information about you in an emergency situation.

In addition, youth workers may need to relay diagnostic and treatment plan information to your insurance company in order to obtain authorization for services, payment and to comply with regulatory health care operations such as quality improvement activities.

Minors

Confidentiality is an essential part of treatment. We will discuss with you what kind of information you would like us to share with your parents/guardians. In certain cases, you may not need to have parental/guardian consent for referral to mental health or addiction services. We will need to determine this on an individual basis, and we urge you to discuss this issue with your youth development coordinator. In certain instances, we may need to relay information to your parents/guardians in cases of emergencies (medical emergencies, suicidal issues or attempts, drug/alcohol overdoses, for example).

Client Rights and Responsibilities

As a client of YDP at Spectrum, you have the following rights. Additionally, there is a list of your responsibilities that will help us to provide you with the best care we can.

As a YDP client you have the right:

- 1.) To basic civil and legal rights as a person served by YDP and as a citizen or resident of the United States.
- 2.) To have these policies communicated in a way you understand.
- 3.) To communicate in your primary language and primary mode of communication.
- 4.) To ask questions about anything not understood.
- 5.) To have access to the services you need, including services to ensure continuity of care.
- 6.) To be given a **YDP Program Description** as part of YDP's informed consent and orientation policy and procedure. This will describe the service approach and the admission criteria used by the program.
- 7.) To refuse services and accept appropriate referrals if YDP cannot meet your needs.
- 8.) To receive services according to commonly accepted professional standards regardless of race, creed, gender, age, nation of origin, political belief, disability, sexual orientation, or infectious disease.
- 9.) To be treated with respect and dignity at all times under all circumstances.
- 10.) To receive services in a manner responsive to your unique characteristics, needs, and abilities.
- 11.) To request reasonable accommodation for special needs.
- 12.) To be notified as far in advance as possible should an appointment need to be rescheduled.
- 13.) To be informed about your services, recommendations, and progress, and to be provided with information to support decision making.

- 14.) To participate in all aspects of your service plan, and all decisions regarding your YDP experience.
- 15.) To not be subjected to experimental research without your express and informed consent and/ or the consent of your legal guardian. If consent is given research will adhere to all Spectrum Youth & Family Services, professional and governmental regulations. You and/or your legal guardian may withdraw consent at any time.
- 16.) To voice and/or file a complaint or grievance, request re- assignment to a different provider, to recommend changes in policies or exercise of legal rights without fear of retaliation or punishment, and to receive due process with regard to the complaint/ grievance. Attached you will find a copy of the **YDP Policy Regarding Grievance and Appeals**.
- 17.) To receive support in accessing and referral to self- help groups, advocacy services, legal services, and other community services as appropriate.
- 18.) To access and review your service and financial records as per the federal guidelines put forth by HIPAA (Health Information Portability and Accountability Act). In addition, you will be informed of your rights in treatment as part of the informed consent procedures of the YDP Program.
- 19.) To have your medical record handled in a professional and confidential manner. Written and electronic records will be kept confidential, except for disclosure as required by law.
- 20.) To stop services at any time.

As a client of YDP, it is your responsibility to:

1. Be on time for all scheduled appointments. Call ahead if you will be late.
2. Cancel appointments at least 24 hours in advance if needed.
3. Be courteous to all other clients and staff.
4. Be as engaged in your service planning and meetings as possible.
5. Participate fully in decisions regarding the services you receive.
6. Follow through on service recommendations, your service plan, and complete all necessary paperwork to facilitate connection to resources to meet your goals.
7. Ask questions about any aspect of your services that you do not understand or agree with.
8. Attend all appointments drug and alcohol free as much as possible. You will not be denied a meeting with your worker if you are able to engage in a productive conversation and meeting (to be determined by the worker)
9. Not carry weapons on Spectrum's property.

10. Inform your worker should you choose to end services.

Grievance and Appeals

YDP, in an effort to be compliant with the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) Department of Mental Health, sets out this process to receive complaints, appeals and grievances from individuals we serve, and their authorized representatives.

- YDP has appointed Mark Redmond, Executive Director of Spectrum Youth & Family Services, to receive and be responsible for grievances including, but not limited to, the quality of care or service provided, aspects of interpersonal relationships such as rudeness of a provider or employee, or failure to respect the beneficiary's basic rights.
- All complaints received by us will be directed to this individual for proper processing and handling.

Our grievance policy:

1. Complaints, grievances, and/ or appeals may filed verbally or in writing consistent with policies and procedures provided by the Agency of Human Services;
2. The complaint, grievance or appeal will be immediately forwarded to Mark Redmond, and will be logged into the appropriate database;
3. Written acknowledgment of the grievance will be mailed to the complainant within 5 days of receipt of the complaint;
4. Beneficiaries or their designated representatives may withdraw their grievance orally or in writing at any time. If the grievance is withdrawn orally, the withdrawal will be acknowledged by YDP in writing within 5 calendar days;
5. Mark Redmond will review the complaint, grievance, or appeal for resolution; 6.) All grievances must be addressed within 90 days of receipt;
6. Mark Redmond will report results of the investigation to the appropriate individuals including the individual complainant; and
7. Mark Redmond will periodically submit a summary report of activity to the designated persons (for example, Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, the Performance and Compliance Committee).

YDP at Spectrum will not take any retaliatory action against any individual who files a complaint with the agency or AHS.

Additional information is available at the following:

Vermont Department of Mental Health

802-828-3824

<http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/about/grievance>

Vermont Department of Health Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs

802-651-1550