

## **Program Description for Today's Journey Program YWCA of Binghamton/Broome County**

The vision of the "**Today's Journey**" Program (**TJ**) is to provide a supportive, sober, stable living environment for women recovering from alcohol and substance abuse and their dependent children. The program will enable them to live in a safe, secure, sober environment while receiving "in house" services from a highly qualified staff that includes: a Master's Level Social Worker, a Vocational/Educational Counselor and a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor along with a full-time Resident Manager. The YWCA provides Residential Staff 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to promote a safe, supportive living environment. **Today's Journey** will currently offer housing for two women and up to two children, with the projection of an additional third unit post-renovation of the residential floors.

Every woman entering the program will begin by meeting with the CASAC during the first 72 hours of her being admitted to the program. The CASAC will be responsible for providing intensive case management and monitoring of the resident's progress. The CASAC will obtain demographic information within the first 72 hours as well as completing an in depth assessment during the first 14 days. The resident along with the CASAC will develop an individualized service plan. This plan is derived from the psychosocial history as well as the resident identifying goals she would like to achieve while in the program. Along with this information the CASAC will work closely with the appropriate treatment provider to coordinate goals and objectives for the resident and her children. The resident will be required to meet with the CASAC a minimum of one time per week for a minimum of one hour. During these meetings, the resident along with the CASAC will discuss the resident's progress or lack of and how to achieve identified goals on the individualized service plan. The plan will be update every 60 days or sooner.

In order to promote and enforce good citizenship and longevity in the program, the YWCA has developed reasonable expectations for the women living in the program. Each resident will receive a list of guidelines that is reviewed with the CASAC upon intake. During the initial interview with the resident, the CASAC will discuss the minimum three-month commitment to the **Today's Journey** Program, and residents will be encouraged to utilize the available 18 month maximum stay. These guidelines identify resident expectations reinforcing positive behaviors. While there are guidelines in place for residents of the program it will seek to empower the residents to understand the causal relationship between choices and consequences, sticking to their obligations, and helping them become active participants in their own environment. Residents who enter the program on probation or who are court ordered will be expected to keep regular contact with their probation officer or court representative and abide by all court directives. The CASAC of the program will keep in close contact with all probation officers and court personnel.

While residing in **Today's Journey**, the women will be encouraged to enroll in a GED program, obtain or continue employment or enroll in a job-training program, providing it does not interfere with their treatment and providing they are emotionally stable to do so. They also will be required to begin or continue with treatment for their alcohol or substance abuse problems and follow any and all recommendations. Every resident entering the program will meet with the Vocational/Educational Counselor to assess their needs and set up services within the community. The women must be willing to attend educational classes and groups offered by the Vocational/Educational Counselor and the Social Worker. The YWCA works closely with the area high schools, the local employment offices, BOCES, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The Vocational/Educational Counselor will work with the residents on budgeting

skills along with providing a list of local banks and credit unions where various types of banking can begin for residents. The CASAC will work with the residents to continue to address specific individualized goals including following treatment recommendations. Residential staff will provide follow-up visits with the residents and their children who will have the option of returning for meetings and groups with staff and peers. This reinforces the positive skills they learned in the Program and enhances their chance for long-term economic self-sufficiency. Residents will also be required to meet with a Social Worker to determine if the resident is in need of a referral for a mental health evaluation. The Social Worker may also work with a resident to provide additional counseling and emotional support.

The women and their children living in the program will strongly be encouraged to develop a healthy life style. All residents will be encouraged to obtain a physical examination if they have not had one in the last year. It is also strongly suggested to the women and children see a dentist if they are not under a dentist's care. Healthy eating habits are important and residents will be required to complete a required six-week nutrition, cooking and budgeting program offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension. The residents will also be provided with numerous recreational activities in the YWCA including swimming, aquatic classes, aerobics, Yoga, Tai Chi, and dance classes. Residents will be provided with information upon admission about all local social service agencies. Along with becoming familiar with area agencies every resident is provided with a bus schedule and directions as to how to read it. If needed, staff will take residents to the bus depot and ride a bus with them enabling residents to gain confidence in utilizing public transportation.

The children of the **Today's Journey** Program will be afforded care in the Young Wonder's Child Care Center of the YWCA. Young Wonder's provides services for infant's ages 6 weeks and up as well as services for Toddler's and Pre-School age children. The children will be able to access recreational activities of the YWCA including the aquatics program. The CASAC will also help the resident make any referrals for enrolling in local schools, obtaining medical appointments and enrolling in parenting classes.

Referrals to Today's Journey will come from the Broome County Department of Social Services and/or Broome County Family Drug Treatment Court. All referrals must be eligible to receive services from Broome County Department of Social Services.

As Residential Services is currently a "community style" living situation with shared bath facilities and common living spaces, the program cannot at this time house young male children over the age of 8. The YWCA is beginning a major renovation project that will lead to Residential Services being efficiency and one-bedroom apartments. When this is complete Residential Services will be able to provide housing to an older age group of young male children.