

FINALIST EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Providence Self Sufficiency Ministries

For 24 years, Providence Self Sufficiency Ministries (PSSM), located in Georgetown (Floyd County) has provided services to children and families in southern Indiana. Providence House Family Preservation Program (FPP), a ministry of PSSM, is a unique residential treatment program for both children and their parents who have active cases of child abuse/neglect with the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). Children and their parents move onto the Georgetown campus for 6-12 months, receiving an intense comprehensive array of services, including on-site case management, on-site therapy and concrete services, (e.g., food, household necessities, etc.). The goal of FPP is to improve the emotional functioning of the entire family and help parents become self-sufficient and ultimately move into permanent housing in the community. Serving 10 families at a time, FPP admits a minimum of 20 families per year, which include 20-25 adults (primarily single mothers) and 40-60 children. Of the 20 families Providence House served this previous fiscal year, 50% were referred by Harrison, Clark and Floyd County DCS offices (15%, 20% and 15%, respectively). Because of the unique services that Providence House offers, 50% of our referrals were from neighboring counties; however, 80% of families graduating the program became permanent citizens of Floyd, Clark and/or Harrison counties.

Providence House has always striven to stay aware of the most salient needs of FPP families and to evolve treatment to meet those needs. Currently, the opioid epidemic has significantly increased the number of cases of child neglect in Indiana (89.4% in the past decade) and the percentage of cases of repeat maltreatment are higher than the national average. These statistics indicate that current treatment interventions do not adequately address the underlying causes of child maltreatment. Often, substance abuse and child maltreatment share a relationship with one common factor, which is unresolved trauma. FPP parents have their own histories of childhood maltreatment and have unintentionally repeated the cycle of neglect with their own children. Research shows that unresolved childhood trauma impedes parents' ability to emotionally connect with their children, which results in unconsciously repeating intergenerational patterns of unhealthy parenting behaviors. FPP parents are committed to providing loving care to their children and strongly desire to change. To change these longstanding patterns, treatment must emphasize insight-based interventions targeting understanding the importance of emotional connection and gaining insight into past trauma. However, due to time and cost efficiency, most current approaches emphasize psychoeducation and skills training, which are not sufficient to change pervasive patterns of behavior. In order to change these patterns and reduce/prevent repeat child maltreatment, new insight-based treatment interventions are needed.

Therefore, aligned with the Impact 100 Family Focus Area, this two-year project proposal aims to meet to the need to improve treatment interventions for families impacted by intergenerational patterns of child neglect. This FPP improvement project aims to develop and implement a new theoretically-grounded treatment curriculum that emphasizes insight-based interventions to more effectively target treatment to change parent-child relationship patterns.

Providence House FPP is ideally positioned to carry out this project, as the Clinical Director is a Licensed Psychologist specializing in trauma with children and families. FPP already has an established team of Masters level therapists who provide direct services. An additional team of highly knowledgeable clinicians will be assembled to develop the curriculum. Based on the most current approaches in the field, the parenting curriculum will emphasize an insight-based approach to target 1) understanding the importance of emotional connection, 2) gaining insight into past traumatic experiences and 3) establishing healthy parent-child relational patterns. Insight-based interventions will be combined with psychoeducation related to child development, emotional connection, relationship patterns and the impact of trauma. The psychoeducation will be presented to clients in an innovative new way, which will be through an interactive e- learning platform, the creation of which is a portion of this project. Client progress will be tracked using an online learning management system. Evidence-based skills training interventions will also remain a core component of the overall treatment curriculum. Families are anticipated to receive double the amount of treatment with the addition of this new curriculum. Over the course of treatment, parents will develop insight into how their experiences have shaped their relationship with their children and improve their emotional attunement to their children, which will in turn improve the children's emotional functioning. Parents and children will develop more intimate connections with one another, which will inevitably reduce the likelihood of future child maltreatment.

The first year of the grant period will be devoted to development of the curriculum and the second year will be devoted to implementation. By developing and implementing this new curriculum, Providence House aims to create transformational change on several levels. First, this project will drastically improve the structure of FPP by providing a theoretically-grounded framework for the program. Additionally, the use of a web- based learning platform will transform the way in which clients can receive treatment and will resolve previous barriers caused by limited staff. The curriculum itself will significantly improve the treatment that clients receive by emphasizing the gaining of insight into relational patterns, which existing interventions overlook. Most importantly, this project will allow Providence House FPP to significantly increase the number of parents who achieve the treatment goal of improving emotional connections and establishing new patterns of engaging with their children. By achieving this goal and breaking the cycle of child maltreatment, transformational change will be achieved not only in the newly-established parent-child relationships, but also in the future generations of families. Lastly, completing this project will provide FPP with a sustainable curriculum that will be used for many years to come, making a great impact on many families.