



Hospital Partner Reports 2020-21

Youthdale Treatment Centre

Submitted by Dr. Nathan Scharf, Medical Director

Youthdale is a non-profit, charitable community agency funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Youthdale is managed by a central administration and overseen by a public Board of Directors. Established in 1969, Youthdale is one of the founding members of the children's mental health movement in Ontario. Youthdale upholds the highest professional standards and continuously searches for innovative ways to treat children with complex mental health needs and their families.

Youthdale's clinical services include psychiatric crisis response, inpatient, live-in, day treatment and outpatient consultation. Youthdale meets the complex needs of children and youth with a team of highly skilled and dedicated psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, child and youth workers, as well as other allied social service and health work related professionals.

Youthdale's "continuum of treatment" provides integrated mental health services to children and youth aged 6 and up as well as their families, simplifying access and allowing families to focus on their children's well-being. Youthdale is moving forward in forging strong treatment partnerships with other Agencies and Hospitals, in order to support the development of well integrated, community based and client centered programs. We serve all children and families, regardless of race, creed, ethnic origin or financial circumstances. Wherever possible, we adapt our treatment environment to support a child's religion, heritage, and cultural identity. Though many of the children and families who come to us face complex challenges, they bring their strengths and the capacity for growth and change. Our goal is to help each individual realize their full potential.

Currently, Youthdale is undergoing a Review of Services and Practices in order to ensure that the Agency is well placed to optimally serve the needs of the community in a rapidly evolving social, systems and service provision landscape. We wish to modify and improve our treatment models and mandate to ensure effectiveness, inclusion, equity and diversity. We strive to be sensitive to and mindful of the wishes and needs of youth and families that have complex psychosocial services needs and require a range of intensive resources.

Department Overview

Youthdale strives to provide comprehensive and well integrated services to the youth and families that it serves. We do this through the provision of a continuum of services ranging from mobile (community based) assessment and consultation with support, direction and referral to a range of inpatient options and other services.

The Crisis Support Team has acted as Youthdale's intake to urgent services. During a period of restrictions to in-person contact resulting from the COVID pandemic service provision has been by phone or virtual. Psychiatrists consult with the Crisis Support Team on all service referrals. This process is integral to: providing triage to the child and family; directing them to the right service to help stabilize a developing worrisome situation providing a community-based safety plan where appropriate, planning for an admission or providing other intensive service where necessary, either within our service continuum or from a different resource.

If a referral is deemed as low risk, the Crisis Support Team will provide telephone support and refer to an appropriate community resource for further assistance. For moderate risk situations, the Crisis Support Team will develop a safety plan, provide mobile crisis response to the home, and help with daily telephone support until the situation is resolved or the need for more intensive intervention becomes clear. In high risk situations, The Crisis Support Team will facilitate admission to our 10-bed Secure Treatment Unit or another psychiatric unit as available or appropriate. As COVID has resulted in some limitation of admission rates, we have adapted service models on an interim basis to provide virtual services where possible and appropriate.



Youthdale provides emergency psychiatric treatment for Ontario youth under 16 at imminent risk of harming themselves or others, or who are suffering a severe disturbance of emotions, thought, or cognition on our Acute Support Unit. Our goal is to help children express their feelings appropriately, understand the relationship between emotions, thoughts, and actions, and learn to control their harmful behaviour.

Youthdale's 10-bed voluntary Transitional Psychiatric Unit provides stabilization, assessment, and intensive treatment for children under 16 from Toronto who present urgent emotional and behavioral difficulties, but no imminent risk of harm to themselves or others.

In mid 2020, Youthdale opened an 8 bed, Voluntary Inpatient Treatment Service for Transitional Age Youth, the Transitional Age Unit (TAU), an interdisciplinary Unit that employs a Dialectical Behavioural Therapy Model to support youth in developing life and independence skills, which providing psychiatric support , diagnosis and treatment.

The 3 Units are staffed by a team of child psychiatrists, psychologists, a consulting neurologist, registered nurses, psychiatric crisis workers, and educational specialists. Specialty consultations with Speech and Language Pathology or Occupational Therapists may be arranged as required.

Intensive Support and Supervision Program

In partnership with Youth Justice Services, Youthdale provides an Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) in Toronto for young persons with mental health needs as an alternative to custody for their criminal offences, but who can be appropriately supported and supervised in the community. Intensive support and supervision is intended to reduce the risk of relapse through evidence-based treatment, including psychiatric consultation, family and community support, supervision, and crisis management appropriate to the young person's needs.

Youthdale Sleep Centre

Youthdale's Sleep Medicine Clinic is a six bed service, allowing for 6 children to have comprehensive sleep studies nightly, in addition to daytime studies conducted as required. Additionally, the Clinic provides "in house" sleep medicine consultation and studies to the inpatient services.

Live –In Treatment Programs

Youthdale provides Community based live-in treatment to youth in Toronto whose psychosocial circumstances suggests that live-in treatment is most suited to their personal and family needs. The milieu therapy available includes educational, day treatment, and individual and family therapy as appropriate. There are 3 houses located in Toronto, and 2 rural programs near Magnetawan, ON.