



Stevens' Wellness Policy

Introduction

Stevens Treatment Programs (“Stevens”) is a therapeutic residential treatment center serving biological males aged 11 to 22 with complex emotional and behavioral needs. Stevens’ MA approved Chapter 766 (5th-12th grade) private special education school serves youth within our specialized, staff-secure Residential Education program and small therapeutic Day School. The youth within our Residential Education program attend the Stevens School; receive individual, family and group therapy; and receive 24-hour care and supervision.

Stevens main campus is at 24 Main St. in Swansea, which also houses its small Intensive Treatment Residence (ITR) program. ITR youth do not attend the Stevens School. Stevens’ off-site Transitional Living Program (TLP) in Fall River, MA serves biological males aged 14 to 22 who are transitioning to adulthood.

The youth served by Stevens frequently have complex trauma histories, have experienced failed interventions, and have negative behavioral patterns that have caused them to be unsafe to others, themselves, and the community. Most youth struggle with relationships, trust, and lack hope for the future. Stevens specializes in working with difficult populations and excels at providing a safe, secure therapeutic setting.

Philosophy

At Stevens Treatment Programs, we believe that all youth have the right to optimal health and wellness. We are committed to providing a safe environment and access to health care at three levels - prevention, treatment, and support.

The primary objective of the healthcare system at Stevens Treatment Programs is to assist youth in achieving optimal states of wellness during their stay. This is accomplished in partnership with the youth through mutual identification of health care needs and the provision of appropriate and timely care and treatment.

Healthcare at Stevens has the following goals:

- Through youth self-identification and accurate health assessment by the Nurse Manager, identify the health care needs and establish priorities for wellness and health care for youth in partnership with them
- Provide appropriate and timely care by a licensed primary care provider, dental and vision providers and specialists
- Assist youth in making healthy choices through the provision of health information, wellness education and supports
- Maintain a collaborative Health Team, including parents, guardians, DCF, and other agencies or individuals as needed to ensure youths’ optimal health

Wellness Policy Statement

Wellness is essential to youths’ academic success, cognitive performance, physical health, and overall well-being. Stevens’ Wellness Policy is the template for how the Stevens’ community prioritizes the health and well-being of the youth we serve. Through this document, Stevens sets forth to:



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- spell out specific practices aimed at promoting health and nutrition;
- detail physical education and recreational activities provided;
- provide information on food and meal preparation;
- share relevant practices of the Food Services Department at Stevens; and
- present information regarding the Stevens' Wellness Committee.

Relevant Regulations

- Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004
- Healthy, Hunger-Free Act of 2020
- Code of Massachusetts Regulations: Department of Public Health regulation 105 CMR 215 – Standards for School Wellness Advisory Committees
- MA Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 3.07(6)
- M.G.L. c. 111, § 223, 105 CMR 215.000

Reference Documents

- MA and USDA Competitive Foods and Beverage Nutrition Standards (2014)
- School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health (SWITCH) ~ <https://massschoolwellness.org>
- MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office for Food and Nutrition Programs – Administrative Review Checklist
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program
- Stevens Healthy Eating Plan Procedure
- Stevens Dress Code & Hygiene Procedures

Wellness Activities

Nutrition Promotion and Education

Within the small Stevens' School, there are two lunch periods served each day in the dining room. Students eat alongside teachers and teacher assistants, who provide behavioral support, skill development and promote healthy eating habits. Staff encourage youth to try new foods, make healthy choices and provide basic education regarding nutrition.

Culinary Pre-vocational Class

One of the quarterly pre-vocational classes offered to youth at Stevens is a Culinary Class. During this class, students learn the basics of reading, adjusting, and developing recipes and following the necessary steps for recipes. The class initially focuses on ways to make a balanced meal and the importance of incorporating fruits and vegetables. When it comes to practicing culinary skills, the students learn about measurements, how to substitute ingredients, cutting techniques, and maintaining an organized workspace. Once a week, the students have an opportunity to select a dish, come up with a recipe and items list, and then cook as a group. This gives them an opportunity to develop basic culinary skills while building self-confidence and working as a group.



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Core Curriculum

Stevens has historically provided nutrition education using the framework of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA) - Money, Home and Food Management (Module 1). School staff build upon this module with creative use of online and print resources to provide education to the youth. Stevens uses interactive, hands-on lessons in order to effectively impart relevant knowledge. Students are taught to read nutrition labels, identify health benefits and characteristics of different types of food, and plan healthy menus. Stevens is in the process of developing a new interactive and comprehensive curriculum based off of the MA Health Curriculum Framework that will utilize hands-on, in-person and electronically-based lessons.

Physical Activity

Students participate in yoga class once per week, facilitated by a contracted yoga instructor and held in the Stevens' gym. During summer school, additional physical activities are offered during the school day, such as softball, basketball and yard games. The youth within the Residential Education program participate in afterschool programming detailed on a Weekly Activity Schedule, which involves a variety of physical activities throughout the week. Additionally, students participate in two intramural programs during the year – flag football and basketball.

Additional Wellness Activities

As part of the school curriculum, youth participate in Career Education, Pre-vocational classes, and Current Events Class. The PAYA Life Skills Curriculum is integrated into the curriculum. All of these activities and classes have a fundamental focus on youths' integrated health and wellness.

Stevens Treatment Programs provides comprehensive trauma-informed treatment to all youth. Youth receive individual therapy and family therapy (as appropriate), and participate in therapeutic and psycho-educational groups on topics such as relationship development, and Building Resiliency. Youth at Stevens have the opportunity to engage in a variety of clubs that serve as additional support for their social-emotional development, self-development, identity and overall wellness.

As part of the educational curriculum at Stevens, youth attend a class on Human Sexuality education. The goal of the class is to promote the health and well-being of students and to help them make wise and informed decisions during their teenage years and beyond. Some of the topics covered include: puberty, dating, relationships and communication skills, pregnancy, birth control, sexual orientation, prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, the prevention of sexual abuse, consent, healthy relationships, sex and the media, and gender identity

Material is presented in a balanced, factual way that makes clear that people may have strong religious and moral beliefs about issues such as birth control and abortion and that these beliefs are respected. Parents are notified about the Human Sexuality Curriculum during intake, including their right to review the materials used and/or exempt their child from any portion of the class.

Food Services at Stevens

Food Services Department



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Stevens complies with guidelines pertaining to food services that are more stringent than in a home atmosphere. Stevens prepares and serves food for youth and program staff on duty, seven days a week. The Food Services Department understands the importance of daily nourishment for youth and staff and do their best to provide tasty, attractive, and nutritious meals to everyone.

Food supply is ordered by the Chef Manager and delivered on a weekly basis from local wholesalers specializing in a variety of needs (i.e. proteins, vegetable, fruits, baked goods, etc). The Chef Manager is responsible for the Food Services Department, including menu planning, purchasing, meal preparation, and departmental staffing. Continuing education for the Chef Manager is acquired throughout the year via attendance at conferences and training hosted by the USDA and/or School Nutrition Association. Food services staff are ServSafe Certified, have their Certificate in Allergen Awareness, Civil Rights and receive daily on-the-job training from the Chef Manager. Staff receiving training in excess of the annual continuing education/training hours required by DESE.

Food Provided

Stevens participates in the National School Breakfast Program (SBP) and School Lunch Program (NSLP) and complies with the USDA regulations for school meals. Lunch meal patterns meet the required daily and weekly amounts of the five components (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates). Breakfast served complies with the three components for breakfast (milk, fruits and grains). All lunch and breakfast meals meet the USDA's dietary specifications.

Menu Development

FoodSource Plus provides the Chef Manager with expert advice and guidance from their Registered Dietician as needed. The Chef Manager takes resident menu suggestions into consideration during the menu planning process. You may elect to choose the alternative meal that is offered. The daily meal plan averages 2200 calories and exceeds all USDA recommendations and requirements. The meal portion size is the same for youth and staff. The menu is based on a rotating 5-week schedule.

Safety

Food is stored, prepared, and served in a clean environment and is safe for human consumption. Food is stored in temperature-regulated refrigerators and freezers in the kitchen, dining room, and storage room. Storage area contain thermometers that are regularly checked and recorded in a log by the Food Service staff. Temperatures are maintained according to the following parameters:

- Cold food is refrigerated at 41° or lower.
- Frozen food is frozen solid at 0°.
- Milk is refrigerated at 40°F or lower.
- Dry storage is kept in a well-ventilated area, 50°F – 70°F, at least 6 inches off the ground.

Food stock is rotated using the FIFO (first in first out) method. Expiration dates on stock are checked; and any left-over food is disposed of. Food Service staff prepare all daily meals ensuring safe food handling practices are applied.



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The kitchen and dining areas are kept clean, sanitary, and well organized to provide a safe environment for food preparation, serving, and consumption. Staff and youth wash their hands and use utensils when serving food.

Youth are not involved with purchasing or preparation of food served during breakfast or lunch. Food items sent to the residences (aka: cottages) are stored in clearly-labeled and dated covered containers. Designated cabinets and refrigerators in the cottage kitchens are only used for food for youth. Staff food and drink are not permitted to be stored in those designated places.

Behavioral Support

Residential staff monitor youth to ensure that their meals follow the menu and each receive appropriate portions and variety for a well-balanced meal. Staff use positive encouragement to motivate the youth to try different menu items. No youth is forced to eat a meal against their will. No youth is ever denied a meal for any reason other than specific accommodation based on medical need. Mealtimes are used to teach youth about healthy eating habits including portion size, serving amounts, variety, and the benefits of a well-balanced diet.

Health Services

The Health Department at Stevens provides oversight of the preventive, routine, and emergency medical care of the youth we serve. The Nurse Manager and Health Assistant are on grounds throughout the school day in order to assess emergent needs. Youth within the Residential Education Program access the consulting Psychiatric Nurse Manager once per month (or more if needed), who monitors medication side-effects and effectiveness and makes changes to the treatment plan, if needed. In order to properly understand a youth's needs, additional monitoring, such as a sleep study, may be completed by program staff.

Regular health assessments are completed of all youth; and include height, weight, and BMI. Stevens screens youths' vision and hearing through a collaboration with the Swansea Public Schools. Based on a youth's presenting needs, the Health Department ensures that all needed follow-up occurs with the appropriate healthcare provider.

Healthy Eating & Other Individualized Plans

The Stevens' Nurse Manager is responsible for recommending and communicating any special dietary needs or accommodations for youth directly to the Chef Manager. Stevens implements a Healthy Eating Plan for youth who fall within stated eligibility. While the Nurse Manager provides oversight of this program, the Chef Manager, Education Department and Residential Department implement the guidelines on a daily basis.

The Healthy Eating Plan decreases calories by controlling the portion sizes while maintaining a well-balanced nutritious meal. An increased caloric meal may also be requested for individual clients. Youth with special dietary needs have their meals plated individually in the kitchen to provide the youth with an accurate portion controlled meal based on that individual's needs.



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Youth may be placed on the Healthy Eating Plan if the CDC's BMI percentile calculator for children and teens reveals that they are beyond the 95 percentile for BMI. Residents placed on the Healthy Eating Plan are monitored monthly. Youth falling in the 85-95 percentile are also monitored monthly (height and weight). The Healthy Eating Plan consists of a daily 1800 calorie meal plan that has been developed in consultation with a nutritionist and follows DESE guidelines. The meal plan exceeds all USDA recommendations and requirements for the ages of youth at Stevens. Youth who fall within the obese range (95 percentiles for BMI) for a time period of three months or more are referred to their PCP for consultation.

Youth may be placed on a nutrition plan by the Nurse Manager or other medical professional due to acute or chronic illness. Common plans include a Clear Liquid Diet and Bland Diet.

Youth may request an individualized meal plan based on religious or clinical needs (i.e. sensory profile) by discussing this request with their assigned clinician. The clinician completes the Youth Dietary Restrictions Form and emails the completed form to the Chef Manager. This plan is reviewed at the beginning of each month with the youth's clinician. Any changes are documented on the form and sent to the Chef Manager. Individualized options include vegetarian, pescatarian, no pork products, and other.

Hygiene and Personal Care

Youth are expected to maintain their personal hygiene and are provided the opportunities and supplies to maintain daily hygiene. Stevens provides operational shower facilities in each cottage and basic hygiene supplies. Each resident receives their own clippers, stored in a medication file cabinet, and are supervised by staff when using them. As part of their personal hygiene routine, youth are asked to wash hands with hand sanitizer following bathroom use and as needed; shower and shampoo as appropriate; brush teeth twice a day and floss every day; and keep facial hair groomed.

If individual youth require hygiene education and support, the Nurse Manager provides instruction to youth and to the direct care staff so that they may provide the support needed. Direct care staff report any concerns regarding youth's personal hygiene to the Nurse Manager.

Youth adhere to a dress code. The purpose of the dress code is to provide education and guidance regarding parameters of appropriate attire; teach and encourage hygiene; allow for the development and enhancement of self-respect and self-expression; and ensure safety for all Stevens' youth.

Wellness Advisory Committee

Introduction and Structure

The Stevens Wellness Advisory Committee meets quarterly to oversee the implementation of Stevens' Wellness Policy and recommend, review and help implement policies and practices that affect student health and wellbeing. Annually, the committee reviews the Wellness Policy and makes revisions as needed. The committee develops goals and objectives for the coming year and determines the process for evaluating progress. In setting goals and objectives, the committee values the voice of the youth, parents, personnel and other stakeholders. Feedback and suggestions are gathered via surveys, focus groups, and discussion during various meetings, including the Parent Advisory Group.



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Data from youth health needs assessments and research regarding best practices in the field are also considered when formulating goals and objectives.

Committee reports and meeting minutes are maintained and provided to the Department of Public Health or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request.

On an annual basis, the committee submits a report to the Stevens Board of Directors in regards to wellness goals and action plans, including goals and objectives for the coming year and an assessment of the accomplishments of the previous year.

Membership and Community Voice

Representatives from across the organization participate in the committee:

Chef Manager, Nurse Manager, Health Assistant, Education Director, teacher, Clinical Director and/or clinician, Residential Director, Quality Assurance Coordinator, direct care staff, parents and caregivers, youth

In addition to the above, representatives from Stevens' Board of Directors serve as members of the committee. Stevens collaborates with various local health professionals to encourage participation on the committee, in order to broaden membership and ensure community representation and voice on the committee.

Sample Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- Wellness Policy review and approval
- Current data available & data needed
- Wellness goals