

The Chicago School Forensic Center & Interwoven Community Counseling Center

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1

The Forensic Center (TFC)

- Founded by forensic psychology faculty in 2009
- Serves as the primary provider of mental health services for persons mandated by the Cook County Domestic Relations Court
- Largest provider of outpatient mental health services in Illinois for persons deemed unfit to stand trial.



2

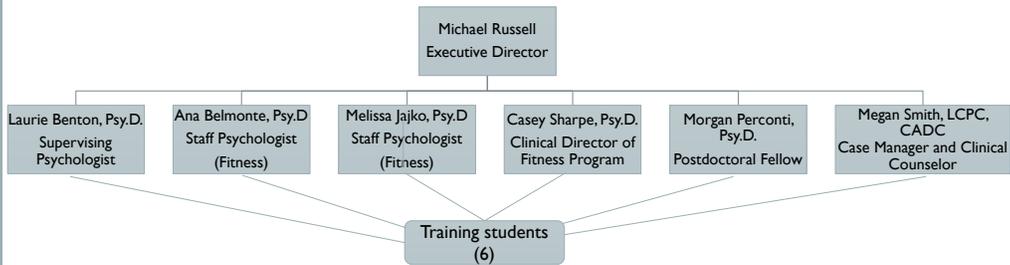
Interwoven Community Counseling Center

- Interwoven Community Counseling Center is a comprehensive Community Mental Health Center located on The Chicago School of Professional Psychology's Chicago campus.
- Committed to providing high-quality, evidence-based, mental health services to underserved and underprivileged populations.
- Provides clinical training for students in psychology and other behavioral sciences programs to become competent and civically-engaged professionals



3

Our Team



4

Referral Process

- Registration for court-ordered services can be initiated by an attorney/GAL
- Complete Forensic Center Referral Form for each court-ordered party
- Provide copies of all case-related documents/records
- If the referral is accepted, the prospective client is assigned a provider or put on the waiting list

Referrals must include...

- Court Order
- Financial Documents
- Referral Form



5

Our Services

- Mental Health Assessment (MHA)
- Individual therapy
- Family therapy
- Co-parenting
- Therapeutic Supervised Visitation (TSV)
- Reunification therapy
- Psychological Evaluations
 - 215
 - Parenting capacity
 - General



6

Mental Health Assessment (MHA)

- Assessment of readiness of all parties for court-ordered service
- No psychological testing conducted, but can refer for testing after
- Can be used to assess for a starting point for treatment if referral source is not sure



7

Individual Therapy

- Clients will be assigned a mental health provider who will assist in developing an individualized treatment plan
- Goals may include:
 - Monitor mental health symptoms
 - Process past distressing/traumatic events
 - Develop coping skills
 - Improve interpersonal and communication skills
 - Increasing parenting skills
- Individual therapy may precede, or overlap with, other forms of treatment (e.g., family therapy)
- We do not offer formal anger management or substance use treatment



8

Family Therapy

- Includes two or more family members
- Intended to support healthy relationships between family members
- Goals may include:
 - Identify family dynamics
 - Process previous distressing family events
 - Improve interpersonal communication skills and perspective taking
 - Increase ability to resolve conflicts



9

Co-Parenting Therapy

- Includes parents/caregivers who will work towards improving their co-parenting relationship in order to improve the overall well-being of the child
- Goals may include:
 - Improve interpersonal skills
 - Build communication skills
 - Establish ways to support the other parent
 - Identify aspects of parenting that will most benefit the child
 - Focus on specific needs of the child



10

Therapeutic Supervised Visitation (TSV)

- Allows non-custodial parents to have parenting time with their children in a structured environment and under the supervision of a mental health provider.
- Primary goal: to foster a healthier relationship between the child and parent
- While treatment is focused on non-custodial parent and child, the custodial parent is an integral part of the process as well
 - It can be helpful to include all family members (custodial and non-custodial parents/guardians, and children) on court orders for TSV to increase participation, particularly on the part of custodial parents
- Our TSV process includes an assessment period with all parties before any meetings between parent and child
 - It can be beneficial to let your clients/potential referrals know about this up front as many parents hope they will begin seeing their child immediately when services begin



11

Reunification Therapy

- Provides the opportunity for an estranged child and parent to reconnect and develop healthy interactions
- Similar to TSV, we begin this process with an assessment of all parties involved
- Reunification therapy involves a deeper level of therapeutic intervention than TSV



12

Communication With Referral Parties

- Treatment providers will engage in ongoing communication with referral parties
 - Treatment providers will typically reach out to referral parties at the outset of treatment to introduce themselves and obtain additional information not in the referral packet
- GALs may be contacted by email/phone to discuss client issues/troubleshoot
 - Communication between treatment providers and referral parties can be a two-way relationship- treatment providers and/or their supervisors can be contacted by referral parties for additional information as well
- Status letters will be submitted to the court on a regular basis
 - We monitor court dates through Cook County's public access system and will submit a status update for each court date
 - If additional information is needed, please contact the treatment provider



13

Psychological Evaluations

- A psychological evaluation typically consists of a (1) clinical interview; (2) psychological testing for purposes of diagnosis clarification, risk assessment, and treatment planning; and (3) a review of records.
 - Clinical Interview – personal background history
 - Psychological Testing – cognitive, intellectual, and socioemotional functioning
 - Record Review- court, police, medical, mental health, and other records or collateral interviews; standard practice for forensic evaluations per our ethical guidelines
- When referring clients, it is helpful to submit any/all court records that you are able so we can best assign the case. Additionally, providing any other records (e.g.- DCFS, police reports, etc.) that you have access to when you submit the referral is extremely helpful.
 - Difficulty obtaining third-party collateral data is the most frequent reason reports are delayed
 - Knowing the full scope of the case up front can also assist in facilitating the interview process with the client so we can obtain as much data as possible



14

Psychological Evaluations

- Can be self-referred or court-ordered (e.g. IL Supreme Court Rule 215 and parenting capacity evaluations).
 - There are limitations to our ability to release information to the court and/or GAL if the party is not court-ordered
- **TFC does not conduct child custody evaluations or 604(b) evaluations.**
 - We do not have the staffing capacity in order to take referrals for these evaluations
- Approximately 4 to 8 hours, scheduled across multiple sessions
 - It can be helpful for referring parties to inform their clients about the typical timeframe for evaluations
- Reports are typically completed within 8-10 weeks of last meeting with client
 - Can be delayed for many reasons, most often due to not getting requested records from hospitals or other agencies
 - At times more time is needed to complete our reports due to the intense supervision process with our student trainees
- TFC does not offer psychiatric service
 - Treatment recommendations may include a psychiatric referral, but the center does not have a psychiatrist on staff who can prescribe medication.



15

Telehealth Services

- TFC utilizes HIPAA-compliant software Zoom to conduct services via telehealth.
- Telehealth services include therapy, intake assessments, fitness restoration, and some diagnostic testing.
 - Some testing requires an in-person meeting- currently we do this in a non-contact manner where the client and clinician are in separate rooms connected via Zoom and a two-way mirror so the clinician can see into the client's room
- If access to technology is limited, arrangements may be made with the client's attorney, although in-person services are available on an as-needed basis.
- Any changes to our provision of services is dictated by CDC guidelines and our school's Return to Work plan
 - We will likely continue to offer telehealth services even if we resume pre-COVID operations



16

Student Training

- Masters- and doctoral-level students are the primary treatment providers and evaluators, guided by the clinical supervision of a staff psychologist.
- Trainees gain experience working across a wide range of caseloads, including individuals, couples, therapy, and fitness restoration.



17

Payment

- We accept the following insurance plans:
 - Illinois Medicaid plans (all MCOs)
 - Blue Cross/Blue Shield PPO
 - Aetna PPO
 - United Healthcare PPO
- For self-pay clients, a sliding scale method is applied to set fees based on income and household size (i.e., number of dependents, spouse) and a graduated percentage reduction in fees based upon the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).



18

How To Decide What Service Is Needed

- If you are not sure, give us a call! Our clinicians are always happy to consult and assist in determining the best course of action.
- Also, if you are not sure, you can refer a client for a mental health assessment for us to do an in-depth interview and assessment of potential treatment needs
- If parents and children already have regular contact with each other; but conflict remains, family therapy can help!
- If parents and children do not have regular contact with each other, TSV or reunification therapy are likely better options.
 - Reunification therapy is best for parents and children who have had a prolonged absence from each others' lives and need to be reintroduced to each other
 - TSV is beneficial for children and parents who have some contact, but may be at risk for unhealthy relationships, insufficient parenting skills, and/or domestic violence



19

How To Decide What Service Is Needed

- Individual therapy can be useful as a standalone service for processing trauma, increasing coping skills, etc., but also can be an adjunctive services for parents/children in other therapies
- Psychological testing can help determine a mental health diagnosis (if there is one), identify treatment options, and assess for risk issues (parenting, substance use, violence)
 - While an MHA can assess for some of these things, psychological testing is helpful in more complex, less straightforward cases, those with elevated risk potential, and with clients who may be unwilling to openly disclose information in an interview process



20

How To Formulate A Referral Question

- It is helpful to have as much information up front, but clinicians will be in contact with the referral party to seek additional information and create/maintain working relationship
- Referral questions can be on the court order, in TFC's referral form, or communicated via email upon referral (or after)
- Other information that is helpful- who should any reports or status letters be sent to (or not sent to)
 - Typically, if there is no guidance, we send reports/letters to GAL and judge



21

How To Formulate A Referral Question

- Referral Questions for Therapy Services
 - What should treatment focus on?- e.g.- increasing parenting skills, addressing/processing traumatic event, increasing coping skills
 - What do you/the court expect the outcome of treatment to be?
 - What is prompting the referral?
- Referral Questions for Psychological Evaluations
 - What question(s) do you want the evaluation to answer?
 - Examples- it is not as helpful to us to get an order for a 215 evaluation without any guidance
 - "Issue: mental and substance abuse status, if requires treatment recommendations, appropriateness for unsupervised parenting time with child. Requesting a 215 psychological evaluation to determine whether there is a current mental health diagnosis, evaluation to include psychological testing, mental health assessment and also screen for possible substance abuse"
 - "Does Mr. XX have a mental condition that impacts his ability to safely have parenting time with his minor child? If so, what psychological or psychiatric services can be offered to Mr. XX to increase his parenting time with his child?"

22

Questions?

- Additional materials provided included our referral form, our services brochure, and our FAQ brochure.
- Please contact us at 312-467-2535 or forensiccenter@thechicagoschool.edu with any questions or to submit referrals!

