



THREE SPRINGS
New Beginnings

Helping Troubled Children Discover Lasting Solutions



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General Information

New Beginnings program for girls is located in the Owens Cross Roads community of Huntsville, Alabama. The program provides therapeutic services in a residential setting for females between the ages of 12 and 18. The program is both staff and campus secure and serves girls who cannot be served in a less restrictive setting. Our girls typically have failed to acquire lasting benefit from outpatient treatment or short-term hospitalization and may have a series of failed placements. The goal of the program is to provide comprehensive, safe, and ethical services for females with significant behavioral and emotional issues.

While the use of group process is seen as the primary therapeutic intervention necessary to achieve lasting change, New Beginnings recognizes the need for additional therapeutics. Therapeutic services such as group, individual, and family counseling, life skills training, activity therapy and a positive peer community are provided. Educational services are provided at our on-campus licensed, private school.

At New Beginnings we offer a highly structured, therapeutically based educational program. Our primary goal is to provide the resources, opportunities, and protection necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual development of girls who demonstrate patterns of thinking and behaving which result in direct conflict with social norms.

New Beginnings focuses on the “here and now” issues of a child’s life. This focus is consistently seen through the utilization of a reality-based approach, which emphasizes the development of problem solving, coping, self-help, and socialization skills through cognitive behavioral techniques. These techniques, such as rational thinking groups, are aimed at helping the child recognize and change thought processes in order to change inappropriate behaviors. The central focus of these techniques is on the identification and understanding of behaviors, as well as the psychological and situational factors that lead to irrational thinking and unacceptable behaviors.

The adolescent girls served in our treatment program exhibit diagnoses such as, but not limited to, Depression, Bi-polar Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Impulse Control Disorder, and Attention Deficit Disorder. They may have secondary diagnoses such as Substance Abuse, Learning Disabilities, and Personality Disorders.

The believe that the causes of adolescent emotional and behavioral problems are complex and typically multi-determined. Contributing agents can be biochemical makeup, personality type, specific development or learning disabilities, family structure and functioning, and social environment. It is normally a combination of these factors that cause significant disruption in the appropriate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development of these girls. Therefore, through an extensive assessment process, to include pre and post testing both clinically and educationally, each child has individualized treatment while working in a group system.



The foundation of New Beginnings' therapeutically based educational environment is our Positive Peer Culture. The premise of the Positive Peer Culture (PPC) is that each adolescent girl entering the program needs help in learning responsible thinking and behavior. While this occurs through the involvement of both staff and girls, the girls are seen as the most critical component in the process because of their ability to influence one another. The Positive Peer Culture teaches children through a comprehensive approach, to develop responsible thinking and behavior by helping one another. PPC does not ask whether a person wants to receive help, but whether she is willing to give help. The PPC is about teaching values and not rules. In addition, it places the responsibility on the higher level girls to reach out and support their peers as they struggle with personal growth and change. As a result, the group begins to bond and work together with defined parameters, in order to meet their group and individual goals. The end result is they feel a sense of ownership and control over the changes that are occurring in their lives.



The primary goal of New Beginnings' PPC is to help each student eliminate oppositional and inappropriate behaviors by dealing with the faulty thinking that leads to those behaviors. This goal is accomplished through the following:

- Showing girls how to be aware of the effect of peer group influence and the potential for the positive influence of the group, always aware that the family, school and community are a part of the group, and the functioning of each is essential to be a successful individual.
- Helping children develop an awareness of responsibility for individual choices and behaviors by allowing them to demonstrate acceptance of responsibility.
- Allowing the girls to gain a positive self-concept through helping and caring for others.
- Encouraging girls to develop a sense of control over their lives versus being controlled by their circumstances.

One of the predominant lessons girls learn from a PPC is the acceptance of responsibility for their behavior. This task requires and teaches self-discipline as well as self-control. Structure, or routine and order, teaches students to focus on the "here and now." The PPC provides the basics for a child to gain control over daily situations and problems. Problems are viewed as opportunities for growth not failure. Girls learn to see problems as challenges that need to be solved by the group, versus something that must be controlled.



Education

New Beginnings' Educational Component consists of a private, on-campus school that offers our girls the opportunity to attend regular academic classes or prepare for and receive high school credits as well as their GED. The educational program at New Beginnings offers a wide range of academic levels to include emotionally conflicted and learning disabled students. This Special Education program is a competency based learning program that allows each student to work at their own pace and academic level with one-on-one learning opportunities. Students are given the opportunity to excel in areas where previous behaviors have had a detrimental effect on their educational development. Through the implementation of a small classroom and low teacher to student ratio, students have often surpassed their expected grade and educational development level.

The girls attend school on a year-round schedule. Staffed by certified teachers, classes are held for an average of six and one half hours daily and include academic classes, experiential learning, physical education/health activities, vocational education, and life skills training. Students are also provided with the opportunity to use computer-enhanced learning and to familiarize themselves with basic computer skills. Throughout the school day, students have opportunities for individual and group activities as well as opportunities for enrichment and remediation. Cooperative learning activities and tutoring are part of the daily curriculum.

Children who receive special education services have an Individualized Education Plan. In accordance with special education legislation and policies, the educational plan is evaluated at least once a year, and is reevaluated every three years, including state appropriate testing, if recommended.





New Beginnings School is firmly committed to the belief that each student is capable of learning, and will learn when provided with an appropriate educational placement. Skills Development Training, Adventure Based Programming, Life Skills, Drug Awareness, Intramural Sports, and Experiential Activities are also a part of the overall program. Through Skills Development Training and Adventure Based Programming, adolescents are given the opportunity to develop a positive work ethic, increase self-discipline and acquire increased self-esteem. In addition, Life Skill Training provides an assortment of stress-reducing and life-enhancing strategies to keep the student feeling emotionally and physically balanced. Focus topics may include Socialization Skills, Stress Management, Communications Skills, Values Clarification and Assertiveness Training.



New Beginnings offers an array of adventure based/experiential and recreational activities. Activities offered are cultural enrichment, therapeutic outdoor activities, arts & crafts, field trips and water sports. Experiential activities include low and high ROPES courses, which are considered “challenge by choice” opportunities. The Alpine Tower is the ultimate challenge of skill and self-confidence. Standing approximately fifty feet high, the Alpine Tower offers students a chance to increase their self-esteem, appropriately deal with anger and frustration, and above all, to achieve success as a group. Mastery of the low ROPES course on campus is a prerequisite to the Alpine Course field trip.

Family Services

New Beginnings believes that family involvement is extremely important to the healing and changing process of a student. Families are strongly encouraged to make a commitment to work with their child, in order to facilitate the healing process for the entire family. A goal of family services is to provide support and assistance to families whose children are in the “change process”, and to empower the entire family in the shared responsibility for change and growth. The Family Service Worker assigned to each child, assists the child and family to strengthen individual relationships and establish open communication channels as they facilitate therapeutic change.



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The Family Service Worker serves as a liaison between the family and the program. New Beginnings encourages and supports family involvement by holding either telephone or on-site individual family sessions on a monthly basis. The Family Service Worker is responsible for the following:

- Informing the family of child's initial adjustment to the program.
- Develop an Individualized Treatment Plan, in cooperation with the child and her family, which is a blueprint of their treatment.
- Discussing with the family any assessments that are done at the program, for example psychiatric evaluation or psychological testing.
- Providing group and individual counseling for the child, and counseling for the family.
- Scheduling family conferences and sessions.
- Coordinating student passes and visitation.
- Monthly Family Education.



Each child's individualized Treatment Plan is based on the results of comprehensive assessments, which take place within 10 days of admission to the program. The Treatment Plan is updated every 30 days, or as necessary during the course of treatment. Residents, families and/or guardians are strongly encouraged to participate in the treatment planning. Coordination of each child's treatment occurs through a multi-disciplinary team of consulting professionals and full-time staff members. This team is composed of a Psychiatrist, a Psychologist, Family Service Workers, Teachers, Nurses, an Activity Therapist, and Counselors. Discharge planning begins at admission and is reviewed every 90 days or as necessary.

New Beginnings provides structured aftercare services for the girls and their families. Monthly aftercare services are provided at the facility. Family Service Workers continue to monitor and provide counseling services to the child and her family for the first six months following discharge. Staff are available for crisis situations. Additionally, referrals to local community mental health professionals are made to continue working on treatment needs, growth, and goals.



Admissions

Professionals and/or parents may make referrals to New Beginnings by contacting the program directly or through our toll-free referral line (888-758-4356). Once the initial discussion of the presenting problems and previous treatment history has occurred, arrangements for obtaining records and/or visiting the program will be made. The following documents should be provided to assess the child for a program:

- Three Springs Application
- Resident/Family Social History
- Resident Health History
- Recent Diagnostic Evaluation/Testing (psychiatric/psychological)
- Educational Records including disciplinary reports
- Previous treatment reports

Once these documents are submitted to the admissions staff, a screening committee will promptly determine if the resident can benefit from this intervention. The screening committee may either accept the child based on the information submitted or if appropriate, a pre-admission assessment and campus visit may be scheduled. Admissions take place year round.



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