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Program Description

Turn-About Ranch is a short-term, high-impact therapy program that emphasizes family values and relationships. We take boys and girls from 12 to 18 years of age. A minimum stay of 60 days is required. Most students stay an average of 90 days. We keep the time of stay open-ended to allow counselors and parents to decide when the teenagers are ready to come home.

We are located in southern Utah canyon country and operate year-round in a dry, mild climate. Admission can be any day of the week, any time of the year. School credits are available and we also deal with substance and chemical abuse.

The key ingredients of our program are the amount of time and effort the counselors spend working directly with the troubled adolescents, as well as the interaction between parents and staff during and after the program. Counselors are with the students 24 hours a day, not only as teachers, but also as parents and friends. Every bad attitude and manipulative behavior is dealt with directly and immediately. No smoking, drinking, tobacco, drugs, sex, or swearing is allowed. Counselors deal with problems sometimes gently and sometimes through confrontation, but always swiftly and fairly.

The Turn-About Program is divided into four phases:

LEVEL I

This phase takes place at the "Roundy Camp," an old fashioned "frontier" environment with a log cabin, log barn,

and log chicken house. Level I is designed to disorient and upset the youth's everyday patterns of defiance and control. It is designed to take the rebellious, selfish, undisciplined, defiant, or unmotivated youth and strip him or her of old defenses, attitudes, and facades.

Rules are enforced and time is very structured. No free time is allotted, and each youth is directed, taught, encouraged, confronted, and held accountable for his or her actions. Students begin to work on goals and are required to complete them before they can move to the next level in the program. It should be remembered that as a student "earns" their way to a higher level, they can also "earn" their way back to a lower level through improper behavior.

LEVEL II
This phase also takes place at Roundy Camp, but allows a little more freedom and choice. Daily activities are very routine. No longer can the teens take for granted the necessities of life that parents provide. Each youth is assigned daily chores and responsibilities, and stringent daily personal hygiene standards are not only encouraged but enforced.

Roundy Camp is physically and mentally challenging, but very rewarding. It is frustrating, but enlightening. And most important, it establishes a foundation of discipline, respect, and orderliness. Both individual and group counseling sessions are facilitated on a regular scheduled basis throughout the program. Also, there are many unscheduled spontaneous group sessions precipitated from a particular incident or confrontation. Quite often these are the "key" or most productive groups since the students' emotions, attitudes, and feelings are at their peak.

LEVEL III
Now that a foundation of change has been
provided at the Roundy Camp, the youth are moved to the main hub of the ranch known as "The Barn" area. This phase initiates the real building blocks, the framework that support the evolution and development of the youth's perspective of life.
The students are now able to begin accepting responsibility for themselves and their actions.
As more reliability is demonstrated, more responsibilityis given, slowly building self-esteem and confidence. Each child is given chances at leadership roles and is allowed room to explore their new-found strengths. The schedule will not be as strict and unwavering as it was at Roundy Camp, allowing for changes and alterations that can be found in normal life.

Level III incorporates the youth into typical every-day ranch activities, but with the structure and guidance of the staff counselors. During Level III, each student will be required to go through a horsemanship course and pass a variety of tests before being allowed to ride their horse. There are cattle drives, fences to fix, hay harvest, branding, and realted actitivies. Sound like the old west? It is...it's hot and dusty, cold and snowy, and most of all hard work! But it's realism: real work, real friends, and a real experience of being part of something bigger than you are. It's a time to realize that life is more than parties and "hanging out", more than just having fun. Life makes demands, and it also provides rewards.

Animals often begin to play an important role in the counseling of the students during this phase. Each student is assigned a horse to care for with the teenager's own personality taken into consideration. There are also cows, calves, goats, sheep, chickens, ducks, geese, pigs, rabbits, and yes, cats and dogs. Some are old, some are young.

Some are healthy, some need extra care, patience, and love. Sometimes attachments are made. If so, it can be an intriguing and amazing tool in counseling behavioral patterns of adolescents.

Level III can be fun, frustrating, and challenging. Sometimes it opens doors, sometimes it closes others. But most important, it can be a time when changes are made, changes created by being in a different place, doing different things, being around different people, realizing that life is not what it seemed to be.

LEVEL IV
After intense activity and emotional trials, the students now have a completely new outlook on themselves. In the process of working, cooperating, enduring, and learning, new positive coping skills are being learned. Old bad habits are beginning to be discarded for positive new ones.

The youth will go on his or her "solo," an individual experience closely monitored by the staff. This is a time to be completely alone, to reflect and think, to set goals, and decide on what changes are needed. This time allows them to consider relationships with parents and their attitudes toward home, school, and friends.

After solo, normal ranch life resumes, with the emphasis on holding the youth accountable for their new goals and behaviors, until they become second nature to them. The Level IV phase is finished with graduation exercises where parents witness the end of a big accomplishment, and the beginning of a new life.

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