



The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School Transitional Living Center Program

Admission Packet

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Transitional Living Center (TLC) Program Description

I. Mission

The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School Transitional Living Center ("TLC") will assist youth transitioning from more structured treatment settings, such as a therapeutic residential treatment center to more open settings, such as home with family, college, trade school, or semi-independent and independent living arrangements within their community. The TLC will provide youth with the necessary treatment, education, knowledge, skills and experiences to make a successful transition to adulthood so that each may optimally utilize their own resources and those of the community to become healthy, happy, productive members of society.

II. Program Overview

Youth who face serious psychiatric illness must still master a number of significant and basic developmental tasks in order to make a successful transition to adulthood. For those young people who have been placed in residential treatment, added to their difficulties is the need to make an additional transition from the supportive and structured treatment environment to the more demanding and permissive environment in the open community. Often, youth transitioning to less structured settings or independent living suffer the frustration of trying to meet demands and responsibilities that they are developmentally unprepared to accept. Therefore, these adolescents require opportunities to acquire the necessary independent living skills, connections to community supports and practical experiences needed to avoid common pitfalls associated with reintegration into the larger community including, school failure, substance abuse, social problems and worsening of their mental illness.

The TLC is a newer component of the treatment programs at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School and represents a part of the continuum of intervention alternatives available to our students. It is located on the grounds at the Orthogenic School, on the University of Chicago campus in Chicago's south side neighborhood of Hyde Park. Given its location, the TLC has access to a comprehensive range of services and resources, including: daily monitoring by skilled mental health professionals, medication management, psychotherapeutic services, daily living skills (housekeeping, shopping, time and money management, and cooking skills) educational programs, vocational training and employment assistance. A basic requirement for all students in the TLC is that they maintain some form of volunteer or paid employment on at least a part-time basis. Students for whom it is appropriate will enroll in formal instruction directed at developing their personal interests, strengths or skills, including jobs, schools or preparation for advanced academic programs. TLC will build upon existing relationships with the University of Chicago and local businesses to provide these youth with "real life" experiences in the work force.

In addition to helping youth develop necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to become self-sufficient in their community, the TLC will also address the ongoing social, psychiatric and psychological needs of students who have successfully struggled to manage their emotional distress, disruptive and dangerous behaviors, and/or dissatisfying interpersonal relationships.

A major focus of the program is to help youth solidify gains made while in residential care, and to ensure development of pro-social attitudes and behaviors as well as strong, broad-based adaptive skills. In addition to strengthening appropriate family interactions and supports, the TLC provides youth the opportunity to build and maintain supportive peer relationships within the program as well as helping to establish ways to develop similar relationships with peers in the community to which they intend to return. At the same time, because children in residential care are sheltered from many community problems, the program will work preventively with youth regarding issues of personal safety, teen pregnancy, safe sex and substance abuse.

Additionally, each TLC student will be required to participate in one weekly mandatory group activity that will focus on community service, education, or a team-building experience. A goal for the service-based activities is to help students look beyond their own circumstances to see the needs of others and recognize and discover the individual gifts that each student has to offer to others. Community education experiences will help students more fully understand the world in which they live and help them to examine their individual role in the global picture. The purpose of team building experiences is to address the importance of and strengthen the existing relationships of the members in the TLC group.

All TLC services provided are individually designed and structured to meet the specific needs of each student. Since the focus of TLC is on transition to semi-independent or independent living, discharge planning is a central part of program development that begins upon admission and is modified as further goals are identified or met. It is expected that TLC students will remain in the program for a period of time not to exceed two years and, for most students, much less time.

III. Program Description

A. Students Served

Students entering the TLC must be of at least 16 years of age. Students will have a history of placement in a structured or specialized setting. Most commonly, students will come from residential treatment centers; however, they may also be transitioning from day programs or other similar, highly structured treatment setting, including specialized foster care. Students must voluntarily agree to enter the program and be capable of adhering to the program's policies and guidelines. Students will be asked to sign a contract that outlines their duties and obligations to TLC, as well to their primary caretakers, be it family, foster family or agency. All eligible students will be considered for the program irrespective of their diagnosis, gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds,

economic background, sexual orientation and religious beliefs. The TLC Admissions Committee makes admission determinations with final admission authority resting with the Director of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School.

B. Setting

The TLC is housed within the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School building at the University of Chicago. The building is located on the University of Chicago campus in the south side Hyde Park neighborhood, considered to be one of the most racially and economically diverse locations in the greater Chicago metropolitan area. The community offers numerous educational, cultural, and recreational activities year-round. With multiple bus routes and train lines, the TLC is 20-30 minutes away from all of the opportunities and events offered by downtown Chicago.

The physical space now devoted to the TLC has been completely renovated and redecorated to provide students with modern and comfortable living arrangements. The TLC is comprised of six large double occupancy rooms arranged on two different floors, with three student rooms per floor. Each of the student rooms is approximately 300 square feet in size and each has a private bathroom. On both floors there is a 320 square foot common room, and a common kitchenette. In addition to the students' living space, there will be one single occupancy room staffed by a qualified counselor, who will reside in the facility year-round to provide support and monitoring. TLC students have access to all the facilities of the Orthogenic School, including the gymnasium, art room, computer room, game room, and dining facility.

C. Services Provided

To help youth in transition make a successful move to full independence or semi-independent living, TLC students will participate in a full spectrum of services. These services include psychiatric care, various forms of individual and group psychotherapy, substance abuse prevention, sex education, housing, academic programs, leisure education and recreational programs, vocational training and employment. The following list represents the core services to be provided, however, it is not exhaustive and can be modified depending upon individual needs.

1. *Supported independent living milieu*

The TLC will provide students with an independent living arrangement that is similar to living in a college dormitory. Staff specifically trained and supervised for work in a transitional living program will be available to provide regular supervision but not constant visual contact for each student. Responsible adults available 24/7 provide supervision. They will provide routine supervision, guidance, program planning and support, as well as crisis intervention, if necessary. A TLC staff member is available and present to facilitate the various daily program activities in the center. At each day's end, TLC staff reviews each student's accomplishments and struggles to assist in preparing for the next day.

2. *Individual psychotherapy*

Most of the TLC students will enter the program with a pre-existing and continuing psychotherapeutic relationship. These therapeutic relationships will be supported and maintained, as they will provide each individual student the opportunity to continue their own psychological growth and provide them with additional support while making the difficult transition to independent living. Additional individual and group therapies will be available, when appropriate and indicated. Similarly, psychiatric and other medical services are readily available for all TLC participants. The groups of professionals will be integrated into a single treatment team focused on the goals and needs of the individual student.
3. *Psycho-educational group*

Twice weekly, students will participate in socially appropriate psycho-educational groups. This program will use positive peer support and appropriate psychotherapeutic strategies to facilitate a smooth transition to independent living. In addition, there will be specific educational programs associated with the group that will include “outside” experts to provide information and skills in selected areas. Important topics to be covered by these groups would include topics such as substance abuse prevention, social skills development, sex education, anger management, relaxation training, and medication management. TLC will seek to further enrich this aspect of its program as opportunities and personnel become available.
4. *Experiential life skills classes*

To the degree that each student is capable, TLC students will take personal responsibility for a number of life skills. They will be provided with instruction and guidance in how to complete basic self-sufficiency tasks. For those tasks that the students cannot safely or accurately complete, TLC residents will be given aid in doing so but only to the degree that is needed. The following basic life skills will be the focus of each student’s weekly experiences. This list is not exhaustive and will be amended to meet the individual needs of each student.

 - a. Money management

All students open a bank account through which they manage their money. They will be taught how to make deposits and withdrawals and balance a checkbook. In addition to being responsible for developing a budget and purchasing their own personal belongings, students will also be responsible for purchasing household supplies and food for community meals. They are taught comparison shopping and other cost saving measures.
 - b. General housekeeping

Students are responsible for ongoing daily maintenance of the program’s living spaces and cooking areas. When using facilities at the Orthogenic School, students assume responsibility for

- laundering of their own personal articles of clothing and bed linens.
- c. **Basic dietary and cooking skills**
Students eat in a group and have full use of the regular dining facilities at the Orthogenic School. In addition, each student will be taught how to plan a balanced menu for daily meals. They will shop for the necessary ingredients for the meals and they will be responsible for the preparation, cooking, and cleaning up after community meals.
 - d. **Public transportation**
Students are taught how to navigate the Chicago metro area using public transportation. They will familiarize themselves with reading time schedules and maps and how to plan out their desired route. They will practice using buses, trains, and subways. While driver education will be available for appropriate students, TLC students will not be permitted to have personal automobiles on campus, while in the program.
 - e. **Employment skills**
All TLC students have a vocational and educational assessment. From that an IEP and statutorily required transition plan will be developed that will address both academic and vocational goals as well as plans for the type of setting to which the participant will be moving upon graduation. Each student is assisted in performing a job search, including writing a resume, cover letters, and applications. Each TLC client is expected to obtain a paid or volunteer position at a part-time level or more.
 - f. **Accessing community resources**
Students are taught and permitted to collectively identify and access various community resources, such as public library, social and cultural events. On a monthly basis, the entire group of students will take advantage of such resources. Scheduling and financial planning for these activities is a central part of the program.
5. **Medication Management**
The TLC will provide medication management services to the students. The program will utilize the psychiatric services provided by the Orthogenic School's residential program. For those students entering the TLC who had previously received psychiatric services within the residential program, they will maintain this treatment relationship. The full spectrum of services at The University of Chicago Medical Center is readily available for all students.
6. **Discharge Planning**
For each student who participates in the TLC, discharge planning will begin upon admission. By definition, students involved in this program are in the process of moving from the more restrictive environment where

they were receiving specialized services to a more independent and/or less restrictive environment. The particulars of a given child's discharge plan will be determined in accordance with the expectations and limitations of the new situation to which their ultimate discharge is directed. Students will achieve a successful discharge when they have successfully developed the necessary skills to be a productive and contributing member of a family, supportive community, or society as a whole. Those students who have not been able to achieve mastery of basic life skills, ensure their own and others' safety, and refrain from illegal activity within a two year period of time will be referred for other more intensive and supportive living arrangements.

IV. Staffing

A multidisciplinary team of professionals, specially trained in transitional programming, staffs the TLC. The counselors will be responsible for implementing the ongoing program schedule, guiding the students through their daily activities, and providing monitoring. Counselors will have earned at least a BA (or equivalent training) and have at least two years of previous experience working with troubled adolescents (exceeding the QMHP requirements) and have received specialized training in working with transitioning students. An "in-house," dedicated, educational staff will be available to provide educational programming for those students participating in TLC who require continued placement in a structured classroom to achieve academic success. For those students completing course work in a community setting, educational opportunities to augment and/or enhance their academic program will be available. Two licensed mental health practitioners (LPHA) with a MSW, Ph.D., or Psy.D., provide psychotherapeutic services. Through the University of Chicago's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, child psychiatrists provide psychopharmacological services for those students on psychotropic medications. The Supervision and administration of the TLC is completed by a licensed mental health professional (LPHA), with a MSW, Ph.D. or Psy. D. and over 10 years of experience working with troubled adolescents.

Admission Criterion for the Transitional Living Center (TLC)

The Transitional Living Center (TLC) at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School provides students with opportunities to develop the necessary life skills so that they can successfully live in a less restricted setting, whether at home, away at school or fully independently. The TLC offers students monitoring and support while at the same time proving them increasing levels of self-responsibility and access to the broader community. Student accepted into the TLC must have clearly demonstrated within their school's residential program the capacities to accomplish the basic tasks of daily living as well as, refrain from illegal, dangerous, or injurious behaviors and to conduct themselves honestly and cooperatively within and outside the school's community.

1. Students must be at least 16 years of age, but not have reached their 21st birthday.
2. Students must have a goal of discharge in less than two years from the time of acceptance.
3. Students must be consistently completing all required tasks and activities within their residential program for a period of 6 months or more prior to acceptance.
4. Students must be consistently completing all required academic work and activities within the academic program for a period of 6 months or more prior to acceptance.
5. Student must have been successfully employed in a job for a minimum of 3 months prior to acceptance.
6. Students must have previously earned and successfully utilized the privilege of independent outings for a minimum of 3 months prior to acceptance.
7. Students must have demonstrated their ability to live under less intense supervision by not having engaged in any dangerous, destructive, or injurious behaviors to themselves or others for 6 months prior to acceptance.
8. Students must be fully compliant with their daily medication regimen.
9. Students must be successfully completing outings and home visits.
10. Students must be participating fully in their individual and group psychotherapies.
11. Students must complete their applications for the program in a thoughtful and thorough manner.
12. There must be parental approval of the transition.

Commitment to Code of Conduct

As a member of the Transitional Living Center of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, I affirm that I will adhere to the following Code of Conduct and will commit myself to being a productive and thoughtful member of the program, the school, and the broader communities in which I live.

1. I will avail myself for staff assistance to treat myself and others with respect and care.
2. I will be honest, forthright, and true to myself and others.
3. I will express my opinions and concerns in a direct and helpful manner.
4. I will refrain from behaving in threatening, dangerous, or injurious ways towards others and myself.
5. I will refrain from engaging in sexual activity with other members of the school community.
6. I will refrain from destroying personal and public property.
7. I will not break any school rules nor will I engage in illegal activity.
8. I will not use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances.
9. I will work to the best of my abilities in both the classroom and my place of employment.
10. I will attempt to serve as a positive member and role model for the school's community.
11. I will abide by the behavioral expectations and schedule of the program.

Student

Date

Student's Parent (if Student is under 18 years old) Date

Program Manager

Date

TLC Orientation

The TLC is designed to assist students in making the transition from a residential setting to independent living. Students will be assisted in developing and using those skills necessary to successfully live independently. TLC students are required to be responsible for completing all activities of daily living including; doing their own laundry, organizing their own transportation, managing money, keeping their rooms and common areas clean, periodic food shopping, meal planning and cooking, making medical, school and professional appointments, obtaining and maintaining a part-time job, and participating in community service. Students will be assigned a primary counselor trained in all of the above areas to assist them in learning about these skill areas and will help students organize, and prioritize their goals while in the program.

In order to have a smooth transition into the program Students entering the TLC will receive preliminary preparation by the TLC Staff prior to their move. Each student will be required to sign a contract committing them self to a Code of Conduct while participating in the program.

Senior Staff members will make the recommendations of candidates to the TLC after a thorough review of their completed application and consultation with all members of the student's treatment team. Final approval for admission into the program is at the discretion of the Director of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, who will make the decision based upon the Senior Staff's recommendation, status of the student's work towards completing their treatment goals. In addition to these goals, students will be required to have refrained from physical violence and elopement, have consistently experienced successful home visits and relations with their families, and have exhibited insight into their own areas of strengths and weaknesses. Students who have completed an application but not accepted will be provided with specific feedback as to why this decision was made, and, if applicable, what areas are in need of further improvement.

While participating in the TLC, students will attend weekly community meetings with their peers along with regularly scheduled therapeutic and skill development groups led by professional facilitators. Students will also be expected to continue meeting with their individual psychotherapist regularly and will independently schedule these sessions. During the majority of the day, students will have free access to come and go as they please from the building, following the School policy for sign in and sign out. After the 9:00 PM curfew on weekdays and 10:00 PM on weekends, students' will be expected to receive permission to be out of the building and check-in and out of the building. At all times, when out of the building, the senior staff member on duty must be aware of where to find the student. No alcohol, drugs, or any other illegal or dangerous drugs or objects (e.g. guns, knives, fireworks, etc.) will be allowed in the facility at any time. The TLC program reserves the right to search student rooms if there is a suspicion that such items are present in a room. These searches will be done respectfully and with the knowledge of the students. Students found in possession of these items will be referred to their therapist for a crisis assessment, which can lead to further treatment.

TLC Expectations and Guidelines

TLC students are expected to follow the following rules and regulations:

TLC Living Areas:

1. The entire TLC unit, including personal areas, is to be clean at all times.
2. Students are expected to complete chores on a weekly rotating basis.
3. All TLC students are required to clean their rooms and bathrooms on a regular basis.
4. Rooms must be clean (laundry washed and put away) before TLC students go home on weekends. All trash must be taken out, dishes washed, and the floors must be swept.
5. TLC students may not invite others into their rooms or enter the rooms of others.

Personal Care:

1. Each TLC student must maintain socially appropriate hygiene and grooming habits. This includes a daily shower, brushing teeth 2x/day, trimming fingernails on a regular basis, and changing bed sheets and washing laundry at a minimum of every two weeks.

Food:

1. TLC students must attend all meals. TLC staff may grant exceptions for work or illness.
2. Food is allowed only in common areas, not in student rooms.

Medications:

1. All students are required to take their prescribed medications.
2. TLC students are not permitted to keep any medications in their rooms.

Contraband:

1. No tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other illegal contraband is allowed in TLC.
2. No lighters, matches, or other smoking paraphernalia are allowed in TLC.
3. No pornography is allowed in TLC.

Behavior:

1. Physical or verbal aggression is prohibited at all times and students must conduct themselves in a mature and respectful manner to all peers and staff.
2. When going out of the building, TLC students must tell staff where they are going and when they will return and must also write this information on their boards.
3. TLC students must return to the building by 9 p.m. They must be in TLC by 10 p.m., and in their own rooms by 11 p.m. TLC staff or Program Manager ONLY may grant exceptions to these curfews.
4. TLC students must participate in one mandatory unit meeting and one mandatory group activity weekly.
5. TLC students must arrive at school and work on time.
6. TLC students will act as role models for larger student body.

Commitments:

1. All TLC students must attend school.
2. All TLC students must attend one after school group each semester.
3. All TLC students are expected to have jobs, either in the school or volunteer or paid jobs in the community.
4. All TLC students will complete weekly schedules.

The TLC staff and Program Manager reserve the right to provide additional, more directive, regulations as warranted.

Application for Admission

Please complete the following application to the best of your ability. As one of the admission criterion into the TLC program is a thoughtfully and thoroughly completed application, please take time to answer the following questions in a honest and well thought out manner.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Date of Admission: _____ How Long Have You Been at the Orthogenic School:

Current Grade Level: _____

Current Dormitory Group: _____

Current Classroom Group: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Permanent Home Address: _____

For each of the following questions, feel free to attach your answers on additional paper if needed.

At the time of your admission to the Orthogenic School, what problems and/or difficulties were you confronting?

Since your admission to the Orthogenic School, how have you managed these problems and/or difficulties?

What do you believe would be the most beneficial and realistic life plan for you once you have graduated from the Orthogenic School?

How do you believe participating in the Transitional Living Center program will help you accomplish this plan?

Describe the personal strengths, talents, and skills that you possess that will help you be successful in the Transitional Living Center.

Describe the areas that you believe you need to improve on so that you can be successful in the Transitional Living Center.

Who are the individuals in your life that will be able to support and to assist you in working towards the completion of this plan? Be as specific as you can about how each person will contribute support.

List any work experience you have had while at the Orthogenic School and who supervised you

Describe activities you completed while on your independent outings and how these outings enhanced your work while in the program.

Describe your recreational activities, such as hobbies, sports, musical instruments.

List 5 Specific Goals you would have for yourself while participating in the Transitional Living Center.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____
