

TOMPKINS COUNTY SINGLE POINT OF ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES

Effective September 1, 1996 we began an IRT review for youth under consideration for/or in detention, group home care, institution care including residential treatment centers, residential treatment facilities, and Office of Children and Family Services custody. The Institution Review Team will now become the Tompkins County Single Point of Accountability and will begin reviewing more situations: non- DSS Residential Facility placements and Committee on Special Education placements and situations where youth may be in need of support to safely remain in their home community. SPOA was created to identify Tompkins County children with the highest risk of placement in out of home settings and develop appropriate strategies so the youth can succeed in their home communities. SPOA will work with youth who are at risk of higher level of care and involved in or in need of services from multiple service systems. In addition, the youth may be involved/in need of mental health services, special education services, legal, probation, child welfare, substance, health, or family services.

Our new goals are: to assess strengths and needs with families, to provide support to families and young persons by sharing responsibility among team members, to provide expertise both in developing and coordinating a local community based care plan as an alternative to a more restrictive placement, or, in selecting the least restrictive placement to meet a youth's needs, and, to overcome barriers to community based care and assist youth and families to get the services they want and need.

DSS caseworkers need to sign up with clerical for review of any youth remanded to detention, under consideration for group home care or institution level (eg DSS, OCFS, RTF, RTC) care. Probation staff involved with youth being considered for institution or group level care contact the children's services caseworker or children's services intake as early as possible and in particular before the PDI is complete. If higher level of care is being recommended, DSS will present to SPOA, with Probation assistance. Committee on Special Education staff, Mental Health staff, Cayuga Medical Center staff, hospitals and others who are working with youth not involved with DSS children's services who are being considered for institution level care, contact Stu Grinnell at the Tompkins County Mental Health Clinic, 274-6200 for a referral package and assistance. The team can meet every Thursday at 10:00 and 11:30 or at other times to accommodate the parents and young person's schedules. Family members and/or service providers are also invited to request a SPOA meeting if a youth is in need of support to safety remain in their home or community.

Please proceed with your normal practice of assessment, service planning with the family and referrals to services, but, if a youth is at risk of or is being recommended for a higher level of care (or, placed in a higher level of care) please sign up for the next (weekly) review meeting. The team can meet at a different time if necessary to accommodate the family's schedule.

Presenters are asked to attend and be fully prepared with the information outlined on the SPOA referral information form. The first page includes a release for you to complete with family members as well as identify with families who to invite. You and the family are strongly encouraged to bring other persons who are supportive of the family and other key players. (e.g. probation, therapist, school, service providers, relatives or other supportive or involved parties.) If service providers or others would like to participate but the SPOA can't accommodate their schedule, presenters can solicit their verbal or written information and basis for them and bring them to the meeting--in particular, asking them to share their assessment of strengths and needs and participate in planning together. Parents must be invited and welcomed to have someone accompany them, and if parents want to participate the meeting should be scheduled at a time when they can be there. The young person is welcome to participate too, and, if necessary, the SPOA will meet at a different time to accommodate their work/school/other schedules.

Persons making referrals to a SPOA meeting should inform parents/caretakers about the availability of a Parent Partner who provides support and information to maximize parental participation in the SPOA process. Please give the parent or caretaker the Parent Partner brochure, and ask parents if the Parent partner can contact them, or to indicate on the release form if not. Then, call Robin or Sonya to make the referral if the parent doesn't object. Contact information will be provided to Catholic Charities a week before the SPOA meeting whenever possible, in order to increase the likelihood parents can receive the service. To make a referral to the Parent Partnership, phone Catholic Charities of Tompkins County at 272-5062, extension 16.

The team will make a thorough review of the situation. The focus of the meeting will be on building on strengths and resources with families in order to reach goals. And, to develop and coordinate a local community based care plan for youth considered for higher levels of placement, or, on selecting the least restrictive placement to meet a youth's needs. The team can be used to formulate a plan to help the young person succeed in the community. The team may make recommendations about placements, may approve or not approve placements, or may defer decision pending further assessment. The team will lend support, provide alternatives and recommendations and knowledge about current status and expertise of various programs for the

caseworker. With the family's permission, information sharing is encouraged, including various and differing recommendations and the basis for them.

The goal is to identify supports and build consensus for a care plan at the least restrictive level which will meet the youth's needs.

Attached are:

- Procedure to sign up for review
- Transfer Policy (DSS only)
- Agenda for meetings and Team Member responsibilities
- Purpose
- Guidelines for our meetings
- Forms—Attendance and Notes SPOA referral forms (see clerical)

Our ultimate goal is to work in partnership with families to improve outcomes with youth in the community.

Agency team members are DSS, Mental Health Clinic, Home & Community Based Services Waiver, Youth Advocates Program, Glove House, County Attorney's Office, Law Guardian's Office, Sara Hess, community member parents and other parties who may be involved with youth such as Probation. Parents will be offered parent partners, provided by Catholic Charities, through an agreement with Mental Health, DSS, and the Tompkins County Youth Bureau.

PROCEDURES

(1) The procedure is to sign up for review when a youth is at risk of placement in detention, diagnostic, group, or institutional care, or immediately following the remand to detention.

- SPOA meetings regularly occur on Thursdays at 10:00 and 11:30 at the Human Services Building. The team will meet at another time to accommodate family's schedules. Other service providers and key players should be encouraged to come and to provide information, particularly the information on the SPOA referral form regarding a youth's and family's strengths, needs, resources, and potential resources that can help with the situation.
- The referring person or, if the referral is from DSS, the referring caseworkers, must attend - they must invite family and other service providers, and inform them about the process. Youth can be invited at the discretion of the presenter and the parents/custodian. There is a SPOA brochure to give to people; the brochure is available with the forms referring persons/presenters must complete with families for a referral to the team.
- The presenting worker should be familiar with the family and the situation. Presenters must complete the SPOA referral form with youth and families, in preparation for the SPOA meeting and be fully prepared to go through it orally and develop goals and strategies with the family and team.

TRANSFER POLICY (DSS ONLY)

In the event the caseworker or unit is changing and there has been a recommendation for group care placement, the transferring unit is responsible for obtaining prior approval from the SPOA before transfer. One exception to this would be a family working with the intake unit with a child in a detention placement. The intake unit will be responsible for scheduling and attending the SPOA meeting as soon as possible, but timely transfer will not be delayed.

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT (MHC ONLY)

Tompkins County has 24 intensive case management slots which are managed through the Mental Health Clinic. These slots are available to residents of the County who need extra services or support. The Clinic will use the SPOA process as a way to determine who will use the empty slots as they become available. In this way the SPOA group has the responsibility of how the slots are filled and in what order.

Agenda for SPOA meetings and Member's Responsibilities

SPOA agency members responsibilities:

- To be available on Thursdays from 10-12:30 if needed, or to accommodate wherever possible the family and young person's schedule
- To see the meeting starts on time

- To participate & facilitate the meeting using the SPOA meeting guidelines
- To see the SPOA meeting guidelines are posted in the room

Facilitator's responsibilities:

(Patricia, Maryanne, Stu, Robin, Richelle, Brian, Mary, and Christine) have agreed to facilitate meetings)

- Explain the purpose of the meeting
- Ask everyone to sign the attendance sheet and confidentiality statement
- Appoint a notetaker
- Refer to the goals and the guidelines for SPOA at the beginning of the meeting
- Explain how the meeting will work: we will go through the information with people and ask everyone to contribute and share. We will go through some demographics, reasons for the meeting, and identify strengths and resources and priority needs. We will then identify together strategies to meet priority needs based on strengths.
- Let participants introduce themselves and highlight strengths of the youth/family
- Distribute name tags/make name tags
- See the SPOA forms are distributed and reviewed, beginning with page 1—youth's name, age, invitees, and what brought the family to the SPOA team. Ask the family, presenter, and other team members to contribute with reasons, circumstances, relevant history for the SPOA team.
- As the presenter takes the group through the SPOA forms, get input from team members to help the group identify and confirm priority strengths resources & potential resources, priority needs and goals, and then strategies to meet needs based on strengths, resources, and potential resources (and who will do what when)
- Assist with coming to consensus on the plan, or confirm varying opinions and basis for them
- Ask the notetaker to review the notes and the group to confirm accuracy of notes including strategies and level of care decided upon
- Ask the family and then the group who would like copies of the notes
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Notetaker:

- Complete the SPOA meeting notes form
- Prior to the end of the meeting read what you have written to the team, for their review and validation that what is in the notes is an accurate representation of the teams recommendation(s)/consensus/plan
- Identify who will get copies of the SPOA meeting notes
- Give the recommendations form, the attendance sheet, and one copy of the SPOA referral forms to DSS for typing and distribution within 24 hours

PURPOSE OF TOMPKINS COUNTY SINGLE POINT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

To identify children with the highest risk of placement in out of home settings and to develop appropriate strategies to help them succeed in their home communities.

Our goals are:

To assess strengths and needs in partnerships with families

To provide support to youth and families by sharing responsibility among team members

To provide expertise both in developing and coordinating a local community based care plan as an alternative to a more restrictive placement, or, in selecting the least restrictive placement to meet a youth's needs

To overcome barriers to community based care and assist youth and families to get the services they want and need

Decision for approval of the level of care or development of a coordinated community based care plan will be developed by consensus, usually within 24 hours of the presentation.

The Presenter should be prepared to summarize the following documents and have them available at the SPOA meeting:

- 1) The SPOA referral form and assessment of strengths, resources, needs with family
- 2) Social summary
- 3) Any past psychological evaluations
- 4) Any past psychiatric evaluation
- 5) Current Family Court Order
- 6) School information (including, if available and/or pertinent: attendance reports, behavior reports, immunization records, report cards, academic test scores, CSE information).
- 7) Criminal history, placement history
- 8) Current UCR (DSS only)
- 9) Health records
- 10) Any past summaries/evaluations from other service providers/agencies (i.e. Sexual Abuse Project, Mental Health Clinic, Probation and recommendations from providers and family members if they are not present

Guidelines for our meetings

Give everyone the opportunity to share their ideas respectfully

Voice concerns constructively, example: what could be done to help with this situation?

Welcome respectful presentation of different ideas and solutions

Respect confidentiality

Stay focused on strengths and resources and build on them to meet needs

To meet needs, select strategies that build on strengths

Work in equal partnership with families

Provide each other support and share responsibility

Lend expertise to develop the best plan

Overcome barriers to success