



Department of  
**Children's Services**



# Therapeutic Response Unit Handbook

For Wilder Youth Development Center

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# Therapeutic Response Unit

The purpose of the Therapeutic Response Unit (TRU) is to assist youth in regaining the focus and skills to engage safely and effectively in the general population. This is accomplished by providing additional supports in a secure environment with a smaller dorm.

## *Entry Criteria*

Youth qualify for admission to TRU after repeated and persistent unsafe behaviors that place others at risk and have not responded to interventions to keep youth in general population. Youth are not admitted to TRU solely for disruptive, defiant, and refusal behaviors. Admission must include authorization from the Team Leader that includes documentation that less restrictive options have been tried. Youth are not placed on TRU for behavioral non-compliance or behaviors that do not place others' safety at risk. There are three primary avenues for TRU placement:

### **Treatment Team Recommendation**

The referring Residential Case Manager (RCM) of the treatment team submits form [CS-4211, Therapeutic Response Unit \(TRU\) Referral](#) and sends it to the Team Leader to review. The summary includes documentation of repeated assaultive or physically aggressive behaviors that place staff or youth at risk. The Team Leader ensures that the Team has tried effective interventions to assist the youth. If the Team Leader finds that the Treatment Team has not made appropriate interventions, then the TL guides the Treatment Team in its interventions. If the TL finds that the Treatment Team has made appropriate interventions, the TL authorizes the TRU placement.

### **Administrative Approval**

It is recognized that there are times when administrative placement in TRU is necessary for the safety and security of the youth, other youth, and the facility. These incidents should be rare. Form [CS-4212, TRU Administrative Referral](#) is submitted by the Shift Leader/or designee then reviewed by the Superintendent/or designee within 24 hours of placement. If less restrictive options are available, the youth is returned to the general population.

### **Transfer to WYDC from another facility due to disruptive, aggressive, dangerous behavior**

If a youth is transferred to WYDC from another facility **for security reasons that involve the youth being actively involved in aggressive, disruptive, or dangerous activity**, he may be placed in TRU upon arrival with Superintendent approval documented on form [CS-4212, TRU Administrative Referral](#). This may not include youth sent here purely for their own safety unless this was the result of aggressive and disruptive activity on their part.

- ❖ Youth are processed as usual (developing the IPP, assessments, etc.) and follow the TRU program.

## *Admission*

Upon admission, youth are provided with a written description of the reason for placement on TRU and the behaviors he needs to demonstrate to return to general population. A [\*TRU Behavior Support Plan \(CS-4213\)\*](#) to reduce these behaviors is developed with the youth, RCM, and therapist.

## *Exit Criteria*

After five days in the program, the youth exits TRU upon demonstrating 24 hours of safe behaviors, as evidenced by no physically aggressive, assaultive, or destructive behaviors. The Superintendent/or designee has the ability to exit youth from TRU prior to five days for positive behaviors.

## *Program Description*

The program in TRU combines elements of the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) with individual therapy and behavioral feedback. Most of the emphasis is on ART as the program is designed mostly for aggressive youth. The staff assigned to TRU must be properly trained in ART and continuously implements the TRU program.

The Residential Case Manager (RCM) reviews each youth upon entry into TRU and develops his [\*TRU Behavior Support Plan \(CS-4213\)\*](#) to include behavioral and treatment goals. Behavioral goals are linked to the behaviors that led to the youth's placement on TRU (i.e. "Youth will comply with program requirements. When mad at program directions, youth will refrain from physical aggression and practice responding to others in a safe way.") The TRU Behavior Support Plan includes a description of how the ART and individual therapy both help with this goal and strategies the youth will try to implement instead of the negative behavior (e.g. "When mad at staff, youth will practice counting how many basketball players he can name to distract himself, ask for a minute to regroup, tell the staff he's feeling mad and needs to see his TRU plan, take deep breaths, visualize his safe place.") This plan is personalized to each youth and incorporates strategies found or might be found to be helpful. Adjustments to the youth's Individual Program Plan is made, if necessary. In addition, the RCM and youth review goals daily in preparation for reentry into general population.

## *Program Components:*

### **• Groups (ART and Independent Living)**

Group is held each day for one hour. The ART program focuses on youth replacing an aggressive response with non-violent behavior option, choosing assertive rather than aggressive methods of goal seeking interaction, and attempting to fortify coping skills through the development of a more positive self-image. This program is also designed to give positive support to others in need and to develop empathy. ART is made up of three components which are Social Skills, Moral Reasoning, and Anger Management.

- ❖ Social Skills consists of groups with role plays addressing interpersonal, intrapersonal, stress management, and problem solving.
- ❖ Moral Reasoning consists of groups addressing moral dilemmas that youth sometimes face.

- ❖ Anger Management consists of groups addressing the many triggers that may cause one to become angry it is typically addressed in a role play.

- **Individual Therapy**

Youth meet twice a week with their therapist. The goal of therapeutic sessions on TRU are to better understand antecedents to the aggressive behaviors and develop more effective responses. Therapist communicates with TRU staff and RCM to assist in developing effective behavioral responses.

- **Behavioral management**

Staff on TRU assists youth in identifying when they are becoming escalated and coach them through utilizing their crisis plans.

### *Discipline and Lack of Progress*

Majors and loss of points are used when a youth violates facility rules. Counseling is used when a youth violates program rules.

When a youth has been in the program for more than one week and appears to be making no progress, the treatment team along with the therapist meets with the youth to address any barriers that may be preventing him from progressing. This meeting is conducted in the form of a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) where the Juvenile Service Worker (JSW) and parent can be involved.

### *Chapel*

Youth have access to spiritual counseling and worship while in TRU by requesting a visit from a spiritual representative. Participation in services located in the Chapel is not permitted while on TRU.

### *Visitation*

Youth in TRU are allowed visitation on the allotted visitation days. However, youth are only allowed a one (1) hour visit with no more than two (2) visitors per visitation day. Visitation is held in the Classroom of the TRU area.

### *Education*

Youth in TRU receive the same academic services while programming in TRU as they would in general population. Special Educational Services, HIsset, ACT, and all other testing are available.