



Homespace Corporation

Y-PREP Program

Participant Handbook

Revised NOVEMBER 2016

Welcome!

Homespace welcomes you to its family of supportive staff and participants. We hope that your participation in the program leads to the fulfillment of the goals that you have set for yourself.

This Handbook is your guide to policies, procedures, expectations and information that will help you to become a successful Homespace participant.

It is our goal at Homespace to provide an environment that is conducive to your personal goal achievement and your acquisition of independent living skills. Please feel free to bring all questions and concerns to the Homespace staff for clarification and guidance.

Sincerely,

The Homespace Staff

Homespace Values

The Homespace mission statement is best achieved through a set of values that helps guide both participants and staff. In becoming a Homespace participant it is important to recognize these values so that you may understand our policies and procedures, as well as be able to live the values in your own life.

Family

Responsibility

Security

Self Sufficiency

Resiliency

Our Mission...

Homespace supports at-risk young women to achieve independence two generations at a time.

The Homespace “Family”

Homespace employs a supportive staff to help all participants achieve their best. Staff is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to ensure a safe and comfortable environment. All staff is available to provide assistance and offer guidance.

Executive Director

The Executive Directors role is to oversee all operations of Homespace.

Director of Program Operations (DPO)

The role of the DPO is to oversee the overall functioning of the program as it relates to the Child Care staff. This includes over site of the supervision of CCW’s as well as developing the training and support aspect of our program for our staff members.

Director of Youth Services (DYS)

The role of the DYS is to oversee the overall functioning of the program as it relates to the clinical needs of the participants. This includes intake and supervision of the clinical team (Case Planner and Independent Living Trainer). The DYS will also become involved with a participant that is asking and/or being asked to transition out of the program.

Case Planner

The role of the Case Planner is to assist participants in developing realistic goals for themselves, make referrals for needed services and monitor the progress of the participants. The Case Planner also attends all court proceeding, coordinates/monitors family visitations as needed, coordinates Service Plan Reviews and ensures that all participants receive the mental health treatment that they may need.

Independent Living (IL) Trainer

The role of the IL Trainer is to assist in the areas of budgeting, nutrition, housekeeping, time management and daily living skills.

***A full list of job duties of the Case Planner and IL Trainer are provided at the time of intake.**

***Participants must meet face-to-face with the Social Work Staff a minimum of 2 times per month. The Social Work Staff must also have face-to-face contact with a participant’s child(ren) a minimum of 1 time per month.**

Child Care Workers

Child Care Workers are on duty outside of normal business hours. The Child Care Workers maintain the rights and dignity of the participants as well as maintain the safety of the complex. The Child Care Workers also oversee the compliance of program rules.

Office Staff

The front office staff oversees all matters as it relates to the front office; this includes monitoring the phones and doors. They are available during normal business hours.

Community Spaces

Homespace has several community spaces for participants and staff to utilize. The following are the rules/expectations of these spaces so that all can enjoy them. If the rules/expectations are not followed the space may be closed and/or a participant may be banned from using the space.

Front Office

Participants are not allowed in the front office area. If they need assistance they should come to the front window. **Participants are allowed to be in the hallway however they are asked to be respectful of the front office area. This includes not cursing or yelling while in the hallways.** Additionally, your time in the hallway should be limited. This area is to be used while waiting to meet with your worker only, this is NOT a visiting area. You may be directed by staff to move to the community room, or leave Homespace, if it appears that you are loitering. Participants are also asked to not leave personal belongings in the front hallway and/or office area. This would include strollers, car seats, etc. Anything left in the front area may be thrown out as this could cause a safety issue.

Laundry Room

The laundry room is available to all participants for a cost of \$2.00 per use. There is a time limit to each use of the room – please see front desk for more details. Participants must pay a staff member at the front office to gain access to the laundry room. Participants will not be allowed to “owe” for laundry access. The laundry room is closed at 11pm daily. It is the participant’s responsibility to clean up after themselves after each use. Participants are also asked to be respectful of others and clear out their items from the washer/dryer after the cycles are complete. **Homespace is not responsible for any items left in the laundry room past their scheduled time.** Participants should not allow guests to use the laundry room – this space is for participants of Homespace only. Please be aware that laundry detergent is not provided by Homespace and is the participant’s responsibility to purchase this on their own. In times that the program is full, laundry days may be assigned so that all participants are given a chance each week to have laundry time. If a Participant does not comply with the laundry policy, they will not be allowed to use the laundry facility for 2 weeks.

Community Room

The community room is a shared space between participants and staff. Participants may be allowed to utilize this space **when not in use for** business meetings. This space is open for participant use during the hours of **8am and 6pm**. Only YPREP participants and their children are allowed to be on Homespace property/utilizing community spaces. The space has a kitchen and a television (with cable). If participants are allowed to use this space for personal use, they are responsible for cleaning up the space after each use. Participants are also asked NOT to eat any of the food in the refrigerator and/or cupboards as this is for staff use only! If anything is damaged or missing during a participant’s usage of the room, they will be held responsible for replacing it. There is also an emergency door in this room; Participants

and guests are asked NOT use this unless there is a true emergency! If staff have noted a violation of any of the above stated regulations by a participant, you may be asked to leave, and/or no longer allowed to utilize this privilege.

Parking Lot

Participants and guests are only permitted to park in the parking lot during the following times:

- Monday-Friday 5pm-8am
- Saturday-Sunday all day

It should also be noted that from November 1 – March 31st Participants and guests are NOT permitted to park in the lot overnight. This is because of snow plow removal and will be strictly enforced.

- *Participants are responsible for their guest's behavior in all community spaces.**
- *Children must be supervised by their parents at all times in the community spaces.**

What You Can Expect From Homespace...

1. Staff will help engage each participant in a level of services that they are capable of succeeding.
2. A safe, secure environment including staff on duty 24 hours a day.
3. The opportunity for you to develop necessary independent living skills that will benefit you and your child (ren).
4. A family environment in which staff and participants form relationships that are mutually caring and respectful.
5. A staff that maintains all participants' confidentiality and rights.
6. Assistance in securing permanent housing when the appropriate time comes.

What Homespace Expects From You...

1. Respectful interactions with all staff.
2. Maintaining a safe home for yourself and your child.
3. A goal and a plan to obtain self-sufficiency, along with actions that show progress towards this goal.
4. The desire to learn and grow as an individual and a parent.
5. Active participation in group meetings, individual meetings, and Homespace events.
6. Be interested in personal growth- willing to attend support groups, educational seminars, furthering education, obtaining job skills, vocational training, and any other area that is deemed necessary.
7. Participants are expected to follow ALL rules and regulations so that safety, comfort, and progression of the individual are achieved.

Entrance into the Program

Acceptance into Y-PREP

Once you have been accepted into the program, the Case Planner will meet with you face to face within 5 business days, to define the goals to be agreed upon and established as a team. This is also a time that you can ask for clarification about this Handbook and other policies.

In addition, you will be assigned an IL Trainer to work on hands on specific tasks. This relationship will begin within 10 business days of the Case Planner's initial meeting, so that the Case Planner and the IL Trainer can understand and formulate a plan together to address the participant's needs.

Services

Clients in the YPREP program will receive the following services to help define needs and monitor progress, as well as make sure that each workers focus is on the challenges that the individual client presents.

- Casey Life Skills (Independent Living strengths and needs)
- Independent Living Assessment
- Comprehensive Clinical Plan (Established goals, youth strengths, needs, presenting mental health issues, permanency related issues).
- Ages and Stages (Developmental milestones for children)
- Assistance with educational goals (high school, GED, post-secondary education)
- Vocational and computer training
- Referrals/linkages (counseling, mental health needs, substance abuse prevention, preventive health, etc.)
- Advocacy for youth's individual needs (court related matters, education, etc.)
- Discharge Planning Summary

Support Counseling

For any participants transitioning to Homespace Y-PREP program from a residential treatment facility and/or Therapeutic Foster Home, you will be required to continue with counseling for a minimum of 6-months. After the 6-month period the counselor, along with the Case Planner, will assess the need for continued services. Refusal to attend mental health treatment may result in you being discharged from Homespace.

What to Do In an Emergency/Crisis Situation

Staff at Homespace want to ensure your and your child's safety at all times. Staff are trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) and First Aid/CPR. We are a "hands-off" program and therefore staff will use verbal de-escalation strategies if a youth is in an emotional crisis. A Crisis Management Plan will also be completed with you at intake so that staff are aware of your individual trauma history as well as any triggers and strategies that work well for you in a crisis. If you are witnessing another participant in crisis please follow any staff instructions given including leaving the area, and/or calling for assistance. During a medical crisis your assistance may also be requested. For example, you may be asked to call for help, ensure that all babies/toddlers are cared for, etc. If at any time you have questions or concerns as it relates to how staff handle crisis situations please speak with the Director of Program Operations.

Your Money

SEFCU

When you are accepted into the program you will be linked with SEFCU for your banking needs, if you do not already have a bank account. Participants over the age of 18 will have both a checking and savings account. Participants under the age of 18 will be linked with a savings account. SEFCU is located on the corner of Main and Chippewa. It is your responsibility to manage your account!

Bus Passes

If you are in care with the county, Erie County can provide you with money for a bus pass. Please speak to the Case Planner about requirements. If you are not in Erie County care, or do not qualify for this, please speak to the Independent Living Trainer about alternate arrangements. If you are eligible for this program you will receive \$75 towards the purchase of a bus pass, and must provide your case planner with the receipt. It is your responsibility to use this money to get your bus pass each month. If you are not using the bus pass funds provided to you to appropriately, this will be reported to your county worker and consequences may include not receiving the money in the future or having staff purchase the bus pass for you. If you lose it Homespace will NOT replace it!

Other Transportation Needs

Y-PREP is a community based program which encourages independent living skills, therefore we expect you to be able to be independent with getting to/from your appointments. Case Planners often times assist with transportation to medical appointments, court appearances, job interviews, etc. You can speak to your Case Planner regarding a request for transportation related to a relevant goal. No rides will be given for personal needs (to see a friend, etc.). Homespace also cannot transport anyone other than Homespace participants. If you are requesting transportation, you must contact your Case Planner 48 hours in advance to set up a time. It is not guaranteed that your Case Planner will be able to provide transportation for you. Bus tokens are also provided when related to a relevant goal, and if determined to be necessary. Tokens will however be limited for each participant per month.

Clothing

Homespace Y-PREP Case Planner can assist you with appropriate referrals for clothing (if necessary) through programs such as Harvest House. If this is something you require please contact your case planner for additional information.

Educational Needs

It is expected that all Homespace Y-PREP participants are working on their educational needs while in the program! This includes educational (GED, High School, College) or vocational services.

Your Community

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the program that is guaranteed for each individual. This is not only the responsibility of staff but also of each participant. It is prohibited to discuss the names of business of any participant while outside of the Homespace community. This is to ensure the safety and dignity of each participant. Any person found in non-compliance of this rule may be asked to leave the program.

Mediation with Other Participants

You are encouraged to talk with staff if you are having difficulties with another participant. Staff can offer mediation between you and other participants if needed. Homespace will not tolerate bullying of any kind including physical violence or verbal harassment. Any acts of physical violence and/or harassment on or off of Homespace property may result in removal from the program.

Interactions with staff

You are expected to work with all members of the Homespace team. If you are having a personal conflict with any staff member you are encourage to talk to them respectfully and openly. If the situation is not resolved you may then ask to speak to their supervisor. If you are not able to work with ALL staff, you may be asked to leave the program. Verbal and physical intimidation of staff will NOT be tolerated.

Meetings and Groups

Quarterly Meetings/Service Plan Reviews (ONLY APPLICABLE TO THOSE IN FOSTER CARE)

Every 3 months you will meet with the Social Work Team, your county worker and your attorney to review your strengths and accomplishments over the previous 3 months. This is also a time that you will review your goals and develop new goals for yourself.

First Aid/CPR

All participants have the opportunity to be trained in First Aid/CPR yearly. This training will be offered several times per year and it is your responsibility to sign up for a class that fits with your schedule if this is something you are interested in.

Youth in Progress

Youth in Progress (YIP) is an advocacy group for youth in out of home placement. This group meets monthly at various agencies throughout the area. Homespace staff will transport to all meetings and events and you are encouraged to attend often. If you want to become involved with this group please see your Case Planner. Youth Handbooks and Need to Know Series are available for you outside of the Case Planner office.

Additional Groups/Activities

Homespace likes to provide you with a wide variety of events and activities to participate in. Along with groups, events may include recreational opportunities, educational opportunities, skills groups, etc. You will be provided with a calendar each month which lists all activities/groups. If you want to attend an activity it will be your responsibility to sign up. Be aware that if you sign up for an event that has a cost associated to it and you do not show on the day of the event you WILL be held responsible for the cost of that activity. Childcare will not always be provided by Homespace for the extra events so be aware that you may have to arrange your own childcare to participate in adult only activities.

Group Policy

Homespace Group Rules are as follows:

- Be Respectful of each other, staff and speakers at all times: foul language and abusive behavior are not allowed.
- One person talks at a time
- What is discussed in group, stays in group; No talking about each other's business
- Be on time; 15 minutes late results in no admittance-Unless discussed with IL Coordinator before group.
- No talking or answering cell phones or texting during group; must be on silent/vibrate.
- No visitors during group; cannot remain on property, can leave and come back.
- No leaving group, except for an emergency.
- Group discussion is always encouraged, but side conversations with friends are not allowed.
- All children over 6 months of age are NOT allowed in the group; Participants must have alternative child care or utilize agency provided child care.

Please check your group calendars for times and be on time. A copy of the group calendar is given to you WELL in advance.

Homespace Policies and Procedures

Cell Phone Policy

The Y-PREP Case Planner will be providing you with his/her cell phone number to keep in contact. Although we understand that cell phone is the primary form of communication, there are guidelines that we respectfully ask you to follow.

~Case Planner's typically work from 9AM to 5PM Monday through Friday. Unless your Case Planner specifically tells you otherwise, the phone number that is provided to you should only be contacted between 9AM and 5PM. If you call or text message your Case Planner before 9AM or after 5PM you will not get a response until the following business day.

~If you call and are in need of something which is **not urgent** and do not get a response, please leave a message for your Case Planner.

~If you cannot get ahold of your Case Planner during normal business hours, you may contact Homespace staff at 881-4600 to see if you can reach him/her. You can also contact Homespace staff at 881-4600 **after normal business hours**, to receive guidance/assistance over the phone.

~If you are having a true emergency please contact Crisis Services 24 Hour Hotline at 716-834-3131. For the Domestic Violence Hotline contact 716-862-HELP. For Shelter contact 716-884-6000.

Your Case Planner is **Alexandra Mastoras**

Her schedule is as follows **unless specifically stated otherwise** to you:

~Monday: 9AM-5PM

~Tuesday: 9AM-5PM

~Wednesday: 9AM-5PM

~Thursday: 9AM-5PM

~Friday: 9AM-5PM

Drug/Alcohol and Smoking Policy

Homespace is a drug and alcohol free environment. Drugs of any kind are prohibited on the premises of Homespace entirely. If you and/or staff feel that you have concerns with drug and/or alcohol use you will be referred and must complete drug counseling to remain in the program. If you do not comply a 30 day notice will be given. Please note that if you are found to be under the influence while caring for your children, Child Protection Services will be contacted. In addition, the police will be contacted if you have illegal substances on Homespace property. Please note that because all participants are under the age of

21 years old (the legal drinking age), alcohol of any form is considered an illegal substance and is not permitted on Homespace property.

Cigarette Policy

Smoking is prohibited on Homespace property. If a participant is a smoker it is expected that you smoke off Homespace property. If a participant is caught smoking on the premises, a meeting with the clinical staff will be held, and consequence determined case by case.

DV Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish agency protocols should there be a Domestic Violence incident at Homespace. This policy has been put in place for the safety of all participants and their children's best interest.

Homespace Corporation and all of its employees strive to promote healthy relationships.

In the event that there is a situation that has become physical between the participant and their guest the following is imperative to be followed by the Child Care Worker/s (CCW) on duty to ensure the safety of all those involved. First and foremost, the participants and their guest must immediately be separated. If the participant has child/children the CCW must ensure they are safe. The CCW(s) on duty must call the supervisor immediately and ask the guest to leave the premises. The on duty CCW(s) will use their own best professional judgment to call 911 if needed.

The guest directly involved in the situation will not be able to return to Homespace Corporation premises until there is a meeting conducted with the Program Director and Social Work Staff.

All Homespace employees have embraced the Trauma Informed Care Model of treatment and understand that relationships are very important to our participants. Depending on the seriousness of the situation decisions will be made for continuing visitation. The following will be adhered to:

- If the participant is 18 years of age or older and the situation is related to the child's birth father, 1st offense – potential for continued visitation after meeting (depending on seriousness of situation)
 - 2nd Offense the violator of this policy will not be permitted back on Homespace property.
- If the Participant is 17 years of age and the situation is related to the child's birth father, 1st offense potential for continued visitation after meeting (depending on seriousness of situation).
 - Scheduled supervised visitation with birth father only.
 - Recommended couples counseling.
 - 2nd Offense the violator of this policy will not be permitted back on Homespace Property

The Homespace Administrative team reserves the right to revoke all visitors to ensure the safety and well-being for everyone involved.

Program Contracts

If you consistently break Homespace program policies you will be placed on a specialized written contract. If you are placed on a written contract your county worker and parent/guardian will be made

aware of this (if applicable). A program contract will give you 30-days to correct inappropriate behavior. If the social work staff do not see improvements during this time period you will be discharged from the program.

Discharge from the Program

Successful Completion Transition

If a participant has achieved their goals and the service team feels it's appropriate to discharge from Y-PREP services, this can be done following a discharge meeting. If a youth decided that they would not like to receive services any further and the service team approves, this can also be done following a discharge meeting. It is recommended that you speak with your Case Planner often about your discharge plans so that the transition can be as smooth as possible.

Immediate Referral Out Of the Program

The safety of all of our participants are our first priority. Any action that violates another person's health, safety and/or well-being will be taken seriously. It is the intention of the staff that we work with you to resolve any issues together but if this cannot be done then dismissal from the program will be seriously considered. Other actions that may lead to immediate discharge from the program include intentional destruction of property, smoking on Homespace property, illegal activities and continuous violations of policies and procedures.

Every effort will be made to meet the youth at their level and individualized needs, but within 30 days of noncompliance, staff will attempt to hold a discharge meeting to reengage the participant, otherwise the participant will be discharged from services and resources will be provided. When a participant is referred out of the program in this manner the participant will not be allowed back on property; this includes being a screened visitor for another participant.

Assistance with Moving

Homespace staff will not assist with moving you to your new home. You should plan to have help from friends and/or family members. If you do not have access to a van to move your items in, please talk with your Case Planner as soon as possible.

Access to File

At the time of discharge staff will ensure that you have the following documents: Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, Medicaid Card, Picture ID and your high school diploma (if applicable). You may also request any other forms at that time. If you want to access your file after your final discharge from the program you may do so by making a request in writing to the front office staff. Your records will be available to be picked up within 10 business days of the written request.

Other After-Care Services

Again, please speak with your Case Planner often about your discharge plan and services that you may need at the time of discharge. Referrals can be made for in-home and/or community support services after discharge if you would like to continue to work with someone on your goals. The following are other considerations when planning your discharge:

Homespace prides itself in making each participant's experience unique to their individual needs. Therefore, staff reserves the right to change or alter any policies as needed.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand all policies and procedures outlined in the Participant Handbook.

I have also been given a copy of the Handbook and know who to talk to if I have questions about any of the policies and/or procedures.

Participant Signature

Date

Homespace Staff Signature

Date