



Alternative Living Solutions

Be a StarThrower and Become a Difference Maker

Program Description for ALS **Supervised Independent Living Services**

1. Mission Statement:

Alternative Living Solutions, a Trauma Aware Agency, is committed to developing innovative programming that challenges and enhances community supports for the youth, young adults and families we serve.

2. Legal entity/ description of facilities:

Alternative Living Solutions (ALS) was founded in 2007 and began operations on July 2. ALS conducts business as a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Service Code. ALS is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) pursuant to Title 55 Pa. C.S. Section 3680 OCYF as Administrative / Supervised Independent Living (SIL) whose primary focus is to meet the needs of at risk and aging out youth. All the facilities currently operated by ALS are in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. The corporate mailing address for ALS is 2108 Tartan Court, Latrobe, Pennsylvania 15650.

3. Services available:

SIL apartments are opened and available as per the individual need of the aging out youth and young adults. They may be one to three-bedroom units (apartments / houses). The exact locations are contingent upon the specific individual involved. For some of these units the leases may be transferable directly to the individual as they age out at 21 years.

4. Program objectives and activities:

ALS subscribes to the Daniel Memorial best practice protocols for enhanced independent living programs for young adults. ALS counselors are expected to achieve the Independent Living Specialist Certification (ILSC) from the Daniel Memorial Institute within their first year of employment. Upon admission, each client is administered a pre-

alternativelivingsolutions.com or ALS-PA.com

Broad Street Apartments
1339 Broad Street
Greensburg, PA 15601
Phone (724) 834-3496
Fax (724) 834-4200

Georges Station Apartments
915 Georges Station Road
Greensburg, PA 15601
Phone (724) 837-2341
Fax (724) 836-2469

ALS ~ Administration
2108 Tartan Court
Latrobe, PA 15650
Phone (724) 493-2509
Fax (724) 424-8772

test life skills assessment (fourteen categories) to establish a baseline for their individualized skills plan. There is ongoing instruction and review of their skills plan to reinforce their strengths and to identify additional needs for successful attainment of their goals. Intermediate-tests are offered (ninety days) to measure competency improvement with a computer-generated skills plan being periodically updated. An individual may test out with a high competency score. Under ideal discharge planning conditions, a post test may be given at the time of discharge as a measure of progress.

The program objectives, activities and associated outcomes for ALS individuals are in large part tailored by the uniqueness of our individuals. ALS serves an older adolescent and young adult population, ages 16 through 20. All have been adjudicated or co-adjudicated delinquent or dependent, many of whom are unable to return to their homes. Therefore, ALS individuals are required to obtain the skills necessary to become independent by the time the Court's jurisdiction concludes.

The primary facility objective of ALS is to develop a positive community culture for each of its sites. In doing so, ALS individuals are required to advance their competencies in the areas of pro-social skills, emotional and behavioral stability in an ongoing effort to become productive members of society. ALS is committed to aiding our individuals in advancing their skills and competencies in the five principal domains of pro-social skills, moral reasoning, academic or vocational proficiencies, workforce development, and independent living skills. The anticipated outcome for ALS individuals is to achieve the skills necessary to become an independent and productive member of society. All staff are trained in the Prudent Parent initiative, which enhances the individuals' opportunities in the community.

5. The program activities that have been integrated into the ALS system of care in order to accomplish its objectives are as follows:

Education / Vocational Training – ALS students participate in the public education system. ALS individuals attend the school district of the student's residence or the corresponding alternative school component. ALS individuals are eligible to participate in school sports, activities, and functions. ALS individuals who wish to pursue a GED can do so by attending classes at various community sites or at the community college level. Finally, ALS individuals who qualify are eligible to attend college classes at the Westmoreland County Community College or local universities which are located within several miles of all our facilities. ALS also offers remedial tutoring through Title 1 programming.

Counseling – ALS does not permit unconventional treatment modalities. All court ordered treatment and counseling services are obtained via outside providers. Prevailing research indicates that youth can benefit from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Prudent Parent, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) interventions. The ALS Clinical Director utilizes these best practices approach with the individuals. All can attend CBT groups with the Clinical Director where they may learn how to identify thinking errors and common mental mistakes as a means of

taking responsibility for their behaviors. Only those individuals with an identified need will participate in PTSD groups with the Clinical Director.

Independent Living and Life Skill Enhancement – ALS is an independent living agency and a significant amount of attention is devoted to providing a means whereby individuals can develop the skill sets necessary to eventually “live on their own.” This program activity is initiated on day one of the individual’s placement because of the structure of the program. All individuals live in an apartment / home style setting and are ultimately responsible for all aspects of the living arrangement. The specific activities associated with this portion of the ALS experience includes but is not limited to: doing laundry, planning shopping for and preparing all meals, budgeting, cleaning the inside and outside of their apartment, learning how to access public transportation, cutting grass and shoveling snow, and perform minor repairs and upkeep activities within their apartment.

Employment – An important part of the ALS experience is developing the skills necessary to seek, obtain, and retain gainful employment. Of equal importance is enabling an individual to develop positive work habits and to learn how to properly interact within the work environment. All individuals are urged to seek gainful employment while placed at ALS.

6. The services that are delivered by the agency are:

Supervised Independent Living Apartments:

Housing, room and board – ALS operates any number of SIL living sites, all of which are licensed by the Department of Human Services, OCYF.

Supervision – ALS provides 24/7/365 staff availability for its SIL apartments with the level of contact / supervision suitable to the characteristics of independent living individuals and consistent with current DHS regulations governing the same.

Food - ALS is a SIL apartment and part of the program requirements is that the individuals prepare their own meals. ALS staff is available to assist the individuals in the development and preparation of healthy meal plans. ALS manages the resources for the purchase of the food necessary to prepare daily meals based upon the menus and budgets prepared by the individuals.

Clothing - Each individual is expected to bathe and change cloths daily. ALS provides clothing based upon the initial county clothing allotment, personal inventory, and additional clothing is purchased on an as needed basis.

Health / Medical Care - Upon intake each individual receives a Health and Safety Evaluation to assist in identifying any mental and/or physical concerns of the youth. If not already completed the EPSDT screening is administered. At the time of admission

any and all health and safety concerns will be addressed in conjunction with the individual, ALS staff, and the child's family and county representative.

Educational / Vocational Services – ALS students who are eligible may attend the public-school district in which the apartment is located. ALS students attend either regular school classes or an alternative educational setting provided by the school district. ALS individuals can pursue their GED at either community locations or at the Westmoreland County Community College. Furthermore, ALS individuals who elect to pursue a college education may do so at the Westmoreland County Community College or other local universities / colleges. ALS also offers remedial tutoring through Title 1 programming.

Recreational/Social/Cultural Activities – ALS individuals are members of the communities in which they reside and therefore are able to participate in recreational, social, and/or cultural activities available through their school or community within the Prudent Parent guidelines. Individuals have access to parks, walking and biking trails, theaters, movies and other similar types of activities.

Coordination of outside services - ALS staff work diligently to take full advantage of as many community-based supports as possible, therefore; individuals who are in need of behavioral or substance abuse counseling or therapy obtain these services via service providers located within the community. This approach also applies to all medical and dental services as well as other screening services required by individuals upon admission. ALS individuals are encouraged and instructed in the methods by which appointments for services are made as part of their independent living training while in our care. When necessary, ALS staff provides transportation to outside appointments as required.

7. Criteria and procedure for acceptance, discharges, and reports:

ALS accepts referrals between 16 and 20 years of age. Individuals who are referred for placement may be adjudicated / co-adjudicated delinquent and / or dependent. ALS will consider individuals with a wide range of delinquent or dependent behaviors. Potential individuals with a history of mental health or substance abuse treatment will be considered for placement based upon their behaviors, service plans and goals. Likewise, referrals who are prescribed psychotropic or other behavior management medications will also be considered for placement. Many of the individuals who are referred for service to ALS are homeless by nature of their family circumstances (parental abandonment, incarceration of parent(s), or one or more parent(s)/guardians deceased). ALS is ideal for adjudicated youth who are ready to “step up” from an RTF, group home or residential facility. By the very nature of these individuals’ risk of sex trafficking, ALS provides a safe environment and enhanced safety net for them. ALS is ideal for those young parents who have children and need skill development leading to the reunification with their children. ALS is appropriate for an older individual whose adoption has failed to materialize as planned and is now in need of independent living facilities. Finally, we accept individuals who are covered by Act. 80 and 91 of 2012 commonly referred as dependent children who are “aging out of the system of care” or children who have

requested permission from the Court to return to a system of care having been previously discharged and released from the county's custody.

Individuals who are not suitable for acceptance are those who have demonstrated aggressive behaviors in the recent past or who have been adjudicated delinquent of a felony offense involving acts of violence. Also, those individuals who require considerable levels of personal health care may not be appropriate. In addition, individuals whom require 24/7 security monitoring or who would otherwise be considered a security risk may also not be suitable for placement.

Referrals to ALS should be made directly to the Clinical Director (724-322-0063) or the Program Director (724-433-7229). The CEO may also be called (724/493-2509) if the previous contacts are not available.

ALS requests that at a minimum the referral information include the following documents:

Petition alleging dependency or delinquency and corresponding adjudication and dispositional order; recent social summary that includes at a minimum the youth's demographic information, along with a comprehensive history of the youth's family and their involvement with the referring agency; the County making the referral; the primary reason for the referral; and any information on referrals to other facilities where the youth was rejected for placement and the reason for the rejection. ALS also request recent medical evaluations along with a copy of the client's immunization record; plus, any psychological and/or psychiatric evaluations; prior facility or institutional placement reports. The YLS for delinquent youth is especially helpful.

ALS accepts individuals on a normal and emergency / shelter basis depending on the need of the individual and the referring agency. It is anticipated that referrals made on an emergency / shelter basis will come with a limited amount of information with the full complement of information to follow on a very timely basis. These individuals must be willing and able to follow the ALS rules of conduct expected from all other individuals.

Planned discharges from ALS will be recommended at such a time when the individual has successfully reached the goals as outlined in their ISP. Discharges will be coordinated between the appropriate ALS staff (Clinical Director / Operations Director / Supervisor) and the appropriate referring Court / Agency staff.

Unplanned discharges from the program are avoided at all costs; however, they do occur from time to time. During these occasions, ALS staff will work with the committing Court / Agency to transition the individual from ALS to an alternate placement as agreed upon by all parties.

Services to the individual are documented daily as well as through monthly and quarterly comprehensive reports. Reports are available to the Court and placing Agency upon request and in sufficient time to be included in all dispositional review hearings scheduled before the Court.

8. Qualifications of staff including the individual responsible for administering the program:

CEO: Monitors and oversees the operations of the agency. CEO manages the program, business, maintenance, and human resource functions for effectiveness. This individual conducts Board of Directors' meetings, and is the principal liaison with Federal, State, County and local government entities. The CEO has the final decision on employee hiring, discipline, and discharges. Minimum Qualifications: BA or BS degree in human services related field or equivalent experience and education and possess all clearances and be at least 21 years of age.

Operations Director: Primary responsibility is the day-to-day operations of the program. This individual conduct annual and special employee evaluations, maintains all human resource files, mediates grievances at all levels and interviews and recommends prospective employees for hiring to the CEO. OD has direct management responsibility of the Clinical and Program Directors. OD has primary client admissions and discharge authority. Minimum Qualifications: BA or BS degree in human services related field or equivalent experience and education and possess all required clearances and be at least 21 years of age.

Clinical Director: Act as lead liaison with counties, families and all other family service plan partners, administer admissions procedures for the program, manage ISPs, conduct group exercises and interventions, train staff in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Motivational Interviewing, conduct PTSD groups as needed and participate in staff meetings. Minimum Qualifications: A Master's Degree or BA or BS in counseling related field and three years of experience, possess all clearances and be at least 21 years of age.

Program Director: Monitors and directs the day-to-day program operations of the agency as well as supervises the daily monitoring of the effectiveness of the program. This individual conduct annual and special employee evaluations, and interviews and recommends prospective employees for hiring to the OD. Reviews client referral information and conducts client interviews. Makes recommendations for placement to the OD for admission. Minimum Qualifications: BA or BS degree in human services related field or equivalent experience and education and possess all required clearances and be at least 21 years of age.

Compliance Director: Maintains an independent program overview and review protocol. Examines and reports on all individual grievances. Meets periodically with program individuals. Participates in referral review and interview admission activities. Assists in data collection and reporting as needed. Examines and reports on employee grievances. Meets periodically with staff members. Assists in business operations and contracting. Oversees the consistent scheduling and policy / procedures of staff services. Minimum Qualifications: BA or BS degree in human services related field, and possess all required clearances and be at least 21 years of age.

Supervisor: Supervise Youth Counselors and Youth Care Workers. Schedule employees for daily 24/7 structure and supervision, monitor and maintain youth files, coordinate transportation and attend court appearances, conduct annual and special performance evaluations for Youth Counselors and Youth Care Workers, ensure safety of apartments and monitor fire drills, review and implement disaster plan and maintain community relations with fire and police departments, schools, employers as well as transport and/or accompany youth to appointments and monitor and direct the day to day operations of the apartment sites. Minimum Qualifications: A BA or BS in a human service-related field or AD and equivalent experience, possesses all clearances, and is at least 21 years of age.

Youth Counselor – Maintain daily 24/7 structure and supervision, monitor youth safety and whereabouts, monitor youth ISP, transport and/or accompany youth to relevant appointments, assist in aspects of meal planning and preparation, monitor all living areas. Minimum Qualifications: BA or BS in a human service-related field or equivalent type experience, possesses all clearances, and is at least 21 years of age.

Youth Care Worker – Monitor youth safety and whereabouts, keep common areas in order, all house laundry washed, dried and folded and stored in orderly fashion, inspect each apartment for property cleanliness and safety, conduct perimeter checks of the grounds and facility during third shift coverage, inventory supplies on weekly basis and transport students to necessary appointments. Minimum Qualification: High School diploma or equivalent, possess all clearances, and is at least 21 years of age.

9. The degree and method of family involvement and the method used to maintain family involvement:

ALS believes that a individual's family is an important part of their development into adulthood. Upon admissions, families are encouraged to participate in the development of the ISP. Depending on a individual's progress and treatment track, the individual's family may be called upon for providing home visits for the individual and as a resource upon release. Family units who seek support in the reunification process will be assisted by the Clinical Director.

10. Behavioral management policies and techniques including the disciplinary methods utilized by the agency and how these disciplinary measures are linked to the agency's policies:

Because of the independent nature of the ALS program, it is extremely important that the individual placed in the program adhere to all program rules as well as all local and State laws. For everyone's safety, ALS has developed the following list of non-negotiable rules. These rules apply equally to all independent living apartments.

- Safety:** All individuals are expected to act in a safe manner and report all safety concerns.
- Tobacco:** Smoking and smokeless tobacco products including vapes are not permitted in any apartment or on ALS grounds;
- Drugs:** Non-prescription drugs are not permitted. All prescription drugs and over the counter medications are monitored by ALS staff. ALS staff may randomly drug test an individual at any time with probable cause;
- Alcohol:** Possession or consumption of alcohol is not permitted;
- Visitors:** No unauthorized visitors are permitted;
- Sexual relations:** Sexual relations of any kind are prohibited in the apartments.

11. Educational and training services available:

ALS students may attend community based high school educational facilities or alternative educational programs operated by the local school districts or other numerous community organizations. This includes GED preparation, instruction and testing. As may be appropriate, ALS students are eligible to attend community or local colleges in order to pursue an associate or bachelor's degree of their choosing. Technical schools for welding, food service, nursing assistant, construction trades, information and medical technology and other specialties are available as well. ALS also provides remedial tutoring services for interested students via Title 1 programming.

12. Recreational activities provided as part of the program of services, if any:

ALS individuals have access to a wide variety of community based recreational activities including shopping, movies, community and amusement parks, playgrounds, walking and bicycle trails, and theaters. Based upon the level of the individual's behavior, they are able to pursue the recreational activity of their choosing.

13. Policies and arrangements regarding religious observances:

At the time of admission, ALS individuals are asked which if any religious affiliation they identify with. If at any time during their time with ALS an individual expresses an interest in attending a religious program the staff at ALS will help them make arrangements to attend the service or function of their choice.

14. Anticipated Outcomes:

ALS subscribes to the philosophy that all individuals need to have a permanent connection in their lives, during and especially, following discharge from the juvenile system. Therefore, ALS stresses family involvement and seeks to assist the individual in finding, identifying, nurturing, and compromising with the significant individuals they have or will encounter. Even though there may be initial resistance to adoption, foster care, or other positive relationships, ALS will continue to actively promote the need for those forever relationships. On a parallel track, independent life skill development is stressed so the individual may experience and build a broader range of interpersonal options as they move towards interdependence with others who may enter their lives now and in the future.

15. Current DHS license numbers and corresponding address:

446300 – Supervised Independent Living

All licensed Supervised Independent Living Apartments are opened and operated on an individual basis in accordance with the client’s individual need.

16. Referral process:

Referrals can be made by calling one of the numbers below:

Clinical Director at 724-322-0063.

Program Director at 724-433-7229.

You may also go online at ALS-PA.com and fill out the specific client referral page.

Should you encounter difficulties in the above processes, please call the CEO directly at 724-493-2509.

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