

Values and Principles for a System of Care

CORE VALUES

1. A system of care should be child centered and family focused, with the needs of the child/youth and family dictating the types and mix of services provided.
2. A system of care should be community based, with the locus of services as well as management and decision-making responsibility resting at the community level.
3. A system of care should be culturally competent, with agencies, programs, and services that are responsive to the cultural, racial, and ethnic differences of the populations they serve.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should have access to a comprehensive array of services that address their physical, emotional, social, and educational needs.
2. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should receive individualized services in accordance with the unique needs and potentials of each child/youth and guided by an individualized service plan.
3. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should receive services within the least restrictive, most normative environment that is clinically appropriate.
4. The families and surrogate families of children/youth with emotional disturbances should be full participants in all aspects of the planning and delivery of services.
5. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should receive services that are integrated, with linkages between child-serving agencies and programs and mechanisms for planning, developing, and coordinating services.
6. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should be provided with case management or similar mechanisms to ensure that multiple services are delivered in a coordinated and therapeutic manner and that they can move through the system of services in accordance with their changing needs.
7. Early identification and intervention for children/youth with emotional disturbances should be promoted by a system of care in order to enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes.
8. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should be ensured smooth transitions to the adult service system as they reach maturity.
9. The rights of children/youth with emotional disturbances should be protected, and effective advocacy efforts for children and adolescents with emotional disturbances should be promoted.
10. Children/youth with emotional disturbances should receive services without regard to race, religion, national origin, sex, physical disability, or other characteristics, and services should be sensitive and responsive to cultural differences and special needs.

From Stroul, B & Friedman, R. (1986). A system of care for children and youth with severe emotional disturbances (rev. ed., p. 17). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health.