



JEFFERSON COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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Jefferson County ESC Showcases OhioRISE program

Steubenville, Ohio- OhioRise. A program which has been serving the community's youth for several years. A program that focuses on their mental or behavioral health issues and works with local resources to provide them the appropriate care they require to reach a positive outcome in the end.

OhioRise officials gathered for an open house Dec. 12 to showcase to the community its new location.

The Jefferson County Educational Service Center care management entity, is now inside the Regional Programs Building at 600 Lovers Lane. The program was previously located in the basement of the ESC annex and moved to the new site in July, 2022.

In addition to OhioRise, the JCESC programs Help Me Grow and Engage are located inside the Regional Programs Building.

The purpose of the open house was to provide the opportunity for community partners to see the new building and meet its staff members, officials noted.

Those attending the event were given the chance to hear all of the services OhioRise provides to the community, in addition to touring the facility.

Assistant Director Lindsay Brandon stated the new space accommodates space for 24 coordinators, supervisors and directors.

"We started here on July 1, 2022 and have become an integral part of the community," Brandon said. "We've really flourished and became a community partner, which is nice to see."

Brandon explained the overall responsibility of OhioRise care coordinators is to take the results from the youth's Child and Adolescent Needs and Strength assessment, and place them with those who can help them the most.

"The CANS assessment is a tool that gathers the child and caregiver's story to better understand their situation and determine the best ways to provide help," according to officials. The assessment is used to determine eligibility for OhioRise and assist with care coordination.

She stated those at OhioRise are a support system which helps youth and their family obtain the appropriate services they seek, such as educational, developmental disability, child protection, juvenile justice or mental health and addiction supports.

"OhioRise brings all of these systems together to support the needs of enrollees through care coordination," officials said. Care coordinators assist those who have been referred to them by either a parent or caregiver, a school counselor or therapist, a court, pediatrician or child protection or developmental disability staff member.

"We will also provide transportation to get them to the appropriate services," Brandon commented. She noted the importance of making people aware that those at OhioRise are not a direct form of crisis support, but rather, the entity which directs enrollees to the appropriate support facilities.

Care Coordinator Jamie Spencer stated, “We work with families who have Medicaid or the Ohio Medical Card and who qualifies for the program. If we feel they need therapy, mental health, physical therapy or occupational therapy, we will work with that therapist and see if they are hitting the goals they have to hit.”

“We are there to coordinate the child’s care,” Spencer continued, providing the example of dyslexia and finding the proper resources to help the child obtain the proper resources for that disability.

Discovering what the issues are can be done through the CANS assessment, she noted, saying the in-depth testing is done by answering questions and takes approximately an hour to complete.

Mary Kakascik, an OhioRise supervisor, said there are eight care coordinators whose duties include, but are not limited to, checking charting, providing support, CANS assessments, accompanying youth and families on visits, providing outreach on caseloads, making informational calls, answering the crisis hotline.

Kakascik said there are many responsibilities and duties which are required of the care coordinators, as OhioRise serves eight counties.

“We each work with the FCFC (Family & Children First Council) and attend monthly meetings,” she stated. Meeting for Jefferson County are held bi-monthly, she added. “Six supervisors are responsible for one county each. We have three supervisors who handle the counties up north.” The counties served are Jefferson, Belmont, Harrison, Monroe, Carroll, Columbiana, Stark and Tuscarawus.

In regards to those youth suffering from substance abuse, Kakascik said OhioRise officials support the families which choose to keep the child in their home rather than place them in a facility or hospital.

“We take them food from the food bank so they can get meals and we attend their IEP meetings,” she said of the some of the services offered to these individuals.

She said referrals come from all sorts of entities, some of which are the parents of the youth, schools, probation officers, Child Protective Services and the courts. “We reach out and set up their assessment once we receive their enrollment information,” she said.

Once in a while, those at OhioRise receive self-referrals, which are usually done by parents who need support when their child is acting out and they don’t know what to do to help, Kakascik concluded.

Those at OhioRise will continue to help those in need, with officials saying there are a number of ways in which to contact them to begin the enrollment process.

For program referrals and general inquiries, call (740) 792-4011. Visit the website www.jcesc.k12.oh.us/CareManagementEntity.aspx or download the referral form on the mobile app, which provides a QR code.