

NYFS Achieves COA Accreditation

Newtown Youth & Family Services (NYFS) has achieved national accreditation through the New York-based Council on Accreditation (COA).

Organizations pursue accreditation to demonstrate the implementation of best practice standards in the field of human services. COA evaluated all aspects of NYFS programs, services, management, and administration.

COA accreditation is an objective, independent, and reliable validation of an agency's performance. The accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of an organization's administration, management, and service delivery functions against international standards of best practice.

The standards driving accreditation ensure that services are well-coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, outcomes-oriented, and provided by a skilled and supported workforce. Accreditation demonstrates accountability in the management of resources, sets standardized best practice thresholds for service and administration, and increases organizational capacity and accountability by creating a framework for ongoing quality improvement.

To achieve COA accreditation, NYFS first provided written evidence of com-



pliance with the COA standards. Thereafter, a group of specially trained volunteer Peer Reviewers confirmed adherence to these standards during a series of on-site interviews with trustees, staff and clients.

An endorsement of COA and the value of its accreditation process is reflected in it being named by the US State Department as the sole national independent accrediting body under the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption to accredit intercountry adoption service providers.

In addition, COA is the only national accreditor designated by the US Department of Defense to develop accreditation



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standards and processes for human service programs provided to military personnel and their families.

NYFS Executive Director Candice Bohr calls the process "very tedious," saying it "requires reviewing and updating all policies and procedures within the agency. This includes mental health, finances, board of directors, human resources, programming, fundraising, PQIs, stakeholder surveys, supervision, client rights, administration, autism programming, risk prevention, and case records.

"I am truly thankful and proud of all our staff and board members for their exceptional work throughout the year and applaud them for continually put-

ting this community, clients and our agency in the highest regard," she added.

Founded in 1977, COA is an independent, not-for-profit accreditor of the full continuum of community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations in the United States and Canada.

Over 2,000 organizations — voluntary, public, and proprietary; local and statewide; large and small — have either successfully achieved COA accreditation or are currently engaged in the process.

COA presently has a total of 47 service standards that are applicable to over 125 different types of programs. NYFS is one of 17 agencies accredited in Connecticut.

NYFS is a youth service bureau and mental health clinic for children, teens, adults and seniors. For over 35 years, NYFS has been committed to providing high quality human health services to promote individual and community wellness.

Specialized services include outpatient individual, couples and family counseling, substance abuse treatment services, autism and social skills programs, prevention initiatives and support groups. Learn more about NYFS by visiting NewtownYouthAndFamilyServices.org.