

Admissions and Eligibility of Services: Evening Residential and Supported Living

Policy

The mission of Bittersweet, Inc. is to maximize opportunities for individual development of persons with autism by providing an array of premier services to individuals, and support to families. As an outgrowth of this mission, it is our policy to provide services to persons with autism who are in need of active treatment and can, based on preliminary evaluations of each applicant, clearly benefit from such services and placements. Such evaluations may be conducted or updated by Bittersweet Inc., staff or by outside sources. The preliminary evaluation must contain collateral background information as well as currently valid assessments of functional development, behavioral, social, health and nutritional status to determine the benefits of Bittersweet Farm's Services. A person may be accepted, as a participant only when it has been determined by the interdisciplinary team that placement is the most appropriate option available to the individual. Bittersweet Farms reserves the authority to utilize any consultants of its own choosing which will help elucidate the individual needs of the potential resident and the potential benefit of their residential placement.

The number of residential participants served at our main campus or any of our ancillary programs may not exceed the licensed capacity of those programs. Bittersweet Inc. does not discriminate in its eligibility based on race, color or national origin.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE FAMILY AND FACILITY RELATIONSHIP IN ACCEPTING PARTICIPANTS INTO BITTERSWEET INC.

- I. The Interdisciplinary Team, of which the family or participant representative is an important voice on that team, will work in cooperation to fully facilitate the growth and independence of the individual participant being served. It is recognized:
 - A.) That in seeking the services of Bittersweet Inc. that the individual participants' disorder is involved and enmeshed to such an extent in their lives that they need intervention by a program specializing in the provision of services to those individuals with Autism.
 - B.) That while Bittersweet Inc. may not have specific knowledge regarding the individual client being served that we are experts in the treatment of Autism as a disorder and that we are able to recognize needs of persons specifically related to this disorder.
 - C.) That consistent meaningful active treatment, which reaches across both the family and the facility, is the only way to guarantee the success of any program or regimen developed for an individual client.
 - D.) That the participant, their family or appointed representative and the interdisciplinary team need to work together to reach mutually agreed upon goals, that can be consistently implemented, satisfactory to help the individual progress.
 - E.) That once agreed upon treatment regimens are developed, everyone on the team in collaboration will consistently follow agreed upon programming.

- F.) The Interdisciplinary team will be comprised of parents and staff of Bittersweet Inc. The team may include but is not limited to consultants employed by Bittersweet Inc. such as Physicians, Psychologists, Speech Pathologists, Dieticians, Physical or Occupational, or Recreational Therapists.
- II. The Interdisciplinary Team has the final decision making authority in issues related to behavioral programming, medication, vocational placement, training, and all aspects of the participant's care while the participant is part of Bittersweet Inc.
- III. If a family member disagrees with the decisions made by the Interdisciplinary Team they may elect to call meetings of the team and bring to the meeting authorities of their own choosing to help present information which may be helpful in the decision making process. Ultimately it is the option of the sitting Interdisciplinary Team to utilize and accept this advice or disregard it, as they believe it to be in the best interests of the participant being served.
- IV. If a family member disagrees with the opinions of the Interdisciplinary Team and is unable to resolved differences of opinions on treatment options, medication regimens or programming they may appeal their case to the Executive Director of Bittersweet Farms Inc. If the discrepancy over the treatment issues is still unresolved the family may elect to withdraw their participant without prejudice from Bittersweet Inc. Until the actual physical departure of the participant takes place, the Interdisciplinary Team's ultimate authority will remain the guiding determinant of treatment options.
- V. Bittersweet Inc. recognizes the dignity, rights and the individuality of each participant it serves.
- VI. Families agree to follow to the best of their ability medication regimens, behavior plans and other treatment regimens designed by the Interdisciplinary team while a participant is in their care while on leave from the treatment program.

Intermediate Care Facility Eligibility Procedures

- I. Placement on the Waiting List for Residential Openings in our Main Campus Intermediate Care Facility.
 - A.) Must have a diagnosis of the autism spectrum of disorders based on a recent (within 2 years) Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation.
 - B.) Must be 17 years of age and an Ohio resident before a referral date is given.
 - C.) Must be screened by the admissions committee as being appropriate before placement on waiting list.
- II. Procedure for Filling Residential Openings in our Main Campus Intermediate Care Facility.
 - A.) Must be on waiting list per I.
 - B.) Must already be placed in some capacity by Bittersweet Inc., either in our day program, supported recreation, supported employment, augmentative education program or other services.
 - C.) Consideration will be given to those individuals who have been the placement list the longest.
 - D.) The Interdisciplinary Team will consider the needs of applicant. The team will determine whether or not they can adequately address their

needs at the time. Consideration will be given to individuals appropriate to the case-mix given the resources available and the potential candidate must fit into the current community.

- E.) Next applicants on the list may be considered when the appropriateness of the first applicant is questioned.
- F.) Emergencies shall not be given extra consideration over persons who have greater seniority on our waiting list. The exception to this is where special service arrangements have been made with both Bittersweet Inc.'s licensure and oversight agencies for changes in our capacity to serve such as an increase in our licensed beds to meet that particular emergency.

III. PROCEDURE FOR PROVIDING NON-RESIDENTIAL, DAY STUDENT SUPPORTED LIVING AND OTHER ANCILLARY SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH AUTISM.

- A.) Anyone may be referred to Bittersweet Farms' services who has a diagnosis from the Autism Spectrum of Disorders by a licensed psychologist within the last two years.
- B.) Each person will be considered based on their needs, their individual ability to benefit from our program and the potential client's appropriateness for the current program population they wish to enter.
- C.) Bittersweet INC. will accept referrals for our any of our services from county social service providers, schools, and governmental or private agencies and directly from families themselves.
- D.) The Interdisciplinary Team may meet to consider the best placement for the individual client.
- E.) Waiting lists may be created as needed for persons who are desirous of placement but unable to be served at the time of application.
- F.) This procedure should not be interpreted to supercede or replace the admissions policy or eligibility for the day program in any way. That policy may be viewed at:
<http://home.tbbs.net/semisweet/Admissions%20and%20Eligibility.pdf>

IV. ORIENTATION AND INITIATION OF SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH AUTISM.

- A.) Initial Meeting. Prospective Participants receiving services shall have scheduled a visit with staff from Bittersweet Farms, where possible at the location where services will be provided. The purpose of such meetings shall be to acquaint the individual with Bittersweet Farms and its services as well as to help staff better understand the needs of the individual. A visit of this type must occur prior to a final decision being made to provide services to the individual. Follow up meetings may be required before a final decision is made at either the facility or the family to help further evaluate the appropriateness of the placement.
- B.) As part of the orientation to the services being provided, all program participants shall be counseled in the rights of persons with developmental disabilities and procedures in exercising such rights.