

BITTERSWEET INC.

Accountability: Interdisciplinary Team/Guardians or legal representative

Admissions and Eligibility of Services - Day Habilitation – Whitehouse

Mission: The mission of Bittersweet, Inc. is to maximize opportunities for the individual development of persons with autism by providing an array of services to individuals and support to families.

Policy: It is the policy of Bittersweet to provide services to persons with autism who are in need of day habilitation services and can, based on preliminary evaluations of each applicant, clearly benefit from such services and placements and whose service needs can be met. Such evaluations may be conducted or updated by Bittersweet staff or by outside sources. The preliminary evaluation must contain relevant background information as well as currently valid assessments of functional development, behavioral, social, health and nutritional status to determine the benefits of Bittersweet's service. 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 may utilize any consultants of its own choosing who will help clarify the individual needs of the potential participant and the potential benefit of his/her Day Program placement.

Bittersweet, Inc. does not discriminate in its eligibility on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, or age, including, but not limited to, failing to make reasonable accommodation to the individual's physical, mental, or behavioral disabilities to the extent required by law unless Bittersweet demonstrates that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the program.

Day Program Eligibility Procedures

- I. New admissions into the Bittersweet Day Program are restricted exclusively to those who are also receiving Residential or Supported Living services from Bittersweet Inc.
- II. Individuals who are accepted to receive services from Bittersweet Residential or Bittersweet Supported Living services and who have initiated those services are provided with the opportunity to be automatically admitted into the Bittersweet Day Program.
- III. Those individuals who were receiving both residential or supported living services and day services as of July 1, 2005, or who initiate such services at any time thereafter, may be required by the Interdisciplinary Team to forfeit their position in the Day Program if they or their guardian willingly choose to terminate either Residential or Supported Living services at Bittersweet.
- IV. If part-time capacity becomes available, defined as openings that would permit participation in the Day Program during two or fewer days per week, the Interdisciplinary Team may deem part-time placement to be appropriate. Part-time placement does not require that the potential participant also receive

Residential or Supported Living services from Bittersweet. Such an arrangement is held to the following stipulations:

- A. Placement is recognized as being part-time.
- B. Placement on a part-time basis does not improve the participant's likelihood of full-time placement. Individuals who are receiving part-time placement must still follow the waiting list procedure in order to receive full-time placement.

Day Program Waiting List Procedures

- I. It is recognized that the Day Program admissions policy could be modified from time to time. The admissions policy may be revised due to facilities growth, additional site openings, changes in the physical or financial capacity to serve individuals with autism, or any other reason deemed appropriate by Bittersweet Inc. In the event that the current Day Program Admissions Policy is ever modified to allow non-resident participants to initiate services in the Bittersweet Day Program, a waiting list is maintained.
- II. Referral and evaluation procedures
 - A) The Bittersweet Day Program will accept referrals for any of our services from county social service providers, schools, governmental or private agencies, and directly from families.
 - B) Individuals seeking placement will be asked to provide the Interdisciplinary Team with information relating to their level of care, functional abilities, adaptive skills, and related psychiatric conditions. This may involve providing a copy of the individual's current behavior support plan, ISP/IHP, medications, and incident reports written during the past year.
 - C) Based upon the review of the information requested, the Interdisciplinary Team may interview current and past medical and service providers, observe the participant, and/or invite the participant to engage in a site visit to the Bittersweet Whitehouse location. This process will require that the potential participant and/or his/her guardian provide a confidentiality release to allow Bittersweet to seek any necessary information from current or past providers.
 - D) Each individual will be considered based upon his/her needs, the individual's ability to benefit from the program and the potential client's appropriateness for the current program population they wish to enter.
- III. Placement on the Waiting List for the Day Program services
 - A) Must have a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder based on a recent (within 2 years) Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation.
 - B) Must no longer be eligible to receive educational services that are entitled to individuals under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 - C) Must be accepted by the Interdisciplinary Team as being appropriate for placement on waiting list, based upon review of information provided by potential participant, observations, and interviews.
 - D) Individuals on the waiting list may contact the Day Program Director at any time to inquire of their position on the waiting list. Bi-annually,

Bittersweet will inform participants of their position on the waiting list. This will be done by mail. It is the responsibility of those on the waiting list to inform Bittersweet of any changes in their address.

E) Placement on the waiting list does not obligate the individual to eventually accept Bittersweet services, if such services become available.

IV. Procedure for filling Day Program participant openings

A) Must be on waiting list per III.

B) First priority will be given to individuals previously or currently enrolled in the Bittersweet Transitional Program.

C) In the event that no current or former participants in the Bittersweet Transitional Program are deemed appropriate for placement by the Interdisciplinary Team or none is currently seeking placement, then program openings will be made available to the next person on the waiting list, utilizing a sequential first-come, first-serve policy.

D) The Interdisciplinary Team will determine whether or not Bittersweet can adequately address the needs of the individual at that time.

E) Emergencies shall not be given special consideration over persons who have greater seniority on the waiting list.

F) Upon being offered a position in the Day Program, the participant must initiate services within three months. Failure to initiate services within three months will result in the position opening being revoked, and the individual will be removed from the waiting list. If the individual's name is removed from the waiting list, he or she may again initiate the process to be placed on the waiting list.

IV. Orientation and Initiation of Services to Persons with Autism.

A) Initial Meeting. Prospective participants for receiving services shall schedule a visit with Bittersweet staff, preferably at the site 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 assist staff in understanding the needs of the individual. Follow up meetings may be required before a final placement decision is made by either Bittersweet or the family to further evaluate the appropriateness of the placement.

B) As part of the orientation to the services being provided, all program participants shall be counseled regarding the rights of persons with developmental disabilities as well as procedures for exercising these rights.

Guiding Principles of the Family and Facility Relationship in Accepting Participants into Bittersweet Inc.:

- I. Bittersweet recognizes the dignity, rights and the individuality of each participant it serves.

- II. The Interdisciplinary Team, of which the family or participant representative is a member, 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 the individual participant's disorder is involved and enmeshed to such an extent in his/her life that they need intervention by a program specializing in the provision of services to those individuals with autism.
 - B) That while Bittersweet may not have specific knowledge regarding the individual participant being served, we are experienced in the treatment of autism as a disorder.
 - C) That consistent, meaningful, active treatment which reaches across both the family and the program is one way to guarantee the success of any program or regimen developed for an individual client.
 - D) That the participant, his/her family member or legal representative(s) or appointed representative, and the Interdisciplinary Team work together to reach mutually agreed upon goals, which can be consistently implemented to help the individual progress.
 - E) That once a treatment regimen is developed, everyone on the team in collaboration will consistently follow agreed upon programming.
 - F) The Interdisciplinary Team may include but is not limited to consultants employed by Bittersweet Inc. such as Physicians, Psychologists, Speech Pathologists, Dieticians, Occupational Therapists, or Recreational Therapists.
- III. The interdisciplinary Team has final decision making authority on issues related to behavioral programming, medication, vocational placement, training, and all aspects of the participant's care while the participant is served at Bittersweet. All decisions shall be made after discussion and through voice consensus. If a decision cannot be reached through voice consensus, a documented roll call vote will be taken on disputed decisions for purposes of recording affirmative and dissenting voices to said decisions.
- IV. If a family member or legal representative of the participant disagrees with the decisions made by the Interdisciplinary Team, he/she may elect to call a future meeting of the team. At that time, he/she may bring to the meeting authorities of their own choosing to present information which may be helpful in the decision making process. Ultimately it is the option of the 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. The Interdisciplinary Team is not required to include said information when developing an individual's program.
- V. If a family member or legal representative of the participant disagrees with the decision(s) of the Interdisciplinary Team regarding treatment options, medication regimens or programming he/she may appeal the case to the Executive Director of Bittersweet Inc. If the conflict over the above issues is still unresolved, the family or the legal representative may elect to withdraw their participant without prejudice. Until the actual physical departure of the participant takes place, the Interdisciplinary Team's ultimate authority will remain the guiding determinant for treatment options.

- 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 during a leave from treatment program.