

A Parent's and Custodian's Guide To the Ruth Meiers Adolescent Center

Welcome to the Ruth Meiers Adolescent Center (RMAC). If you are reading this, it means that either your child, or a child you're responsible for, has been accepted and placed at RMAC for mental health services. If this is the first time your child has been in a treatment facility, it can be a particularly anxious time. If your child has been in other placements, you may be hoping that this will be the place that finally makes the difference for your child.

Under the best of circumstances it is difficult to leave a loved one at an unknown place operated by a group of strangers! If the above describes you and your situation even just a little bit, this guide was developed for you. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information that will help explain how our program operates. By the time you've completed reviewing this guide you should have a basic understanding of how the program operates, expectations of youth and their parents or custodian, visitation guidelines, phone calls, house rules, and how we hope to impact your child so they can lead a healthier and happier life. That is our mission, to provide your child a therapeutic environment in which they can address important issues, learn new skills, improve behaviors, feel healthier and be capable of tackling each day in a positive and productive manner.

Our pledge is to give our best effort to make a difference. Our pledge is also to be courteous and respectful in all our dealings with you and your child, no matter how hard or difficult the job becomes. You can rest assured that you are a critical component of the treatment process for your adolescent. As such, you will be directly involved in all aspects of the treatment process and you will have direct input into the decisions made regarding your child.

If, after you have completed this guide you still have questions regarding the RMAC program, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information. Now, with that said, let's get on with the task of helping you understand the RMAC program.

Bryon Novotny
Director
Ruth Meiers Adolescent Center
701-795-3870
bnovotny@nd.gov



RMAC History

The Ruth Meiers Adolescent Center (RMAC) opened its doors to adolescents with serious mental health issues in 1989. A sister program that treated younger children, Manchester House in Bismarck, also opened that same year. The facilities came into existence because of the need at the time to find a way to keep our youth closer to home to provide the mental health services they needed. Many youth, at that time, were needing to go to treatment facilities out-of-state to get these services, such as Minnesota, Montana and Iowa. This meant that the adolescents were a long way from home, family and friends, and it made it difficult for people to get together for treatment purposes, making it harder to get treatment completed in the best manner possible.

RMAC is a licensed (by the State of North Dakota) and accredited (by the Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities – CARF) Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF). RMAC is a 12 bed facility, serving North Dakota adolescents ages 12 thru 17. RMAC is a program of the Northeast Human Service Center (NEHSC) in Grand Forks. NEHSC is a regional office of the Department of Human Services, serving Grand Forks, Walsh, Nelson and Pembina Counties. RMAC has served hundreds of youth from across North Dakota in its 21 years of helping North Dakota youth. RMAC is one of six PRTF facilities in ND, including Luther Hall - Fargo, Manchester Pride - Bismarck, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch (DBGR) – Fargo, Minot, and Western Plains (DBGR) – Bismarck. All of these programs serve seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) youth.



RMAC Program Model/Description

Since its inception, RMAC has served youth with serious mental health issues. Sometimes the term Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) is used to describe an adolescent that has had significant mental health issues that have caused problems at home, school or in the community. Additionally, most of the youth in the RMAC program have been in some type of out-of-home placement prior to coming to RMAC. These placements may include the hospital, foster homes, living with a relative or in some type of residential facility. Whatever terms are used to describe the adolescent, RMAC views each adolescent as a unique and special person, with their own history, family dynamics, dreams, personality, strengths and weaknesses. *(Please find attached a listing of commonly used terms and acronyms within the RMAC program)*

The type of program that RMAC uses to work with your child combines using cognitive and behavioral strategies. First, the cognitive work involves the thinking process – what they are feeling, why they do or don't do certain things, thinking errors and having or developing insight as to what these various things mean and how they can work with it to better their mental health.

The second part, behavioral issues, includes addressing the behaviors the adolescent is demonstrating. Often, these behaviors are directly related to things that have happened in the adolescent's life, and in many situations as a result of things that have been done to them or that they have been exposed to. Social issues have had a dramatic impact on the many of the adolescents in the program including: abuse, neglect, domestic violence, abandonment, adoption, alcohol and other drugs, and sexual abuse just to name a few. Also, for many, school is very difficult, some experiencing learning difficulties and for others, attendance has not been good. For those having experienced one or more of these issues, the road to a healthy outlook on life can be long and difficult.

By providing a highly structured and therapeutic environment, RMAC staff work with the adolescent to identify their primary treatment issues. They then work with them to develop the tools or enhance existing skills that will help them make better/healthier choices, and hopefully help them be more successful at home and in their communities.

The RMAC program focuses on helping the adolescent become more accountable for their actions. A special emphasis of the program involves using the four concepts that are depicted on the banners in the living area of the facility – Honesty, Respect, Trust and Choices. As the adolescent makes good choices, is honest and does what they say, they become trustworthy and earn the respect of others. It sounds easy, but of course it is often difficult to accomplish given the history that many of the adolescents bring with them to RMAC. The good news is that given time, education, therapy, support and a lot of hard work on the adolescent's part, they make it, becoming much more responsible for their behaviors and their own mental health.



Parent and/or Legal Custodian Involvement

An important ingredient to helping an adolescent be successful in our program is the involvement of significant people in the life of that adolescent. A parent or parents, grandparents, siblings and or custodian can play an important role in how well an adolescent does in treatment. Our goal is to involve the parent, or custodian, if applicable, as much as possible in the treatment process. That begins from the first moment you arrive at the facility with your child.

Admissions Meeting:

During the *Admissions Meeting* it is very important that the parent/s and/or custodian attend and provide input. After all, you know your child better than most everyone else and certainly better than RMAC staff knows them. This meeting is important as we complete necessary paperwork which includes learning as much as we can about your child. It is extremely helpful for us to know what has and hasn't been effective with your child in the past. What do you see as strengths and areas needing improvement? What medical issues are of a concern? What types of family dynamics are important for us to be aware of as we provide treatment to your child? During this meeting you will get a tour of the facility, and we will answer questions you may have about the program. You may have many questions for us that we answer, but our experience tells us that because this is a very anxious and difficult time for the parents and adolescent, the answers are often forgotten or confused with all the other information you receive. That is why we have this guide. This meeting begins to set the tone for your child's treatment as we start identifying the primary treatment issues for your child and family.

Treatment Review Meetings:

Another way we value the involvement of parents/custodians is by their participation in our twice monthly *Treatment Review Meetings*. These meetings include all the primary people involved in the treatment of your child including:

- Parent/s
- Custodian, Partnership Workers, Family Support
- Therapist
- Case Manager
- Community Home Counselors (CHC's)
- Nurse
- Clinical Supervisor
- School Personnel
- Activity Coordinator
- Program Director



This meeting is held in the conference room at RMAC on Friday mornings. You will receive a letter from the Clinical Supervisor prior to the 1st of each month with the schedule of your child's upcoming meetings. Though we prefer for you to be with us in person, it is understandable that factors such as distance and other conflicts may make this impossible. For times like these you can attend by telephone. You can arrange this by speaking to the Case Manager prior to the meeting.

Ongoing Contact:

We strive to keep you up-to-date on what is going on with your child. First, you can contact us at any time to discuss your child's treatment. Usually it will be best for you to talk to your child's Case Manager during regular business hours, as they will have the most current information regarding your child's treatment. Second, you will be receiving updates from the Case Manager on a weekly basis. The Case Manager attempts to be in direct contact with you on a weekly basis to discuss general concerns and issues. Also, if your child experiences significant behavioral or emotional difficulty, RMAC staff will promptly notify you so that you are aware of that difficulty and RMAC's response to it.

Visitation and Contact With Your Child

One of the first questions asked by both parents and the adolescent is – when can we have visitation? This is an important question because we know that parent, sibling and worker involvement can have a significant impact on an adolescent's success while in placement. Routine contact with family members is encouraged, unless it is determined it would be harmful to the adolescent. Given the nature of the facility – highly structured and therapeutic – it is necessary to provide this *Visitation/Contact* information to help make the visit as pleasant and successful as possible.

With many activities (school, individual therapy, groups, recreation, etc.) occurring daily at the facility, all visits must be closely coordinated with your child's Case Manager. This coordination is essential to ensure proper arrangements are in place. Arrangements can include:

- Making sure your child is on-site when you arrive
- Making sure an area is available for the visit if the visit is onsite
- Making proper meal arrangements if you will be eating on-site with your child
- Exploring community activities that may be available
- Coordinating family sessions with your child and therapist, if applicable
- Making sure there are no conflicts with groups, appointments, etc...

As part of the adolescent's treatment, there are program rules that the adolescent is required to follow to help maintain safety, routine and consistency. We respectfully request that all visitors abide by all house rules and guidelines to help assure a positive visit. If you have questions during your visit about what is expected, please do not hesitate to direct them to a staff member. In order to assure everyone's safety, at all times visitors must immediately respond to direction from RMAC staff. We also ask that these procedures be followed prior to any visit.

On-site visit at RMAC: May happen anytime during the course of placement. Arrangements must be made with the Case Manager prior to the visit for the purpose of planning. Visits will be limited to the immediate family members, foster parents, guardians, legal custodians, trackers, etc. Grounded level residents may have visits from their family, tracker or legal custodians as long as it is prearranged with the Case Manager and determined therapeutic. Visits of any type must be prearranged with the case manager or the on call person. If a visitor is not following the rules, or not handling themselves in an appropriate manner, the staff will require the visitor to leave. If a visitor appears to be under the influence of chemicals, they will be required to leave the facility and the police may be notified.

Off-site visit from RMAC: Must be requested by the family or custodian and must be planned in advance with the case manager, preferably by Tuesday, but not later than the Wednesday preceding the requested visit. All off- site visits must be approved by the parent, custodian, if applicable, and the treatment team. The parent or custodian must initiate off-site pass requests. Internally, the Case Manager will complete a Pass Request form after the parent or custodian has requested a visit. This document clarifies pass details such as date, time, transportation, check-ins, return time, emergency numbers, and the pass rules and expectations for the adolescent and parents.

Overnight visit – off-site: Are allowed when a resident has successfully achieved level 1 or higher in their WLS (Weekly Level Score) programming and is approved by the treatment team and custodian, as applicable. The same guidelines apply for this visit as other visits.

Check-In Calls While On Pass: Just to make sure that everything is going okay for your child and the family, your child will be required to ‘check in’ while they are on a pass away from the building. For the check-ins, the resident and their parent or responsible adult must call on the office line. The phone numbers are 795-3870 or 795-3871. Our toll free number is 1-888-823-5931 for those who live out of town.

The resident has a 15-minute time margin on either side of their scheduled check-in to make their check-in. Staff will need to speak to the parent/guardian, as well as the resident while on pass. If the resident misses a check-in, staff will call to make sure everything is all right. If the resident completes their check-in on time, they will receive a five on their WLS score and a zero if they do not.

Additional Visitation Rules: The following program rules apply when you are visiting your child at RMAC:

- No weapons are permitted on the facility grounds
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on RMAC property
 - We also discourage alcohol and/or drug use during off-site visits as well
- Evidence or a suspicion that a visitor is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will result in that person being asked to leave the facility
- Use of tobacco products are not allowed in or on facility grounds
- Regular program rules and any specific rules determined by staff

Visit planning can be affected by a variety of situations. The goal of treatment at RMAC is to help an adolescent learn and use skills that will help them be successful at home, in school and at work. Home visits are critical in practicing and testing skills learned. If an adolescent is struggling with their treatment it may not be helpful to plan a home pass or out-of-facility visit. The home visit will always have learning goals and expectations for the adolescent and the parent/custodian. A pass form will accompany your adolescent for each pass. It is your responsibility as the adult to complete the document and return it to RMAC at the visits end. This document provides us with some basic information about how the visit went. A sample is attached.

If it is felt that the individual is not able to carry out or minimally meet the goals and expectations of a home visit or off-site pass, the pass may not be granted. Pass approvals are part of the team decision making process (parent, custodian, treatment team) and are considered on an individual basis. The following are some of the circumstances that could lead to cancellation, postponement, or discontinuation of a visit:

- If a resident is grounded
- The family situation presents a risk for harm or compromised safety
- If a resident is having difficulty in progress or lack of engagement with programming or therapy
- Poor behavior
- Unexpected circumstances (transportation problem, weather, etc...)

Transportation for visits will be provided by the parent/s or custodian unless other arrangements are made with the Case Manager prior to the scheduled visitation time.

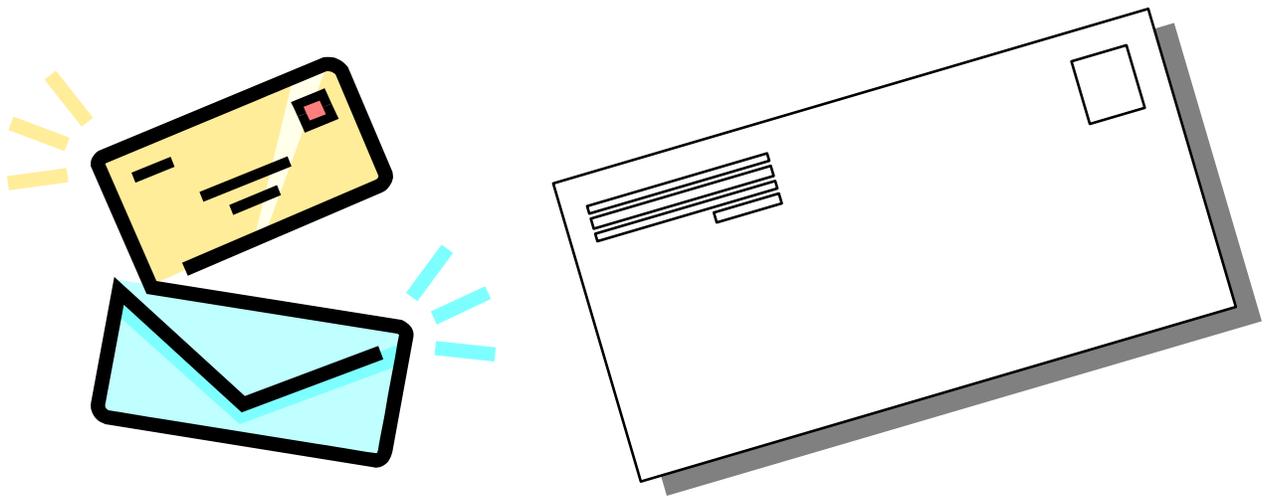
Mail

We encourage all residents to correspond by mail with family. We also encourage family members to correspond with their resident as often as possible. All incoming and outgoing mail will be reviewed if there is suspicion of inappropriate content or items being sent or received by the adolescent. If there are people on the adolescent's no contact list, any mail from those individuals will be returned or forwarded on to the child's custodian.

The mailing address for RMAC is:

Ruth Meiers Adolescent Center
770 S. 14th St.
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Postage for outgoing mail is paid by the adolescent. They can purchase stamps, regardless of the level or privilege status they are on, from RMAC staff as their funds permit. Of course parents can provide additional stamps as they feel appropriate. RMAC provides paper and envelopes.



Telephone Calls

One of the most popular forms of communication between adolescents in the program and significant others is by telephone. Telephone contact with your adolescent is encouraged. Residents are allowed to make phone calls during evening or afternoon hours according to their weekly planning schedule. Incoming calls from referring agencies or parents are accepted during the times listed below unless other arrangements have been made with the Case Manager.

- Resident must not have any phone restrictions to make phone calls, if resident is grounded they may make one call only to their parent or legal custodian to inform them of their grounding status unless deemed therapeutically necessary to have by the treatment team.
- Resident must obtain permission from a staff member to make a call.
- Calls are limited to 10 minutes (except for level 3 – 15 minutes is allowed)
- Residents can only make calls during times they have scheduled during their weekly planning
- A call will be discontinued if staff member hears swearing, hollering or other misuse of the phone. Making telephone calls is a privilege and will be treated as such. Residents will lose phone privileges for one week if there is any violation of phone use rules. There are times where phone calls are monitored on speaker phone by staff to assure that the conversation is healthy and appropriate.

Phone Times: (Preferred phone call timeframes)

Monday - Friday

3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

5:30 – 6:00 p.m.

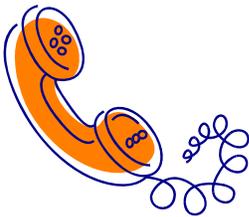
8:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Saturday - Sunday

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

5:30 – 6:00 p.m.

8:30 – 9:00 p.m.



Phone times may be periodically impacted by activities, especially on weekends, which may alter the times by 30 – 60 minutes.

Our phone numbers are:

701-795-3870

1-888-823-5931 toll free (for those outside the Grand Forks area)

Personal Possessions

In general it is not encouraged that the adolescent bring a lot of personal items to RMAC. Some items that may help personalize their room or have sentimental value, such as photographs, a special stuffed animal, etc...are certainly appropriate. Too many items can create a distraction as to why the adolescent is in our program – to work on treatment issues. RMAC is also not responsible for lost or damaged personal items an adolescent brings to RMAC. Electronic devices are not encouraged. Personal computers and laptops are not allowed. Cell phones and Ipods are not allowed. It is best, if you are wondering about whether certain items are ok to have at RMAC, to contact the Case Manager and discuss it with them.

Clothing

Several changes of clothing are recommended for your child. Your child's clothing will be inventoried upon their arrival at RMAC. Appropriate clothing only will be allowed. No alcohol or other drug logos or wording are permitted. No cigarette logos are permitted. No clothing depicting gang or gang related slang, logos or specific colorings are permitted. If the adolescent arrives at RMAC with any of the above mentioned items those items will be set aside and returned to the parent or custodian. Of course a couple of pair of shoes are needed, one for phy-ed and another for general wear. If your child is at RMAC during the winter months, boots are helpful. RMAC will work closely with you to make sure your child's basic clothing needs are met while they are in the program. Any concerns you may have can be directed to your child's Case Manager. The suggested clothing list is attached.

RMAC Weekly Level System (WLS)

While your child is at RMAC you will hear them refer to the level they are on, or they may refer to their WLS score. All adolescents are part of a level system used by RMAC. There are four progressive levels - Introduction, 1, 2, and 3. The more progress an adolescent makes the higher the level they can achieve. With each higher level comes an increase in expectations towards accomplishing treatment goals, as well as more privileges. The adolescent will receive consequences for infractions of the program rules/guidelines. The privileges, responsibilities, and restrictions for all levels are explained in the House Rules and Guidelines that your child receives when they arrive at RMAC. If you have questions on this please feel free to talk to your child's Case Manager.

Each resident will move through the level system based on their achievements with (1) the WEEKLY LEVEL SYSTEM (W.L.S.), (2) TREATMENT GOALS, AND (3) OVERALL BEHAVIORS. The requirements for the advancement within the level system are explained in the House Rules and Guidelines. The attached WLS form gives you an idea of the categories your child will be assessed on each day. Depending on your adolescent's issues and treatment goals, certain categories will be more relevant than others, though they all contribute to their weekly score.

Education

Adolescents at RMAC attend either the on-site school classroom or one of the middle or high schools in Grand Forks. Most adolescents start at RMAC attending the on-site school classroom. This classroom has a Special Education teacher and Para-professional assigned by the Grand Forks Public School District. As the adolescent makes progress in this classroom the goal is to transition them to the appropriate public school. This often starts with them attending one or two classes to monitor how it goes, with ultimate goal being that they are attending off-site school full-time. An adolescent's progress in this area is a good predictor as to how their treatment is progressing. The RMAC teacher monitors each adolescent's progress closely so that any difficulties or issues can be identified quickly and corrective action taken, which may include having the adolescent come back to the on-site classroom.

Many of the adolescents have an IEP (Individual Education Plan). You may be asked to attend an IEP meeting while your child is at RMAC. Our goal is to make sure your child receives the best opportunity to make progress with their education while at RMAC. The RMAC teacher attends the Treatment Review meetings and provides an update as to how your child is doing. Of course, you can contact their teacher or the case manager at any time to get an update.

While your child is at RMAC they will be required to participate in a one hour study-time each evening, Sunday through Thursday. Staff and tutors will be available to assist your child during this time. Your child will also be required to carry and have completed a 'Passport,' each day, signed by their teacher. This passport indicates attendance, work completed and any assignments due.

Expectations

Team members at RMAC expect that your child will conduct themselves appropriately while they are in treatment at RMAC. We recognize that your child may have some difficulty in this area and we will work with them to address those issues. Never the less, we have 4 core components of the program that we believe every adolescent in our program need to aspire to and work towards: Trustworthiness, Honesty, Respect and making good Choices. For some, this is not difficult. For others, life circumstances have made trusting and respecting others, especially adults, difficult. Honesty, for some youth, can be an elusive character trait. Of course, making good, positive and healthy choices for themselves can be a challenge for any adolescent, even more so for those at RMAC.

Throughout your child's time with us we will work on those core values as they progress through their mental health treatment. It will be important for them to see these values being role modeled by their parents and significant others in their life. Seeing these values consistently practiced by the important adults in the adolescent's life can have a very powerful and positive impact on their treatment.

Certainly it is a program expectation that everyone in the program feel safe and secure. Violent behavior of any kind will not be tolerated and can include consequences up to and including police involvement and placement in juvenile detention. Threatening, assaultive and aggressive behavior directed at other residents and/or staff members will not be tolerated and appropriate consequences will occur.

It is critical for your child - all youth and staff - to be able to work in an environment free from threat of harm. This is a top priority of the program and we ask that you encourage your young adult to use non-threatening skills and techniques to voice frustration and anger. Of course we will be working very hard on these issues as well, but a solid team approach is clearly in the best interest of your child.

Activities

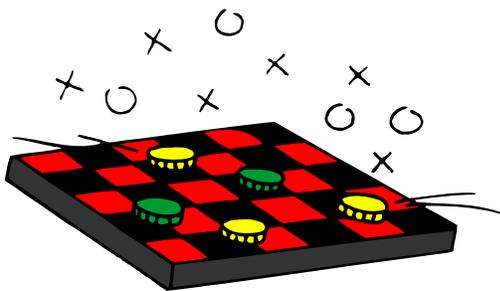
Your adolescent, while at RMAC, will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. Many of the activities will be required as part of scheduled programming. Some activities are determined by the adolescents at their weekly planning meeting. Some of the activities that the adolescents participate in include:

- Y-Family Center
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Shopping
- Library
- Going to movies
- Videos
- Swimming
- Biking
- Sporting events
- High School Theatre Productions
- On-site activities (Pool, Ping Pong, Crafts, Reading, Games, Cards, etc...)



Adolescents are expected to behave appropriately at activities. If problems arise during an activity because an adolescent is not behaving, they may be asked to leave and they will be returned to RMAC (if the activity is off-site), or the activity may be ended for all adolescents.

We believe it is important for young people to experience a wide range of activities that can help them utilize leisure time in a healthier, more positive manner. Many of the activities are the kind that the adolescent may be able to enjoy for a lifetime and in most cases are inexpensive or don't cost anything.



Schedule/Routine

As a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF), the program is highly structured. This is very important in order to assure adolescent and staff safety and to develop a routine where everyone knows the expectations and what is going to happen next. Also, many things are going on at any given moment – individual therapy, group, activity, study-time, chore, phone calls, meetings, meals, grooming, reflecting, consequences, medical appointments, passes, school, etc. If that was for just one adolescent it would be a lot, but for 10 or 11 it would be impossible without a very detailed schedule and routine. Surprisingly most adolescents get into the routine rather quickly. A typical day would look similar to the following:

6:00 a.m. – Some residents begin awaking (may have a scheduled shower time)

6:30 a.m. – Residents may come out of the pod area for breakfast

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. – Complete morning chore, clean room, finish grooming and be prepared for school

8:00 – 10:00 a.m. School (some adolescents attend on-site, others off-site)

10:00 – 10:10 a.m. – Snack

10:10 – 12 noon – School

12 – 12:30 p.m. – Lunch and clean-up

12:30 – 3:00 p.m. – School

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Grooming, snack, free time, phone calls

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. – Group (different each day)

5:00 – 5:30 p.m. – Dinner/Supper

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. – Clean-up/Quiet Time

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. – Study-time

7:00 – 8:00/8:30 p.m. – Activity/Group

8:30 – 9:00 p.m. – Phone Calls

9:00 – 9:30 p.m. – WLS review/Reflections/Journaling time

9:30 – 10:00 p.m. – Grooming/In rooms

10:00 p.m. – Lights out



Of course during this typical day the adolescents have medical appointments, meetings, and therapy so the schedule is even busier than it looks. Weekends are a bit different as there is more down time. The adolescents get to sleep in longer, have a bit of a different chore schedule and grooming is later in the morning.



Medical Care

Making sure that your child's medical needs are met is a top priority of our program. A full-time Registered Nurse (RN) manages the medical care for all the adolescents. Our RN works closely with area providers to assure your child's needs are met. Some of the providers that RMAC works closely with include:

- Altru Hospital
- Altru Clinic
- Grand Forks County Public Health
- Local Dental Office
- Eye Clinic
- Other providers as needed



Our RN also works closely with the facility psychiatrist to coordinate psychiatric care for your child. The psychiatrist is at the facility a minimum of one time a week.

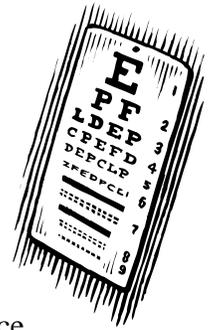
Adolescents medications are closely monitored and controlled while your child is at RMAC. Additions or a change to a child's medication schedule is discussed with the parent and/or custodian prior to the addition or change.



We take very seriously your child's medical care and encourage you to contact our RN with any questions or concerns you have related to the medical care your adolescent receives at RMAC. You know your child best so if you notice

anything about their health that concerns you, especially when they are on passes with you, please document the concern on the pass form, tell RMAC staff, or contact the nurse.

The RN also provides parents and/or custodians a medical update at the Treatment Review meetings regarding any medical issues, appointments or concerns there may be regarding your child.



Just a reminder to those parents who have placed your child at RMAC on a private basis, **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COPAYS for prescription medication for your child.** RMAC pays for OTC medications. If you have questions related to this please contact your insurance provider.

While your child is at RMAC, medications must be obtained from the pharmacy we use. Parents cannot bring in medications from home for use or disposal.

Pass medications are sent home in bottles, please return the bottles at the end of the visit so they can be reused on next pass.

Discipline and Consequences

One of the most difficult challenges a program faces is how to handle situations when an adolescent is not following the program rules and guidelines. As mentioned earlier in this guide, structure, routine and consistent expectations are an essential part of the treatment process. Also mentioned earlier, is our approach to holding the adolescent accountable for their choices and behavior. To accomplish this specific rules are in place that your child is made aware of during the Introduction level of the program. As part of the materials they receive the very first day they arrive is a copy of the program rules and guidelines. Along with staff they review the rules and make sure questions are answered. An important part of the Introduction level is your child becoming familiar with the rules and how the program operates.

When your child makes choices that violate program rules they will receive consequences for those choices. Since the consequences for most rule violations are spelled out in the program rules it is generally a straight forward process to implement the consequence. Staff will generally try a number of options to help the adolescent make a positive choice but when violations occur the adolescent will likely receive one of the following consequences:

- **Removal from Group:** Occurs when a staff member asks or the adolescent asks to remove him or herself from the situation to the designated room or area. The adolescent will be able to rejoin the activity once he/she has processed with staff and calmed down.
- **Countering:** An adolescent is expected to sit at the counter or table for a designated amount of time during individual and/or group activities. Once that time has passed the adolescent may join the activity.
- **Warnings:** Includes WLS, Chore, and School warnings. Adolescents not meeting set percentages for their level receive a warning. Recipients of these warnings serve the consequence on designated days during activities. When the adolescent has served the warning they may return to regular activities.
- **Grounding:** The result of serious violations of a program rule. The adolescent will sit at a designated spot for up to two days. They will be provided with a grounding plan, which includes the reason for grounding, length of grounding, assigned grounding spot and expectations. The resident is also assigned hourly grounding blocks. A staff member will sign each one of these blocks as long as the adolescent is complying with the grounding plan. The adolescent is responsible for asking to have these blocks signed and following through with the expectations as listed on the RMAC grounding plan. If the adolescent does not comply with the grounding plan the block will not be signed and the grounding will be extended by one hour for each block not signed. Once all of the grounding blocks have been signed, the resident may return to regular programming.
- **Separation:** A separation plan occurs when two or more residents are expected to remain a determined amount of space apart and have no interactions. This can be done on an individual basis or according to gender. The treatment team will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays to review the ongoing status of this consequence. Staff will inform residents involved when the separation plan has ended.
- **Freeze:** A resident is expected to remain in their rooms for a specific amount of time. The resident is expected to only interact with staff. They are expected to remain in their rooms the entire day including meals. They may leave their room to use the bathroom or attend appointments. The treatment team will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays to review the ongoing status of this consequence. Staff will inform the resident when he/she may return to regular interactions and participation in activities.

- **Removal from program:** The resident will be removed from the facility to either the hospital or detention.
 - If a resident's psychiatric needs warrant, the resident will be transported to the hospital. The treatment team will meet with the resident's custodian and parents to determine the return of the resident to the facility.
 - If a resident's behavior warrants, the resident will be escorted to detention. If the behavior is aggressive or assaultive towards other adolescents or RMAC staff, law enforcement will be contacted. If the behavior includes being destructive to RMAC property law enforcement may be called. The treatment team will meet with the resident's custodian and parents to determine the return of the resident to the facility.
 - Further details of consequences are based on the situation and the specific needs of the resident.

An important aspect of the discipline process at RMAC is holding the adolescent accountable for their behavior. This process helps the adolescent recognize and learn that there are consequences for actions that are taken. For many adolescents in the program this is a difficult concept. But, they can get there as a result of the consequences and discipline being applied on a continual and consistent basis.

It is extremely important that parents/custodians recognize the importance of a united team approach to enforcing rules and consequences. Adolescents are very quick to recognize the weakest link in the team and often attempt to manipulate it to get their desired result. The problem is that often that result is not in that child's best interest. Open communication between team members is essential to a strong united front when addressing discipline and consequence issues.

Conclusion

We appreciate the fact that you have chosen RMAC as the program to help your adolescent. It has been our privilege to work with North Dakota youth for over 20 years. Seeing hundreds of youth make significant progress in becoming healthier and happier is the highest goal we could hope to achieve. You can count on us to give our best effort to help your child. In most situations it is not easy, but then again, nobody said it was going to be easy. Together, we can do it. Let's get to work!



Ruth Meiers Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (RMAC)
770 S. 14th St.
Grand Forks, ND 58201
701-795-3870 FAX 701-795-3899