

## Conceptual Framework for Curriculum-Based Skill Building and Weekly Planning for Therapeutic Mentoring Service Delivery

### Introduction – What is Therapeutic Mentoring?

Therapeutic Mentoring is a medically necessary service for youths who need to improve age-appropriate functioning or to ameliorate deficits in their functioning across life domains. The service is needed to achieve specific goal(s) in the youth's individual care plan (ICP) (for ICC-involved youth) or treatment plan, including:

- Addressing daily living, social, and communication needs
- Helping the youth navigate social contexts, learn new skills, and make functional progress
- Support, coach, and train age-appropriate behaviors, interpersonal communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution, and relating appropriately to others in recreational and social activities

The Medical Necessity Criteria (MNC) and Performance Specifications (PS) note that the service is to:

- Teach skills *through* “structured, one-to-one support services” (across life domains and settings) in order for youth to remain at home, prevent out-of-home placement, or to transition “home”
- Assist youth to communicate his/her needs to the Care Plan Team (CPT)/treatment team; contribute the “voice of the youth” in the youth's absence

The MNC and PS also note what the service isn't:

- It is **NOT** observation or management during sport/physical activity, school, after-school activities, or recreation.
- It is **NOT** a teacher's aide.
- It is **NOT** for parental respite.
- The Therapeutic Mentor does **NOT** directly provide social, educational, artistic, athletic, recreational, or vocational services.
- It is **NOT** a stand-alone service; it is part of the treatment plan developed by the youth's clinical hub service (OP, IHT, ICC).

A curriculum-based approach to skill-building for Therapeutic Mentoring service activities, planning, and delivery is an effective way to ensure that the interventions are linked to a youth's assessment information, diagnosis(es), and goals. A curriculum-based approach will also improve consistency and continuity of skills for staff delivering the service, improve objectivity of documentation, and enable providers to adhere to best practice guidelines.

Part of this approach includes assessing regularly the progress that the youth is making on mastering the identified skills needed to improve functioning. If the youth needs to “practice” the skill more, the Supervisor will plan with the mentor additional activities to improve mastery. As mastery improves and additional skill needs are identified, the Supervisor and mentor will use the curricula to determine the next activities to use for teaching those skills.

Using a curriculum-based approach for teaching skills and a structured process for assessing progress and developing new “lesson plans” will strengthen the quality of the service. It will also enable providers to objectively document progress and additional needs, as well as improvement in preparation for discontinuation of the service. It will also assist providers in avoiding the risk of the service becoming “observation,” “accompaniment,” “management,” or a “friend.”

This weekly planning process will include the clearly-evident use of assessment information for goal writing, creating diagnosis-related (best practice) intervention strategies, implementing relevant service delivery and documentation that reflects the integration of the process; all parts of the treatment and support process working together to demonstrate an unequivocally integrated relationship between them.

An integral part of this process will be curriculum-based weekly planning by Supervisors/mentors for each youth with whom they work. Objectives of the weekly planning activity are to:

1. Assess a youth’s progress/status through the identified curriculum-based skill-building lessons.
2. Reinforce the mentor’s accountability for progress/status.
3. Based on this progress, plan for follow-up and the next week’s lessons
4. Communicate to the mentor the focus and expected progress for the next week of service.
5. Create clear documentation of a structured planning activity (see attached note).

### **Foundation for Curriculum-Based Weekly Planning**

In order for this type of planning to occur:

- 1) Goals must be behaviorally based, providing clear descriptors of what progress looks like.
- 2) Interventions must be curriculum-specific, naming lessons/skills to teach.
- 3) Service Notes used to assess must contain information indicating status/progress