

## Report Shows Safe at Home Improving Youth Well-Being

By Lisa McMullen, Project Director, Safe at Home West Virginia

More and more of our youth and families across the state are receiving wraparound supports through Safe at Home West Virginia. As of June 12, 2017, the program has prevented 468 youth from entering residential placement. Another 125 youth have returned to their communities from in-state residential placement; 49 have returned to West Virginia from out-of-state residential placement and eight have returned to their communities from shelter placement.

Our staff and partners are dedicated to helping these youth lead safe, healthy and successful lives, and our third Semi-Annual Progress Report, a large portion of which is compiled by an independent evaluator, highlights our progress.

For the analysis of outcomes, this report looks at data among Safe at Home youth divided into six-month groupings based on referral dates. To measure well-being, Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment data are used. According to the evaluator, the domain that showed the most need upon initial assessment, Life Functioning Needs, showed a reduction of need among 61 percent of youth from Group I.

The same was true for 69 percent of youth in Group II. At 12 months, the reduction of need in the Life Functioning Needs domain for youth in Group I showed a marked improvement with 92 percent of youth having improved their scores within the domain. Interestingly, the Life Functioning Needs domain exhibited the greatest reduction in needs overall for both groups, suggesting that while these are the most common needs initially identified, they are also the ones that the program has been able to address most effectively.

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Table 18. Percentage of Youth with a Need on the Initial CANS Who Improved Scores on a 6 or 12 Month Subsequent CANS		
CANS Domain	Youth with Improved Scores 6 Months Post-Initial CANS	Youth with Improved Scores 12 Months Post-Initial CANS*
<b>Cohort I</b>		
Behavioral/Emotional Needs	51	92
Child Risk Behaviors	45	67
Life Functioning Needs	61	92
Symptoms of Trauma	40	75
<b>Cohort II</b>		
Behavioral/Emotional Needs	61	-
Child Risk Behaviors	68	-
Life Functioning Needs	69	-
Symptoms of Trauma	59	-

\*12-month data for Cohort II will be forthcoming.

Given these findings, we look forward to sharing future successes for West Virginia's child welfare system. Thank you for your commitment to helping our children be safe at home, and for turning our vision into a reality for so many families in West Virginia.

## Safe at Home Helps Youth Find Forever Family

*By Necco, Local Coordinating Agency*



Necco's first referral for Safe at Home West Virginia in 2015 was a young man living in an out-of-state facility. He grew up in and out of multiple placements, and spent some time in detention for destructive and violent behavior. With no family ties, the young man's Safe at Home team worked relentlessly to locate a home for him, and eventually connected him with a relative and his biological sibling.

For months, the teenager's family team worked diligently to integrate him into his new community. He was initially unprepared for this level of freedom due to his life in institutions; however, he was remarkably resilient despite experiences of trauma. The young man was wrapped in supports throughout his stay and had collaboration with a full foster care team.

As he struggled academically, emotionally and socially, his dedicated team helped him through his trials. He began to make friends, engage in social activities, and worked hard to meet his goals. With multiple revisions of his Wraparound Plan, his emotional health made major improvement.

Despite this, a setback occurred when the young man's foster parents decided not to adopt him. Although he and his Wraparound team were greatly discouraged, another opportunity was presented. A family that the youth had spent a lot of time with on respite stays in the past approached them with the possibility of providing a permanent home for him.

This new family came through for the young man in a beautiful way. They dropped everything and met him where he was. The Wraparound team was in court two days later and the potential adoptive parents took time off from work and were there to support him. He now lives with this family and is thriving. He goes to school and makes good grades, and his evenings are filled social and family activities. When his Wraparound team visits, he is polite and happy.

The family informed the youth that he had a home forever if he wanted it, and in April of 2017 his case was staffed for adoption. His case will successfully close this summer after his next court hearing. This is just one example of how bringing in the supports of a community and wrapping them around a family can not only keep a child safe at home, but thriving at home and in life.

