

# Riverside Community Care

Leading the Way in Behavioral Healthcare & Human Services

## Program Description Riverside Life Skills Center - Milford

Welcome to the Life Skills Center,

The Life Skills Center is a highly structured and supportive therapeutic program for adolescents, ages 12 to 18 years, who are presenting with various mental health disorders and are experiencing disruptions in their home, school, or community. The program offers therapeutic groups and milieu activities based on best practices to help teens identify and gain insight into their thoughts, emotions, and behavioral patterns, to develop more effective ways of coping, and improve their self-esteem and social skills in order to better be able to be successful in their community.

The Life Skills Center is part of Riverside Community Care, which provides us with further access to other services such as in-home therapy, crisis intervention, community service agencies, and other community-based programs. Each year Riverside Community Care provides more than 40,000 adults, children, and adolescents with a broad range of behavioral healthcare and human services. We are an award-winning organization offering mental healthcare, developmental and brain injury services, specialized youth and early childhood programs, trauma response, and more. We are here to make a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities by delivering compassionate, locally-based, integrated care.

The Life Skills Center offers a small client to staff ratio and focuses on a sense of community and wellbeing that is essential for effective group work. There are strong clinical and family supports, as well as academic supports provided. We are open year-round, Monday through Friday from 9am to 3pm although we are closed for major holidays.

The following pages provide information that more closely outlines the types of therapeutic groups offered and the structure of the program. Should you have further questions please feel free to contact me at the number or e-mail listed below.

Sincerely

*Samantha McKenna*

Samantha McKenna, LMHC  
Program Director  
smckenna@riversidecc.org

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The Riverside Life Skills Center is designed to accommodate adolescents with significant mental health issues and learning challenges. Teens typically present with a variety of mental health issues including but not limited to:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Major Depressive Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- PTSD
- Attention Disorders
- Dual – Diagnosis
- Mood Disorders
- Social Anxiety
- Mild Learning Disorders
- Psychotic Disorders

Through a highly structured clinical environment involving therapeutic groups and activities, teens are able to identify and understand their behavior patterns and learn more effective ways of coping, gain insight into their mental health issues, improve their self-esteem and increase social skills to integrate more effectively into their school and home communities.

### Clinical Supports:

Each adolescent is assigned a primary Masters Level clinician. The clinician will coordinate goals and treatment at the center and will access community agencies and providers to assist in meeting the individual needs of the adolescent. Each adolescent and their family will work to collaborate with their clinician to develop an Individualized Action Plan to outline the course of treatment and establish attainable goals to accomplish with the support of the team.

The Life Skills Center utilizes a group and milieu therapy model in order to help teens process and manage the challenges that they face. Therapeutic groups are developed and facilitated utilizing the following theories, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Anger Management, Social Skills Building, Expressive Therapy, Health and Wellness, and Development.

### Family Supports:

The family is viewed as an essential part of the success for each individual. All family members are encouraged to attend and participate in family meetings. Family meetings focus on allowing the family to understand and become a part of their child's treatment goals, build communication, develop stronger family relationships, increase support, and skill building.

### Academic Supports:

Many of our adolescents have struggled to manage the academic and social stressors at school. Our goal is to provide each child with the academic support they need in order to learn to more effectively manage the academic demands and experience success in their work. We work with each child's public school in order to help them gain school credits, identify school related triggers, and to develop healthy coping skills in order to manage these demands while being supported in the therapeutic environment.

### Collaboration:

Our clinical staff will work with a variety of community agencies such as outside therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, DMH, DCF, and local schools in order to provide successful continuity of care.

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## Criteria

The Life Skills Center is a DMH funded program. Prior to admissions a referral packet must be fill out and submit to DMH for final approval.

Determination of eligibility is based on whether:

- The individual meet the clinical criteria for DMH continued care services
- The individual requires DMH services
- The individual has no other means of obtaining needed services

Clinical Criteria:

The applicant must have a qualifying mental health disorder as the primary disorder requiring treatment, meet illness duration criteria, and meet functional criteria.

The applicant must be 18 years of age or younger at the time of application and have a qualifying mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that substantially interferes with or limits his/her role or functioning in the family, school, or community activities.

Qualifying Diagnoses:

- Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders (not due to medical conditions or substance induced psychosis)
- Mood Disorders (excluding Dysthymia and mood disorders due to a medical condition)
- Anxiety Disorders (excluding due to a general medical or substance condition)
- Dissociative Disorders,
- Eating Disorders,
- Personality Disorders
- ADHD (excludes conduct disorder and opposition defiant disorder)

Duration of qualifying disorder must have lasted for, or be expected to last for, at least one year.

Must have demonstrated need for a DMH service and the program available.

# Riverside Community Care

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## Rules of Group

### **RESPECT:**

Everyone is treated with respect. This includes giving the facilitator and/or person speaking your attention. Participants may use coping skills during group as deemed appropriate by the team and facilitator. If you are unable to remain respectful you may be asked to take space away from the group until you are able to participate more appropriately.

### **PARTICIPATION:**

Participation in groups is key to a successful experience. Everyone has the option of “passing” when it comes to sharing personal information, but will be encouraged to take positive risks in an effort to fully benefit from the Life Skills program.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

It is essential that participants feel that they can trust others in the group. What is said in group needs to stay in group. We want to ensure that everyone’s right to privacy is insured.

### **PROCESS:**

In some groups individuals may be asked to create certain projects. These projects are personal and therefore deserve to be respected. The materials allowed for self-expression should be treated with care and with the permission of staff.

# Riverside Community Care

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## Therapeutic Group Offerings – Life Skills, Milford

DBT/CBT based groups	<p><b>Coping with Conflict:</b> A CBT based group that addresses the causes, management and resolution skills of both internal and external forces. Written materials, scenarios, role-play, and problem solving tasks are presented and explored.</p>
	<p><b>Stress Less:</b> A DBT based group where adolescents discuss their levels of stress and identify positive ways of managing it. They participate in management and relaxation exercises, explore various coping strategies and discuss the usefulness in managing their stress.</p>
	<p><b>Y-CBT:</b> A CBT based group combined with Kundalini yoga, which focuses on mindfulness and meditation to cope with anxiety, depression, and anger management. Clients learn how to self-regulate with deep breathing techniques and changing thinking patterns to perceive themselves more positively.</p>
	<p><b>Wise Minded Music:</b> A DBT based group combined with Music Therapy approaches where clients identify strengths and push their own personal boundaries to build distress tolerance skills and mindfulness.</p>
	<p><b>New Directions:</b> Small group for adolescents who are engaging in self-harm. In addition to CBT and DBT skills adolescents explore distraction techniques and Psycho Education tools and learn how to speak with providers.</p>
Emotion Management	<p><b>Family Matters:</b> This discussion-oriented group will highlight strengths of healthy family functioning as well as stressors encountered. The nature of changing family dynamics during adolescence is also discussed.</p>
	<p><b>Symptom Survival:</b> This group uses the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 to focus on psycho-education around diagnostic criteria. Adolescents are encouraged to share their personal experiences with mental illness while relating symptoms to categories of mental disorders when possible.</p>
	<p><b>Art of Healing:</b> This group focuses on adolescents’ experiences of grief and loss both within their families, peer group, and communities as well as the loss that they experience with mental illness including loss of abilities and skills, relationships, interests, and hope.</p>
	<p><b>Boys/Girls/Gender Bender Group:</b> This group allows the genders to focus on issues relevant to their lives and how these issues affect them.</p>
	<p><b>The Weekend:</b> This group focuses on the adolescent’s weekend. This is a time to share positive experiences and process difficult times over the weekend. This group offers adolescence opportunities to support and give feedback to others and to reflect back and examine coping skills utilized.</p>
Social Skill Building	<p><b>STEAMwork:</b> S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) develops a set of thinking, reasoning, teamwork, investigative and creative skills that students can use in all areas of their lives. In STEAM lessons, students address real social, economic, and environmental problems and seek solutions. In STEAMwork, client work effectively as a group to problem solve STEAM related activities and to improve team building skills.</p>
	<p><b>Community Meeting:</b> This group is dedicated to fostering a sense of community. Adolescents collectively process the previous week events and address and issues that have been challenging. Additionally they explore upcoming events and expectations.</p>
	<p><b>Coffee Talk:</b> This skill-based group focuses on building the social skills and pragmatic language skills required to form and maintain positive interpersonal relationships.</p>
	<p><b>Branch Out:</b> This group is an outdoor, activity-based group where clients work together as a team to complete challenges and solve problems. Clients will learn how to work effectively with others while building confidence and connecting with their peers.</p>
	<p><b>What’s Love Got To Do With It?:</b> A relationships groups that focuses on healthy relationships with self, peers, and in the community. Topics such as boundaries, communication, levels of friendship, and types of love will be explored through discussion and activities using music, art, and other media.</p>

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	<p><b>Squad:</b> Teamwork, cooperation and social interactions are the focus through a variety of activities. Focus is on stimulating problem-solving skills in order to work effectively as a group.</p> <p><b>Out of the Box :</b> This group encourages social interactions through open-ended discussions about social issues as a whole. Adolescents may engage in teambuilding activities.</p> <p><b>Jump Start:</b> Adolescents are involved in different activities, including games in order to develop social skills and review the day ahead.</p>
Expressive Therapy	<p><b>Express Yourself:</b> This is an activity based group which uses various approaches influenced by expressive therapies, such as medias and art, music, creative writing, and sensory integrated activities to practice self-expression and explore new ways to cope.</p>
	<p><b>Moods and Media:</b> By observing examples drawn from various media sources teens develop analytical skills related to increased awareness and perspective around topics of self-image, violence, advertising, bullying, peer pressure, and relationship building.</p>
	<p><b>Survey Says:</b> A self-regulation group in which adolescents help to design question and topics of interest, utilize active listening of peer interests and incorporate with staff into group presentation.</p>
Health and Wellness	<p><b>Healthy Living:</b> This group focuses on education and discussion around health issues, nutrition, physical fitness, and other teen topics. Groups focus on promoting a healthy lifestyle.</p>
	<p><b>Fitness:</b> This group focuses on activities specifically designed to promote health and exercise. Connections are made to a healthy life, stress relief, and community.</p>
Growth and Development	<p><b>Mission Possible:</b> This group focuses on basic life skill necessary for successful transition into the community. Topics may include budgeting, prioritizing, job skills, driver's education, community resources, independent living, and planning for college or work.</p>
	<p><b>Study Hall:</b> This group is designed for adolescents to work on missed work from their public schools. Organization strategies are explored and learning what type of learner the adolescent is and what strategies work best for them.</p>
	<p><b>Current Events:</b> Given current events from the week, adolescents engage in group discussions to share views and receive feedback. Adolescents work collaboratively within the group setting to process the world news.</p>
	<p><b>Treat Yo'self:</b> A discussion and activity based group that focuses on self-care. Clients discuss the importance of self-care and engage in various activities that foster this skill set in order to assist with managing symptomology.</p>
	<p><b>I'm Worth It:</b> The goal of this skill-based group is to enhance self-esteem and increase self-compassion. Select groups will encourage clients to identify personal competencies and strengths, practice using positive affirmations in helpful ways, and learn how media messages impact the way we view ourselves.</p>
	<p><b>Adulting:</b> This group focuses on the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Group members will participate in discussions and activities about various life changes after high school. They will also receive coaching on how to accomplish tasks such as filling out college and job applications.</p>
	<p><b>Creatively Me:</b> A discussion and activity based group with a purpose of exploring identity in adolescence using ingenious and imaginative ways. The group will uncover limitless ways to manifest creativity unique to each individual while building confidence in their own self-discovery.</p>
	<p><b>20/20 Vision:</b> An activity and discussion-based group about finding one's identity in adolescence. This group takes a strength-based approach and is designed to increase one's self-confidence and self-awareness by exploring identity as it relates to personality, social life and peers, self-esteem and stigma.</p>