

Caregivers SOAR White Paper

Sustainable Opportunities for Accessing Respite

Caregivers SOAR is an innovative, community-based respite model that strengthens families through drop-off respite, youth coaching, and caregiver support, especially for those underserved by traditional systems.

Over 100 families, youth, and youth workers were supported across Cambridge and Somerville, resulting in reduced caregiver stress, improved youth outcomes, and a scalable model for statewide replication.

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Executive Summary

Caregivers SOAR (Sustainable Opportunities for Accessing Respite) is a transformative, community-based respite model developed by Riverside Community Care to support families caring for youth with significant mental health challenges. The SOAR pilot was made possible through a \$900,000 Respite Innovations Grant awarded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), supporting its community-rooted, equity-driven design [Respite Innovations Grant | Mass.gov](#). Caregivers SOAR's pilot operated from July 1, 2023, to March 31, 2025, with its development and preparation phase running from July through a soft internal launch in November 2023, followed by the opening of on-site respite programming in December 2023.

Respite in this context refers to temporary relief for caregivers, while also building youth engagement, emotional regulation, and caregiver capacity (ARCH National Respite Network & Resource Center, 2023). Unlike traditional behavioral health clinical services, SOAR centers on coaching, mentoring, and lived experience.

In response to documented needs highlighted by Parent/Profession Advocacy League (PPAL) [PPAL: Children's Mental Health PowerPoint Presentation](#) in Massachusetts, Caregiver's SOAR was designed with flexibility, cultural responsiveness, and sustainability at its core. SOAR offers a comprehensive flexible model of care that includes health and well-being coaching, young adult peer mentorship, youth support, sustainability coaching, and family partner support.

From its inception, SOAR was co-designed and continuously refined with input from those it aimed to serve. Feedback from caregiver focus groups, community partners, and internal and external advisory councils shaped key aspects of the model and led to critical adaptations throughout the pilot.

SOAR has served a diverse range of caregivers, including parents, grandparents, and community youth workers, many of whom have historically struggled to access consistent, culturally relevant respite. Through innovative programming such as drop-in Saturdays, evening respite, individualized caregiver and youth support plans, and coaching for community youth workers employed at youth-serving organizations, SOAR has provided critical support to over 100 families across Cambridge, Somerville, and surrounding communities.

Caregivers SOAR achieved strong outcomes, yet systemic barriers, especially the lack of sustained funding, threaten to limit its reach and long-term impact.

Without investment beyond short-term grants, innovative respite models like SOAR risk remaining pilots rather than becoming the equitable, scalable solutions families urgently need. Highlighting SOAR's success underscores the critical need for sustained investment to ensure equitable access and lasting impact.

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SOAR's Innovative Three-Pronged Model

This document outlines SOAR's innovative three-pronged model:

- 1) Site-based drop-off respite with optional on-site caregiver coaching;
- 2) Community-based coaching and support for youth and caregivers at youth serving community organizations and centers;
- 3) Training and wellness support for community youth workers as natural respite providers.

Drawing from quantitative outcomes and rich caregiver interviews, this paper demonstrates how the SOAR model reduces caregiver stress, increases child engagement, and improves caregiver self-efficacy. It provides a scalable blueprint for state and national investment in non-traditional, community-rooted respite services.

Program Design and Three-Pronged Model

Caregivers SOAR was designed as a flexible, non-traditional respite model rooted in coaching and lived experience. Through an iterative design process informed by direct community input, an interdisciplinary team worked collaboratively to deliver services across three key prongs.

1) Site-Based Drop-Off Respite

SOAR offered weekly Saturday programming with added evening, summer, and school vacation hours. Youth participated in resilience-building activities led by coaches and peer mentors, while caregivers could:

- Drop off youth for structured, strengths-based activities;
- Stay on-site and participate in coaching or peer support;
- Engage in hybrid participation based on their availability and preferences.

Several caregivers who remained on-site formed relationships with one another. They later reported that on weekends when SOAR was not offered, they independently coordinated meetups in the community, allowing youth to stay connected and caregivers to continue providing one another with mutual support. These natural peer-led gatherings reflect the broader sustainability goals embedded in the program.

2) Community-Based Coaching and Support

In partnership with local community centers, and youth-serving organizations, SOAR staff delivered integrated support to youth and their caregivers in the community. This prong focused on building resilience and emotional well-being through:

- Individual and group health and well-being coaching sessions for youth, delivered by Health and Well-Being Coaches and Young Adult Peer Mentors at youth centers, and community events;
- Facilitated learning series with youth through partnerships with programs like Teen Empowerment, offering skill-building opportunities rooted in self-regulation, goal-setting, and self-care;
- Family Partner support for caregivers of participating youth, including resource connection, and coaching aligned with family needs;

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- Participation in out-of-school-time events and drop-in hours at local youth organizations, ensuring consistent presence, relationship-building, and informal access to support for both youth and caregivers.

These community-based efforts were particularly effective in reaching youth who may not engage in traditional behavioral health services and caregivers who feel isolated from formal support systems. The flexibility and cultural responsiveness of this model enabled SOAR to meet families where they were physically and emotionally. Ongoing dialogue with youth, caregivers, and community organizations helped staff adapt engagement strategies, refine coaching content, and improve alignment with cultural and practical needs.

3) Community Youth Worker Support Program

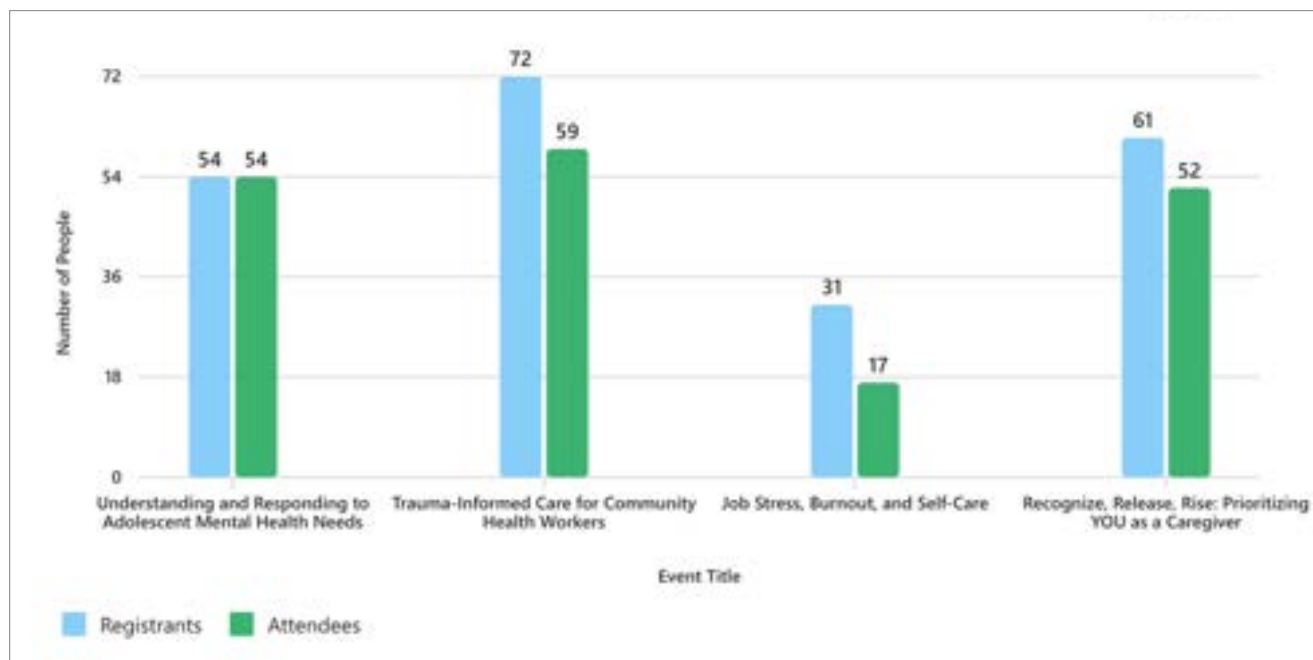
Recognizing youth workers as natural respite providers, SOAR developed a unique support program including:

- Top-based trainings, including:

- Access to 1:1 consultation and behavioral health supports;
- Input from community partners including Teen Empowerment, Groundworks Somerville, Somernova, First-Generation Mentor Network, and Cambridge Youth Programs.

Anonymous surveys were conducted using SurveyMonkey and included a mix of scaled and open-ended questions to evaluate burnout prevention, knowledge of resources, and overall satisfaction. Survey participation was modest (14%), but 100% of respondents reported satisfaction with the trainings. Supervisors noted improved morale, stronger team cohesion, and increased awareness of mental health supports. These findings should be interpreted with caution due to a low survey participation rate (14%). This limited response rate increases the possibility of non-response bias, meaning the views captured may not fully represent the perspectives or experiences of all training participants.

Insights from post-training surveys and partner feedback directly informed the work. Topics, formats, and delivery methods were adjusted in response to community need and emerging trends.



Quotes from Community Youth Workers

"I didn't realize how much I needed space to just be human, not just a worker. This gave me that."

"SOAR helped us connect the dots between burnout and our ability to actually support kids in meaningful ways."

"Now I know where to send a youth in crisis - and I feel more confident doing it."

Enhancing Healing Spaces Through Grant-Funded Projects

In addition to the three-pronged service delivery model, SOAR leveraged grant funding to enhance its physical spaces and promote caregiver and youth wellness in concrete, restorative ways.

Caregiver Wellness Room

A dedicated space was created on-site for caregivers to rest, recharge, and engage in self-care while their children participated in programming. The room features a massage chair, aromatherapy, reading materials, and mindfulness tools. Caregivers could also sign out equipment such as yoga mats, light therapy (SAD) lamps, and meditation devices. Creative activities like painting and crochet kits were also available, promoting emotional regulation and relaxation.

Community Garden

In partnership with [Groundwork Somerville](#), youth and caregivers helped design and cultivate a small community garden. Families accessed organic vegetables, a meditation bench, and a miniature Zen rock garden. Caregivers participating in on-site programming were invited to use the garden as a space for grounding, connection, and quiet reflection.

Sensory Space

Based on caregiver and advisory council feedback, a state-of-the-art sensory room was developed for youth participants in the on-site respite program. The entrance hallway featured a sensory path and a wall mural designed by youth and caregivers in collaboration with local artist, Michael Talbot [Talbot's Art - Home](#). The sensory space itself offered tactile panels, calming lighting, and therapeutic tools to support emotional regulation and sensory needs.

Virtual Reality (VR) Integration

As part of its innovative approach, SOAR partnered with local VR company, [Virtual Reality for Seniors | Rendeever](#), to pilot the use of virtual reality as a therapeutic and relational tool. VR was available for use in both individual and group settings to promote mindfulness, support emotional regulation, and foster caregiver–youth connection. For example, a grandparent could play a simple interactive game with their grandchild, or an immigrant caregiver could virtually walk down the street of their home country using integrated Google Maps, creating opportunities for storytelling, bonding, and shared experience.

These healing-centered, community-informed projects exemplify SOAR's commitment to holistic care, environmental wellness, and co-creation with the families it serves.

Cumulative Reach Summary

December 2023- March 2025

179 caregivers were supported

through community-based coaching, Family Partner-led topic-based trainings, and other community events.

16 caregivers

received on-site drop-off respite

15 youth

received on-site drop-off respite

1 youth

received in-home respite

853 hours

drop-off respite youth programming delivered

206 hours

of on-site caregiving coaching was delivered

312.5 hours

Caregiver Coffee Hours hosted throughout the community

23 hours

community-based direct caregiver support at events

334 hours

of community-based respite youth programming delivered at youth centers

362 youth

served through community-based coaching

100+ community youth workers

trained and supported

Note: 1,395 total hours of programming includes all direct coaching and group programming delivered directly to caregivers across both drop-off and community settings during the evaluation period.

Note: The total of 334 hours and 362 youth served includes all direct touchpoints with youth engaged through partnerships with Dojo@Somernova, Teen Empowerment, Mystic Learning Center, Somerville YMCA, First Generation Mentor Network, and public high schools in Somerville and Cambridge. In addition, countless youth were reached indirectly through the coaching and training of youth workers across both communities.

Interdisciplinary Team Roles

The SOAR team included:

Sustainability Coach: Helped caregivers and youth align personal growth with community well-being; taught stress management, mindfulness, and social connection-building.

Health and Well-Being Coach: Supported mind-body wellness through coaching on coping strategies, self-care, and emotional regulation.

Young Adult Peer Mentor: Offered relatable support, promotes life skills, builds youth confidence, and encourages engagement through lived experience.

Youth Support Worker: Provided direct outreach and support to youth in schools, homes, and community settings.

Family Partner: Bridged caregivers to services and validates their experiences through shared understanding.

Clinical Consultant and Program Director: Guided practice implementation, provided supervision, and ensured fidelity to the model.

Coaching Collaboration

Coaches worked in tandem across all prongs of the program. For example:

- The Sustainability Coach and Health and Well-Being Coach co-created individualized caregiver support plans;
- The Family Partner provided additional navigation support and resource connection;
- Coaches supported youth in creating coping plans, setting goals, and building resilience skills.

Each family received tailored follow-up, including check-ins up to three months after transitioning out of formal SOAR services.

Spotlight: Sustainability Coaching

Sustainability Coaching, developed as part of SOAR, bridged personal resilience with broader community sustainability. Coaches supported individuals in building meaningful connections, aligned personal goals with values, and learning skills like mindfulness, self-care, and systems thinking. This model:

- Promoted long-term well-being beyond clinical treatment;
- Encouraged advocacy and community stewardship;
- Strengthened informal networks of support among caregivers and youth.

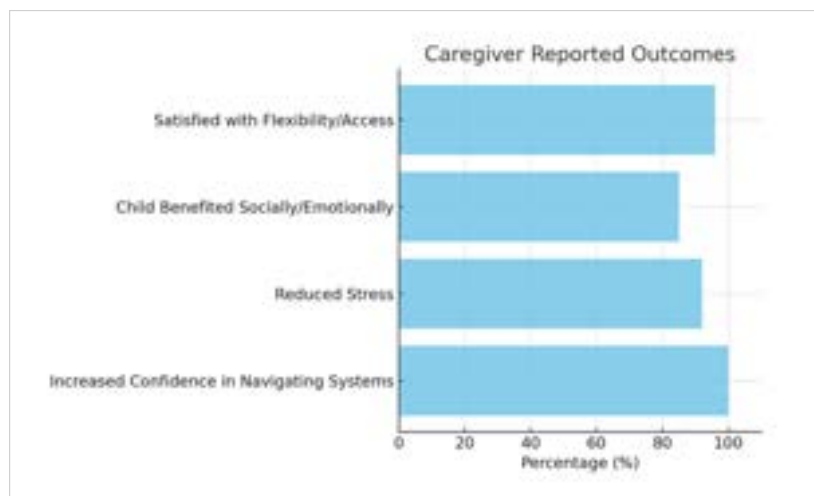
Caregivers engaged with the Sustainability Coach to develop plans across multiple life domains using tools such as the Wellness Wheel. These domains included emotional well-being, community connection, financial stability, and physical health. Several caregivers reported that the visual model helped them identify neglected areas in their lives and feel empowered to make incremental changes.

Quote from Caregiver

"The Wellness Wheel helped me see I was pouring everything into my child but nothing into myself. I started small—walking with a neighbor—and suddenly I felt human again."

Drop-Off Respite Outcomes

From December 2023 to March 2025, 16 families received direct respite services at the on-site location. Outcomes included:



100% of caregivers

reported increased confidence in navigating systems of care;

92%

reported reduced stress;

85%

reported social-emotional benefits for youth;

96%

were satisfied with flexibility/access.

Many youth who had previously avoided group settings began participating more consistently and confidently. Caregivers and staff noted visible improvements in emotional regulation, peer engagement, and willingness to try new activities. Demographics of caregivers receiving drop-off respite showed racial, linguistic, and family structure diversity, including grandparents foster parents, adoptive families, and multilingual households.

While these populations showed strong participation in our program, non-traditional caregivers remain

underrepresented in many traditional respite services and often require additional, tailored supports such as psychoeducation, self-care strategy training, and kinship-focused caregiving resources.

In addition, 18.8% of participating caregivers identified as male, and several; were over 65. Primary languages spoken by participants included English (81%), Spanish (6%), and Russian (13%), underscoring the program's need for and commitment to language access.

Additional Quotes from Caregiver & Youth Participants

"My child has never been invited to a birthday party and because of the connections we made with other parents, my child went to his first party. It was such a milestone for us."

"This was the first place where I didn't feel pressure to talk - I just got to show up and be me."

"Before SOAR, I was drowning. The drop-off program gave me time to breathe and a team that believed in us."

Note: Several quotes in this section are composites drawn from themes across multiple caregiver interviews to protect anonymity while highlighting shared experiences

Additional Quotes from Caregiver & Youth Participants

"The peer mentor made it easy to open up. He didn't act like a therapist - he just listened."

"I've been through so many systems. This is the first one that actually felt human."

"Some of the youth we worked with had never stayed in a program more than a few weeks. At SOAR, they not only stayed—they thrived, and even asked for more."

Staff Training and Credentials

SOAR staff were selected for their professional qualifications, cultural humility, and lived experience. They received training in:

- Trauma-informed care and relational support
- Coaching models, including resilience and goal-based frameworks
- Adolescent development and motivational interviewing
- Crisis intervention, de-escalation, and safety planning
- Cultural responsiveness and language access strategies

Role Specific Certifications

- **Sustainability Coach:** Certified Master Life Coach, Certificate in Intensive Motivational Interviewing, Safety-Cares Specialist, Facilitator-Arammu Family Resilience Checkup
- **Young Adult Peer Mentor:** Certified Peer Specialist, Safety-Cares Trainer, Certificate in Intensive Motivational Interviewing

- **Family Partner:** Financial Social Work Certification Safety-Cares Specialist
- **Program Director:** Certified Master Life Coach, Certificate in Intensive Motivational Interviewing, Safety-Cares Specialist

Reflective supervision was provided regularly, and role-specific onboarding ensured consistent service delivery across all settings.

Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

SOAR prioritized equity throughout its design and implementation. The program ensured:

- Services were offered in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole to support language access;
- Cultural and linguistic matching where possible to promote trust and reduce barriers;
- Use of translation services as needed;
- Embedding staff in familiar, community-based environments to meet families in non-stigmatizing, accessible ways;
- Creation of individualized, culturally sensitive support plans.

Funding and Support

The Caregivers SOAR pilot was funded through a \$900,000 Respite Innovations Grant awarded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). Riverside's proposal was selected for its innovative, equity-driven approach to delivering flexible, community-based respite services for families of youth with significant mental health needs.

This public investment enabled:

- The launch and staffing of SOAR's three-pronged service model;
- The creation of wellness-enhancing environments for both caregivers and youth;
- Culturally responsive training and support for community youth workers;
- Integration of sustainability and trauma-informed coaching practices through an interdisciplinary team.

This level of funding was essential to designing and implementing a comprehensive model grounded in lived experience, accessibility, and long-term community impact.

Advisory Structures

SOAR was guided by both internal and external advisory councils composed of:

- Caregivers
- Youth
- Community partners
- Riverside clinical and lived experience staff

These groups:

- Shaped service delivery
- Provided real-time feedback
- Ensured cultural alignment and relevance

Caregiver focus groups were also conducted to surface needs, co-design solutions, and validate pilot adaptations.

Limitations and Areas for Growth

While SOAR demonstrated strong outcomes and satisfaction, future implementation should consider:

- Capacity constraints – While the team adjusted schedules to avoid waitlists, future demand may outpace available slots
- Low survey response rates from Community youth workers, limiting generalizability
- Geographic reach was limited to two cities due to staffing and funding
- Sustainability coaching is still emerging and may require further standardization
- Data collection relied in part on self-report, though supplemented with interviews and supervision
- Transportation was not a barrier in this pilot, but could be in other communities
- Funding constraints - This pilot was funded by the EOHHS Respite Innovations Grant, but at present there are few additional funding opportunities to sustain innovative programs like Caregivers SOAR.

These findings offer opportunities for future research, deeper integration into state systems, and improved access strategies.

Scalability and Sustainability

Caregivers SOAR is both scalable and sustainable by design, offering a replicable framework rooted in community partnerships, interdisciplinary collaboration, and culturally responsive care. The model has demonstrated success in supporting families traditionally underserved by the behavioral health system and it is well-positioned to expand.

Scalability

Scalability is made possible through the program's adaptable design and its ability to embed within existing youth-serving environments and spaces. SOAR can be implemented in a range of settings from community behavioral health organizations to family homes and community youth centers offering a range of implementation opportunities. Key drivers of scalability include

- **Modular Program Components:** SOAR's three-pronged approach—on-site drop-off respite, community-based youth, and caregiver support, and coaching for community youth workers—can be tailored to meet local needs and capacities.
- **Clearly Defined Roles and Training Pathways:** The model includes training protocols and coaching frameworks for each role, allowing other communities to onboard staff consistently while maintaining fidelity to the model.
- **Community Integration:** The ability to co-locate and implement programming within trusted community organizations facilitates smoother integration, community trust, and quicker startup timelines.
- **Blended Funding Strategies:** Replication could be supported by leveraging a mix of Medicaid reimbursement (where applicable), grant funding, state contracts, and private funding to fill gaps as outlined in the [2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#) report. Consultation and training offerings also present opportunities for earned revenue to support program expansion.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the SOAR model is rooted in its attention to long-term system alignment and commitment to community voice. Unlike temporary or crisis-driven programs, SOAR is structured to grow and evolve with the communities it serves. Critical sustainability factors include:

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration and Shared Ownership:** SOAR's development and implementation involve caregivers, youth, educators, clinicians, funders, and policy stakeholders. This coalition model ensures broad-based investment and relevance.
- **Continuous Community Feedback Loops:** Program design has been shaped and refined through caregiver focus groups, internal and external advisory councils, and feedback from youth and community partners. This participatory approach ensures the model remains responsive and grounded in real-world needs.
- **Investment in Workforce and Reflective Supervision:** Staff receive ongoing training, supervision, and opportunities for professional development, essential to building and retaining a diverse, community-based workforce.
- **Policy Advocacy and Systems Change:** SOAR contributes to the larger conversation about how to define and fund respite. By demonstrating outcomes through a non-traditional, coaching-based model, SOAR is informing state-level discussions on respite services and influencing the broader system of care.

Together, these elements ensure that SOAR is not only replicable in new communities but also built to last. Its success is evidence that flexible, culturally attuned, relationship-centered respite can be a foundational element of the behavioral health ecosystem, providing real relief to caregivers, increasing resiliency, and helping youth thrive at home and in the community.

Conclusion

Caregivers SOAR Pilot clearly demonstrated that innovative, culturally responsive, and flexible respite is both possible and impactful. Its innovation includes redefining the term "caregiver" to incorporate community youth workers as part of families' natural

respite networks, introducing a sustainability coaching role that is new to the field, and integrating Virtual Reality (VR) to enhance connection and mindfulness practices with youth and caregivers. Additional creative elements, such as the development of a community garden and a state-of-the-art sensory space, further reflect the program's holistic approach. Through meaningful partnerships, investment in peer-led and coaching-based supports, and a commitment to whole-family well-being, Caregivers SOAR helped families who once felt invisible find relief, connection, and a path forward. While the pilot's results were significant, the program could not be extended beyond the grant period due to the absence of sustainable funding sources.

In recognition of the impact SOAR made in partnership with other Riverside programs, Riverside Community Care was honored with the **Distinguished Service to Somerville Award** by the Somerville Chamber of Commerce on December 5, 2024. The nomination came from Vladimir Benoit, President and CEO of the Somerville YMCA, in recognition of Riverside's innovative contributions to youth, families, and community youth workers across the city. This award underscores SOAR's role in advancing equity, mental health support, and community collaboration.

By listening deeply and responding meaningfully to caregiver voice and community wisdom, SOAR became more than a program; it became a model of co-created care.

This model offers a tangible way for states and systems to move beyond rhetoric into action, centering community wisdom and resilience as essential components of behavioral health reform. However, addressing funding gaps is essential for its replicability and success.

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- Rendever Data Deck.pdf
- [Resilient and Healthy Communities - Groundwork USA](#)
- [Nurturing Minds: Community Gardens & Mental Well-being](#)

Caregivers SOAR Appendices

Supplemental Tools and Materials

Prepared by Riverside Community Care
August 2025

Appendix A:

Measurement Tools Utilized in Program Evaluation

For Caregivers

- [Personal Inventory Assessment \(PIA\)](#): A self-assessment tool used at intake to evaluate domains such as physical and mental health, environment, relationships, financial well-being, and personal growth. Results guided coaching goals and the development of an Individualized Support Plan (ISP). Inclusive of Life Domain Wheel.
- [Individualized Caregiver Support Plan](#): Developed in collaboration with the Sustainability Coach to identify strengths, barriers, and concrete goals for improving caregiver well-being.
 - Themes Identified from PIA Responses: Chronic stress and fatigue; concerns about home and community safety; isolation and strained relationships; mixed levels of confidence in caregiving (50% moderate, 25% low, 25% high).
- [AMA Stress Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#): Used during programming to track caregiver stress and resiliency levels.
- [Caregiver Interview Script](#): Caregiver Interview Script: A qualitative tool used for evaluating the caregiver experience before, during, and after program participation.

For Youth:

- [Personal Inventory Assessment \(PIA\)](#): Adapted to gather self-reported feedback from youth on well-being and goals. Inclusive of Life Domain Wheel.
- [Individualized Youth Support Plan \(ISP\)](#): Used to help youth articulate their desired future, identify barriers, and develop action steps.
- [Youth Behavior Observation Grid](#): Youth Profiles based on consistent observations during programming, youth behavior data was tracked and compiled using grid.
- [Youth Satisfaction Survey](#): Brief qualitative and Likert-style tool used to assess program engagement, connection to peers, and feedback on activities.

Caregivers SOAR Personal Inventory

Caregiver's Full Name: _____

Date: _____

Introduction:

You are the expert on yourself! Understanding the current state of different areas of your life and setting goals to feel more satisfied and healthier may not be easy. Yet, it is a vital step towards reaching your full potential and that of your loved ones.

This Personal Inventory will help you consider your actual needs, where you are now, and where you want to be. It will be the first step in creating an Individualized Support Plan to achieve sustainable change/growth and meet your goals.

Instructions:

- There are no wrong or correct answers; the most important thing is identifying the answers that resonate the most with your actual experience and perception. Take a few minutes to relax and think broadly and openly as you answer the questions.
- Circle the number that applies to you for each question.
- Sum up the points and write down the total in "**TOTAL SCORE:** _____;" it is at the end of the statements. The Total Score number is your score for that specific life area.

PHYSICAL HEALTH Review your physical health status and identify your sleeping, eating, hydration and exercise habits.					
1. How often do you exercise or go for a walk? (For at least 20 minutes each time)	1 Three or more times a week	2 About once a week	3 About every two weeks	4 About once a month	5 Not at all
2. How often do you have a good night's sleep and feel rested and alert the next day?	1 Most nights	2 About every second night	3 About once a week	4 About every two weeks	5 Rarely
3. How frequently do you eat a meal that is composed of a mixture of vegetables, fruit, carbs, and lean meat?	1 Three or two times a day	2 At least once a day	3 Two or three times per week	4 Once a week	5 Rarely
4. On average, how many glasses (12 oz.) of plain water do you drink daily?	1 More than seven glasses per day	2 Five to six glasses per day	3 Three to four glasses per day	4 One to two glasses per day	5 None
5. For at least the past 6 months, to what extent have you been limited because of health problems in your daily activities?	1 Not limited at all	2 Rarely limited	3 Limited	4 Very limited	5 Severely limited
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Physical Health Risk Levels					
5 – 9 Low Risk	10 – 14 Moderate Risk		15 – 25 High Risk		

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH Check your emotions and stress management.					
1. Do you find it easy to set priorities and make decisions?	1 Extremely easy	2 Moderately easy	3 Somewhat easy	4 Slightly easy	5 Not at all easy
2. Is it easy for you to be flexible and adapt or adjust to life's challenges positively?	1 Extremely easy	2 Moderately easy	3 Somewhat easy	4 Slightly easy	5 Not at all easy
3. Rate this statement: "I can manage and express my emotions appropriately (i.e., hurt, sadness, fear, anger, and joy)."	1 Very true of me	2 True of me	3 Somewhat true of me	4 Untrue of me	5 Very untrue of me
4. Rate this statement: "I feel guilty when I take "time-out" to enjoy myself."	1 Not at all guilty	2 Slightly guilty	3 Somewhat guilty	4 Moderately guilty	5 Extremely guilty
5. Rate this statement: "I am hopeful for my future and for my child's future."	1 Extremely hopeful	2 Moderately hopeful	3 Somewhat hopeful	4 Slightly hopeful	5 Not at all hopeful
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Emotional & Mental Health Risk Levels					
5 – 9 Low Risk	10 – 14 Moderate Risk		15 – 25 High Risk		

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT Identify your connection with the social networks and support available in your social environment.					
1. How often do you participate in community or social activities that support your interests and well-being?	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
2. How easily can you access and navigate your community support network (i.e., transportation, access to internet, etc.)?	1 Extremely easy	2 Moderately easy	3 Somewhat easy	4 Slightly easy	5 Not at all easy
3. Rate this statement: "My community provides quality resources to improve aspects of myself or my life (personal development)."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very Untrue
4. Rate this statement: "I participate in support or self-help groups where I experience similar issues with others and feel understood, comforted, and supported by them."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very Untrue
5. How safe or accepted do you feel when expressing your true self to others? (Gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, cultural/ethnic background, beliefs/values, political point of view, etc.)	1 Very safe	2 Safe	3 Somewhat safe	4 Unsafe	5 Very Unsafe
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Levels of Social Environment Support/Connection					
5 – 9 High Support/Connection	10 – 14 Moderate Support/Connection		15 – 25 Low Support/Connection		

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Identify how your physical environment supports or affects your well-being and health.					
1. How often do you worry about safety in your community?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
2. How comfortable do you feel reaching out for help from local law enforcement/first responders?	1 Very comfortable	2 Comfortable	3 Somewhat comfortable	4 Uncomfortable	5 Very uncomfortable
3. How often do you worry about having a place to live? (Becoming homeless, quality and safety, affordability, landlord issues.)	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
4. Rate this statement: "I have access to affordable and interesting recreation and fitness areas/facilities and related programming in my community."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
5. How often do you worry about food security?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Physical Environment Support Levels					
5 – 9 High Support	10 – 14 Moderate Support		15 – 25 Low Support		

RELATIONSHIPS

Assess the state of your relationships and determine if your needs are being met.

Write N/A if one of these relationships doesn't apply in your case.

Rate this statements	Family Members			Romantic Partner			Friends			Other important relationships		
1. I feel loved and connected in this relationship.	1 = Very loved 2 = Loved 3 = Somewhat loved 4 = Unloved 5 = Very unloved			1 = Very loved 2 = Loved 3 = Somewhat loved 4 = Unloved 5 = Very unloved			1 = Very connected 2 = Connected 3 = Somewhat connected 4 = Unconnected 5 = Very unconnected			1 = Very connected 2 = Connected 3 = Somewhat connected 4 = Unconnected 5 = Very unconnected		
2. I have a safe and trusting relationship.	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue		
3. I feel accepted and respected.	1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted			1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted			1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted			1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted		
4. I feel satisfied and want to spend quality time having fun.	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue		
5. I find it easy to communicate. (Understand them and feel understood by them.)	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue			1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue		
	TOTAL SCORE: ____			TOTAL SCORE: ____			TOTAL SCORE: ____			TOTAL SCORE: ____		
	Family Members			Romantic Partner			Friends			Other important relationships		
Relationship Satisfaction Levels	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low
	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25

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FINANCIAL SECURITY					
Explore your current satisfaction with your personal and family finances.					
1. How satisfied do you feel about managing your individual or family finances?	1 Very satisfied	2 Satisfied	3 Somewhat satisfied	4 Dissatisfied	5 Very dissatisfied
2. Rate this statement: "I understand and control non-essential spending (wants versus needs.)"	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
3. Rate this statement: "I calculate a monthly budget that works for me and my family and stick to it."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
4. Rate this statement: "I save part of my income for an emergency fund and future saving."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
5. How would you rate your credit score history?	1 Excellent	2 Good	3 Fair	4 Poor	5 Bad
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Satisfaction Levels of Financial Security					
5 – 9 High Satisfaction	10 – 14 Moderate Satisfaction		15 – 25 Low Satisfaction		

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Examine the growth and development of your abilities, talents, and interests, both in your personal life and at work (if applicable), and live with both in balance.					
1. Rate this statement, "I am confident in my ability to assess and overcome barriers that prevent me from achieving my personal and/or professional goals."	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Not at all confident
2. Rate this statement, "I feel confident that I can successfully advocate for my own needs?"	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
3. How motivated are you to actively seek and engage in opportunities for your personal and/or professional development?	1 Very motivated	2 Motivated	3 Somewhat motivated	4 Rarely motivated	5 Not at all motivated
4. Rate this statement, "How often do you engage in activities to promote your mental and emotional well-being?"	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
5. How balanced do you feel about managing your different life areas and obligations (family, friends, work, personal time, etc.)?	1 Very balanced	2 Balanced	3 Somewhat balanced	4 Unbalanced	5 Very unbalanced
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Satisfaction Levels of Personal and Profesional Development					
5 – 9 High Satisfaction	10 – 14 Moderate Satisfaction		15 – 25 Low Satisfaction		

PARENTING SKILLS Assess your parenting skills by identifying your strengths and the skills you want to develop.					
1. How often do you actively listen to your child(ren)'s thoughts and feelings?	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
2. How confident are you in resolving conflicts with your child(ren) and following through with appropriate consequences?	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Never confident
3. Rate this statement, "I am confident that I understand my child(ren)'s needs and set realistic expectations."	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
4. Rate this Statement, "I feel confident I can set limits and boundaries with my child(ren)."	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
5. Rate this statement, "I am confident in my ability to adapt and respond to changes in my child(ren)'s behavior or needs."	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Never confident
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Parenting Skills Level of Confidence					
5 – 9 High Confidence	10 – 14 Moderate Confidence		15 – 25 Low Confidence		

CHILD ADVOCACY Identify how you advocate for your children.					
1. Rate this statement, " I feel confident in my ability to advocate for my child(ren)'s needs in various care systems, including educational, medical settings, and others."	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Never confident
2. Are you satisfied with the collaboration and communication between yourself and your child(ren)'s teachers regarding their academic progress and challenges?	1 Very satisfied	2 Satisfied	3 Somewhat satisfied	4 Dissatisfied	5 Very dissatisfied
3. Rate this statement, "I am confident in my ability to support my child(ren)'s education and learning outside of school."	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Never confident
4. Rate this statement, "I have the skills and confidence to advocate for my child(ren) in and out of the community.	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
5. Rate this statement. "I believe that it is important to foster a positive and inclusive community for all child(ren)."	1 Very important	2 Important	3 Somewhat important	4 Slightly important	5 Not at all important
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Child Advocacy Level of Need					
5 – 9 Low Need	10 – 14 Moderate Need		15 – 25 High Need		

Caregivers SOAR Individualized Support Plan

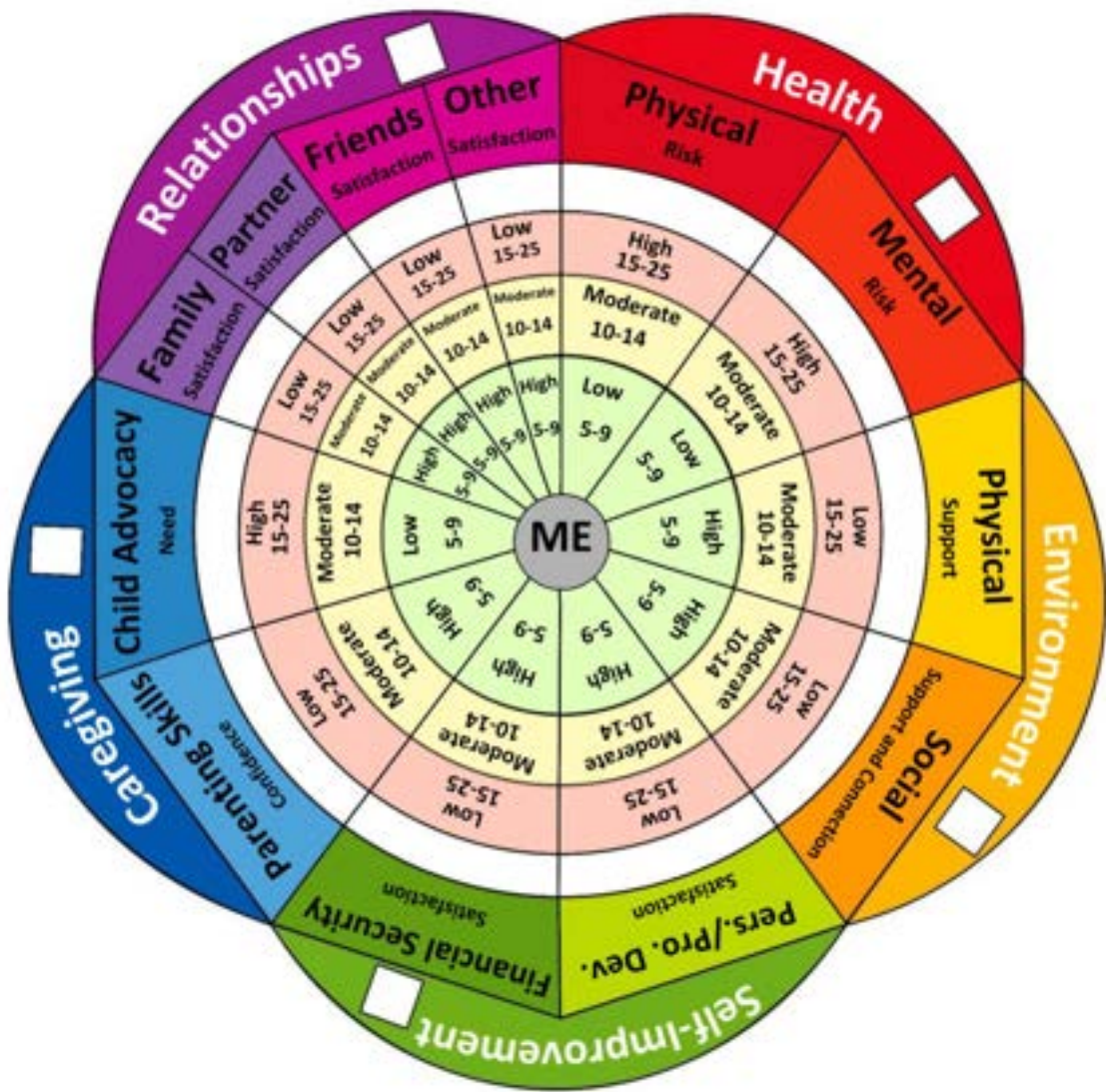
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I. MY CURRENT LIFE

Caregiver Full Name: _____ Date: _____

Personal Inventory Summary



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II. MY DESIRED LIFE

Where do I see myself in 5 years from now? How will my life look like in 5 years?

Life Domains:

HEALTH

ENVIRONMENT

RELATIONSHIPS

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

CAREGIVING

Values/Strengths

Why/Motivation

Ideal-Self

Values/Strengths

Why/Motivation

Ideal-Self

Values/Strengths

Why/Motivation

Ideal-Self

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III. MY ACTION PLAN

Life Domains:

HEALTH

ENVIRONMENT

RELATIONSHIPS

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

CAREGIVING

Physical

Social

Family/Sig. Other

Financial Security

Parenting S.

Mental

Physical

Friends/Other

Pers./Prof. Development

Child Adv.

Start Date: _____

End Date _____

Duration: _____

GOAL

1: _____

OBJECTIVES

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

ACTION STEPS

Obj. 1

1: _____ 4: _____

2: _____ 5: _____

3: _____ 6: _____

Obj. 2

1: _____ 4: _____

2: _____ 5: _____

3: _____ 6: _____

Obj. 3

1: _____ 4: _____

2: _____ 5: _____

3: _____ 6: _____

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How motivated are you to achieve this goal?

1	2	3	4	5
Very motivated	Motivated	Somewhat motivated	Slightly motivated	Not motivated at all

How confident are you in meeting this goal?

1	2	3	4	5
Very confident	Confident	Somewhat confident	Slightly confident	Not confident at all

Notes/Comments

INTERNAL STRENGTHS

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

PROGRESS INDICATORS (MILESTONES)

Potential Check-in Dates

1:		
2:		
3:		

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SCHEDULE

Objective —	Dates		Days	Time	Place	Who	Materials/Services
	Start	End					
Action Steps	Done		Date	Time	Place	Who	Materials/Services
	☐						
	☐						
	☐						
	☐						
	☐						
	☐						

How will you keep track of your progress? (Agenda, calendar, app, etc.)

IV. MY GOALS PROGRESS

ACTION PLAN UPDATES

Progress Status: I.P. = In Progress C. = Completed R. = Revised N.M. = Not met

Goals Update	Progress Status	Roadblocks	Success	Milestones Update	Check-in Date
Objectives Update	Progress Status	Roadblocks	Success	Milestones Update	Check-in Date
Action Steps Update	Progress Status	Roadblocks	Success	Milestones Update	Check-in Date

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Check-in Date: _____

How motivated are you to achieve this goal?

1	2	3	4	5
Very motivated	Motivated	Somewhat motivated	Slightly motivated	Not motivated at all

How confident are you in meeting this goal?

1	2	3	4	5
Very confident	Confident	Somewhat confident	Slightly confident	Not confident at all

Notes/Comments

Which tools did you use to keep track of your progress? Any changes? (Agenda, calendar, app, etc.)

Have your goals changed in priority?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Caregiver self-assessment questionnaire

How are YOU?

Caregivers are often so concerned with caring for others that they lose sight of their own well-being. Please take just a moment to answer the following questions.

During the past week or so, I have ...

1. Had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.....Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Felt that I couldn't leave my youth alone.....Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Had difficulty making decisions.....Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Felt completely overwhelmed.....Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Felt useful and needed.....Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Felt lonely.....Yes ☐ No ☐
7. Been upset that my youth has changed so much from his/her former self..... Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time.....Yes ☐ No ☐
9. Been edgy or irritable.....Yes ☐ No ☐
10. Had sleep disturbed because of caring for my youth.....Yes ☐ No ☐
11. Had a crying spell(s).....Yes ☐ No ☐
12. Felt strained between work or other life areas and family responsibilities.....Yes ☐ No ☐
13. Had back pain.....Yes ☐ No ☐
14. Felt ill (*headaches, stomach problems or common cold*)Yes ☐ No ☐
15. Been satisfied with the support my family has given me.....Yes ☐ No ☐
16. Found my youth's living situation to be inconvenient or a barrier to care.....Yes ☐ No ☐
17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not stressful" to 10 being "extremely stressful," please rate your current level of stress. _____
18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very healthy" to 10 being "very ill," please rate your current health compared to what it was this time last year

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Introduction

There are no wrong or correct answers; the most important thing is identifying the answers that resonate the most with your personal experience. Take the time to think about your answers, and don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

We will ensure confidentiality. Please feel free to stop the interview at any time or choose not to answer any questions. Thanks for your time and participation. Your contribution to Caregivers SOAR is greatly appreciated!

Caregiving Overview

Internal note - If the caregivers discussed their challenges, rewards, feelings, or experiences in question 1, you may skip some of the questions below.

1. How would you describe your overall experience as a caregiver?
2. What are some of the most challenging aspects of caregiving?
3. What are some of the most rewarding aspects of caregiving?

Caregiving Overview:

- Rewards and challenges of caregiving
- Self-Care techniques/personal time
- Their personal caregiver experiences

Stress Status before SOAR

Internal note- Provide the caregiver with the date they started at SOAR to help them place themselves in that time and remember more easily.

1. What aspects of caregiving caused you the most stress?
2. Did you have sufficient opportunities to socialize with others outside your caregivers' responsibilities?
3. How would you describe your mental and emotional health before SOAR?
4. Internal note – if the caregiver has trouble answering this question, ask the question a.
 - a. Did you sometimes feel overwhelmed, isolated, frustrated, or anxious? Provide specific examples or more details.
5. How would you describe your physical health before SOAR?
6. Internal note – if the caregiver has trouble answering question 1, ask the question a.
 - a. Did you experience headaches, digestive problems, insomnia, etc.? Provide specific examples or more details.

Stress Status **Before SOAR:**

- What was causing the most stress/overall stress levels
- Respite options
- Caregiver socialization
- Overall wellbeing (physical and mental health)

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7. How would you rate your overall well-being before SOAR?

1	2	3	4	5
Very good	Good	Somewhat good	Slightly good	Not at all good

- a. What made you choose this number?

8. How would you rate your overall stress level before SOAR?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all stress	Slightly stressed	Somewhat stressed	Moderately stressed	Very stressed

- a. What made you choose this number?

Stress status during SOAR

- Have you noticed any improvement in your general stress levels since coming to SOAR? Provide a specific example. [Internal note – if the caregiver has trouble answering question 1, ask questions a and b.](#)
 - To your emotional health? (ex: anxious, overwhelmed, exhausted) To your physical health? (ex, headaches, digestive problems, insomnia, etc.)
 - How do you think that SOAR has helped reduce or manage your stress levels related to your caregiving responsibilities?
- How do you feel about your overall well-being since participating in SOAR?

Stress Status **During** SOAR:

- Improvement of stress levels due to SOAR
- Improvement of wellbeing due to SOAR
- Any coping/stress reducing techniques learned from SOAR

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4. How would you rate your well-being during SOAR?

1	2	3	4	5
Very good	Good	Somewhat good	Slightly good	Not at all good

- a. What made you choose this number?

5. How would you rate your overall stress level during SOAR?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all stress	Slightly stressed	Somewhat stressed	Moderately stressed	Very stressed

- a. What made you choose this number?

Benefits obtained from SOAR

1. Have there been SOAR services/roles that have been beneficial to you? Please explain your reasons.
2. Internal note- give time to CG to reply before offering the options below Saturday childcare respite has been very helpful to give myself a couple hours. Parent sessions on Saturdays that for me was the most helpful part because I got to meet other parents and communicate frankly with other parents who have similar experiences.

- a. **Programming options:** Evening, Saturday, Vacation? Drop-off? **Roles:** FP? SC? YAPM? HWC? SOAR Director?
- b. What positive changes/benefits have you noticed (yourself, youth, and family) since participating in SOAR?

Internal note – if the caregiver has trouble answering question 2, provide the examples below in question a.

- a. (Ex: going to new places, doing activities you couldn't do before, meeting or reconnecting people, starting a new hobby/job/classes, etc.) Have you been able to create social connections with other caregivers? Please explain how.

Benefits Obtained from SOAR:

- Which service has been most beneficial
- Positive changes within caregiver, youth, or family dynamic
- Social connection between caregivers within SOAR
- Self-care/personal time improvement
- Potential long term benefits from SOAR

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4. Do you feel that you can better balance how you spend your time for your own mental and physical health? What do you see as the long-term benefits of the SOAR program for your youth, family, and yourself?

Rate These Statements					
	1 Very True	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
1) I feel less isolated/lonely since participating in SOAR.					
2) The SOAR Program has connected or accompanied me with other services/providers. If so, explain how it's been beneficial.					
3) I have learned new techniques to support my youth.					
4) The SOAR program has provided me with much-needed breaks from my caregiving responsibilities.					
5) Since participating in the SOAR program, I have time to engage in activities I enjoy but often neglect due to caregiving responsibilities. (List those activities)					

Lunch, yoga, getting tasks such as housekeeping done.

Youth Behavior Improvement/Progress

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Internal note – Ask them to explain/describe their answers or provide specific examples.

1. How would you describe your youth's most challenging behavior **before SOAR**?
2. **Before SOAR**, did you have effective interventions in place to support your youth's behaviors?
 - a. Have your intervention techniques changed?

Youth Behavior Progress:

- Before and after challenging behaviors
- Before and after intervention techniques
- Socialization and resiliency skills assessment
- Behavior in other contexts
- Youth's overall wellbeing since participating

Rate These Statements and provide specific examples.					
Since participating in SOAR	1 Very True	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
1) My youth has improved their behavior (e.g., apologizing when necessary, communicating their needs, being less reactive, etc.)					
2) My youth's communication skills have improved.					
3) My youth has shown increased empathy or understanding of others.					
4) My youth behaviors improved in other contexts (e.g., school, home, etc.)					
5) My youth's relationships with you, family members, and peers have improved.					
6) I have observed positive changes in my youth's mood or emotional state.					
7) My youth looks more confident and self-assured.					
8) My youth have been able to regulate their emotions on their own.					

How would you rate your youth's well-being during SOAR?

1 Very good	2 Good	3 Somewhat good	4 Slightly good	5 Not at all good
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SOAR Overview

1. Is there a goal you met or a problem you resolved because of your involvement with SOAR? Please explain how or provide examples.
2. What do you feel has worked well/not so well with SOAR for your youth, family, and yourself?
3. With SOAR, is there anything(s) you felt were missing or could've been added? Provide examples.
4. Would you recommend SOAR to others? If so, why?

Caregivers SOAR Youth Personal Inventory

Youth's Full Name: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Introduction:

You are the expert on yourself! Understanding the current state of different areas of your life and setting goals to feel more satisfied and healthier may not be easy. Yet, it is a vital step towards reaching your full potential and that of your loved ones.

This Personal Inventory will help you think about your actual needs, where you are now, and where you want to be. It will be the first step to creating an Individualized Support Plan to achieve sustainable change/growth and meet your goals.

Instructions:

- There are no wrong or correct answers; the most important thing is identifying the answers that resonate the most with your actual experience and perception. Take a few minutes to relax and think broadly and openly as you answer the questions.
- Circle the number that applies to you for each question.
- Sum up the points and write down the total in "**TOTAL SCORE:** _____;" it is at the end of the statements. The Total Score number is your score for that specific life area.

PHYSICAL HEALTH Review the different factors influencing your physical health status, including your sleep patterns, dietary choices, hydration habits and exercise routines.					
1. How often do you engage in physical activities (sports, gym, running, etc.,)?	1 Every day	2 Three times a week	3 Twice a week	4 Once a week	5 Never
2. How frequently do you wake up feeling refreshed and energized?	1 Every night	2 Most nights	3 About every second night	4 About once a week	5 Rarely
3. How often do you have a meal containing a mixture of vegetables, fruit, carbs, and lean meat?	1 Three or two times a day	2 At least once a day	3 Two or three times per week	4 Once a week	5 Rarely
4. On average, how many glasses (12 oz.) of water do you consume each day?	1 More than seven glasses per day	2 Five to six glasses per day	3 Three to four glasses per day	4 One to two glasses per day	5 None
5. When was the last time you had a physical examination with your primary care provider or dentist?	1 Within the last 6 months	2 Within the last year	3 1 – 2 years ago	4 More than 2 years ago	5 Never
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Physical Health Risk Levels					
5 – 9 Low Risk	10 – 19 Moderate Risk		20 – 25 High Risk		

EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH Engage in monitoring of your emotions, identifying areas that require attention to maintain emotional equilibrium, and foster resilience.					
1. How comfortable do you feel asking for support regarding your mental/emotional health?	1 Very comfortable	2 Comfortable	3 Somewhat comfortable	4 Uncomfortable	5 Very uncomfortable
2. How often do you feel that you make good decisions?	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
3. How strongly do you agree with the statement: "I'm afraid to face the world out there on my own."	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
4. How frequently do you feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities at home or school?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
5. Rate this statement: "I have healthy coping strategies."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Emotional & Mental Health Risk Levels					
5 – 9 Low Risk	10 – 14 Moderate Risk		15 – 25 High Risk		

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SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT					
Identify the connections within your social network to nurture and sustain your well-being and personal growth.					
1. Rate this statement: "I feel comfortable being around people who are different from me."	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
2. How safe do you feel speaking up in a group of friends about something you disagree with?	1 Very safe	2 Safe	3 Somewhat safe	4 Unsafe	5 Very Unsafe
3. How would you rate this statement: "My community offers valuable resources to help me think about my future and personal growth."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very Untrue
4. How would you rate this statement: "I actively participate in youth support groups and activities where I connect with my peers."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very Untrue
5. How much time do you spend on social media outside of school time daily?	1 Minimal (30 mins or less)	2 Moderately (30 – 60 minutes)	3 Occasional (60 – 90 minutes)	4 Heavy Use (More than 90 minutes)	5 Other (please specify)
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Levels of Social Environment Support/Connection					
5 – 9 High Support/Connection	10 – 14 Moderate Support/Connection		15 – 25 Low Support/Connection		

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Identify the various aspects of your physical environment, considering how they influence and contribute to your emotional well-being and overall health.					
1. How frequently do concerns about safety arise for you within your home or community?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
2. How at ease do you feel when seeking assistance from school administration or community resources regarding issues such as bullying or harassment?	1 Very comfortable	2 Comfortable	3 Somewhat comfortable	4 Uncomfortable	5 Very uncomfortable
3. How frequently do you worry about having a stable place to live?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
4. How often do you worry about running out of food to eat?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
5. Please rate this statement: "Within my community, I have opportunities to participate in affordable and enjoyable recreational activities and fitness programs."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Physical Environment Support Levels					
5 – 9 High Support	10 – 14 Moderate Support		15 – 25 Low Support		

RELATIONSHIPS

Examine the state of your relationships ensuring that your emotional and interpersonal needs are being adequately addressed and fulfilled.

Rate this statement	Family Members (parents/caregivers/other)	Significant other	Friends	Other important relationships (mentors, teachers, etc.,)								
1. I experience a sense of love and connection within this relationship.	1 = Very loved 2 = Loved 3 = Somewhat loved 4 = Unloved 5 = Very unloved	1 = Very loved 2 = Loved 3 = Somewhat loved 4 = Unloved 5 = Very unloved	1 = Very connected 2 = Connected 3 = Somewhat connected 4 = Unconnected 5 = Very unconnected	1 = Very connected 2 = Connected 3 = Somewhat connected 4 = Unconnected 5 = Very unconnected								
2. My relationship feels secure and engaging.	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue								
3. I feel acknowledged and accepted in my interactions.	1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted	1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted	1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted	1 = Very accepted 2 = Accepted 3 = Somewhat accepted 4 = Not accepted 5 = Not at all accepted								
4. I look forward to participating in fun and relaxing activities (with).	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue								
5. I feel understood and can express myself (with).	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue	1 = Very true 2 = True 3 = Somewhat true 4 = Untrue 5 = Very untrue								
	TOTAL SCORE: ____	TOTAL SCORE: ____	TOTAL SCORE: ____	TOTAL SCORE: ____								
	Family Members	Significant other	Friends	Other important relationships								
Relationship Satisfaction Levels	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low
	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 25

FINANCIAL EDUCATION Explore your current level of satisfaction with your personal finances as a means to establish a foundation of stability in your life.					
1. How often do you find yourself worrying about money?	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
2. How often do you have the opportunity to earn or have access to money?	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
3. Rate this statement: "I create a monthly budget that fits my wants (hobbies, interests, etc.,) and needs (transportation, food, etc.,)."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
4. Rate this statement: "Saving money is important to me."	1 Very important	2 Important	3 Somewhat important	4 Unimportant	5 Very unimportant
5. If you have received financial education (parents, teachers, guidance counselor, college prep courses or workshops), how effective do you feel it was in preparing you for managing your finances?	1 Very effective	2 Effective	3 Somewhat effective	4 Not effective	5 Have not received
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Satisfaction Levels of Financial Education					
5 – 9 High Satisfaction	10 – 14 Moderate Satisfaction		15 – 25 Low Satisfaction		

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Explore the progression and enhancement of your skills, talents, and interests by integrating them harmoniously into your daily existence.					
1. Rate this statement: "I feel confident in my ability to identify and overcome obstacles that make it difficult to meet my future aspirations."	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Not at all confident
2. Rate this statement: "I feel confident in my ability to effectively advocate for my own needs."	1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Somewhat confident	4 Rarely confident	5 Not at all confident
3. How would you describe your ability to balance school, family, and other activities?	1 Excellent	2 Good	3 Average	4 Fair	5 Poor
4. How often do you seek advice or feedback from teachers, mentors, or helping professionals?	1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never
5. Rate this statement: "I have clear aspirations for my future career or education."	1 Very true	2 True	3 Somewhat true	4 Untrue	5 Very untrue
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Satisfaction Levels of Personal and Professional Development					
5 – 9 High Satisfaction	10 – 14 Moderate Satisfaction		15 – 25 Low Satisfaction		

Personal Identity					
Explore your inner world to discover how you define yourself as an individual through values, beliefs and goals.					
1. How would you respond to this statement: "I feel like a person of worth."	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat Agree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
2. Rate this statement: "I understand how my beliefs and culture are connected to my identity and guide me in my actions."	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat Agree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
3. How strongly do you agree with this statement: "I must achieve or produce something significant to feel good about myself."	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
4. Rate this statement: "I feel confident in my ability to achieve the goals I set."	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
5. My interests, hobbies, and activities reflect and celebrate aspects of my identity (beliefs, culture, values).	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Personal Identity Level of Confidence					
5 – 9 High Confidence		10 – 14 Moderate Confidence		15 – 25 Low Confidence	

Social Identity Explore your inner world to discover how you define yourself in relation to others.					
1. How safe or accepted do you feel when expressing your true self to others? (religion, disability, cultural/ethnic background, beliefs/values, political point of view, etc.)	1 Very Safe	2 Safe	3 Somewhat Safe	4 Unsafe	5 Very Unsafe
2. Rate this statement: "I often think about how my social status compares to others."	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
3. How strongly do you agree with this statement: "I often compare myself to others on social media."	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
4. Rate this statement: "I feel confident and comfortable in my sexual orientation."	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
5. My gender expression affects the way people treat me.	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
TOTAL SCORE: _____					
Social Identity Level of Confidence					
5 – 9 High Confidence	10 – 14 Moderate Confidence		15 – 25 Low Confidence		

Caregivers SOAR Youth Individualized Support Plan

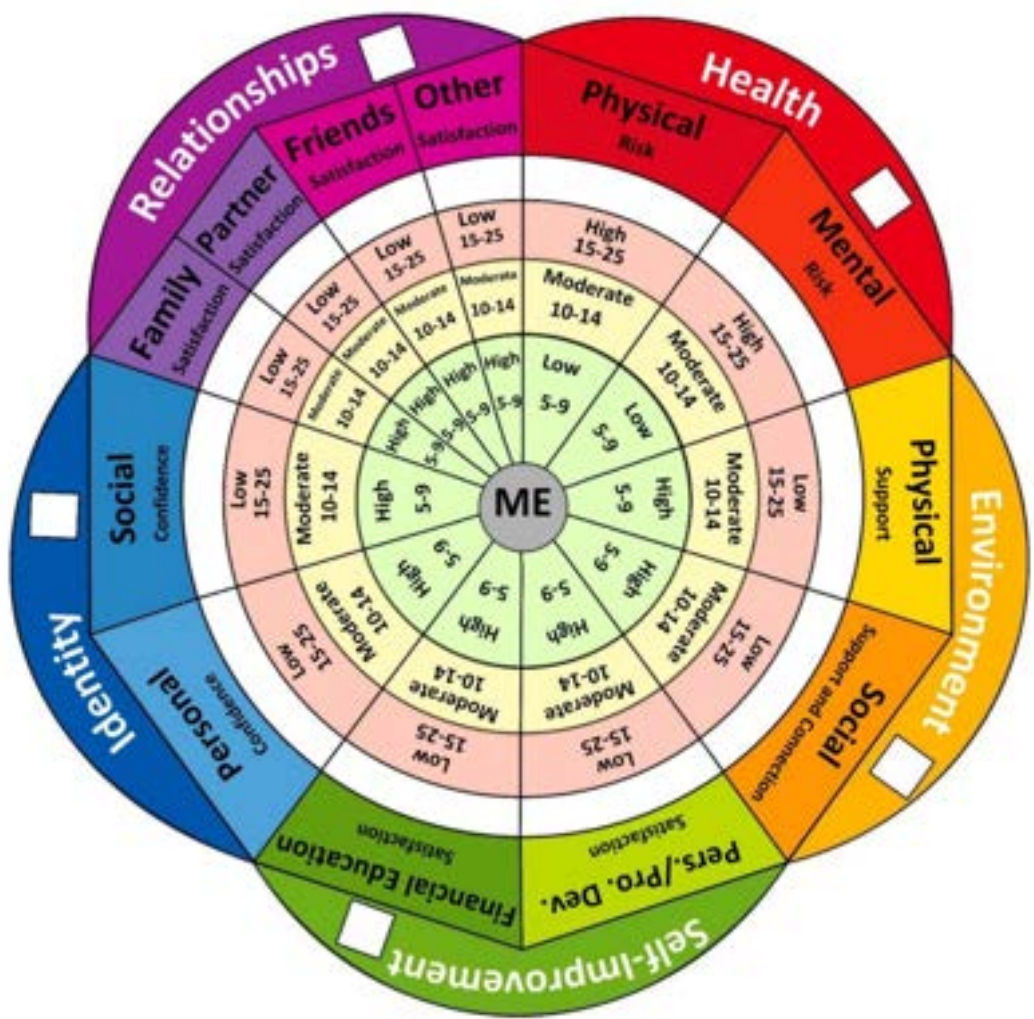
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I. MY CURRENT LIFE

Youth's Full Name: _____ Date: _____

Personal Inventory Summary



II. MY DESIRED LIFE

What is your desired life?

What is affecting you to reach your desired life? What actions/behaviors are contributing?

What is the cost of not solving what is affecting you? What is the future cost?

What is the benefit of solving what is affecting you? What are the future benefits?

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What are some possible solutions?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Which solution do you want to explore and put into action?

What is your motivation to achieve a solution?

Notes/Comments

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III. MY ACTION PLAN

Life Domains:

Health

Environment

Self-Improvement

Identity

Relationships

Physical

Physical

Pers./Pro. Dev.

Personal

Family/Sig. Other

Mental

Social

Financial Education

Social

Friends/Other

GOAL

ACTION STEPS

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

How will you keep track of your progress? (Agenda, calendar, app, etc.)

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How motivated are you in meeting this goal?

1	2	3	4	5
Very motivated	Motivated	Somewhat motivated	Slightly motivated	Not motivated at all

Explain your motivation response

How confident are you in meeting this goal?

1	2	3	4	5
Very confident	Confident	Somewhat confident	Slightly confident	Not confident at all

Explain your confidence response

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POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



HOW TO OVERCOME

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



REWARDS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

IV. MY GOAL PROGRESS

ACTION PLAN UPDATES

Progress Status: I.P. = In Progress C. = Completed R. = Revised N.M. = Not met

Goals Update	Progress Status	Roadblocks	Success	Milestones Update	Check-in Date
Action Steps Update	Progress Status	Roadblocks	Success	Milestones Update	Check-in Date

Have your goals changed in priority?

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Positive Behavior Observation Grid					
Youth Initials:					
1. Take turns when doing an activity together	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
2. Work together to achieve a common goal	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
3. Help Others (kids/adults).	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					

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<i>Notes</i>					
4. Clean up after the activity is over	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
5. Sharing toys and material	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
6. Say please and thank you.	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					

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Notes					
7. Take the time to talk and hear each other out	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staff Intervention					
Notes					
8. Apologize when necessary	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staff Intervention					
Notes					
9. Verbalize their responsibility in a conflict.	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staff Intervention					
Notes					

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10. Propose solutions and accept other people's solutions.	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
11. Avoid blaming or hurtful words or behaviors (Treat others with dignity and respect)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
12. Communicate their needs, feelings, and thoughts	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)
	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					
	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)	Yes (unprompted)

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13. Show signs of self-regulation	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)	Yes (prompted)
	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)	No (prompted)
	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)	No (unprompted)
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Staff Intervention</i>					
<i>Notes</i>					

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Caregivers SOAR Programming

Angela Leddy	Claudia Vargas	Gardite Fougy
Ruth Woods Dunham	Johanny Maria Castillo	Other:
Program:	Date:	Duration:

Activities

Arts and Crafts	Movement	Music
Dance	Cooking	Building
Games	Real Life Scenarios	Sensory
Free play	Other:	

Youth Quality and Satisfaction Survey

Staff name: _____ **Programming:** _____



	Youth Initials					Date	Notes
1. I enjoy participating in the activities/games							
2. Adults make activities fun							
3. I enjoy playing with other kids							
4. Adults let me choose activities							
5. I feel listened to by other kids/adults							
1. What were your favorite activities/games? List them for the kids to choose from.	Youth's names and answers:						

Appendix B:

Supplemental Materials Available Upon Request

[Caregivers SOAR Pilot Impact Report](#) (July 2023–March 2025): Includes key outcomes, timelines, testimonials, and program data.

[Caregivers SOAR Handbook](#): An overview of program philosophy, staff roles, schedules, service structure, and expectations. Includes caregiver and youth protocols and onboarding information.

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Leading the Way in Behavioral Healthcare & Human Services

Caregivers S.O.A.R.

Sustainable Opportunities for Accessing Respite



*July 2023-March 2025
PILOT IMPACT REPORT*



OUR MISSION

Caregivers SOAR offers comprehensive support for caregivers of youth with complex mental health needs by providing respite, coaching, and community connections.

FUNDED BY:

Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Respite Innovations Grant Program

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Through a lens of social sustainability, and using a unique team-driven process, Riverside developed a comprehensive support system that offers diverse respite options, including community activities, center-based groups, and local youth center participation, enabling caregivers to prioritize their well-being, strengthen family bonds, and empower positive individual, family, and community outcomes.



CAREGIVERS

Utilized a non-traditional, holistic approach which aimed to support primary caregivers to access respite and build resiliency through programming, individualized coaching, parent support groups, coffee hour, and educational workshops.



YOUTH

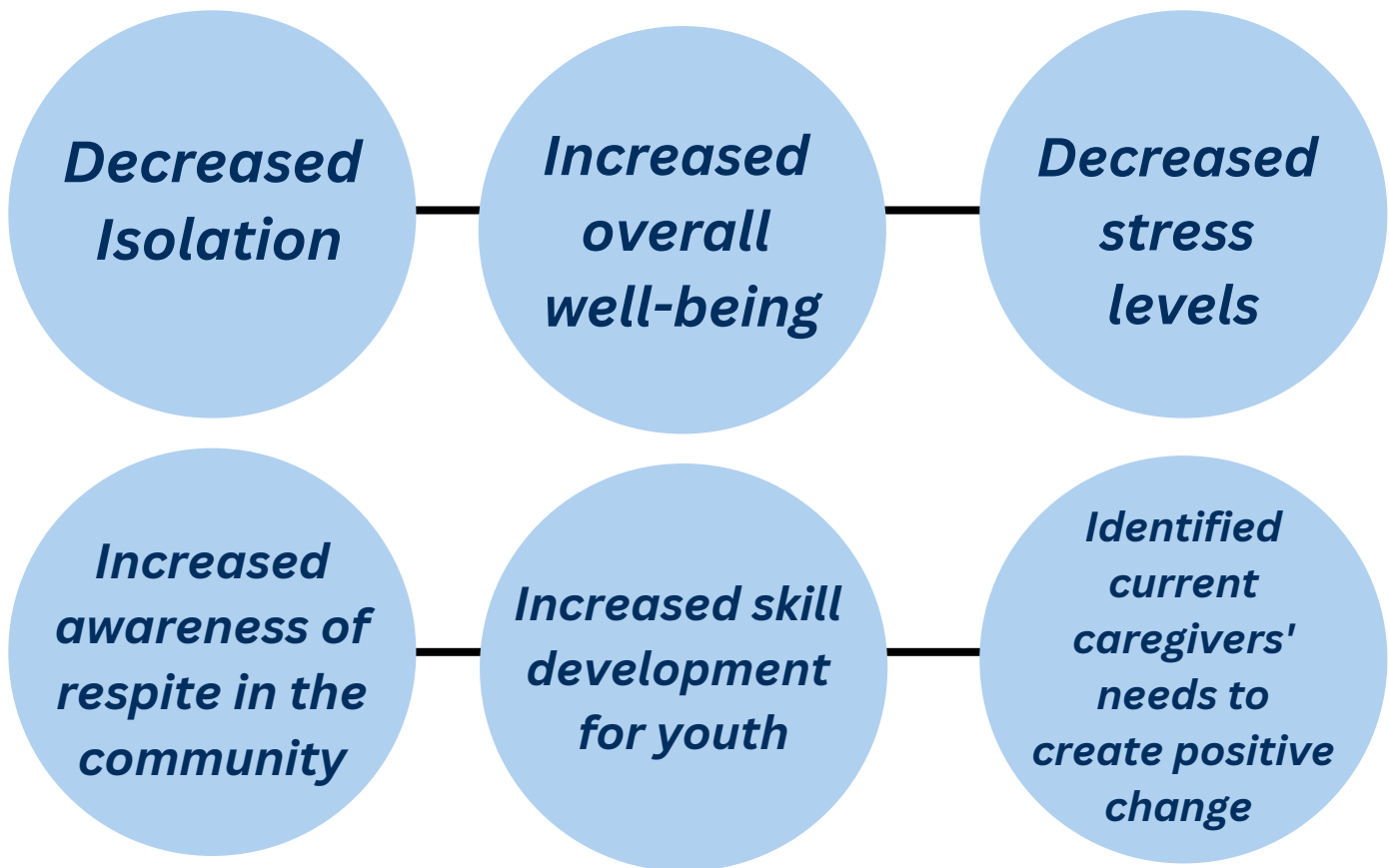
Supported youth (ages 5-12) through socialization and resiliency skill building through programming. Supported transitioning-aged youth (14-18) through 1:1 and group mentoring and coaching sessions.



COMMUNITY YOUTH WORKERS

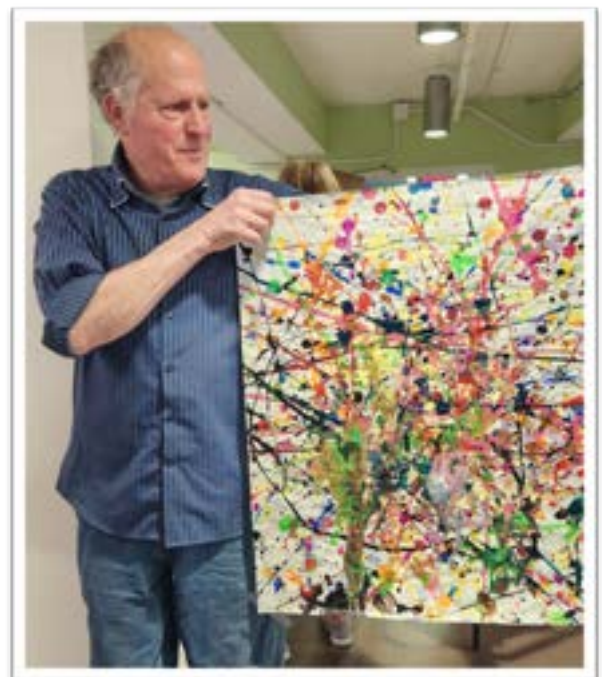
Community youth workers are natural caregivers for our youth, providing essential and sustainable respite and support in the community.

KEY OUTCOMES



We have provided 883 hours of on-site respite

“SOAR provided both of us, the space and the breathing room that we both needed so badly in order to help our relationship and to grow, me as a parent and them as a child, trying to go through this world”
-Lisa, Caregiver



SOAR IN ACTION



**Teen Summer Fair
at Somernova**



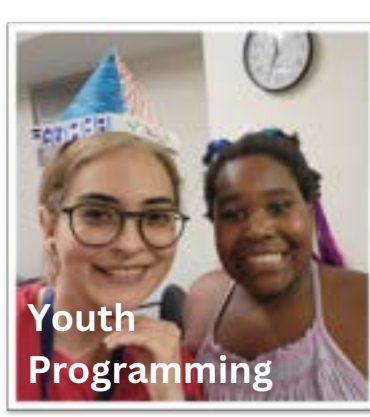
SOAR Graduation Ceremony



Groundworks Garden Event



**Workshop with Teen
Empowerment**



**Youth
Programming**

ACTIVITIES FOR CAREGIVERS AND YOUTH

CAREGIVER SUPPORT/TRAININGS	STAFF ROLES FOR CAREGIVERS	CAREGIVER/YOUTH ON-SIGHT PROGRAMMING	STAFF ROLES FOR YOUTH
•Bi-weekly caregiver support groups •Weekly drop-in coffee hours •Workshops	•Sustainability Coach •Family Partner •Health and Well-Being Coach	•Evening Programming •Saturday Programming •Vacation Week Programming •Gap-Week Programming	•Young Adult Peer Mentor •Youth Support Worker •Health and Well-Being Coach

CAREGIVERS SOAR TIMELINE-HIGHLIGHTS

Number of
Families
Served On-
Site

12



Number of
Youth
Served On-
Site

16

**November
7th, 2023**

SOAR Kick-Off
Event

**December 26th-
29th, 2023**

Winter Break
Programming

**January 23rd,
2024**

First Evening
Programming

**February 19th-
22nd, 2024**

February Break
Programming

**March 16th,
2024**

First Saturday
Programming

**June-August
2024**

Summer Gap
Programming

**August 7-9th,
2025**

Community Garden
Event

**March 1st,
2025**

Caregiver Retreat-
Radiate Wellness

**March 29th,
2025**

SOAR
Celebration/Graduation

CAREGIVERS

OUTCOMES AND GOALS

1. Increased community respite options.
2. Increased awareness of respite opportunities in the community.
3. Improve access and increase caregiver knowledge around a continuum of services.
4. Support the caregivers to achieve their goals identified on an individualized caregiver plan.
5. Each caretaker will develop and implement a comprehensive self-care plan by completing the program.
6. Decrease program caregiver participant stress level (self-report).

WORKSHOPS

- Stress to Resiliency
- Affordable Rental Housing in Massachusetts
- Working with Children with Neurodiversity
- Balancing Family Dynamics
- Financial Literacy
- Expressive Arts for Caregivers and their Family
- Strengthening Family Relationships
- Steps to De-escalating Youth Behavior
- From Challenging Behaviors to Positive Behaviors
- Boundary Setting
- Respite Information in Massachusetts

"I would absolutely recommend [SOAR] to anyone in the community who can benefit from it.... It's like feeling human about the caregiver aspect of it. Feeling normal about the stresses strain that break you down every day and it's about reinforcing the presence and benefits of self-care. Some healthy connections in the community. The people who were running the program were amazing people"
-Sanjukta, Caregiver



YOUTH

OUTCOMES AND GOALS

Demonstrated increased skill development for youth to include improved social skills, safe independence, and decreased isolation.

Transitioning-Aged Youth

Young Adult Peer Mentor worked with transitioning-aged youth (14-18) either 1:1 or in group sessions focused on skill building based on current needs.

Workshops/Groups Offered:

- Sexual Wellness
- Expressive Arts
- Wellness Wednesday



Youth Programming

Programming for youth ages 5-12 focused on building socialization and resiliency skills occurring on:

- Evenings
- Saturdays
- School Vacation/Gap weeks

Increased skills:

- socialization
- resiliency
- empathy
- conflict resolution



Community Youth Worker Support

Implemented activities to enhance the health and well-being of community youth workers at youth-serving organizations in Cambridge, Somerville and beyond. This effort strengthened their capacity to support youth with mental health challenges, expanding natural respite opportunities in the community.

Quarterly Trainings

- Understanding and Responding to Adolescent Mental Health Needs
- Trauma-Informed Care for Community Health Workers
- Job Stress, Burnout, and Self-Care
- Recognize, Release, Rise: Prioritizing YOU as a Caregiver

Additional Offerings

- Health and Wellbeing Coaching (Individual)
- Group Health and Wellbeing Sessions
- Behavioral Health Consultation



Community youth workers across both cities were integral in development of program by:

- Participating in planning meetings to shape training topics.
- Providing input on scheduling and content to ensure accessibility and relevance.
- Offering ongoing feedback to adjust approaches based on evolving needs.

Internal Advisory Council

- **Deepti Kumra**-Former Program Director, Somerville CSA
- **Rachel Carr**-FASP Program Director Somerville
- **Elizabeth Leblanc**- Senior Intensive Care Coordinator Needham CSA

External Advisory Council

- **Annalise Rose**- Young Adult with lived experience and recipient of Riverside services
- **Roberta Biscan**- Former Family Partner, lived experience, and recipient of Riverside services
- **Tabithalee Howard**- Community partner; Cambridge Ridge and Latin, Family Liaison
- **Consuelo Perez**- Community Partner, local activist and educator
- **Ashley Sain Halaire**- Community Partner, Teen Empowerment

Staff Trainings

Sustainability Coach:

- Certified Master Life Coaching
- Arammu Family Resilience Checkup
- Intensive Motivational Interviewing
- Safety-Cares Specialist

Young Adult Peer Mentor:

- Certified Peer Specialist
- Safety-Cares Trainer
- Intensive Motivational Interviewing

Family Partner:

- Financial Social Work Certification
- Safety-Cares Specialist

Program Director:

- Certified Master Life Coaching
- Intensive Motivational Interviewing
- Safety-Cares Specialist

"I wish that i had this program when my child was young"

-Consuelo Perez



Caregivers SOAR Handbook

Sustainable Opportunities for Accessing Respite

Program Philosophy and Goals

Caregivers SOAR is a community-based, innovative respite program specifically designed for caregivers with youth experiencing mental health needs. Our program serves:

- Youth ages 5-12 through supportive on site individual and group programming,
- Caregivers, including Respite providers and Community Youth Workers, through both group programming and individual coaching.
- Adolescents/Transition-age youth through individual coaching and support on site or in the community.

Caregivers SOAR strives to redefine what sustainable respite care looks like for both caregivers and youth in the community. Our family-focused, non-clinical approach is based on understanding that while caregivers benefit from planned breaks, youth thrive when they engage with peers and make connections outside their home environment. In addition, our model supports caregivers in identifying respite workers for in-home care and includes community-based Youth Workers, who offer natural respite and self-care opportunities that help prevent burnout.

For Youth:

Our on-site youth programming provides a supportive space for addressing psychological, emotional, and behavioral needs. Activities are carefully designed to encourage learning, self-esteem, accountability, and resilience. We recognize each youth's unique growth rate, and program schedules are tailored to individual needs, promoting gradual and sustained personal growth.

For Caregivers:

Caregivers SOAR offers caregivers a safe space to address their own emotional needs and focus on their physical well-being, while also supporting their youth's development. Through social connection, training, parenting skills, and access to community resources, caregivers gain tools for managing daily challenges. We aim to empower caregivers, fostering confidence and encouraging skill-building in their children.

Acknowledging that caregivers are their children's primary educators, our program is designed to build on these relationships in a collaborative manner. All services are voluntary, though we encourage caregivers to participate in SOAR family events alongside their children when possible.

Our goal is to collaborate with your youth's providers and school to ensure a consistent approach to their social, emotional, and psychological development.

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Our Team:

Caregivers SOAR is staffed by a team dedicated to facilitating both caregiver and youth growth. The team includes:

- Program Director
- Sustainability Coach
- Family Partner
- Young Adult Peer Mentor
- Health and Wellbeing Coach
- Youth Support Worker

Together, our team works closely with caregivers, empowering them to pursue their personal goals and support their youth's development.

Diversity and Inclusion:

We celebrate the diversity and evolving definitions of family, and we do not discriminate in providing services based on national origin, race, religion, language, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sexual preference, marital status, or disability, provided we have the expertise to offer appropriate care. We are committed to inclusivity, supporting all families in reaching their full potential.

Caregivers SOAR Program Schedule

The times of programming depend on which type of programming, school scheduling, and youth attendance. Timing will be told to caregivers ahead of time.

For youth attendance, timing will follow:

- One Youth-Two Youths -> 90 minutes
- Three+ Youths -> Full time

Each program includes time for both youth and caregivers. Youth and caregiver programming will be held at 117 Summer Street. During this time, caregivers have the option to meet with the Family Partner or the Sustainability Coach.

1. Evening Program (Every other Tuesday and every Thursday, 4:00pm-7:00pm)
2. Saturday Program (Every other Saturday, 10:00am-1:00pm for youth ages 5-9 and 2:00pm-4:00pm for youth 10 and older)
3. Vacation Week Program (10:00am-1:00pm for youth ages 5-9 and 2:00pm-4:00pm for youth ages 10 and older)

Caregivers and youth have the opportunity to foster community connection through:

Family Movie Night (Once a month, 5:00pm-7:00pm)

Other community events that they may attend will be told to caregivers ahead of time.

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For a family attending for the first time, caregivers are asked to stay for the first session. This ensures that the youth is comfortable with the staff and that the staff can make any assessments that may need to be discussed with the caregiver

For future programming, caregivers have the option to stay for caregiver program, drop-off their youth, or observe youth programming.

Youth Data Collection

At the end of each programming, staff complete a youth observation grid. This grid allows for staff to track youth's behavior progress. Results from the grid will be compiled into individual behavior profiles for each youth. The behavior profiles explain the youth's observed triggers, challenging behaviors and staff intervention. Caregivers may request to view both the observation grid and behavior profile of their youth to better understand their youth's behavior and interventions that support the individual youth.

Program Expectations and Protocols

At the inception of the program and on a regular basis thereafter, youth and their caregivers devote meeting time to process program expectations and protocols. Through a satisfaction survey and/or caregiver interview, They are asked to articulate what they feel are important components of making the program a safe and productive environment in which everyone can feel good about participating. Whenever appropriate, the youth's ideas and those of their caregivers are incorporated into the group structure and culture. In an ongoing way, the caregivers and youth are engaged in re-evaluating this structure to maximize its potential for growth.

Youth Activities and Purpose

SOAR offers a variety of activities geared to engage the developmental, psycho-social and emotional needs of the youth. Activities are focused on the development of socialization and resiliency skills. The purpose of building socialization and resiliency skills in youth may provide respite for caregivers while they are not currently in programming as youth learn to regulate their own emotions and therefore can rely on their caregivers less. It is designed to ease the youth into participating in more community events without their caregiver and be able to support themselves.

Various program activities include:

- Expressive Arts
- Movement
- Music/Dance
- Cooking class
- Real-life scenarios (ex: going to a restaurant)
- Seasonal Gardening

Caregiver Activities and Purpose

Caregiver programming is focused on fostering social connection and the physical and mental wellbeing of the caregiver through meeting with our sustainability coach and/or family partner. This may be

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individualized or within a group setting dependent on caregiver participation. All caregiver services and activities are voluntary.

- Caregivers have the option to “drop-off” their youth to SOAR programming to have respite for themselves.
- *Saturday Programming:* Caregivers are encouraged to stay for a 20-minute discussion on relevant topics that may support them in caring for their youth. This time offers an opportunity for caregivers to share strategies that have worked for them and learn from others' experiences. The goal is to foster connections, helping caregivers realize they are not alone in their caregiving responsibilities. As with all services, participation is voluntary.

SOAR offers a variety of activities geared to educate on the developmental, psycho-social and emotional needs of the youth to caregivers. Some activities include:

- Educational Workshops i.e. Navigating the Special Education System or How to read an Individual Education Plan
- Coffee Hour for socialization and community building
- Parent Support Group

Program Community Guidelines

The purpose of the community guidelines for youth programming ensures a safe space physically and verbally for youth to foster connection with their peers.

1. Listen to the trusted adults
2. Respect each other's feelings
3. Focus on yourself
4. Try not to speak over others
5. No fighting
6. Help clean up after yourself and the community after each activity.
7. Respect each other's bodies and space
8. Try to use your indoor voice
9. Take turns
10. Try to use respectful language with others

Core Expectations

1. No hurting or threatening self or others; verbally, physically, or psychologically (as in severe scapegoating or bullying behavior).
2. No destructive behavior in the basement or outside.
3. Staying with the group unless given permission to leave.
4. Respecting their own and their peers' rights to confidentiality.

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Important Information for Caregivers

Youth Release Authorization: Only caregivers will be given authorization to pick up their youth from programming. If you wish to authorize someone else to pick up your youth, please contact staff to sign a release form.

Notification of Youth Participation: If your youth is going to be absent from programming, please notify staff.

- *Evening Program:* If a youth will be absent, caregivers must notify staff no later than 3pm on the day of programming.
- *Saturday Program:* If a youth will be absent, caregivers must notify staff no later than 3pm on the Friday before programming.
- *Vacation Week Program:* These are the weeks during school vacation as well as gaps in August when summer camps generally end, and school begins. Caregivers will be notified of the schedule leading up to these gaps so they can plan.

After three absences without notification, staff will arrange a meeting with the caregiver to discuss further participation.

Appropriate Clothing: The program involves active play. Please send your youth in or with appropriate clothing, especially since some of this active play will be held outdoors throughout the year and in various types of weather. It is also recommended that you send along a change of clothing if your youth needs to change their clothing.

Schedule of Hours and Operations

Caregivers SOAR staff are available all year, five days a week. (Typical Hours: 9:00am- 5:00pm Monday-Friday). Parents/guardians are informed of any significant program changes in writing via their preferred method of communication. The program is closed on the following holidays:

Fourth of July
Labor Day
Indigenous Peoples' Day (Columbus Day)
Thanksgiving Day
Day After Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Eve
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day
Patriot's Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth

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Enrollment

Enrollment in the Caregivers SOAR program includes one or both of the following:

1. A caregiver receiving services through Riverside Community Care,
2. A caregiver referred from any community-based organization, state agency or school.
3. A caregiver may make a self-referral by contacting SOAR@riversidecc.org or calling 781-610-3199

An intake will be conducted by the Program Director to gather information about the caregiver and their youth. Information includes medical information, youth diagnosis, safety concerns, strengths, and areas of need, family traditions, and recent hospitalizations, emergency room visits and mobile crisis interventions. Youth must be able to participate safely in a group setting.

During the intake session, caregivers will be given a stress assessment to evaluate their feelings and physical symptoms of stress about caregiving. Their results will be given through their preferred method of communication.

During the first programming when caregivers are asked to stay for the entire duration, the Sustainability Coach will administer a Personal Inventory Assessment to explore insight into their current life situations and prompt to consider potential changes to improve the quality of both the caregiver and youth's lives

If English is not the first language of the caregiver, the Director of the program will use an approved interpreter to facilitate the intake. Caregivers SOAR staff will utilize this interpreter service whenever requested by the caregiver.

Individual Services for Caregivers

Sustainability Coaching:

Sustainability coaching aims to empower caregivers to develop resiliency and cope with adversity by aligning personal growth with social sustainability principles. Individual actions can impact the community and environment, fostering a sense of purpose and interconnectedness.

This service provides a space for self-reflection on current events in your life across various domains: health, relationships, environment, self-improvement, and caregiving. Together, we will identify your actual needs, pressing issues, strengths/barriers, and potential solutions to help you and your family achieve a more balanced life.

Coaching differs from therapy or mentorship. It concentrates on the present, respects individual expertise about their own life, works with goals, and does not delve into the individual's past and its impact on their current life.

An Individualized Support Plan will be developed to offer guidance and support to caregivers in achieving their goals for sustainable change and growth. This service can also help coordinate referrals and establish connections within the community.

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Family Partner:

The Family Partner position is a critical role designed to support and empower families navigating the complex landscape of mental health and special education services. This role bridges the gap between families and service providers, ensuring that families are well-informed, supported, and equipped to advocate for their children's needs effectively.

This service empowers families to advocate for their children's needs and ensure they receive appropriate services and accommodations through support in understanding and navigating the mental health and special education systems.

The family partner supports caregivers in navigating complex systems, provides information and helps caregivers identify critical community resources. Additionally, topic based educational workshops and training sessions are offered to caregivers.

By providing advocacy, education, and emotional support, they help families navigate the complexities of the mental health and special education systems, ensuring that children receive the care and support they need to thrive. This role is not only about providing services but also about empowering families to become confident advocates for their children, fostering resilience and hope.

Individual Services for Caregivers and Transitioning Aged Youth

Health and Wellbeing Coaching:

Health and wellbeing coaching encourages caregivers and youth to gain a deeper understanding of their mental health and physical health, enabling them to effectively manage stress, anxiety, and other challenges.

This service works collaboratively with the sustainability coach, family partner, young adult peer mentor, and youth support worker to promote personalized guidance and support to empower individuals to develop essential coping skills and strategies, fostering resilience and emotional well-being.

This collaborative partnership between the coach and caregiver/youth encourages self-discovery and promotes positive behavioral changes, promoting healthier habits and routines.

Individual Services for Transitioning Aged Youth

Young Adult Peer Mentor:

Through the lens of their own lived experience the peer mentor aims to guide and support transitioning aged youth to pursue their aspirations. Serving as a positive role model and guide, the mentor offers valuable insights into responsible behavior, effective communication, and sound decision-making.

Through emotional support and active listening, they create a safe space for youth to navigate challenges, drawing from their own life journeys to provide guidance on various issues. These mentors also contribute to skill development by imparting practical abilities such as time management, problem-solving, and decision-making.

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Additionally, peer mentors assist in goal setting, social and emotional learning, community engagement, resilience building, and advocating for youth needs.

Youth Support Worker:

The Youth Support Worker provides strength-based, education, coaching, modeling, guidance, and support to youth in a variety of settings, including youth centers and community.

The goal of the youth support worker is to work with youth where they are at in order to provide respite to caregivers outside of programming.

Costs

Caregivers SOAR is funded by the Executive Office of Health & Human Services Respite Innovation Grant. All programs and services are free for both caregivers and youth.

Staff Meetings and Training

The Caregivers SOAR team holds weekly staff meetings to support the program's safety and development and to provide a venue for staff to address their concerns about any program participants. The Caregiver SOAR team also participates in coordinated care plan meetings held by other Riverside external providers. This allows for continuity of services for youth enrolled in all services.

The Program Director regularly arranges in-service workshops for staff on a wide range of childcare concerns, such as strength-based practice, trauma-informed care, and diversity and inclusion. Staff are encouraged to take part in workshops and training available through other local agencies and, when possible, trainings sponsored by Riverside Community Care, Inc.

Health and Safety

All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid as well as safety training. In a minor accident, the staff will administer First Aid and notify the caregivers. If an injury or illness requires medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called.

In an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, a staff member will call 911 and go with the child to the nearest hospital (your preference, if possible). You will be contacted immediately. All accidents and situations requiring medical intervention will be reported to the Assistant Vice President of Child and Family Services and the Quality Management Department at Riverside Community Care, Inc.

Illness: Children attending the program are expected to be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. If a child becomes mildly ill while at the program, they will be made comfortable in a quiet area, away from other children, until their parents can arrive and transport them home. One staff member will be assigned to monitor the child. Staff must wash their hands after monitoring a sick child.

If a child becomes ill at the program or is found to have a contagious condition, you or your emergency contact will be called and expected to pick the child up as soon as possible. Children must be free of symptoms for at least 24 hours before returning to the program.

Children with a condition or illness treated by antibiotics may not return to the program until they have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

Children with head lice must be treated with an appropriate shampoo and nits must be removed before the child may return to the program.

Children with COVID must remain out of the program until they are fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medication), and mask for 5 days following their return to program.

Notification of Contagious Diseases or Conditions: Staff will notify parents of any cases of a contagious condition or disease at the program. Please notify staff right away if you know your child has been contagious while attending the program.

Medications: Caregivers SOAR cannot administer any medication without written parental authorization. At this time, Caregivers SOAR can only administer emergency medications at program. Emergency medications (EPI pen and asthma inhaler) must be accompanied by a written order of a health care provider indicating the child's name, name of the drug, the purpose of the medication, and directions for its administration (this may be the label on the drug). Staff will complete a medication log indicating the date, time and dosage of each administration, and the name of the staff and child. All medications will be kept in their original containers and stored in a locked location, which is not accessible to children. Unused medication will be disposed of or returned to the parent

Caregiver Concerns

If a caregiver has a concern about the program, it should be discussed with the staff person involved. If the concern is not resolved, it should be addressed to the Program Director who will arrange a meeting with the caregiver and staff person involved.

If the problem has not been resolved through these steps, a meeting will be arranged with the parent, staff, Program Director and Assistant Vice President for Child and Family Services at Riverside Community Care, Inc. There is a formal grievance procedure for families through Riverside Community Care, Inc. if the above procedure is not adequate to address the issue at hand. Upon intake, parents will receive a copy of the complaint procedure. Parents can contact the Human Rights Advocate in the building for further assistance. The Client Bill of Rights is posted at the FASP program at 117 Summer St.

Child Guidance and Positive Discipline Practices

No child shall be subjected to abuse or neglect, cruel, unusual, or severe punishment. Children will not be subject to verbal abuse, ridicule or humiliation, denied of food, rest or bathroom use, punished for soiling or not using the toilet or punished relating to eating or not eating food.

The purpose of child guidance and positive discipline practices in the program is to provide guidance and support to children as they develop resiliency, while ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for all.

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We believe that through a consistent, well-articulated, and respectful system of discipline, children will understand and accept the importance of considerate individual and group behavior. We expect that as children experiment with their own emotions, relationships, and abilities to articulate their needs and preferences, they will begin to take responsibility for their own actions and become increasingly accountable for their behavior. This is to be accomplished through mutual involvement in the establishment of personal goals as well as group rules and procedures. Individual children as well as the group are also expected to engage in evaluation of their behavior and progress and to discuss constructive approaches to behavioral change.

Appropriate Prevention and De-escalation:

1. Redirection away from negative actions, toward positive engagement and activity.
2. Encouragement, teaching, and modeling of empathy and conflict resolution.
3. Encouragement to use words rather than actions to express feelings and frustrations.
4. Ignoring simple, inappropriate, negative behavior that is unpleasant.
5. Disengagement from power struggles and positive engagement in offering choices and mutual problem solving with the child who is acting out.
6. Staff partner with each other and share limit setting in an effort to diffuse anger and aggression from a child that could be directed toward one adult authority figure, offering a united, consistent, and caring approach
7. Staff partner with family and providers around addressing children's difficulties in the home, school, and at the program.
8. Staff offer struggling child direct contact by phone or in person with parent/guardian for support and reinforcement of the importance of staying safe. If the child is unable to connect, staff will often make direct contact for purposes of mutual assessment and planning with the guardian for an unsafe child.

Mandated Reporting

All staff are mandated reporters and as such are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. If a staff member and/or the treatment team believes that a child may have been abused or neglected, they must report it to the proper authorities. According to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 119, the following people are among those mandated to report suspected child abuse: family counselors, social workers, educational administrators, teachers, day care workers, or other people paid to care for or work with a child in a public or private facility. SOAR interprets this mandate to include all workers providing services to children and their families.

Therefore, a staff person who, in his/her professional capacity has "reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, inflicted upon him or her by a

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caretaker, or if that staff members suspects a child is being neglected, including malnourished, or who is determined to be “physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth” must:

1. Notify the Program Director immediately if they think a report needs to be filed.
2. The staff person who becomes aware of possible abuse or neglect will work with the Program Director to contact DCF by phone and to complete and submit the written 51A Form. A copy is kept at the program and a copy of the report will be sent to the Assistant Vice President of Child and Family Services and the Quality Management Dept. at Riverside.

Additional Respite Resources

Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition: www.massrespite.org - This coalition provides a range of respite services and supports across the state.

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program: www.mass.gov/family-caregiver-support-program - This program offers resources and support for family caregivers, including respite care.

ARCH National Respite Network: www.archrespite.org - While a national network, they have a state-specific search tool for finding respite services in Massachusetts

The Arc of Massachusetts: www.arcmass.org - The Arc provides various support services, including respite care, for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

“This is to verify that I have been given the Caregivers SOAR Parent Handbook and encouraged to read it. If I have any questions on the information provided, I know that I can speak with any staff or the Program Director and they will assist me.”

____ Parent/Guardian of _____ Date _____

Guardian Signature

Name of Youth