Wraparound Services

Wraparound services help to ensure that students are able to access mental health services despite practical or logistical obstacles, providing impactful support for students and their families. All three providers provide wraparound services, such as medication management, and afterschool and summer services.

Medication Management and Telemedicine

Medication is often a part of a student’s school-based mental health treatment plan. For these students, it is necessary that they are assessed and followed by a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner to properly manage their treatment. Aspire and View Point provide these services daily through their outpatient clinic. Aspire uses telemedicine to provide medication management, due to a shortage of providers in Southwest Georgia.

Lacking internet bandwidth can pose a barrier to implementing telemedicine in areas without broadband capabilities. CarePartners uses telemedicine for medication management, as well as telepsychiatry, with the school acting as the presenting site. For these cases, CarePartners, which is located in a rural area of the state, contracts with a psychologist, psychiatrist, and psychiatric/family nurse practitioner in the closest neighboring city to provide the services. Parents are required to join these sessions remotely. The provider further accommodates students by delivering medication directly to the home or arranging for pharmacy delivery.

Until recently, View Point has been unable to utilize telemedicine with their school-based mental health programs due to schools’ concerns about internet privacy. However, the provider quickly began implementing telemedicine in Spring 2020 in the midst of the pandemic.

Home Visiting

Home visiting is an intervention designed to give families the support they need to improve well-being. Home visits can include skills training, promotion of positive parenting practices, and education on child development, among other activities. Aspire and CarePartners conduct home visits in certain cases. Aspire uses a staff of Community Support Individuals — whose activities are billable to insurance — to conduct home visits, which are focused on skill-building with parents. Such skills training could range from whole health and wellness skills (e.g., bedtime routines and eating habits), to coping skills (e.g., anger management skills, communication skills, mood tracking), or life skills (e.g., volunteering, resume building, employability skills). CSIs also play a major role in CarePartners’ provision of home-based services, meeting with students and their families twice monthly to provide skills training, service coordination, and case management. View Point refers students’ families to outside services when they are in need of home visits.

Crisis Management

Aspire and CarePartners provide crisis-management services, and View Point partners with the school districts that they serve on the districts’ crisis management. View Point Apex staff are on one of the school district’s crisis teams with school social workers.

CarePartners has a mobile crisis support team, where staff rotate being “on call” each week, and the on-call person will conduct home visits when needed. This means that CarePartners’ patients rarely have to rely on the emergency room or inpatient hospital visits, as the crisis-support services offer de-escalation on-site and provide close follow-up in the wake of a crisis. Approximately one to two students per week needed crisis management support in the last year; only seven of these students needed to be hospitalized. In the remaining cases, the students’ mental health needs were triaged following an assessment. Once triaged, the students and caregivers were given individualized crisis and safety plans and then were referred for mental health services and active follow-up. In the event that hospitalization is required, CarePartners makes daily contact with the student for 14 days following their release. There is a moderate amount of crisis need within the populations served by CarePartners, and this level of need increases during schools’ state testing periods.
Afterschool and Summer Services

View Point provides afterschool services through a Mental Health Resiliency Support Clubhouse (funded and supported by DBHDD) twice a week for second-through fifth-graders, with a maximum enrollment of 60 students. Aspire also provides a Mental Health Resiliency Support Clubhouse afterschool program for six to nine months for students with a DSM-5 diagnosis. The program is focused on skill development for 6- to 15-year-olds. CarePartners provides afterschool services on a weekly basis, such as girls and boys groups for social-emotional skills and trauma coping skills. The exact services depend on the individual treatment plan but may take place in the home or community. These services are funded through a combination of insurance (i.e., Medicaid or PeachCare) and the grant that CarePartners receives from Bulloch County Schools.

The amount of available services as well as enrollment in services drops over the summer, though student needs typically do not. Particularly for students who need Tier 3 interventions and medication, this disruption of services can diminish their progress. The summer months are ideal times to utilize skill groups and nontraditional interventions, like activity therapies and field trips. But without access to transportation and, oftentimes, meals for students, attendance is reduced. Space is also an issue: some providers have access to their school sites over the summer, but others have access only to facilities in the county that are centrally located to their student population. Further, CarePartners reported that in some cases students stay with extended family away from home during the summer and are without treatment and medications for up to three months.

Aspire provides a six-week summer program, two days per week, as a part of their Apex program. Although they host a summer program in each of the 10 counties they serve in order to be closer to students’ homes, participation still drops 30 percent to 40 percent from the school-year enrollment. The provider reported that access to transportation is a major barrier to summer program enrollment. Aspire plans to partner and contract with school transportation departments next year to provide transportation to and from home for the six weeks during summer programming. This will be funded through their Apex grant.

View Point provides Tier 3 services over the summer at school and their outpatient clinic. They facilitate Boys and Girls Club activities and provide activity-based group therapy, field trips, and psychoeducation. The frequency of services varies on a case-by-case basis. View Point contracts with commercial car rental services for transportation and with the school for bus drivers to make summer services more accessible to students.

CarePartners provides a summer program three days per week, three hours per day, during May, June, and July. In counties where it is available, the provider partners with a feeding program to provide these services as these programs provide buses to bring students to and from the school for a free lunch. The curriculum targets social-emotional skill-building and a wellness recovery action plan. Services include recreational therapies (e.g., art therapy), experiential learning, exercise and outdoor activities, and leisure skill development.