



THE CHOICE GROUP

**Community Support Services for People
With Disabilities**

The Choice Group

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Mission Statement

The mission of The Choice Group is a commitment to excellence in meeting our clients' needs, while foremost respecting their individuality and right to make life choices.

Purpose/Persons Served

The Choice Group Inc.'s Community Integration Program, consisting of Community Support Services (CSS), will provide services to persons with severe/most severe disabilities.

Community Support Services will provide services for individuals with non-neurological disabilities to include: developmental disabilities, long-term mental illness, and physical disabilities. Community Support Services now also serve individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain injury as well as individuals who have experienced other types of acquired brain injuries (stroke, tumor, anoxia, etc.)

The development of this program is driven by the need for expanded support services for persons with TBI/ABI within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Nature and Type of Services to be Provided/ Program Description

Community Support Services will be provided by staff members who qualify as a Life Skills/ Brain Injury Specialist (an individual with a Masters degree in a human services field, and a minimum of two years experience working directly with persons with brain injuries, as well as specific Brain injury training for those staff working with individuals with brain injuries). CSS will be provided on an individualized basis to enhance the capacity to process and interpret information and to improve an individual's ability to function in social, vocational, educational, and other community environments on a daily basis, despite underlying cognitive deficits. A comprehensive approach will be utilized to increase an individual's awareness of deficits, to retrain specific impaired functions such as attention, memory, problem solving, reasoning, judgment, and conceptualization and to teach compensatory strategies utilizing items such as schedules, checklists, and memory books. For more information see attached brochure and also visit our website www.thechoicegroup.com.

Community Support Services

Community Support Services will be provided in an individual's home or community setting by a Community Support Specialist. Services will focus on the development and implementation of compensatory strategies such as schedules, checklists, and memory books utilized to improve an individual's ability to perform their activities of daily living or to achieve or maintain a pre-vocational goal. Activities of daily living may include, but not be limited to, money management, budgeting, hygiene and grooming, grocery shopping, menu planning and nutrition, meal preparation, household chores, communication, medical management, first aid, safety, transportation, leisure, and work activities. Services can include assessment of assistive technology needs and individualized training and implementation of assistive technology equipment with the client. Community reintegration goals can be supported through the development of incremental and graduated plans designed to increase independence in the community at large. CSS may also have mnemonic components, assistive technology developed for individuals with neurological disabilities, and are typically more intensive services to include a follow along period where new skills and adaptive strategies are reinforced.

Duration of services covers a wide range given the diversity of individualized goals across clients served. The average duration of services is approximately 90-150 days; however, The Choice Group provides services for several highly specialized LST cases that have required on-going long term supports. Moreover, there are a handful of cases that are collaborative efforts with a multi-disciplinary rehabilitation team where the Community Support Specialist is providing integration services while concurrently working on supporting long-term medical monitoring and maintenance as directed by the team including direction from neurologists, physiatrists and other medical personnel. The average length of stay in these cases is significantly longer than the average duration of services for CSS. Due to the nature of serving individuals with neurological disabilities, intensive CSS cases receive services on an average of twenty-eight percent (28%) longer than traditional CSS cases.

Expected results are also highly individualized across clients served as each individual is assessed based upon their needs. Goal oriented outcome measures allow for diverse goals to be tracked to ensure that each individual's goals are met. Team Meetings are held with all stakeholders prior to the conclusion of services to review service goals and outcomes.

Psychosocial Support Services / Behavior Support Services and Psychological Counseling

Psychosocial and behavior support services as well as psychological counseling will be provided to assist individuals with brain injury who present with challenging behaviors to participate in home, work, and community settings. The Positive Behavioral Support Model will be utilized to decrease challenging behaviors and increase positive behaviors. Psychological counseling will be provided by licensed professionals and behavior and psychosocial support services will be provided by a licensed professional or under the supervision of a licensed professional. Some psychosocial support services may be provided in a group setting.

Referral and Intake Procedures

The following eligibility criteria will be used to guide entrance into the program:

- 1) The client must be defined by the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services as an Individual with TBI or ABI to be eligible for CSS Services.
- 2) The client must be defined by the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services as an Individual with a severe/most severe non-neurological disability to be eligible for CSS services.
- 3) The client must be medically released to work on CSS goals.
- 4) The client must be willing to work with the assistance and support of a Community Support Specialist. The client must express motivation to increase her/his independence.
- 5) Clients with histories of ongoing or current substance abuse must be willing to participate in a substance abuse evaluation and to comply with any recommendation made.

Clients not meeting the above criteria or found ineligible for any reason will be informed of the reason as will their referral source and they will be referred to other resources as appropriate. They may be considered for admission to the program at a later date.

Rehabilitation Counselors making a referral to the program will be asked to provide historical records, including discharge summaries, vocational evaluations, psychological and neuropsychological reports, for Community

Support Specialists, Trainers and Brain Injury Specialists to review prior to/following the initial meeting with the client. Following receipt of this information, Community Support Specialists will schedule an appointment to conduct an initial interview with the client. Family members and the Rehabilitation Counselor will be asked to participate in this meeting whenever possible. Information gathered and discussed during the initial interview includes:

- Identification information/Emergency Contact Person
- Medical diagnosis/Functional limitation
- Benefits received
- Support Status (Financial and Emotional)
- Educational history
- Pre/post injury work history
- Residential status
- Vocational/Psychological/Neuropsychological evaluations
- Activities of daily living
- Behavioral Observations/Challenging Behaviors
- Health and Safety
- Costs of Services
- Cognitive Factors
- Vocational Expectations
- Consent to exchange information

During the initial interview, services offered by the program will be reviewed along with the client's responsibilities for participating. The client orientation will be reviewed and the client will be provided a signed copy. The client and family members will be given the opportunity to ask questions and to express any concerns regarding the client's participation in the program. Should any potential problem areas be identified which could impact level of independence, discussion will focus on additional resources which may enhance the client's participation in CSS. Individualized service plans will be written from a person-centered planning approach describing opportunities to meet individual goals and increase/maximize community inclusion. This person-centered approach allows for a dialog to address many important factors including underscoring the client's ability to make choices, share their needs, wants and desires as well as addressing and risk management factors specific to each client's goals. These person centered individualized plans are addressed in the next section.

Individualized planning

Within 30 days of the initial interview, the client working with the CSS will develop and agree on an Individualized Service Plan (ISP), based on input from all parties and a review of all information currently available and using a person-centered planning approach. From this a plan is developed that is based on the client's strengths, abilities, needs, preferences, desired outcomes, cultural background, and any other identified issues. This document will be drafted with the client based on agreement about the steps involved in services, signed, and reviewed and approved by management within the next 30 days. This includes review of expected results, how services will meet identified needs, how and when results will be evaluated, and the rights and responsibilities related to achieving desired employment outcomes. Each ISP is a working document that can be continually revised and amended to address each client's progress as he/she move through services. New goals, both general and specific, can be added to the ISP as the client continues to work with the Community Support Specialist. This allows for planning to address global service provision as well as addressing pertinent issues as they arise such as safety and risk management in the community and/or home, or the addition of new compensatory strategies, use of assistive technology, the use of positive behavioral supports, and modifications/adaptations.

The highly individualized nature of CSS services often require focusing on community integration, often referred to as community reintegration for survivors of a brain injury who participate in CSS services. Community integration goals are set forth in the ISP as the individualized needs are evaluated during the initial assessment.

Community integration goals are always focused towards the client becoming as independent as possible. Typically services are time limited and goal-oriented; therefore, it is critical to provide training that optimizes the use of increasing each client's independence and ability to problem solve and provide self-help, as well as, developing natural supports in the home and community. This approach ultimately can foster greater independence and control of their respective lives and as a result provide the client with the opportunity for greater choice.

Throughout service provision as clients' needs are assessed, often issues are identified that are not within the scope of services provided by The Choice Group. When this occurs appropriate referrals are made to other service providers. These referrals include, but are not limited to, psychiatric and

medical services, counseling and therapy, financial planning, social security consultation and work incentive specialists. CSS services do not include any type of compensated work; however, when appropriate, a significant amount of CSS services result in a client being referred for vocational services following successfully meeting CSS goals.

Outcomes

The intended outcome for program participants is that they successfully meet their individualized CSS goals. Regular feedback is sought from consumers, family members, employers, and referral sources regarding their satisfaction with CSS services provided. Each person's satisfaction with their service provision will be assessed on a regular basis, as appropriate to the individual and services provided. This information will be captured in a variety of ways, survey monkey, telephonic satisfaction surveys, a suggestion box, and directly from each client via Team Meeting forms. Summaries of incidents and complaints are reviewed by the management team and the information is used in program planning, performance improvement and training, strategic planning, organizational advocacy, financial and resource planning. All feedback is analyzed on an on-going basis and reported annually in our Outcomes Measures report.

Exit Criteria

Instances in which clients may exit from the program include:

- Goals of CSS have been met
- The client has a diagnosis requiring treatment/hospitalization
- The client no longer wishes to increase independence
- The client does not wish to work with the assistance and support of a Community Support Specialist.
- The client refuses to participate in a substance abuse evaluation in spite of evidence that ongoing substance abuse is impeding independence, increasing challenging behaviors or impeding a CSS goal.
- The client has moved away from the areas served.

Should a client need to discontinue services for any reason, they would be eligible to return to services with The Choice Group following a team meeting and authorization from the referral source. When a client is ready to resume services they are asked to contact The Choice Group and they

receive support and assistance in contacting the referring agency to explore resuming services.

Program Management / Structure

The Choice Group, Inc.'s CSS Program will be managed by Robin Metcalf, M. ED., M.S., C.R.P., N.C.C., C.C.M., C.R.P., L.P.C., as Program Director. The CSS cases will be supervised by Christopher Lavach, M.S.

Community Support Specialists hired for the program will hold at least a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education, Rehabilitation Counseling, Psychology, Sociology, or a related field; extensive experience working with persons with brain injuries may be considered in lieu of a Bachelor's Degree.

Senior Community Support Specialists hired will hold a Master's Degree in Special Education, Counseling, Rehabilitation, or a related field and will have demonstrated expertise in working with persons with brain injury.

Please refer to The Choice Group's web site (www.thechoicegroup.com) for additional staff profiles.