

The Galloway After School Program (G.A.S.P.) Program Review

The Galloway After School Program (G.A.S.P.) is a socialization, life skills, and activity group for mildly to moderately developmentally challenged and dually diagnosed adolescents who require the experience of a peer group to help them develop social and life skills. The program serves adolescents at a range of functioning levels, from individuals with significant language and/or speech disabilities (i.e. responses are generally monosyllabic or echolalia) to others with more developed expressive language skills, but limited comprehension and processing. The common element for all GASP clients is their degree of social isolation, limited social skills and minimal life skills as identified by parents and the school system. They are frequently victimized by peers, and are often seen as vulnerable and dependent. Given their presenting challenges, these clients often require additional layers of supervision and support in a variety of spheres.

The overall goals of the GASP Program are to provide a safe, consistent, structured, and fun environment in which to learn the social and life skills necessary for promoting more independent functioning. Activities for building life-skills focus on areas such as cooking, leisure planning, street proofing, sexuality, and relationships. Activities and outings are organized, helping the youth develop a sense of cooperation, teamwork and responsibility. Individual goals are also set with each individual youth regarding the development of social skills, utilizing an incremental learning approach the focuses on their strengths.

Major themes of the program include the need to develop strategies to help in the development of relationships amongst the youth with various levels of intellectual functioning. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has become the most prevalent diagnosis for all new referrals to the program. As a result, ongoing staff training is necessary in order to develop individualized programs.

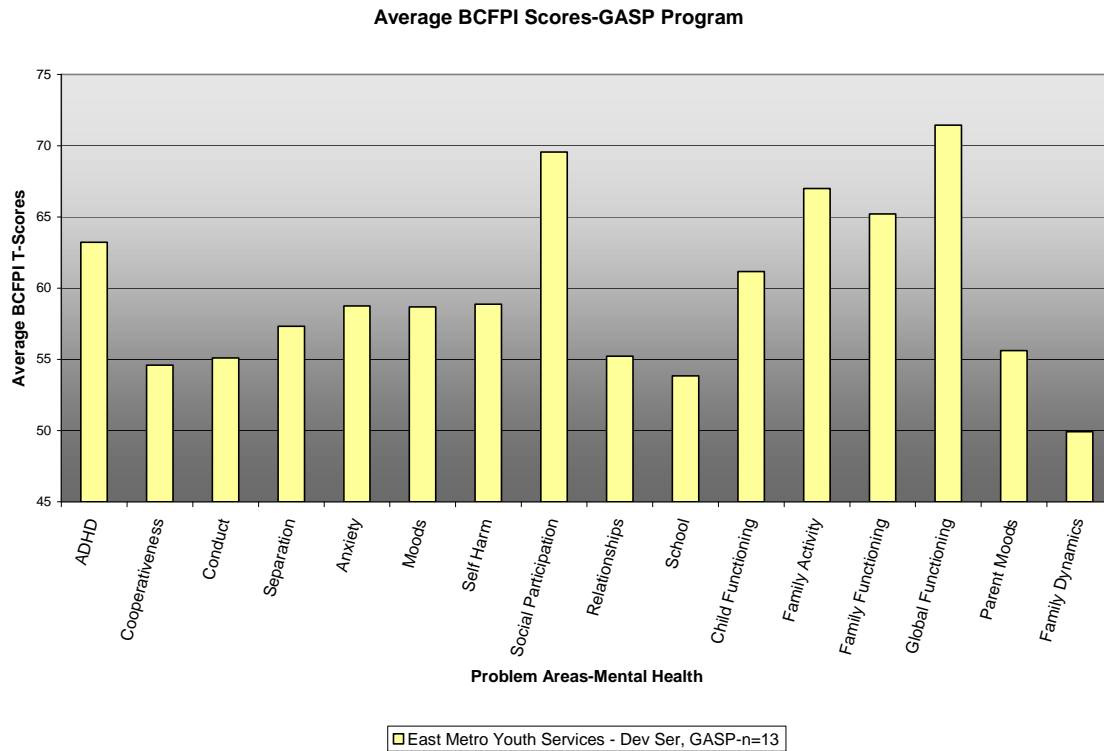
Client Statistics

Out of the 27 youth registered into the program 6 are female and 21 are male. This year there continues to be an overwhelming request from males for the program. While a more even representation of genders would be ideal, clients continue to be overwhelmingly male. In terms of diagnosis, the vast majority (97%) of GASP clients have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Aggregate Data

The BCFPI t-scores, as shown below, provide further insights as to the nature and degree of impairment faced by GASP clients. For example, elevated scores in the area of social participation are not surprising as many parents highlighted the concerns

regarding their child’s lack of ability in social situations. Other areas of concern are global functioning, descriptive of a person with a developmental delay as well as Family Activity, Family Functioning, two areas that highlight the family’s need to reorganize their lives in the family home to accommodate the needs of their child.



Future Directions

Looking forward, there are a few central program goals for the upcoming year. The first relates to data analysis as we began collecting ABAS data for the past two years, particularly the pre-data at program entry. Once more post-data has been collected as more youth leave the program, both data points will be compared to provide insights into the gains made by the GASP clients as well as areas for enhanced emphasis. Further, given that almost all GASP clients have an ASD, efforts will be directed towards exploring changes the program structure and focusing on staff training in order to meet the emerging client needs.