Description of Program:
Centerstone of Tennessee has established WellConnect Health Home to better serve individuals who have been diagnosed with a chronic serious mental illness (SMI) and a second chronic illness—such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease; or those who may be at risk for other chronic conditions because they are overweight. Research has shown that 85% of the persons diagnosed with a severe mental illness also have a chronic primary medical condition. Furthermore, increasing numbers of children and adolescents diagnosed with a serious emotional disturbance (SED) who also have a chronic health condition such as obesity or asthma will also be served by the Health Home.

WellConnect’s target population mirrors the target population defined in the eligibility standards for health home services as established by the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) in the Affordable Care Act. CMS established eligibility for health home services as someone who has a chronic condition, such as a mental health or substance use, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or is overweight. The majority of individuals served by Centerstone meet these basic eligibility criteria.

Health Home Services include: Access to the full array of services that include prevention and health promotion, healthcare, mental health and substance use treatment, and long-term care services, as well as referrals to identified community supports and resources;

Services based on continuing care strategies, including care management, care coordination, and transition-care from the hospital to the community;

A comprehensive, individualized, person centered plan that includes Health Home services. Services that are quality-driven, cost effective, culturally appropriate, person- and family-centered, and evidence-based; The use of Health information technology (HIT) to facilitate care.

Quality improvement efforts to ensure that the work is effective at the individual and population level.

Health Home services are available to individuals who receive their outpatient behavioral health services at Centerstone. Individuals are identified for Health Home services through health screening in the behavioral health clinic. They can receive their primary care services either at Unity Medical Clinic, the co-located primary care clinics at the Health Home locations, or from a primary care doctor of their choosing in the community providers.
Let’s get to the heart of the matter! It is our responsibility to keep our kids as healthy as we can. Parents serve as role models not only through direct interactions with the children, but also through the examples they set with their attitude and behavior toward healthy eating and physical activity. As foster parents we would like to keep a few things in mind when role modeling a healthy lifestyle. 1) Think about the foods and beverages you bring in and consume… what message do they send? If youth see us drinking water and snacking on fruits and veggies, a strong message is sent about the importance of good nutrition. 2) Eating with the youth also sends a message that a healthy meal or snack is an important part of their day. While eating with youth, talk to them about the foods they are eating. If there is a new fruit or vegetable on the menu that day, for example, talk with them about fruits and vegetables. Get the conversation going and explore the other fruits and vegetables youth like to eat. If you know what the meal or snack is ahead of time, research a fun healthy fact or two about that food to help facilitate the conversation during meal or snack time. And don’t forget to ENJOY the meal or snack yourself! 3) Stay positive! Youth pick up on positive AND negative messages. Remember that positive and negative comments from us about food can influence youths’ attitudes on food. Avoid talking negatively about food. Instead, focus on the importance of filling up with healthy foods because they are full of nutrients that will help youth grow and learn. Talk to them about how healthy foods give them more energy and help them stay fuller longer than sugary, fatty foods. Healthy foods are important for fueling both their bodies and their minds. Good nutrition is important to help them grow up strong and give them energy so they can be active, but it also helps them learn and focus better on healthy eating.

What does health home mean to me as a foster parent: NUTRITION

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What does health home mean to me as a foster parent: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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Let’s start with the facts! Tennessee is the eleventh most obese state in the nation for children. With these daunting statistics and other barriers that children in foster care face, we cannot ignore the fact that they need our help.

Increase Physical Activity

Being active is essential to living a healthier life. Youth need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day and adults need at least 30 minutes of activity every day. But it’s hard to make time to move and right now only one in three kids is actually getting their daily physical activity. And this is not something we simply might change but something we must change. And we can. There are affordable and efficient solutions to get your family moving more that can fit into your busy schedule.

• Get Your Family Moving: • Get off the couch and move. If your kids see you doing physical activity, they will want to move more, too. • Encourage your children to be active. Help them figure out what physical activities they like and can do often. • Start early in life. Kids are more likely to be active later in life if they start when they’re young. • Plan activities the whole family can do together.

Decrease Screen Time

School-age children spend an average of 7.5 hours a day watching TV and using electronics. And because screen time is usually a sedentary activity it cuts into or totally eliminates the time we spend being physically active. It’s not just the inactive aspect of screen time that is dangerous to our health, but the fact that screen time is often watched at bedtime and paired with unnecessary snacking. These two things add calories to our daily diets and can affect our sleeping habits, which in turn affect our health.

• Limit your kids’ time in front of TV, video games, and the computer. Setting rules can help cut their screen time by nearly 3 hours a day. • Set a good example. Limit your own screen time. • Know the link between screen time and unhealthy foods. Kids who have more screen time are more likely to eat foods high in fat and added sugar (like sodas or fried foods). • Teach your kids that many of the ads they see on TV are for less-healthy food and drink choices. Knowledge is a powerful thing!
Independent Living: Tips for Foster Parents

As a foster parent, you are in a unique position to help the youth in your care prepare for a successful future. You can support development of the youth’s transition plan, and you can aid in important skill-building activities that will improve the youth’s ability to carry out his or her plan. In addition, you can encourage a young adult’s growing independence and guide safe exploration of new experiences, while providing a cushion of support.

As the foster parent of a youth preparing to transition, you have several vital roles:

Coach—listening, advising and providing youth with opportunities to learn and practice new skills

Advocate—learning about and fighting for the youth’s rights as they relate to education, health and mental health care, court proceedings, and case practices

Networker—helping to cultivate connections and supports for the youth

At age 14- Preparation for Adulthood
Independent Living Plans are developed by the FSW, with all custodial youth ages 14-16. The purpose of the Independent Living Plan is to help youth learn skills they will need to be successful as adults.

At age 17- Success beyond 18
It is required that a Transition Plan be developed by the FSW, with youth who will likely exit state custody at or after 17 years of age to help them have a successful transition to adulthood; consider the following:

What do youth 14 and older need to learn? Find something that the youth you are working with is interested in learning about. Or, select a goal that the youth would like to pursue. Through conversation or observation, assess how much the youth already knows about the skills involved. Ask the FSW to see the life skills assessment to better understand strengths and weaknesses, and what you can help with.

Why is it important to involve youth in planning? Because youth have their own ideas about permanency, they need to be part of the permanency planning discussion. When to consult your regional IL Specialist:

• Anytime a youth 14 and older is not getting a service, you believe they should be getting
• A special needs youth (Adult Mental Health/DIDD) that is 17-years-old or older
• A youth is 16-years-old or older & in need of a state photo ID
• You have questions about IL Wrap Funding
• If you, a youth or his/her team has questions regarding Independent Living Services, LifeSet Services, IL Policies or Extension of Foster Care Services(EFCS)

What do youth in TN want? 1. Help us feel safe. 2. Help us settle into our new life. 3. Speak to us and listen to us. 4. Make us part of your family. 5. Help us be independent.

Research and practice show that having ongoing support from at least one permanent, caring adult can make an enormous difference in the life of a vulnerable youth


Let’s make a plan together!

We want to work with each foster family to plan a monthly/quarterly fitness challenge with rewards! Your foster care coordinator will be contacting you to develop a plan with a goal for your family, made by your family. At the end of the month/quarter you will receive a prize. We can also do family vs. family challenges with rewards. Centerstone wants to see our families happy and healthy. Let’s work together to make it happen!

What you can do to prepare before your foster care coordinator contacts you: make a list of realistic weekly goal(s) or your family (i.e. will as a family every other night, will abstain from sugar from sugar for a week, etc.) for a month. Make a system of keeping track of your accomplishments (i.e. calendar, print-off, etc.). Make list of rewards that your family would like to see.

If you have any suggestions or are interesting in form a group to help reach you fitness goals
please contact:

stacey.irish@centerstone.org
The Principles of Re-Education

“The body is the armature of the self, the physical self around which the psychological self is constructed.” ~Nicolas Hobbs

In our homes and residential centers, we would like to provide opportunities for youth to engage in rigorous sports and exercise. The idea being not to turn out better athletes, but to give the children a greater awareness of what they can physically do. In this way we are able to use the body to increase self-confidence. It is, in many ways, an exercise in self-discovery.