

State of Connecticut  
Department of  
Children and Families



# ALBERT J. SOLNIT CHILDREN'S CENTER NORTH CAMPUS



A State of Connecticut  
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility

## Program Philosophy

*Caring, Healing, and Teaching*

Partnering with children, families, and communities to build hope  
and create opportunities



Albert J. Solnit Children's Center North (Solnit North), part of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, is a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) committed to providing short-term, holistic therapeutic services to boys whose complex psychiatric and behavioral status requires an intensive environment to ensure safety and optimum functioning. Services are provided through an individualized, multi-modal, trauma-informed approach, using a variety of verbal and non-verbal therapies that are culturally sensitive and strength based.

The goal is always to re-integrate the youth back to the family or least restrictive living environment. Solnit North celebrates each adolescent's individuality and works in partnership with him and his identified family system, supporting him to become the adult he envisions himself to be. Therapeutic family visits are an essential component of this work.

## Education

Solnit North has a fully-accredited school program that serves both special education and regular education youth. Youth have access to traditional classroom teaching as well as virtual (computer-based) instruction. Because of the low student-to-staff ratio, youth are able to receive individual attention as they continue with their current courses and classes from their previous school. Youth also have opportunities to recover lost credits as well as earn additional credits through the Virtual Academy Program. A Social Emotional Learning Curriculum (MAAX Program) is utilized within school programming.



## Residential

Residential staff are responsible for the direct oversight of youth at all times during their stay at Solnit North. Residential staff provide the primary support, relationship building, redirection, and teaching of youth on campus. They also facilitate groups, oversee recreational activities, accompany youth to off-campus locations, and assist with community/activities of daily living such as movies and cultural events, or sports. Solnit North has a strong community of youth and staff, with residential staff and youth at the core.



## Medical

The Solnit North medical department provides 24-hour coverage nursing care and a full-time pediatrician. All youth receive comprehensive medical, dental, and vision monitoring. Any youth that requires more extensive medical services is seen by either Connecticut Children's Medical Center or the University of Connecticut Health Center specialties.

## Clinical Services

The Solnit North clinical team includes two board certified child psychiatrists and both masters- and doctoral-level licensed clinicians who have extensive training and experience working with a culturally diverse adolescent population with complex presentations. Clinicians work closely with the youth and family from time of admission to develop individualized treatment plans for each youth, with goals and objectives that are identified collaboratively with the youth and family. The clinicians use a flexible approach with a variety of strength-based and culturally-informed interventions (including Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Trauma Focused-CBT, and others) to help youth meet the treatment goals and objectives identified through a combination of individual and family therapies, as well as group therapy for the youth.



Clinicians maintain regular contact with families and assist in developing comprehensive discharge plans for when youth return to the community. This includes identifying and making referrals to supportive services, assisting in securing aftercare appointments, developing safety plans with the youth and family, and all aspects of preparing the youth and family for a successful transition.

## Psychological Services

The Psychology Department is comprised of doctoral level, licensed psychologists, and psychology graduate level trainees. During admission, youth are provided the opportunity to receive a strength-based, comprehensive, psychological evaluation aimed at capturing a youth's cognitive, personality, and social-emotional profile. Youth are referred for psychological testing to assess the presence and severity of mental health disorders and challenges, including, but not limited to, complex trauma, mood disorders, cognitive and adaptive functioning, psychotic disorders, and personality formation. Data from the formal evaluation is utilized to comprise a unique and culturally informed perspective of the youth's symptoms, interpersonal functioning, coping style, adaptive/maladaptive behaviors, and worldview. This new insight is shared with the youth, treatment providers, families, and stakeholders, and is used to assist with diagnostic clarification and personalized treatment planning. During admission, youth aged sixteen and older also participate in a Pathways Assessment. The Pathways Assessment is an individualized and strength-based evaluation of a youth's career interests and preferences as well as level of grit and perseverance. Resources are provided to assist with career exploration and goal setting, as well as life, vocational, and therapeutic development. Additionally, the Psychology Department provides a 45-day diagnostic assessment as a component of a brief treatment episode. This assessment aims to provide diagnostic clarification and recommendations for continued treatment at home or least restrictive living environment.

# Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy aims to help youth increase their level of participation and independence in all areas of life through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. Each youth receives a comprehensive evaluation including sensory assessments that help determine the best approach for self-regulation strategies and optimal engagement in daily tasks.



## Sensory Immersion Room



The Sensory Immersion Room (SIR) is a state of the art sensory space that provides evidence based interventions to improve youth and family treatment outcomes. The SIR is equipped with cutting edge sensory and virtual reality equipment that provides the ultimate regulatory experience for youth with a variety of histories, diagnoses, interests, and sensory needs.

# Vision Vocational Center

We are excited to announce the opening of the Vision Vocational Center (VVC) in Spring 2021. The VVC is a state-of-the art intervention that will enhance our existing work experience program. Youth will have the opportunity to learn positive work skills on campus where they are paid a “wage” for performing a variety of tasks, first on campus and then at off-campus businesses. They also volunteer in the local community programs. The goal of the program is to provide youth with treatment and opportunities that increase self-esteem, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, vocational skills, and a strong work ethic.

## Community Service Treatment

- The Shovel Brigade - Providing snow removal for our local, elderly population
- Recycle Program
- Soup Kitchen
- Veterinary Hospital
- Environmental clean-up and improvement
- A comprehensive Pathway Assessment for youth 16 and above designed to identify occupational interests and skills
- Introduction to work experience and youth business opportunities
- Life skills coaching and instruction
- Exciting hands on activities to build vocational skills, for example Toastmasters
- Career and academic planning
- Partnership with community programs for life skills, vocation and career opportunities
- Identifying opportunities in communities throughout the state to facilitate post discharge success



# Rehabilitation Therapy

Therapeutic rehabilitation is an integral part of the multidisciplinary treatment program, it promotes the youth's physical, social, and emotional development.

## Music Therapy



## Therapeutic Recreation



The Solnit North rehabilitation therapy program offers youth the chance to explore and develop their interests and talents, while engaging in activities that they enjoy both during and after their stay. The campus has an in-ground swimming pool for summer activities and an indoor ropes course.

Solnit North offers other programs such as a barbershop, martial arts, a Youth Advisory Board, and Wilderness School outings. The DCF Wilderness School is a resource that the rehabilitation therapy department is closely connected with and supports seasonal day trip activities for youth in Solnit care.



## Religious and/or Spiritual Opportunities



Research confirms that individuals engaged with spiritual or religious beliefs stabilize more quickly. In support of this, Solnit North has a part-time chaplain and a Spiritual Life Center. Involvement is individualized for each youth and voluntary. Activities include, e.g.: meditation, Bible study, and attendance to houses of worship off campus.

## Life After Solnit

The goal for all youth is continuing gains made at Solnit once back in the community. The Solnit team attempts to link each youth with resources and services that meet his particular interests and/or needs. Clinical services might include: medication management; individual and family therapy; in-home services; clinical day school; NA and other 12-step groups; and more. The DCF Transitional Supports and Success Division provides services to youth and families following discharge, as well. Rehabilitation and Vocational therapies link youth with community opportunities to promote optimal success. Programs include but are not limited to, e.g.: Boys and Girls Clubs; art and music programs; mentors; martial arts or boxing programs; Job Corp; DCF Wilderness School excursions; summer employment programs. In order to ease a youth's transition home or to another level of care, clinicians bridge the move through meeting youth, family, and new treaters in the community once or twice after discharge as appropriate.



Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes  
Website: [www.ct.gov/dcf](http://www.ct.gov/dcf)



Check out our youth-run  
maple syrup business!

## Contact Information

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