

TFC Teen Handbook



Updated 6/2018

MY TREATMENT FOSTER CARE HANDBOOK

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MY CONTACT PAGE

| Contact | Name | Phone |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------|
| UMFS TFC Worker | | |
| UMFS TFC Supervisor | | |
| UMFS Center Assistant Director | | |
| UMFS Center Director | | |
| DSS Worker | | |
| Resource Parent | | |
| Resource Parent | | |
| Therapist | | |
| Physician | | |
| Dentist | | |
| Psychiatrist | | |
| Family | | |
| Family | | |
| Family | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |

Keep this contact information handy and feel free to contact anyone on the above list if ever needed.

HISTORY OF TREATMENT FOSTER CARE



The United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) Treatment Foster Care (TFC) Program began in 1980 to help provide children and youth with a more healthy, secure, and supportive family environment. We serve children and youth throughout the State of Virginia specifically in Richmond, Tidewater, South Hill, Lynchburg, Farmville, Fredericksburg, and Northern Virginia.

WHAT IS TREATMENT FOSTER CARE?

Treatment Foster Care (TFC) is a program for youth between the ages of 0 and 21 years of age. It is a program that is going to provide supportive services to you and your family. While in TFC you will live with a family that will provide you with a safe and secure home. When placed in TFC, you will receive the following services:

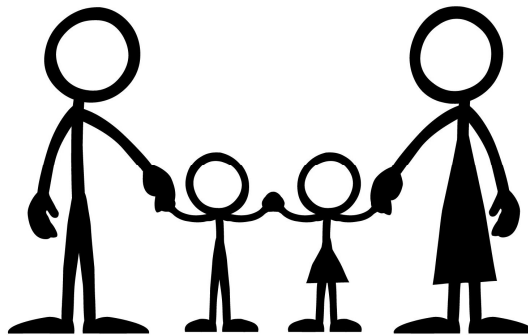
- **Treatment Foster Care (TFC) Worker** - A TFC Worker (also known as the Family Support Specialist) from UMFS will be assigned to your case and will help to coordinate services with your legal guardian, usually the Department of Social Services (DSS). The TFC Worker will have regular contact with you in your home, school, and community and will meet with you and your resource parent as often as needed. Typically, your TFC Worker meets with you on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, depending on your needs. Your TFC Worker is there to provide support to you and advocate for you while you are placed with a resource family.
- **Support Group-** Some centers offer support groups that meet regularly at UMFS. Support group topics focus on activities to help build social skills, improve peer relations and talk about tough issues you may face. TFC children and youth attend these groups. Foster and adoptive siblings are also able to attend.
- **Independent Living (IL) Skills** – Adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 years will be given an independent living skills assessment to determine strengths and needs for independent living. Groups are conducted regularly to focus on topics including but not limited to budgeting, grocery shopping, using credit, finding employment, healthy relationships, educational planning and housing. UMFS offers an independent living binder to youth, age 14-18 years old.
- **Clinical Support Services-** Sometimes youth in TFC need a little extra support, so a Clinical Support Specialist (CSS) is assigned to work with you and your resource family in the home for up to 5 hours a week.

- **Mentor Services** - Sometimes youth in the UMFS TFC program also work with a mentor. A mentor is someone who acts like a big brother/big sister and provides recreational activities for you in the home and community. Mentors are a positive and supportive resource for you and your resource family.
- **Visitation Services** - Sometimes TFC youth are provided visitation services in order to support visitation and promote the relationship between you and your parents, especially when your permanency plan is the goal of return home.

In addition to the above services, you may also receive: Individual therapy, family therapy, and/or have a psychiatrist for medication management in order to help you successfully meet your treatment goals.

When you are initially placed with your resource family, you will be visited by your TFC Worker and will be enrolled in a school as soon as possible thereafter.

RESOURCE PARENTS



Resource parents are people who have a desire to help youth like you have a better life by providing them with a secure, safe and healthy family environment. UMFS resource parents include people of all races and ages, who are married or single, live in the city or country and may or may not attend church. People who become resource parents do so for many reasons. Resource parents want to give children and youth the opportunity to be in a family where they feel they belong and are loved.

When choosing a resource parent, we do our best to look at your needs as well as the characteristics of the resource parents to make the best possible match.

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR YOUTH IN CARE

Every youth in foster or adoptive care has inherent rights.

You have the right to:

- ❖ Be cherished by a permanent family of your own (*this can mean reunifying with your birth or biological family, joining an adoptive family, or ongoing placement with the same resource family*).
- ❖ Be nurtured by resource parents who have been selected to meet your individual needs and who are provided services and supports, including specialized education, so that they can grow in their ability to enable you to reach-your potential.
- ❖ Receive continuing loving care and respect as a unique human being in order to build stronger trust in yourself and others.
- ❖ Grow up with freedom and dignity in a neighborhood of people – a diverse community of people – who accept you with understanding, respect and friendship.
- ❖ Receive help in overcoming deprivation or whatever distortion in your emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth may have resulted from your early experiences.
- ❖ Receive education, training and career guidance in order to help you become a healthy, functioning, contributing member of society able to live a useful and satisfying life.
- ❖ Be represented by an attorney at law (Guardian Ad Litem) in administrative or judicial proceedings with access to fair hearings and court review of decisions, so that your best interests are safeguarded.
- ❖ Receive a high quality of child welfare services, including involvement of the natural parents and your own involvement in major decisions that affect your life.
- ❖ Be involved in the development of your services and treatment plan goals.
- ❖ Refuse services and to receive information about the consequences as well as the effects of such refusal.
- ❖ Receive services that will comply with all laws that protect you from abuse, neglect or exploitation in order to ensure your safety.
- ❖ Privacy and informed consent in seeking medical treatment, including the administration of medication. (*In the case of children or youth under the age of 18, the agency will obtain the written informed consent from the parent or legal guardian*).
- ❖ Refuse to participate in research, experimental treatment or agency public relations. (*In the case of children or youth under the age of 18, the agency will obtain the written informed consent from the parent or legal guardian*).
- ❖ Ensure confidentiality that is upheld within the limits of the law.

- ❖ File a grievance if dissatisfied with services and to receive assistance in the grievance process.

Signature

Date

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- **Any youth receiving TFC services has the right to talk to someone if he is dissatisfied with services.**
- **Any youth receiving TFC services also has the right to receive assistance when he is dissatisfied with services.**

If you feel at any point while you are in the UMFS TFC program that you are not being treated fairly or you have a concern or complaint, then you have the right to let a UMFS staff member know so that it can be discussed. You may share your concerns with your TFC Worker or any UMFS staff you feel comfortable sharing it with. You can choose to share your grievance verbally or in writing, whichever you feel most comfortable with.

Once you share this information, we can figure out if it is something in UMFS control or not.

The client may grieve the following matters:

- The substance, interpretation, and application of policies, rules, and procedures
- Actions by employees, including any denial of access to the grievance procedure

The client may not grieve the following matters as they are not in the control of the Agency or Program to alter or change:

- State and Federal court decisions
- State and Federal laws and regulations
- Other matters beyond the control of the Agency

If it is something that UMFS can control, then it is considered a “grievable” grievance. A “grievable” grievance will be addressed as outlined in the four levels described below:

Level I

1. TFC youth are always encouraged to meet first with the assigned UMFS Worker to discuss the complaint or disagreement, and resolve the issue.
2. If the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the TFC youth at this level, the complaint or disagreement stops at this point in the process.
3. Complaints or disagreements may be made verbally or in writing

Level II

1. If unresolved at Level I, the TFC youth can present the complaint or disagreement to the UMFS Worker’s supervisor.
2. The supervisor will meet with the TFC youth within 7 days of the forwarding of the complaint or disagreement, to attempt to resolve the issue.

Level III

1. If unresolved at Level II, the TFC youth can present the complaint or disagreement to the UMFS center director.
2. The center director will meet with the TFC youth within 7 days of the forwarding of the complaint or disagreement, to attempt to resolve the issue.

Level IV

1. If the complaint is unresolved at Level III, the TFC youth may present the complaint or disagreement to the Vice President of Programs.
2. A meeting or phone conference will be held with the TFC youth and the Vice President of Programs OR a designee, within 15 days of receiving the complaint.
3. A decision will be returned within 30 days of the hearing of the grievance to the TFC youth.

The outcome of your “grievable” grievance will be some sort of resolution, solution, or remedy. For instance, thinking back to the “grievable” grievance example above, the outcome might be that the worker will visit the youth at least 1x every two weeks as they have been, but will also Skype the youth 1x per month and maintain telephone contact with him at least 2x per month.

On the other hand, if your grievance is not something UMFS can control – for example, if the court approved permanency plan is adoption and you are not happy with that, UMFS does not have the authority to change your permanency goal since permanency planning decisions are determined by DSS and the Court. If you share this kind of information, however, UMFS staff will be better able to support you in sharing your feelings with your DSS Worker and the Court.

INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) SKILLS

Your TFC Worker, DSS Worker, and resource parents know it’s important for you to develop skills so that you are ready to be self-sufficient, can make informed decisions, and are ready to take on the responsibility of living on your own once you are an adult and are discharged from foster care.

Some of the skills you will want to focus on before living on your own include:

- Daily living skills
- Household management and obtaining housing
- Obtaining and maintaining employment
- Money management, including budgeting, saving, investing, buying on credit, and debit counseling
- Assessing community resources, public assistance, and other governmental programs
- Obtaining effective interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills

In order to help you build your IL skills, all youth 14 and older are asked to complete an IL life skills assessment within a few months of entering the UMFS TFC program. If you happen to have completed an IL life skills assessment not too long ago, then that might just need to be updated. If you have never completed one, or if one was completed months or years ago, you may need to complete another. The information provided on the IL assessment help identify IL skills that are strong as well as those that you can build upon. Once you complete the assessment, you, your TFC Worker, your Treatment Team will help you identify specific goals, objectives and strategies that will be part of your treatment plan. You will then be able to work towards

strengthening your IL skills. Your TFC Worker will document your progress on these goals on Monthly, Quarterly, and Annual Progress Reports. You will also have a Transitional Living Plan and an IL Binder which are all tools to help you keep track of how you are doing in terms of building your IL skills.

Below is a list of some IL skills that you might focus on prior to discharge:

- **Job Skills:**
 - Status or need for vocational or technical training. Practice interviewing techniques, resume writing, looking for opportunities to meet professionals in their field of interest, practice filling out applications, looking through wants ads, interviewing skills etc.
- **Education:**
 - Career/aptitude testing at local high schools, Community Colleges, guidance counselors, military options, job corps, difference between trade school, associates degree, four year college, college tours, and graduate school. Information on completing high school, GED.
- **Transportation:**
 - Driver's education, learner's permit, information on insurance, car shopping, car maintenance-respectable auto-repair facilities, GPS tutorials, MapQuest, bus and/or other appropriate forms of transportation (e.g. scooter, on foot, etc.).
- **Money Management:**
 - Setting up/balancing check book, learning to budget, tax preparations, paying bills, debit/credit cards, finance vs. cash payments. What are sources of income: Scholarship; IL Program monies.
- **Personal Care:**
 - Hygiene, clothes shopping, laundering, cooking, grocery shopping, cleaning, securing health care services and dental health care services (what local services are available, where are they located). Mental health services availability. Life insurance information and/or benefits for those employed.
- **Support:**
 - Access to at least 2 adults committed to helping with the transition.
 - Exploration of socialization, cultural, religious, and recreational activities.
- **Securing Housing:**
 - Practice looking for apartments by using, newspapers, maps, visiting and assessing neighborhoods. Understanding a lease, deposits, utilities etc. The difference between renting and buying. Roommate pros and cons.

Below is a list of some IL skills that you might focus on closer to discharge:

- **Legal matters:**
 - If you are on probation, what this means, how to get a work permit, legal aid, juvenile justice vs. adult justice. Understanding emancipation. Arranging for transfer of termination of custody. Knowledge of court and welfare system.
- **Services:**
 - Provide Information on services to which adolescents may be entitled or rights which they may have as a result of a disability. Information on day care centers, leisure time activities, and religious resources.

SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Can I date, go to dances, parties, the mall or to the movies?

A. Your resource parent, your UMFS TFC Worker, your Department of Social Services (DSS) Worker and you will make this decision. As a rule, if you are showing that you can be responsible at school, at home and in the community, then this may be an option. It is important that you can be trusted.

Q. When can I get a cell phone?

A. This is a decision you will make with your TFC Worker, your DSS Worker, and your resource parent. Usually, if you show that you can be trusted and are responsible enough to have a cell phone, then having a cell phone may be a feasible option.

Q. What will my curfew be?

A. Each city or county where you live has a legal curfew set by the police department. In most cases this is 11:00 p.m. This is the latest that you can be out. When you first come into care, you generally will not be allowed to stay out that late. Your resource parent, your UMFS case manager, and your DSS Worker will determine your curfew. Again, you must be able to be trusted in order to earn a later curfew. If you show that you can be responsible enough to handle unsupervised time out with your friends, then you will be allowed to do so. On the other hand, if your actions show that you need more supervision, then your resource parent will ensure that you have the supervision that you require.

Q. Can I have contact with my birth family (parents, siblings, and/or extended family members) or former resource parents? Can I visit with them?

A. This is usually decided by your DSS Worker. In some cases, visits and contact with the birth family or former resource parents is allowed; however, this will be determined on an individual basis. In some situations, parents have had their legal rights taken away by the courts; therefore, you would not be allowed to have contact with your parents.

Q. Can I sleep over at a friend's house?

A. This will be a decision made by your resource parents in conjunction with your treatment team based on your progress, needs and safety considerations.

Q. Can I get my driver's license?

A. It depends on the DSS that has custody of you and whether or not your resource parents are willing to put you on their car insurance.

Q. Can I get a job?

A. If your resource parent, your UMFS case manager, and your Treatment Team approve, and if you are at least sixteen years old, then you can get a job. In some cases, if you are at least fifteen, your DSS will allow you to get a work permit.

Q. What happens when I turn eighteen?

- A.** There are numerous options. The two main options are: you can request to leave your resource home and be responsible for yourself and your basic needs. DSS will no longer provide any money for your clothing, housing or medical care. DSS will no longer be your legal guardian.

Another choice is that you can choose to attend college or a vocational program. Your UMFS case manager can assist you with the college application process. DSS will assist you with college tuition through access to vouchers and grants. You may be able to continue living with your resource parents, you may live in a college dorm, or you can choose to live in your own apartment. DSS will continue to provide financial assistance to you.

There are many other options available. This is something that you will need to discuss with your DSS Worker, resource parents and your UMFS case manager.

Q. Am I allowed to be at home alone?

- A.** With permission from your Treatment Team you may be able to have some time alone. This will be determined by your behavior at school and at home. You will be asked to sign an unsupervised contract with your resource parent setting expectations for any time alone.

EXAMPLE OF AN UNSUPERVISED TIME CONTRACT

Unsupervised Social Contract

Youth's Name: _____ Effective Date: _____

Foster Parents: _____

This contract gives Client permission to go out of the home without their foster parents for the below stated activities and with the guidelines stated. Initial to show that all has been read and discussed. Anything not initialed is not active or applicable at this time.

- _____ 1. Client will be able to attend recreational activities including football, basketball, and baseball games. Client will also be able to attend school dances such as prom.
- _____ 2. Client will be able spend time with friends and significant other such as going to the movies and dinner.
- _____ 3. The following activities are NOT approved for unsupervised time.
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- _____ 4. If Client is noncompliant with the expectations of this contract and/or is displaying irresponsibility or problematic behavior, this contract may be revoked by the Foster Parents.
- _____ 5. The Foster Parents reserve the right to meet anyone that the Client will be spending unsupervised time with in the community. Any person transporting a Client MUST have a valid VA license.
- _____ 6. Client agrees to abide by all curfews given by foster parents. Curfews will not exceed _____ on nights that Client has to attend school the next day. Client is expected to be in for the night by _____ on nights that they do not have to work or attend school the next day. In the event that Client cannot make it home by their curfew due to circumstances beyond their control, a call to the Foster Parents must be made stating their whereabouts, the reason for the delay, and anticipated time of arrival.
- _____ 7. Client must fully complete any stated household expectations established by the Foster Parents to include chores.
- _____ 8. Client agrees to abide by all household expectations at all times.

- _____ 9. Client agrees to fully inform Foster Parents of where they will be at all times while out of the home and to be honest regarding whereabouts in the community. Client is to always provide contact information so Foster Parents can communicate with them.
- _____ 10. UMFS or the Foster Parents, reserve the right to check on Client to determine if they are at the set location at any given time.
- _____ 11. Client agrees to obey all laws at all times.
- _____ 12. Client agrees not to travel any more than _____ miles away from home in any direction. This distance perimeter allows Client to travel to _____, VA, and _____, VA. All locations and destinations are to be approved by the Foster Parents prior to Client leaving the home.
- _____ 13. Client agrees to notify the Foster Parent of any change in plans immediately.
- _____ 14. Client agrees to dress appropriately and understands the Foster Parents will monitor clothing choices.
- _____ 17. Client understands that this contract (including all components) is a privilege, not a right, and that UMFS and/or the foster family can terminate this contract at any time for any reason. Furthermore, if at any time Client fails to comply with all of the above conditions, this contract can be terminated or modified.

I, _____, by signing below and initialing above, agree that I am in full understanding of all of the conditions set forth in this contract and agree to abide by all conditions at all times.

Client

Date

Resource Parent

Date

Resource Parent

Date

UMFS Social Worker

Date

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adoption: When someone other than your biological parents goes before the courts and tells a judge that they want you to be part of their family and take their last name.

Birth Parent: This is your biological parent, the person who gave birth to you.

CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocate. A CASA is someone who is assigned to you to help voice your best interest at Court hearings and reviews. Your CASA may also attend other meetings like FAPT and school meetings.

Case Manager: This is your UMFS TFC Worker; he or she visits with you and your resource parents on a regular basis in order to monitor your progress. Your TFC Worker also keeps your DSS Worker updated on your progress.

Custody: The right of a child or youth's care and control, carrying with it the duty of providing food, shelter, medical care, education and discipline.

DSS: Department of Social Services.

DSS Service Plan: A plan that DSS submits to the Court that explains who is responsible for what while you are in foster care.

FAPT: Family Assessment and Planning Team. This is a decision-making team that meets quarterly to discuss your placement, progress, and needs.

GAL: Guardian Ad Litem. This person provides you with legal representation in Court.

IEP: Individualized Educational Plan. This helps you get what you need in school to achieve academic goals.

Legal Guardian: This is usually the department of social services. DSS has been awarded custody of you by the courts. DSS is responsible that your basic needs are met. DSS acts as a representative in place of a parent.

Psychiatrist: This is a person that will monitor your medications.

Resource Parent: A foster and/or adoptive parent.

Respite: When you spend time in the care of another UMFS resource family. It could be for a few hours or overnight. You typically return to your resource home after respite care.

Therapist: Someone that can talk with you on a regular basis about life or problems that you are having.

Treatment Foster Care (TFC): A program for youth to live in a home with a family. A case manager will visit to make sure all your needs are met by the resource parent and to help connect you to other services in the community.

Treatment Team: The treatment team consists of you, your DSS Worker; your UMFS case manager, your resource parent(s) and your biological parents if they are involved in your treatment goal. The purpose of the treatment team is to make sure your goals and needs are met.

UMFS: United Methodist Family Services.

Unsupervised Time Contract: A contract between you and your resource parents that provides guidelines for time spent away from resource parent's direct supervision.