

Therapeutic Modalities

Research has demonstrated that the majority of youth (80% in some studies) in residential substance use disorder treatment have suffered significant trauma. Traumatized youth have difficulty with interpersonal trust, difficulty with emotional regulation and difficulty seeing a positive vision of the future. Many are just in “survival” mode.”

Treatment will be less likely to be successful if the youth’s trauma, and the results of the trauma, mentioned above, are not addressed. In response to this, the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center has developed a curriculum which makes trauma, and its effects, a central treatment focus. This is done by training all staff who interact with youth in “trauma-informed care.” Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is a treatment philosophy and a set of treatment guidelines which take the youth’s trauma history in to account in every interaction. TIC informs all aspects of care with youth including the manner in which treatment decisions are made, the manner in which communication with the youth occurs, and the manner in which behavior modification is delivered.

Additionally, one of the formal therapies to be used at the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center will be Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT). This form of therapy helps the youth to develop the ability to manage their emotions, using mindfulness strategies to develop the “wise mind” and to use effective communications with others.

Our goal will be not only to help the youth not to drink and use drugs, but also to be emotionally healthy adults with healthy habits and positive relationships.

*Some photos provided by David Adams Photography

IHS/YRTC Logistics

The U.S. Congress authorized the YRTCs in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. In 1992, Congress amended the Act authorizing IHS to construct and operate two YRTCs in California, one to serve northern California, and one to serve the remainder of the state. Currently, most of California’s Indian youth who receive residential chemical dependency treatment are sent to out-of-state facilities. Often, out-of-state programs do not address the unique cultural needs of Indian youth, and cannot offer effective family therapy. The new YRTCs in California will be an important step to helping thousands of Indian youth in California who need residential care.



DESERT SAGE YOUTH WELLNESS CENTER Hemet, CA

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Youth Regional Treatment Center (YRTC)



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The Facility

Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center, the Southern California Youth Regional Treatment Center (YRTC), is located south of Hemet, California. The facility is a co-ed inpatient facility for youths (ages 12-17) with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

The facility is built on approximately 20 acres of former dry farming and residential land. It is located in the foothills, in a rural setting, meeting responsible environmental mitigation and land stewardship.

The facility has three state-of-the-art, eco-friendly, LEED Certified Buildings, with 32 beds, offices, behavioral therapy units, cultural gathering area, and common space.

When fully operational, the facility will employ 70 full-time employees, including:

- Intake/Aftercare Coordinator(s)
- Supervisory Residential Assistant and Residential Assistants (Social Services Assistants)
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker(s)
- Substance Abuse Disorder Counselor(s)
- Psych. Tech(s)
- Clinical Nurse(s)/Psychiatric
- Licensed Vocational/Practical Nurse(s)
- Cultural Coordinator/Recreation Specialist
- Custodial Worker(s)
- Food Service Worker(s)
- Administrative Staff
- Teachers



Services Offered

Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center will offer:

- Mental Health Services
- Chemical Dependency Counseling
- Individual and Group Counseling
- Family Therapy
- Traditional Healing Services
- Traditional Arts and Crafts
- Cultural Activities
- Field/Recreational Trips
- Educational Opportunities
- Academic and Life-Skills Education
- Recreation Room
- Fitness Program
- Access to Medical Specialties and Dental Care

The Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center will also have an on-site kitchen and will prepare nutritious meals every day. It is equipped with a recreation room, a weight room, an indoor half court gym, and an outdoor basketball court. Walking paths are on the property, creating a calming, serene environment. An outdoor water feature and amphitheater is proposed for the future.



Aftercare Program

Aftercare is one of the most important and often the most challenging aspect of the recovery process. It is important that once the youth returns to his/her community, they stay engaged in the recovery process. However, our resources are limited and we cannot extend our services beyond our four walls. Therefore, our goal is to ensure that we know what these youth have available to them once they return home. Our Intake/Aftercare Coordinators will work with local personnel on the discharge planning process as soon as the youth is admitted to the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center.

