



Suicide Prevention and Resilience at Children's HealthSM

SPARC

A multi-disciplinary, intensive outpatient program for youth at risk for self-harm and their families with a focus on skill building and safety planning.

Overview

The Suicide Prevention and Resilience at Children's HealthSM (SPARC) program is an evidence-based, Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) focusing on reducing risk for self-harm and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. SPARC is a suicide-prevention program within the Department of Psychiatry at Children's Medical Center Dallas, providing clinical care, training and research opportunities to reduce teen suicide.

This comprehensive program provides:

- **Youth Group Therapy:** Group therapy three hours per day, two days per week for four to six weeks (based on each teen's need). The focus of therapy is on teaching skills to reduce risk factors related to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Monday and Thursday 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. or 1 to 4 p.m., Tuesday and Friday 8:30-11:30 a.m.
- **Parent Group:** Parents will attend a one-hour parent group focused on skills their child is learning in group. Friday 12 to 1 p.m.
- **Multifamily Group:** Group therapy will occur twice during your child's course of treatment. Parents and teens will attend together to focus on program orientation, skill building and communication. Wednesday 3 to 6 p.m.
- **Individual and Family Therapy:** Individual therapy and family therapy provide more individualized care. While the group therapy provides teens with a variety of skills to reduce suicidal thoughts and behaviors, individual and family therapies target the teen's specific needs. As the teen nears completion of the program, therapy focuses on relapse prevention and transition to community care.
- **Medication Management:** If needed, a child psychiatrist will review your teen's case for evaluation of medical treatment. Teens who need medication but do not have a treating psychiatrist will be offered treatment through the Depression Clinic at Children's Health.





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Treatment Skills

- **Reasons for Living:** Teens learn to identify and recall reasons for living to help them feel more hopeful and less helpless in crisis situations and during other times of distress.
- **Mindfulness:** Through this module, teens learn to focus their awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations.
- **Behavioral Activation:** Teens learn to recognize their mood states and how engaging in pleasant activities can improve mood.
- **Problem-Solving:** Teens learn to flip the problem to look at all sides of the situation, identify solutions and develop a plan for tackling difficulties.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Teens learn reactions can either be to the environment or to internal thoughts or interpretations of events, and these reactions can bring forth emotions. Teens also learn to identify their emotions and techniques to manage negative emotions.
- **Distress Tolerance:** Teens learn stressful situations are inevitable, but the goal is to survive the stressful situation without resorting to unhelpful behaviors.
- **Walking the Middle Path:** In "Walking the Middle Path," teens learn all people have unique qualities and points of view, and that it is important to avoid "all" or "nothing" thinking or extreme beliefs.
- **Socialization and Support:** Teens learn to expand their social network of support, particularly during crisis periods. This includes improving family communication, identifying positive peer support groups, and increasing family and community resources.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Relationships can be stressful at times. In this module, teens learn when and how to be assertive and how to use effective communication and negotiation strategies.
- **Positive Affect:** Teens learn that positive experiences decrease negative emotions and thereby increase positive emotions. In this module, teens learn strategies for activating and maintaining positive emotional states by engaging in pleasant activities or recalling positive events.
- **Wellness/Relapse Prevention:** Wellness is one of the key ingredients in prevention of future suicidal thoughts. Teens learn to identify and focus on their strengths and to add tools to increase periods of feeling and behaving "well."