

STEPS:

Supporting **Teens** Engaging **Positive** Solutions

What is STEPS?

The **STEPS Program (Supporting Teens Engaging Positive Solutions)** is BestSelf Behavioral Health's evidence-based treatment program for adolescents between the ages of 13 to 17 that experience problematic sexual behaviors (PSB).

What is the treatment program?

Problematic Sexual Behavior - Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (PSB-CBT) is a comprehensive family-based clinical treatment intervention for adolescents with problematic and/or illegal sexual behavior. The PSB-CBT models were developed and tested at the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Overall goals of this treatment include eliminating problematic sexual behavior, improving coping skills, reducing trauma symptoms (when present) and enhancing individual and family interactions and overall relationships.



Understanding Problematic Sexual Behavior

Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB) is defined as behavior(s) that involve sexual body parts in a manner that is both developmentally inappropriate and harmful to self and/or others. While sexual exploration is a normal part of development in adolescence, some sexual behavior indicates more than harmless curiosity. In cases where sexual behaviors pose a risk to the safety or well-being of a teen and other youth, it is imperative for families and communities to step in and intervene through proper identification, support, and treatment.

We recognize the sensitive and complex nature of these behaviors and work to assist teens in being accountable for their behaviors while also *seeking a way forward*.

How does PSB-CBT Work?

The underlying approach is strengths-based, focusing first and foremost on the young person we are treating and encouraging their capacity to learn and implement appropriate behavior, make safe decisions, and develop healthy relationships. Using cognitive-behavioral approaches, teens are taught rules about sexual behavior and specific skills of coping, self-control, and decision making. Core treatment components with caregivers address managing their child's behavior, supporting healthy development, sex education, abuse prevention, and appropriate sexual behavior and clear boundaries. The treatment consists of 12 structured modules delivered in individual and/or family sessions.

Caregiver Support & Participation

This program involves the family or other support systems in the teen's treatment and requires caregiver attendance. Active participation, monitoring and supporting of the teen's application of skills between sessions and ongoing assessment of progress in treatment will ensure success is achieved. PSB-CBT is appropriate for adolescents living with a variety of types of caregivers, including biological and/or adoptive parents, kinship care, and foster parents.

Referrals

Referrals for STEPS may come from Erie County Probation, Family Court, Law Enforcement, Department of Social Services, pediatricians and physicians, school staff or others. For more information or to make a referral please contact:

Sam Vaughn, Program Director, Child Advocacy Center

at **(716)886-5437**

Email: svaughn@bestselfwny.org

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