

Valley Teen Ranch Treatment Program

There are seven main components of *treatment* at Valley Teen Ranch:

- Social Skills
- Substance Abuse
- Gang Intervention and Victim Awareness
- Anger Management
- Independent Living
- Vocational Training
- Family Reunification

Social Skills are taught via:

- Life Skills classes – New Freedom curriculum, 100 lessons divided into 5 modules and taught twice weekly. Focus is on new responses to situations that have led to trouble in the past.
- Daily point discussions – feedback on interactions during the day with peers, staff and other adults, providing reinforcement and training on Interpersonal Effectiveness skills from our Dialectical Behavior Therapy program.
- Family environment – staff provides guidance in each house and utilizes times such as family style dining to model and discuss appropriate and respectful interactions.

Substance Abuse:

- Substance Abuse Dyads - Residents are evaluated and then participate in weekly substance abuse intervention sessions. The focus is on a) reinforcing motivation to maintain a sober lifestyle and b) developing a relapse prevention plan. Step work uses the Matrix curriculum and the 12-step Recovery Model as outlined in *It Works, How and Why: The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous* with supplemental work from contemporary research and publications.
- Individual Therapy – Residents have the opportunity to participate in individual therapy each week. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy techniques are used to identify the triggers and thinking errors that were involved in their substance abuse behaviors and the connection between self-image and the choice to use drugs and alcohol. Residents develop a toolkit of alternative ways to regulate their emotions so that they can turn to internal resources instead of drugs and alcohol.

Gang Intervention and Victim Awareness:

- What Have I Done? - Residents participate in a complete Victim Empathy program designed by Pete Wallis to encourage empathy in young people who have committed crimes or hurt others through their actions. It challenges the young person to face the harm they have caused and consider what they can do to help put things right.

- Gang Intervention – Residents develop alternative methods of dealing with negative peer influences and peer pressure while simultaneously exploring their own values. This material is woven into the Life Skills curriculum and is the focus of the Vocational program as well, based on our belief that young men who can succeed in vocational endeavors develop true self-respect that they will not find on the street.

Anger Management:

- Individual Therapy, House Group Meetings and the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Groups are all opportunities to learn and practice the Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills used in Distress Tolerance and Emotion Regulation.
- Mindfulness techniques, which have been strongly correlated with everything from a decrease in reactive behaviors to an increase in academic performance, are woven into the daily schedule. Residents have mp3 players to use for guided relaxation and have daily opportunities to participate in yoga or other exercise programs.

Independent Living:

- We have developed our own Independent Living Program curriculum based on feedback from the experiences of young men who have graduated from the program over the past 25-plus years. Lessons are reality based – for example, how much does owning a car actually cost, and what should you not talk about when you are at work? Residents prepare resumes, participate in job interviews, and (if appropriate) complete applications for college and financial assistance.

Vocational Training:

- Valley Teen Ranch is an 80-acre ranch with abundant opportunities to learn job skills involved in the care and upkeep of the grounds and the livestock. Training is provided in Woodworking, Animal Care and Husbandry, Landscape Maintenance, Pool Maintenance, Culinary, and Job Readiness. Certificates are provided when residents complete each of the training programs.
- We provide each young man with many opportunities to experience himself as a successful in a healthy, pro-social environment. On a typical day, a VTR resident might put on a pair of work gloves, pick up a post hole digger, dig a hole, put a post in that hole, use a level and a string to check the height, and tamp in the dirt around it until it is stable. We believe that type of experience is just as important as the information he receives in his Life Skills classes or his individual therapy in terms of developing into a positive and productive person who believes he can succeed.

Family Reunification:

- Family therapy is provided and visitation is encouraged throughout the course of treatment. The skills that are learned in the program can be practiced in the home environment and discussed during family therapy so that parents can provide reinforcement of gains made during treatment.