

# **Client Handbook**

## **Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut, Inc.**

**860-270-0600**

Revised January 22, 2021

## **WELCOME TO EASTERSEALS CAPITAL REGION & EASTERN CONNECTICUT**

Dear Vocational Client:

Your program at Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut is designed to provide you with services that will enable you to achieve your vocational goals. Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will be working with you to ensure your participation in all phases of your rehabilitation program. You will be expected to take an active role in developing and attaining your program objectives.

Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will provide you with regular feedback on your progress and will coordinate your referral to any other services from which you may benefit. We do not have waiting lists for services and make every attempt to provide services in a timely manner. You will assist in directing your services, in conjunction with your referral source, and will play an important role in the service design and delivery. All services will be conducted in the most integrated and least restrictive environments as possible. It is important for you to follow all safety rules and regulations at all times.

The Easterseals vocational team consistently strives to offer quality services. Our dedication to excellence in service delivery is indicated by our long-term commitment to certification by the Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). We are proud of our commitment to provide the highest standards of service delivery and look forward to working with you and assisting you in realizing your vocational goals.

Please note that due to the 2019-2020 outbreak of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), Easterseals is taking extra precautions with the care of every client to include enhanced sanitation and disinfecting procedures in compliance with CDC guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For your information,

Some symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Dry Cough
- Difficulty Breathing
- Loss of Taste/ Smell

If you have experienced any of these related symptoms, have been in close contact with an infected individual within the past 14 days, or traveled out of the state within the last two weeks, please notify us immediately and your service will be pended upon subsided symptoms, a doctor's note, and/or receipt of a negative COVID-19 test.

Please direct any questions to your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Welcome to Easterseals!

**Summary and Analysis of Client Satisfaction Data  
7/1/20 through 6/30/21  
Employment Services  
Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut**

Client satisfaction surveys were completed by clients at the time of completion/discharge from a particular service. The results of these data aggregations are presented in Table 1 below.

<b>Table 1 Percent of Respondents That Made a Rating of "Excellent" or "Good"</b>		
	EXCELLENT	GOOD
Promptness of admission	80%	20%
Promptness in addressing issues	40%	60%
Opportunity to participate in treatment planning	40%	40%
Type, frequency, & duration of service	60%	40%
Staff support in achieving goals	80%	20%
Staff was responsive to communication needs	80%	20%
Arrangements for follow-up	40%	60%
Service expectations met	100%	N/A
Information re program was accurate	100%	N/A
Overall impression of the Center	80%	20%

Table 2 offers a summary of written comments that respondents also offered.

<b>Table 2 Summary of Written Comments</b>
1. "You have been a great help in my life and have made an impact on me. I love everything that you all have helped me with."
2. "I love the atmosphere. As soon as I walked in I realized this is the place I want to work. Cannot say enough."
3. "The staff was great and helpful"

While it is clear that the overall results evidence strong satisfaction, we realize that there is a consistent need for improvement. Although 100% of the clients surveyed reported that their service expectations had been met and that information regarding the program had been accurate, only 60% of the respondents offered an "Excellent" rating for "The opportunity to participate in the development of the treatment plan" and "Staff's recommendations and/or assistance in arranging follow up." What presents as troubling is that the last two surveys had not indicated any issues in in these current two issues of concern.

Results and tentative action plans were presented to staff for review and comment. The findings and suggested strategies will be presented to the Board of Trustees. Table 3 offers an action plan to address concern about clients' overall impression of "The opportunity to participate in the development of my treatment plan" and "Staff's recommendations and/or assistance in arranging follow up." All action items will be immediately implemented upon Board review and approval.

In addition to the information offered above, the following is a summary of the satisfaction survey offered by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for the 7/19 to 3/20 timeframe. This summary offers the reader a greater understanding of the depth of the passion and level of excellence that is incorporated into the work for those we serve. All the following percentages exceed the DMHAS contracted goals as well as the state average.

### Consumer Satisfaction Survey/DMHAS

General Satisfaction	100%
Respect	100%
Access	100%
Participation in Treatment	98%
Overall	98%
Recovery	97%
Outcome	97%

### Mission and Philosophy

The mission of Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut is to lead the way to 100% equity, inclusion, and access for people with disabilities, families, and communities by enriching education, enhancing health, expanding employment, and elevating community.

Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut believes that all people have a desire and right to live in dignity and to be responsible for their own welfare and destiny. Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut will help make this possible, working in cooperation with other organizations.

### **Ethical Standards**

Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut and its staff uphold the highest ethical standards. All staff members treat individuals served with respect and dignity. The client bill of rights is provided to all individuals served, and service decisions are based on the needs and rights of those served.

### **General Program Entrance Criteria**

In order to be served by Easterseals, you must have:

1. A diagnosed disability.
2. A written consent from legal parent, guardian, or conservator, if a minor or not your own conservator.
3. An established referral and funding source.
4. Independence in activities of daily living or established assistance.
5. Independent transportation or established assistance.

You are admitted for vocational services on the basis of a written referral from an appropriate source. Background information, medical history, precautions, and any other pertinent records may be obtained at any time during the course of your rehabilitation plan with your permission.

You may be discharged from services should you become a danger to yourself or others.

### **Client's Bill of Rights**

Easterseals will promote the rights of individuals with disabilities in order to advocate for each person's opportunity for personal growth and community inclusion.

**You have the right to:**

- **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY:** You have the right to every consideration of privacy. All communication and documentation is confidential. However, information will be shared with the appropriate persons in order to protect you and others from harm.
- **FREEDOM FROM:** Abuse, financial or other exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, and neglect.
- **REASONABLE RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR SERVICE:** You shall receive a reasonable response to any and all of your requests for Easterseals' services.
- **INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES:** You have the right to information about services provided through Easterseals.
- **EQUAL ACCESS TO SERVICES:** You shall have equal access to services regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation or national origin.
- **MAKE DECISIONS TO ACCEPT OR REFUSE SERVICES:** You have the right to make decisions about your services. You have the right to accept or refuse services and be informed of the consequences of your decision.
- **INFORMED CONSENT:** You have the right to receive information necessary to give informed consent for services, for release of information, and any involvement in research.
- **INFORMATION ABOUT CLIENT RIGHTS:** You have the right to receive information about Easterseals' policies on clients' rights and grievance procedures.
- **ACCESS TO MEDICAL CHART:** You have the right to review your records and have the information explained to you.
- **BE INFORMED OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** You have the right to be informed of Easterseals' policies and practices as they relate to services.
- **RECEIVE EXPLANATION OF BILL:** You have the right to be informed of Easterseals' charges for services and available payment methods.
- **CONSIDERATE AND RESPECTFUL CARE:** You have the right to receive considerate, courteous, and respectful care.
- **KNOW IDENTITY OF SERVICE PROVIDERS:** You have the right to know the identity of all individuals involved in your rehabilitation program.
- **MAKE DECISIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN YOUR PLAN OF CARE:** You have the right to make decisions about your plan of care before and during services.
- **CONTINUITY OF CARE:** You have the right to expect consistent services.

- **BE INFORMED OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** You have the right to be informed of any business relationships among Easterseals, educational institutions, other health care providers, or payers that may influence your services and care.
- **PARTICIPATE IN ETHICAL ISSUES:** You have the right to participate in decisions involving ethical issues that may impact your service plan.
- **ACCESS AN INTERPRETER:** You will have access to an interpreter if you do not speak or understand English, or if you use sign language.
- **ALTERNATE DECISION MAKER:** Your parent, guardian, or conservator has the right to make decisions on your behalf, in accordance with the law.
- **OTHER LEGAL RIGHTS:** You may have other legal rights as noted by you or others.
- **ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP:** In addition to your Vocational Counselor and/or Employment Specialist, it is your right to ask to speak with their supervisor up to the CEO of Easterseals.

### Client's Responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- **PROVIDING INFORMATION:** You are responsible for providing information, to the best of your knowledge, about your present and past health, hospitalizations, medications, insurance information, and other matters related to your health and vocational status.
- **FOLLOWING THE TREATMENT PLAN:** You are responsible for following the service plan recommended by your team. You are also responsible for keeping appointments and to inform your vocational specialist if you anticipate any problems following the recommended services.
- **REFUSING SERVICES:** You are responsible for your decisions if you refuse services or do not follow your team's recommendations.
- **PROVIDING COPY OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES:** You are responsible for ensuring that the Company has a copy of your written advance directive if you have one.
- **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS:** You are responsible for assuring that the costs of your services are paid in a timely manner.
- **FOLLOWING RULES AND REGULATIONS:** You are responsible for following Easterseals' rules and regulations regarding personal conduct and safety.

- **BEING CONSIDERATE OF RIGHTS OF OTHERS:** You are responsible for making reasonable accommodations to the needs of Easterseals, other clients, and Easterseals employees.
- **PERSONAL HEALTH:** You are responsible for the impact of your lifestyle on your personal health.
- **PERSONAL POSSESSIONS:** You are responsible for your personal possessions while at Easterseals.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy**

It is the policy of Easterseals to provide equal employment opportunity to all participants of its programs without regard to disability, race, color, sex, creed, age, marital status, veteran status, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, or political affiliation.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Easterseals does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, unwelcome or unsolicited requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome or unsolicited verbal or physical contact or conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, deliberate, repeated making of unwelcome or unsolicited gestures, comments, or jokes. Comments or jokes may include comments or jokes about a person's sexual activities (real or imagined), comments or jokes about private or sexual body parts, offering to give someone a raise in exchange for allowing sexual contact, or using sexually-oriented profanity. Physical contact may include rubbing someone's back, pinching someone's buttocks, or bumping into someone deliberately. Other forms of harassment have the same types of elements, except that the unwelcome conduct is based on the person's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected status.

If you believe that you have been sexually harassed, you should immediately bring your concern to the Vocational Coordinator, the Director of Rehabilitation Services, or any Company manager who will then bring the matter immediately to the attention of the President of the company. If it is a Company employee or manager that you feel is sexually harassing you, you should bring your complaint to someone other than that individual. Company management takes complaints of sexual harassment very seriously and will promptly investigate any such complaints. Even though there is a strong procedure in place, Easterseals recognizes that you still may feel uncomfortable reporting sexual harassment. You may decide not to report perceived harassment, or may want to report without identifying the harasser, or without identifying yourself because of fear of retaliation, embarrassment, fear of others knowing, or other personal reasons.

Once alleged harassment is reported, the President or his/her designee will investigate promptly. After a thorough investigation, a determination will be made as to whether or not sexual



harassment has occurred. Appropriate action will be taken if sexual harassment has occurred. Any individual determined to have engaged in harassment may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment (in the case of employees) or services (in the case of clients).

The investigator will maintain confidentiality as much as possible, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. All persons involved in any investigation will be informed of the need for confidentiality and will be expected to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Easterseals will handle all grievances according to policy which provides for prompt and fair resolution of complaints at the lowest possible level. The policy focuses on the mediation and settlement of issues as soon as possible after they arise. If you have a grievance, you should discuss the issues with your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or Vocational Coordinator. If no agreement is reached, then the Director of Rehabilitation Services will review the grievance. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may file a written grievance with the President within 30 days of the decision of the Director of Rehabilitation Services, unless good cause is shown for a late filing. The written grievance must describe the action or situation of concern, your name and address, and if applicable, the name and address of an individual serving as your representative. The President will provide you with a written decision within 21 calendar days of receiving the written grievance. If the client wishes to pursue the matter, he/she may send an appeal, in writing, to National Easterseals, Client Assistance Program (CAP) or Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). The filing of a complaint or grievance by a client will not result in retaliation or barrier to services by an employee or a supervisor.

### **Confidentiality**

Easterseals shall ensure maintenance of confidentiality. Information from your chart may not be disclosed to anyone without written authorization signed and dated by you or parent/guardian or legal conservator. Any individual over the age of 18 may, upon request, see the records maintained about him/her by Easterseals. The person may also bring any person of his/her choosing to see the records as well. The person has the right to have a copy of the records made in a form that is comprehensible to him/her.

If you would like to review your records, these procedures must be followed:

1. A release form must be signed by you, your parent/guardian, or your legal conservator.
2. You and/or legal representative shall arrange to view the record with your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator at a mutually convenient time.

3. Only the records generated from staff at Easterseals will be reviewed; materials from other agencies will be removed by the appropriate staff prior to the viewing session.

### **Business Hours**

Easterseals is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Your rehabilitation program will specify your hours. Community-based programs may involve scheduling you after Easterseals' business hours. Easterseals will be closed the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

### **Bad Weather**

Closings or delayed openings due to inclement weather will be announced on WFSB TV Channel 3 and WVIT Channel 30, contact your Vocational Counselor, or you may call Easterseals at 860-270-0600 for a recorded message.

### **Absenteeism/Illness**

You are expected to report to Easterseals as scheduled. If you are unable to report to Easterseals or if you plan to be late, you will be expected to telephone your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator before 9:00 A.M. If you are ill or may be absent for a prolonged period of time, then you should call or have someone else call daily to keep your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator informed of your status. If your rehabilitation program involves a community-based employer, it is your responsibility to notify the employer.

Excessive absences or tardiness will not be tolerated. A note from your physician will be required for any illness lasting more than five (5) days or when there is a serious health problem, injury, or change in medication that would impact your performance or participation.

### **Appointments**

Personal appointments should be scheduled after your program hours when possible. Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Vocational Specialist or Vocational Coordinator will attempt to accommodate any required appointments or previously scheduled appointments when notified of your needs.

### **Safety Rules**

Obey all safety rules. They are for your benefit and that of your fellow participants. Failure to follow these rules is grounds for immediate dismissal.

1. Do not wear sandals, open-toed, open-heeled, or high-heeled shoes, or dangling objects such as neckties, jewelry and hair that is not tied back when working in the work center.
2. Wear safety equipment, such as goggles, gloves, masks, or aprons when indicated.
3. Report all injuries, even those not considered serious, to your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Vocational Coordinator, Vocational Director, or supervisor immediately.
4. Be informed of and follow all posted Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures.
5. If you observe any conditions that you feel are unsafe, please report them to a staff person immediately.
6. Absolutely no form of medication is to be taken by an individual on the premises unless prescribed by a physician. Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator must be informed of all medications that you are taking and must also be informed of any changes in the amount or kind of medication prescribed. You are expected to be compliant with medications as prescribed. Non-compliance may result in discharge from program.
7. The possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs or alcohol is **PROHIBITED AND GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL**. Any individual who reports to Easterseals under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances will be sent home.
8. No weapons, such as guns, knives, chains, pipes, etc., are permitted.
9. Food or beverages are only allowed in designated areas within the work center.
10. No abusive or foul language, fighting, running, shoving, practical jokes, noisy arguments, any acts of physical violence, or theft of property will be tolerated.
11. No smoking is allowed anywhere inside Easterseals or its vehicles.
12. Individuals must inform their Vocational Coordinator, Career Specialist or Supervisor before leaving the work area for any reason.
13. Borrowing or lending money or other items among fellow workers or staff is not recommended.
14. Easterseals' telephones are for staff use only, unless permission is given by staff.
15. No personal items are allowed on the work areas; this includes radios, tape players, headphones, message beepers, and cellular phones unless previous permission is granted.

16. You are expected to dress safely and appropriately for your rehabilitation program. Any type of clothing or accessory which interferes with your ability to participate or to perform your work, which is inappropriate, or which could cause injury to you or to your coworkers is prohibited. You are expected to appear neat, clean, and well-groomed.
17. Individuals are expected to return to work from breaks and lunch periods on a timely basis.

### **Nonconformance to Rules and Regulations**

1. In the event you do not follow the rules at Easterseals, one or more of the following steps may be taken:
  - A. Verbal Counseling/Warning: This will involve case documentation and goal revision on your team plan of care report.
  - B. Written Warning: This will involve completion of problem/concern report or contract and a counseling session.
  - C. Probationary Status: This will involve the completion of the Problem/Concern Report, a counseling session, and a specific appointment for a follow-up session. It will serve as a final warning.
  - D. Suspension or Dismissal: Repeated offenses or nonconformance to rules that are serious in nature may be grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal. Authority for termination is vested in the Program Director.
2. Team meetings will also be scheduled to discuss issues of nonconformance.

### **Wage Information**

If you participate in one of programs where you may earn wages, your pay may be hourly, based on piece rate or time studies. Paychecks are issued on every other Friday for earnings through the previous two weeks. In the event a payday falls on a holiday, checks will be issued the last working day before the holiday. If you do not work on a payday, then your check will be mailed to your home address unless other arrangements are made. It is your responsibility to inform your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator of a change of address. No benefits are earned in these programs as the work activity is considered a part-time, limited rehabilitative program. It is your responsibility to notify all support agencies, such as social services, of your wages earned. Social Security taxes may be withheld from all paychecks.

### **Financial Review**

Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator will review with you your responsibility to report your earnings in the community to SSI, SSDI, State, or City welfare as they apply. Failure to do so could put your benefits in jeopardy. From time to time, said agency (ies) may request information regarding your earnings, and reporting those earnings is your responsibility.

### **Chemical Hazard Communication**

Easterseals shall comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard by compiling a hazardous chemicals list, by using Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), by ensuring that containers are labeled, and by providing appropriate training. Please ask your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or Vocational Coordinator for further details of Easterseals' Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

### **Support Services**

Easterseals can arrange for a broad range of support services which may be available to you. These services may include, but are not limited to: social services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, assistive technology, augmentative communication, computer access, functional literacy, work-related academic skills, work-related community skills, community living coordination, legal affairs/tax matters, mobility and transportation skills, and psychological services. Please ask your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or Career Specialist for additional information. Supportive services should be coordinated by your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or Career Specialist. Some of the services are provided on a fee for service basis. You should direct any questions to your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Specialist or the Vocational Director.

### **Easterseals Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut Safety and Evacuation Procedure**

#### **Evacuation of Windsor facility in the Event of Fire (Including Drills)**

The following outline covers action procedures to apply before, during, and after various kinds of emergencies which might endanger clients.

1. Evacuation of Windsor facility - Such evacuation is normally indicated in case of fire (including drills). It is signaled by an overhead page.

- A. When an overhead page is sounded, staff will be alerted and will direct clients to the nearest safe fire exit. If you are in the restrooms, please proceed to the nearest exit. Our staff will check the restrooms during a fire alarm and will provide assistance if needed. Staff will ensure that their zone has been properly cleared before exiting the building.
  - B. Once you have vacated the building, you should immediately proceed to the furthest employee parking lot in the front of the building.
  - C. All occupants of the building should remain in the designated area until the “all clear” is sounded.
2. Evacuation and movement to shelter for the Windsor facility
- A. If the evacuation of the building resulted from other than a fire drill or if clients and personnel have not been allowed to return to the building in a reasonable period, full evacuation will be initiated. Staff members shall assist in relocating clients to the designated shelter.
  - B. As necessary and appropriate, the program director(s) will coordinate the dispatching of clients via public transportation when appropriate and notification to families. All remaining clients will be dispatched as transportation becomes available.