

DID YOU KNOW?

Algoma Family Services is leading the way on the world stage in the delivery of evidence based Treatment Foster Care services for children and youth with emotional difficulties.



What does that mean?

With the start of the new millennium, Algoma Family Services (AFS) set out to find a residential treatment service that would be effective in treating youngsters with emotional and behavior difficulties. After searching and reviewing various models of practice, AFS turned to a leading expert in the field at the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) in Eugene, Oregon. There we met world-renowned clinical research expert Dr. Patricia Chamberlain, Ph.D. who had been involved in research studies on residential treatment of young people that spanned over 2 decades. Dr. Chamberlain and her research team had been interested in learning how to best provide treatment for children and youth with emotional and behavior problems. They turned their research into theory then into practice by developing a program that would incorporate everything they had learned about how children learn, grow and thrive in society. They developed what is widely known in the field today as *Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care* (MTFC).

Soon MTFC sites were springing up around the globe including sites in the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and throughout the United States. Bringing this world-class residential treatment model to Algoma would be an ambitious undertaking requiring partnerships and a commitment to assemble a treatment team of dedicated treatment foster parents as well as qualified and experienced staff. In October of 2003, the first MTFC site came to Canada, more specifically to Algoma Family Services.

Although there are many MTFC implementation sites worldwide, only two had successfully implemented all of the program's treatment components in such a manner that they would receive full certification by the Center for Research to Practice. Algoma Family Services in 2005 was confident that our team of treatment foster parents and program staff could become certified as the third certified MTFC site in the world. In addition to using the MTFC model, we added two additional evidence based models to our MTFC program, one involving a model for family work and the other on training foster parents to effectively manage crisis situations. Children were coming into care then returning home with marked progress in functioning.

We were excited following an extensive review of our program by OSLC, that we were in a good position to apply to the Center for Research to Practice for full certification. The Clinical Director of Treatment Foster Care Consultants Inc. (TFCC) at OSLC had the following to say about the review that was conducted:



"Indeed, I have never previously seen such a positive consultant review of an MTFC site...clinical staff and foster parents within this program are extremely skilled. While having skilled staff members is certainly always the goal, your ability to select very skilled foster parents and to retain them within your program speaks to the support within the team and the agency's support for this program."

*Dr. Sprengelmeyer, Ph.D. Clinical Manager,
Treatment Foster Care Consultants (TTFC)
Oregon Social Learning Center*

Algoma Family Services then submitted an application to the Center for Research to Practice and soon became the third fully certified MTFC site in the world, and the only one to have incorporated two additional evidence based models of practice in the areas of family work and crisis management.

Today, there are now seven certified sites in existence with an overwhelming majority of MTFC sites that remains in the implementation phase. Algoma Family Services is now a strong leader in the delivery of Treatment Foster Care services; putting Sault Ste. Marie on the map in respect to the quality of treatment foster care youngsters were receiving.

Since then, we have received national and international attention for the work that our team of treatment foster parents and program staff do. It is with pride that we can truly claim that together we are achieving the extraordinary. Following certification, Algoma Family Services was invited in 2006 to present our MTFC experience at the International Forensic Psychiatry Conference in Vancouver, BC.