

Hibiscus Children's Center Helping Families Heal
Through Mental Health Services

Treasure Coast - May is "Mental Health Awareness Month". Hibiscus Children's Center provides Mental Health Services to over 600 children and families annually and specializes in the treatment of trauma-based disorders, behavioral health, and healing victims of sexual abuse.

Hibiscus provides these critical services to children living at the Tilton Family Children's Shelter and Hibiscus Village and to community children. Master-licensed therapists provide services focused on decreasing emotional and behavioral issues and are trained in a variety of age appropriate and best practice treatment interventions. Hibiscus has a dedicated Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, only one of thirteen programs in the state.

Hibiscus Community Mental Health provides multi-dimensional services to help children heal and strengthen families. Counselors are flexible and go where the need is, meeting in offices or the family's home so they feel comfortable in their own environment. Therapists also provide intervention at school to help communicate the needs of the child and advocate for them by assisting with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and mental health treatment plans. Low self-esteem and trauma affects how kids think and focus and oftentimes causes failing grades and challenging behavior. Therapists may suggest extra support needed such as a 'time out' so the child is removed from a situation and given a chance to calm down. By providing this extra support, children learn coping skills and how to overcome the obstacles they are experiencing.

Therapists also testify for children in abuse court cases and engage in the adoption process by meeting with the new family to evaluate family dynamics, help the child adjust and anticipate any future issues that may arise. Additionally, support for parents is offered by linking them to community resources and providing family therapy.

One of the most important tools Hibiscus uses is the Sanctuary Model – an evidenced-based trauma-informed care model that addresses the health and well-being of children and caregivers, including staff and volunteers. One of the key elements to help minimize trauma symptoms is how we respond by asking, “What has happened to this person?” instead of “What’s wrong with this person?”.

Hibiscus therapists promote safety, build treatment plans and teach coping skills to children and families. Teaching kids how to advocate for themselves is an essential tool in helping them heal. Therapists also promote safety and trust in our community so they know Hibiscus is here when they need us. Robin Dankyi, LMHC, Sanctuary Training Specialist, shared, “Our therapists have had discharged families return for services when new issues arise. This is a testament that they believe in what we are doing and evidence that what we do matters. Families trust us with the most private matters in their lives. It is rewarding to know we have helped them through some of these most difficult times. Hibiscus clients have shared that we go above and beyond in providing mental health services.”

For more information, please visit us at HibiscusChildrensCenter.org or call the Hibiscus Community Mental Health Program at (772) 340-5750, ext. 170.