



### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Person is between 12-20 years of age (and if a minor, has parental/guardian consent).
- Person lives within Monmouth County.
- Person is insured, uninsured, and/or undocumented.
- Person can agree to ensure the safety of themselves/others and does not express intent/plan to act on retaliatory thoughts.
- Person who has been identified by school staff, community service provider, or other community member as being at-risk for becoming a victim of violence/perpetrator of violence. Risk factors include but are not limited to:
  - Aggressiveness
  - Early initiation of violent behavior
  - Parental criminality
  - Child maltreatment
  - Low levels of parental involvement
  - Parent-child separation
  - Academic failure
  - Lack of school connectedness
  - Truancy and school dropout
  - Frequent school transitions
  - Delinquent siblings and peers
  - Peer gang membership
  - Poverty
  - Substance use
  - Community disorganization
  - Availability of drugs and firearms
  - Exposure to violence and racial prejudice

### **Exclusionary Criteria**

- Person is under the age of 12 and over the age of 20.
- Person is not a resident of Monmouth County.
- Person is not at risk for violence or demonstrating behaviors indicative of potentially engaging in violence.
- Injury is self-inflicted.
- Person is actively experiencing psychosis, actively suicidal, actively engaging in substance abuse, or exhibiting symptoms that impede upon their ability to engage in Elevate services as defined above (i.e. non-verbal).

### **Contact Information**

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Elevate serves Monmouth County youth (ages 12-20) who are at risk of or already engaged in violence. The program serves youth in three ways:

1. **Peer mentoring:** Youth admitted to Elevate will be paired with a Peer Specialist, an individual personally impacted by violence who lives in the very communities they serve. Peer Specialists are trained in trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, de-escalation and more so they are better positioned to mentor youth, model positive behaviors, and guide/support youth in creating and maintaining healthy, safe lifestyles. They meet regularly with youth (at least one time per week) and work closely with Elevate's Clinical Therapist to assist youth in identifying their strengths, passions, and goals. In doing so, they will provide alternatives to violence (see below) and remove barriers that prevent engagement in such activities.
2. **Counseling:** Trauma-informed individual, group and/or family counseling is facilitated by Elevate's Clinical Therapist, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The Clinical Therapist will complete a biopsychosocial assessment with youth and parent/legal guardian to identify risk level and needs. They will support youth to identify treatment goals, assist them to create an individualized service plan, and meet regularly with youth (frequency dependent upon presenting problem and risk level) to help them achieve their goals. A variety of evidence-based therapeutic approaches will be used throughout the course of treatment i.e. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), holistic/alternative healing, psychiatric services (if needed). The Clinical Therapist works closely with the Peer Specialist and will also coordinate care with other entities involved i.e. schools, probation, CMOs, etc.
3. **Alternatives to violence:** Research shows that providing intensive support and services to promote healthy development protects youth from substance misuse, gang involvement, and more<sup>1</sup>. Youth will be offered activities that present alternatives to violence and increase the likelihood of long-term success. These activities include but are not limited to:
  - Financial support to participate in SAT test prep
  - Financial support and guidance completing college applications
  - Job readiness and career-based initiatives
  - Childcare and parenting classes
  - Music lessons and instruments
  - Membership to a local gym
  - Healthy lifestyle support (e.g., nutrition and food prep education)
  - Financial support to participate in recreational sports (i.e., registration, equipment, uniforms)

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<sup>1</sup> (Wiley, Christeson, & Newman, 2004; Taliaferro & Borowsky, 2012)