

W/B HIDTA Treatment and Prevention Spotlight

Brooke's House, Maryland



Brooke's House is a treatment center in Maryland that provides a range of treatment services for substance use disorder, including a residential inpatient home for women, individual therapy, outpatient group therapy, and intensive outpatient treatment. The mission of Brooke's House is to inspire and empower women suffering from substance use disorders by providing them a safe, stable and emotionally supportive living environment while in the early stages of recovery. Funding from the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA supports a newer component of Brooke's House, which was launched with the goal of increasing access to substance use disorder treatment in juvenile justice systems. This youth-focused component works to enhance and strengthen current strategies with additional evidence-based interventions, and implements and evaluates innovative strategies to address prevention, early intervention, and treatment needs in Washington County, Maryland.

Through a partnership with the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), Brooke's House provides youth aged 12 – 17 with a variety of services, including:

- Prevention education groups
- Recreational therapy
- Urinalysis monitoring for those with a formal substance use diagnosis
- Mentorship

This greatly expands efforts to provide services to youth, which previously was limited to individual treatment. Services are provided to any youth within DJS with substance use concerns, including those who are considered at-risk but do not have a formal diagnosis. The prevention group provides a 2-hour prevention course that educates on addiction, refusal skills, and coping skills.

A key aspect that staff are excited to get up and running is the mentorship program. They are currently in the process of hiring a mentor, who will provide goal setting guidance, recreational therapy, and ongoing phone call check-ins between sessions. The mentor will explore fun, sober activities with youth such as bowling, going to the skate park, and pumpkin smashing (after writing something you would like to release on the pumpkin). The mentorship component is possible because of funding from the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA.

Lacey Head, an Addictions Counselor at Brooke's House, expressed the true strengths of the new program. "It is really about the relationship you build. Having a safe space to ask questions if you are curious. Teens are exposed to a lot, at home and school, so it is nice to have trusted adults to ask questions to. It is very meaningful to see youth open up."

They are currently serving 10 adolescents, with referrals steadily picking up. Brooke's House is planning to open another site on farmland with a barn and horses and are hopeful that they will be able to provide equine therapy for youth. It is wonderful to see an expansion of treatment for youth in a county with extremely limited treatment options.

