

## Monica Place Program and Services Model

*Philosophy, Practices and Service*

*Descriptions*



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**MISSION:** A registered charity that provides supports to pregnant and parenting youth.

**VISION:** A collaborative and responsive community where pregnant and parenting youth are safe, supported and valued.

Located in Waterloo Region, Monica Place is a registered non-profit child and youth mental health agency focused on the needs of pregnant and parenting youth and their children. Monica Place offers services in two locations, Monica Place Waterloo and Monica Place Cambridge. Monica Place's trauma-informed, holistic programs and services include: Chaplaincy Program, Childminding Program, Circle of Security, Counselling Program, Parent and Child Residential Program, Prenatal Health Program, Prenatal Parenting Program, Prenatal Residential Program, SKILLS Program, Speakers Corner, Transitional Residential Program, Monica Place Cambridge Supportive Housing Program and a fully accredited Section 23 School Program. Since 1968, Monica Place remains an innovative centre that motivates, educates, nurtures and empowers pregnant or parenting youth to make healthy choices for themselves and their children.

Monica Place is governed by a volunteer board of directors that provides effective and ethical governance leadership on behalf of its stakeholders' (persons we support, donors, staff, volunteers, community) interest to ensure that the organization focuses on its purpose and outcomes for persons served, resulting in the organization's long-term success and viability.

### **Persons we Support**

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Monica Place supports the mental health of pregnant or parenting youth and their children who may require some or all of the following:

- supervised and safe housing
- support with respect to pregnancy or parenting
- support to continue their education
- counselling
- individual planning based on needs
- education and support to improve social skills, social supports, life skills and self esteem

The pregnant or parenting youth and their children supported at Monica Place present with a list of high risk factors including but not limited to:

- Mental Health Issues including depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder
- Addiction Issues
- Intimate Partner or Family Violence
- Unstable Housing
- Poverty
- Lack of Natural Supports
- Parent-Child Attachment Issues

### Criteria for Service

We maintain a welcoming, safe and trusting environment by adhering to criteria that ensures each young woman and child in our care receives the quality of service and level of support they need, both from staff and peers in the programs. We feel that everyone deserves a chance and understand that each individual has a unique set of circumstances that are considered in our admission process.

Following is the criteria for **Monica Place Waterloo** Programming.

Prenatal Residence:

- Young women between the ages of 12-24 who are pregnant
- In a position to benefit from the practical and mental health support, goal planning, prenatal support and program structure offered in this program
- Requires safe housing that is staffed 24/7 during her pregnancy

Parent Child Residence:

- Young women between the ages of 12-24 who are parenting a child under 6 months of age
- In a position to benefit from the practical and mental health support, goal planning, parenting guidance and program structure offered in this program
- Requires a supportive housing environment that is staffed 24/7 while she adjusts to parenting and plans to move forward

Transitional Residence:

- Young women between the ages of 12-24 who are in one the following unique situations:
  - prenatal woman who has decided to place her child for adoption
  - postnatal woman who has placed her child for adoption and is planning her next steps
  - woman who enters our services and subsequently miscarries and is planning her next steps

- postnatal woman who is working with Family & Children's Services (FCS) on a plan to have their child returned to their primary care

#### Section 23 School:

- Young women between the ages of 12-21 who are pregnant or parenting a child between the ages of 2 months and 24 months
- In need of completing high school credits
- If parenting, in need of child minding during the school day
- In a position to benefit from the practical and mental health support, goal planning, prenatal/parenting instruction, social support and program structure offered in this program

#### Prenatal Health & Prenatal Parenting (when person is not already a resident or school student):

- Young women between the ages of 12-24
- Woman does not require housing or school programming and would benefit from attending these 2 groups with a focus on prenatal support/instruction/guidance

#### Circle of Security (when person is not already a resident or school student)

- Young persons between the ages of 12-24 who would benefit from learning how the secure parent-child relationship can be supported and strengthened
- Participants are not required to be part of our residential or school programs

#### Following is the criteria for **Monica Place Cambridge** Programming.

- Young women between the ages of 16-24 who are parenting a child under the age of 3
- In a position to benefit from the practical and mental health support, goal planning and program structure offered in this program
- Requires short-term housing and has the ability to pay a monthly subsidized rent amount

Monica Place accepts referrals from a variety of sources including the youth themselves, family and/or an outside professional. Monica Place is continually looking at improving measures to access services and reduce wait times.

Once a referral is received the young woman will participate in a formal intake process to determine eligibility. Upon admission, a comprehensive orientation process that includes service delivery and coordination of each program is provided.

#### **Service Delivery Philosophy**

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Monica Place believes that the best way to serve pregnant or parenting youth and their children is to use a strength-based and person-centered approach. Monica

Place recognizes that everyone is unique and that each person has individual social, physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological needs. Whenever possible, and by drawing on our internal and external resources, Monica Place strives to provide services that incorporate the preferences, family and community backgrounds, needs, aspirations, values and cultural beliefs of each person we support. All persons are treated with respect and dignity.

Monica Place sees its involvement with pregnant or parenting youth and their children as being on a continuum of intervention according to the complexity, severity and evolving nature of the individual's need. Monica Place takes a dyadic approach addressing both the mother and child's mental health needs together. Monica Place maintains a trauma-informed approach which integrates knowledge and skills about trauma in all of its programs, services and organizational structures.

Monica Place works in collaboration with community partners and ensures roles and responsibilities of all service partners and natural support networks are defined, shared and documented. Collaborative efforts are informed by the needs of the people we support.

Monica Place creates a physically and emotionally safe environment for pregnant or parenting youth and their children, volunteers and staff. Monica Place ensures that all persons are treated with dignity and respect.

### **Multi-Disciplinary Approach**

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Staff members from all programs engage in frequent dialogue to inform their work, recognizing that the complex issues that bring youth to Monica Place requires support that is broad and developed through a trauma-informed lens and a multi-disciplinary perspective. Discussions include academic assessments, the development, implementation, and review of individual plans, child development tools, psycho-social assessments, discharge and transition planning.

**Plans of Care/Individual Planning Meetings:** are meetings attended by the young person we support, counsellor, and front-line staff who are involved in the planning process. We seek input from the Section 23 School Program staff as required. The purpose of these meetings is to collaboratively review the strengths and needs of the young person and to develop and monitor personal, academic, and child development goals. These goals make up her individual plan.

**Team Meetings:** are regularly scheduled meetings attended by front line staff, counsellor and management to discuss the progress of persons we support and to problem solve solutions to better support her success.

**Collaborative Meetings:** These meetings are person-centered, including the young person we support, Monica Place staff and staff from partner agencies who are currently providing service. Collaborative problem solving is used to address challenges encountered by the young person we support to provide her with help to develop a range of solutions.

### **Service Coordination- A Community of Support**

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Monica Place recognizes that a multidisciplinary process should be sought whenever possible for assessment, planning, implementation of care plans, review and end of service planning. Monica Place has formalized relationships with community service providers and offers consults and referrals whenever appropriate and ensures the appropriate services are wrapped around the young people we serve.

Community partners include (but not limited to:

- Family and Children’s Services
- Carizon
- Lutherwood
- Public Health
- Primary Care, Midwives, Obstetricians
- EarlyON centres
- Parenting Now
- Langs

When appropriate, community service providers will be invited to planning meetings in order to share information and expectations and to allow for further collaboration. Community handoffs and outreach is particularly important for end of service planning. Whenever possible, a warm hand off is ideal, and transition plans are given between providers.

### **Intake / Orientation**

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Young women we support are provided with an orientation of Monica Place at the start of service. Orientation includes but is not limited to:

- An introduction and explanation of various programs and services offered by Monica Place;
- A tour of the facilities;
- An explanation of the young women we support’s rights and responsibilities and risks and benefits;
- An explanation of her right to privacy and use of personal information;
- An intake meeting with the Counsellor/Intake and Support Coordinator;
- Appropriate external referrals are facilitated as needed

## Accessibility of Service

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Monica Place makes every effort to remove barriers to service for the individuals we support. The staff team explores various strategies to accommodate individuals needs and individual circumstances. Monica Place strives to ensure that the information shared with young parents we support is understood by them. Monica Place complies with the “Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act”. (AODA), 2005.

## Transition Planning/ End of Service Planning

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Transition planning is an important part of our service delivery model and part of everyone’s plan. When a youth leaves Monica Place, she participates in the development of a transition plan to identify ongoing goals and to ensure continued support in the community. Monica Place acknowledges the importance of preparing the young women we support to transition between core services, other community supports, adult mental health services, childcare services, employment and/ or post-secondary education.

## Programs and Services

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Staff members are trained to be trauma-informed and use this approach in conjunction with collaborative problem solving. Based on this philosophy, Monica Place takes the stance that those we support do well if they can. Monica Place adopts a strengths-based approach using various screening and assessment measures in order to identify each individual’s personal strengths and areas for growth. Each person we support at Monica Place has an Individualized Plan that focuses on specific goals as identified by the youth to meet their needs and to promote skill development as well as personal autonomy.

### **Chaplaincy Program**

The Chaplaincy program offers spiritual guidance and support for day to day living. The Chaplain shows non-denominational respect and connection to different faith groups and offers support during times of crisis. The Chaplain also facilitates a supportive correspondence program linking young women to members in the community through written correspondence.

### **Child Minding Program Waterloo**

Free child minding services are provided onsite in our dedicated childminding space for students in our Section 23 School Program. The care is provided by trained and dedicated volunteers with staff supervision. Prenatal young women have scheduled time in the Child Minding Program with staff support to gain hands on skills caring for babies. The Child Minding program focuses

specifically on the mother and child together as a whole, or what we refer to as the mother child dyad. The Child Minding program utilizes the Ages and Stages Questionnaire/Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional (ASQ/ASQ-SE) tools to screen and assess the developmental performance of children at various ages. It is used to identify children who might benefit from a referral for further evaluation re: delayed development. Each parent is provided with a Developmental Support Plan which indicates activities that will support their child's communication, gross/fine motor skills, problem solving, and social-emotional skills. This program incorporates and promotes the positive parenting principles initiated by the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region.

### **“Circle of Security”**

This 8-week evidence-based program offers an interactive learning environment. The goal of this program is for young parents to learn how the secure parent-child relationship can be supported and strengthened. The importance of parent child attachment is the focus of this program. This program is offered in both Waterloo and Cambridge. This group will help parents to:

- Understand their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
- Support their child's ability to successfully manage emotions
- Enhance the development of their child's self-esteem and
- Honor the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure

*Taken from <http://circleofsecurity.net/for-parents>*

### **Counselling Program**

The Counselling Program provides individual and group counselling support to prenatal and parenting women under the age of 25 years. When working with youth who have substance abuse issues, including concurrent disorders, we adopt a harm reduction approach. The Counsellor uses various research-based, evidence-informed assessment tools when helping young people we support move through the process of change. Aligned with our trauma-informed approach to service our Counselor is trained to conduct trauma specific work and use a variety of treatment approaches. The Counsellor utilizes screening and assessment tools including; the GAIN SS (Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener), the ACE (Adverse Childhood Effects) Questionnaire, the RESILIENCE Questionnaire, and the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and to identify an individual's experience, needs, as well as any mental health concerns to assist in providing a focus for

one-on-one counselling. For intensive treatment, a referral is made to a partner agency.

The Counsellor provides support in both Waterloo and Cambridge locations. Our one-to-one counselling program helps pregnant and parenting youth make positive decisions for themselves, their pregnancy and their child.

### **Monica Place Cambridge Supportive Housing Program**

This is a supportive housing program for young women and their children up to 3 years of age. Young mothers utilizing this service engage in individual planning, parenting support and learn independent living skills. This program makes important connections to outside community resources. The goal of this program is to empower young parents and their children to learn and grow as individuals, as a family and in their community. This program incorporates and promotes the positive parenting principles initiated by the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region. The program emphasizes the importance of working with the mother child dyad.

### **Parent Child Residential Program Waterloo**

This is a residential program for young women and their child, up to 6 months of age. The program provides resources, support and hands on learning, encourages healthy attachment between parent and child and models positive parenting. The program encourages use of appropriate parenting strategies, including reading and responding to child's cues. This program incorporates and promotes the positive parenting principles initiated by the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region. Breastfeeding support services are also available. The program emphasizes the importance of working with the mother child dyad.

### **Prenatal Health Program Waterloo**

The Prenatal Health Program is offered in partnership with Region of Waterloo Public Health. This group based program provides young women with resources, education and support during pregnancy to prepare for birth and parenting. The program helps young women understand how their choices impact the health of themselves and their child. This program incorporates and promotes the positive parenting principles initiated by the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region. This program, in conjunction with Prenatal Parenting Program, is also available to prenatal young women in the community who are not enrolled in other Monica Place programs.

### **Prenatal Parenting Program Waterloo**

This group based program is for prenatal young women to learn how their choices impact the development and physical and emotional health of their child. The program includes, but is not limited to, parenting styles and values, parent-child attachment and personal and social responsibilities of parents. This program incorporates and promotes the positive parenting principles initiated by the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region. This program is offered in partnership with the Waterloo Region District School Board. Young women who are registered in our Section 23 School Program can receive a post-secondary school credit upon completion of this program. This program, in conjunction with Prenatal Health Program, is also available to prenatal young women in the community who are not enrolled in other Monica Place programs.

### **Prenatal Residential Program Waterloo**

The prenatal residential program is a comprehensive, licensed, 24/7 care and treatment program for young women between the ages of 12 and 25, with multiple and complex needs during the prenatal period. Front line staff provides 24-hour support and guidance for young women to navigate their way through psychological, emotional, behavioural, social, educational and everyday living concerns, as they prepare for the birth of their baby. While most of the young women in the residential program are planning to parent, we welcome and support young women who are planning adoption for their child as well.

### **Section 23 School Program Waterloo**

This program is offered in partnership with the Waterloo Region District School Board. The program provides the opportunity for young women to receive elementary or secondary school credits. There is a focus on individual programs of study that are revised to accommodate varying levels of concentration, self-discipline, learning styles and well-being in order to meet the student's needs and goals. Monica Place partners with the school program in offering content and facilitating groups, and in supporting young women to obtain their credits in the Prenatal Parenting and SKILLS courses. This program is available to any pregnant or parenting young woman, up to age 21, in the community, residents of Monica Place Waterloo or Monica Place Cambridge.

### **SKILLS: Support & Knowledge for Independent Living & Learning Success**

This program provides young women with the skills to enable them to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The program

follows a SKILLS checklist that will allow everyone to garner the tools to be stable, self-sufficient and live independently.

This program is offered in partnership with the Waterloo Region District School Board. Young women who are registered in our Section 23 School Program can receive a post-secondary school credit upon completion of this program. This program incorporates and promotes the positive parenting principles initiated by the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region.

### **Speakers Corner Waterloo**

Based on the unique needs of the young women and their current circumstances; community partners are invited to share their expertise on a variety of topics. These may include: parenting, finances, relationships, independent living, mental wellness, addiction prevention/support, nutrition and more. This program enhances the work of all other programs by making connections to various community resources.

### **Transitional Residential Program Waterloo**

This program is for young women who are facing one of these unique circumstances:

- Young women who are working with Family and Children Services (CAS) on having their child returned to their primary care
- Prenatal young women who are planning to place their child for adoption
- Young women who enter our prenatal services and subsequently miscarry

Front line staff provides 24-hour support and facilitate planning for these young women to transition back into the community. They also provide residents with links to other community resources as needed.

## Guiding Principles

### 1. Trauma – Informed Practice

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A trauma informed approach/practice is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. A program that is trauma-informed:

- realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in persons we support, families, staff and other involved with the system;
- responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- seeks to actively resist traumatization.

At the organizational level, trauma-informed practices provide a lens through which policies, procedures, and practices are reviewed and assessed. This includes but is not limited to the following activities:

- Organizational Planning and Performance - Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance – Improvement Planning and Program and Services Review and Evaluation
- Employee Performance Development, Professional Learning and Training
- Volunteer Orientation and Supervision
- Risk Management
- Budget and Resource Allocation
- Community Education and Advocacy

### 2. Positive Parenting Philosophy

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Monica Place uses the shared principles from the Positive Parenting Community Committee of Waterloo Region to inform program development and implementation. Parenting is a life-long learning process and recognizes:

Parent(s) are their child's first teacher and they know their child best, recognizing that children are capable and competent and able to take part in the learning process as a partner.

- I. Positive parenting emphasizes the importance of parent(s) engaging with their children to develop positive strategies for expressing their emotions, understanding their temperaments, and managing their behaviors.
- II. Positive parenting contributes to supporting optimal child development throughout the ages, recognizing the importance of the impact in the early years.

- III. Positive parenting is a proactive, non-violent and non-punitive approach that strengthens relationships between parent(s) and children.
- IV. Positive parenting invests in the wellness of parent(s), therefore investing in the wellbeing of children.
- V. Positive parenting supports need to be accessible for all children and their families.
- VI. Positive parenting supports provide opportunities to enhance connections between parent(s), their peers, and their communities.

### **3. Person Centered Approach to Service Delivery**

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- I. Young women we support participate in various screening and evidence based assessment tools in an effort to identify required supports regarding their mental health needs and/or substance use.
- II. Young women we support are active participants in all aspects of their experience at Monica Place including but not limited to: participation in the development of their Individual Plans, Education Plans and Plans of Care, House/Tenant Meetings, Menu Planning and Focus Groups;
- III. Young women we support are expected to take part in the programs and services offered at Monica Place;
- IV. Young women we support actively participate in the creation of their own “Crisis Support Plan”;
- V. Young women we support receive an orientation that includes a copy of “the rights and responsibilities document”;
- VI. Respect for privacy and confidentiality is maintained in accordance with the Monica Place privacy/confidentiality policies;
- VII. Accommodations are made, when necessary, to ensure that the young women we support understand the services offered including communicating such information in a manner that is understandable by them (language, physical challenges etc.);
- VIII. Barriers to services are minimized as much as possible based on available internal resources and external support;
- IX. Young women we support have the right to withdraw from services at any time;
- X. There is a clear path for young women we support to make complaints and Monica Place uses this information, when applicable, for continuous improvement.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

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Monica Place supports diversity and strives to be sensitive to race, culture, ethnicity, gender, age, abilities, religion, and sexual orientation. Flexibility is a key element for our success in providing a physically and culturally safe place for the young women

we support. During orientation, young women we support are made aware of their rights including the risks and benefits associated with accessing programs and services at Monica Place. This includes the young woman's rights to withdraw from programming and reasons why services may be discontinued by Monica Place.

## Privacy

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Recognition is given to the fact that records are legal documents and are an integral part of service delivery. At the same time, Monica Place ensures that confidentiality and privacy are respected and that written and spoken information is protected (see Privacy Handbook). The acquisition and retention of relevant information about the people we support is essential to fulfilling the legal, professional, Ministry of Children and Youth and Ministry of Education requirements. We recognize each person's rights to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of her life. Information is collected and shared in accordance with the Monica Place privacy/confidentiality policies and PHIPA.

## Cultural Competency

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Cultural competency is a necessary skill that empowers staff of this agency to provide support services effectively and competently. Monica Place recognizes that we serve youth who come from a variety of backgrounds and have a host of varying needs, some of which may be based on their diverse cultural identity. Part of our service philosophy places importance on providing equitable and person-centred support. We are committed to proactively recognizing and eliminating barriers that may get in the way of the people we support participating in our agency's programs. We want everyone to feel welcome, understood and safe.

## Continuous Improvement

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Monica Place is committed to quality improvement and has a comprehensive process for quality improvement that involves the collection and analysis of data that may include: environmental scans, third party research, current research on evidence-informed leading practice, information from the young women we support, community and staff feedback, observations and focus groups. Data is used to inform the planning, review and evaluation of programs, services and practices. Participants are invited to complete a program evaluation survey according to the evaluation plan. The results are used to inform program reviews and evaluations as well as to identify any gaps in service and/or programming for future planning.

*This document is available in hard copy at both of our locations, and is accessible on our website ([www.monicaplace.ca](http://www.monicaplace.ca)) for persons we support, employees and the community at large.*