

SANCTUARY at Andrus

**Nancy Ment, Chief Executive Office
Andrus Children's Center**

The Andrus Trauma Treatment Program

Every day, 150 seriously emotionally disturbed children between the ages of five and fourteen rely on Andrus Children's Center (Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial) to furnish the expert clinical, social and special education services that cannot be provided in their own communities. These very vulnerable children carry heavy burdens: all suffer from complex psychiatric conditions and many have experienced physical illness or injury, catastrophic loss of loved ones, physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse and family violence. Andrus is committed to providing a healing environment for children where they can learn to accept what has happened to them and begin moving forward into lives of promise and fulfillment.

The primary framework Andrus uses to conceptualize both treatment and the maintenance of a healthy functioning organization is the Sanctuary Mode[®], developed by Sandra Bloom, M.D. a renowned expert in the treatment of trauma. Sanctuary is a clinical and organizational model which recognizes the inherent vulnerability of all individuals and social systems to adversity, loss and change. In confronting this unavoidable aspect of the human condition, the Sanctuary Model responds with a core belief that every individual and system has the capacity to transcend this vulnerability and overcome the impact of these potentially traumatic experiences.

Adoption of the Sanctuary Model began in our residential and school programs, and has expanded to touch the children and staff in our mental health and community divisions as well. As Andrus has grown and changed as an organization, we have committed ourselves to adapting Sanctuary throughout the organization. For the children in our varied treatment programs – Residential Treatment, Day Treatment and Short-term Diagnostic and Treatment-- we provide highly trained and skilled staff who work as a team to develop and implement individualized treatment plans based on **S.E.L.F.**, a critical component and shared language of the Sanctuary Model. Dr. Bloom has applied her model to adults in over twenty years of practice. She and Andrus are engaged in a multi-year project to tailor S.E.L.F. to the treatment of children in educational and residential programs as well as in open community settings. The Sanctuary project includes the commitment of all organizational stakeholders to the values of Sanctuary, modifications in our traditional treatment protocols, extensive training for all staff, and research on outcomes for the children and families we serve.

What is S.E.L.F.?

The acronym represents Safety, Emotional Management, Loss and Future all of which are central to the experience of trauma and recovery. Here is how S.E.L.F. is integrated into our Campus treatment programs:

SAFETY: Children affected by trauma have not known a safe world. At Andrus they live and study in an environment that is built on safety and respect; where they are protected from the stress and trauma they have known before; and where they can be successful in their family and social relationships, their leisure time and their school work.

EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT: Children affected by trauma rarely link their feelings to their experiences and may behave in ways that make others angry or frightened. At Andrus, children are cared for by adults who show them how to make connections between their behavior and emotions and help them find new ways to express themselves productively.

LOSS: Children affected by trauma have not known the joy that childhood should bring. At Andrus, they are helped to grieve for what they have lost or been denied as an essential step in the process of healing.

FUTURE: Children affected by trauma may become “locked” in their development by their lack of understanding of what has happened to them. At Andrus, as they walk through the steps of healing and recovery, they develop a new understanding of who they are and what they can be.

How Does Andrus Make SANCTUARY Work?

Our commitment to Sanctuary begins with the leadership and staff of the organization. Individuals and groups who have experienced trauma and loss have endured both tangible and intangible injuries with diminished sense of self-efficacy and hope for the future. We understand that that Sanctuary is not something we “do to” others but instead is a culture we must create by and for ourselves, for all of us have, to some degree, faced aspects of trauma and loss as part of life itself. Our intention is to create an environment that is structured and safe, democratic and participatory, and free of coercion. Each of us must establish the organization’s patterns of communication that strengthen our respect for and appreciation of each other. It is our responsibility to model what we believe will heal those who come to us for help. We cannot undo the past, and we cannot control the future, but we can build a shared platform for understanding and responding to the effects of trauma.

Using the Sanctuary Model requires that we identify the source and history of trauma in the children and families we serve and then we create and sustain a

therapeutic environment built on a theoretical and empathic understanding of trauma and recovery. Trauma comes in many forms, not all of them easily discernible. For many of our children and families, trauma means the repetitive failed attempts to overcome physical and mental illness, loss of loved ones, or loss of a desired future. For others, community violence, abuse, accidents and other physical traumas take their toll.

At admission, all children are assessed for personal and family histories of trauma in addition to the other traditional clinical assessments. Trauma affects children and families in very specific and disabling ways, yet may be overlooked in a standard clinical assessment. At Andrus, all staff members are trained to do sensitive exploration of trauma histories. Children and their families engage with the treatment team in developing a treatment program that addresses their specific needs. A crucial intervention provided to all children and families includes basic education of what trauma is and how it can affect the ways we think and act. Other special interventions may include medication, art therapy, and behavior therapy among many others. Children and their families work with staff to develop their personal goals and to celebrate each small achievement.

We assure that :

- All administrators, professional staff and support staff are trained in the basic concepts of the Sanctuary Model, including trauma theory.
- All administrators, professional staff and support staff are committed to non-violence, open communication, social learning, social responsibility, shared governance and growth and change.
- The components of Sanctuary and S.E.L.F. are integrated into all regular interactions: staff to staff; staff to children; children to children and staff to families.
- Program staff conduct formal program evaluation and outcomes research to ensure that children and families benefit from Sanctuary.

About The Andrus Children's Center

The Andrus Children's Center (Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial) is a 501©(3) corporation that has been serving vulnerable children and their families in Westchester County and the greater New York metropolitan region since 1928. Founded by John Emory Andrus in honor of his wife as a children's home, Andrus has responded over time to community needs by becoming a campus-based multi-faceted day, residential and special education center for seriously emotionally disturbed children as well as a community-based organization providing a wide range of clinical and family strengthening programs. Andrus programs are accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services. The Orchard School has been named a Blue Ribbon School three times by the United States Department of Education. Beginning in 1995, Andrus has extended its range of services to vulnerable children and families into Yonkers and other Westchester County communities through program expansion

and mergers to include out-patient mental health clinics, a child care center, in school clinical services and a variety of primary prevention home visiting programs in the city of Yonkers.

Andrus directly reaches 2000 children and families annually. In 1998 with support from the Surdna Foundation, the JDAM took the lead in the Yonkers Early Childhood Initiative, a community development project uniting elected government, public entities, not-for-profit providers, families and businesses in assessing and meeting the needs of young children and their families. Since 2001, Andrus has engaged in a partnership with Sandra Bloom M.D. to incorporate and refine the Sanctuary Model for its treatment programs. In 2003, The Andrus Center for Learning and Innovation created the Sanctuary Institute, a training arm to extend the principles of Sanctuary into treatment settings across the country and the world. Funding for Andrus programs, budgeted at \$30 million for 2007-08, is derived from state and federal contracts and grants, other contracts, foundation grants and private sources.