



averte

A TRIVIUM LIFE SERVICES PROGRAM



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LIFE AT AVERTE & OUR APPROACH

Our mission at Averte is to change the trajectory of someone's life by helping to clarify the path through the development of cognitive, emotional and physical resilience while providing an environment of health, wellness and community. We are a voluntary, person-centered therapeutic community for adults seeking support with their mental health. We employ a trauma-informed perspective, understanding that each resident comes to Averte with a unique story.

A person-centered approach

The concept of person-centered treatment originated with Carl Rogers in the early 1940s and is based in the idea that people are inherently capable of achieving positive psychological functioning when given the opportunity to access their own strengths, internal resources and resiliency. A person-centered approach positions the client as the driver of treatment, while providers follow their lead and offer support and recommendations to help the individual achieve their identified goals. Additionally, a person-centered approach emphasizes collaboration between the individual and their identified support system, which may include their treatment team and family members. At Averte, we value the opportunity to empower our residents to take the lead in treatment decisions by employing a collaborative approach consisting of transparent communication and problem solving in developing a comprehensive and individualized treatment plan.

What is trauma-informed care?

Systems and organizations that implement a trauma-informed approach work to create physically and emotionally safer environments for their staff and the individuals they serve. Averte strives to incorporate trauma-informed principles and practices into all aspects of programming, from our treatment interventions to our overall program culture. We are consistently evaluating our practices and procedures, seeking opportunities to incorporate trauma-informed principles with greater intentionality and purpose.

A trauma-informed approach is intended to be inclusive and is not only designed for individual with diagnoses of trauma-related disorders or known trauma histories – the purpose is to remain open to the stories from that past that continue to inform the present, and to avoid making assumptions about how experiences of adversity may or may not impact an individual's life. Trauma-informed care encourages sensitivity to the role of trauma and adversity and is considered a universal approach – whether specific trauma-history is disclosed, documented or diagnosed, trauma-informed care is designed to be inclusive and supportive to all involved.

LIFE AT AVERTE & OUR APPROACH

A trauma-informed system of care:

- **Realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery
- **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff and others involved with the system
- **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices
- **Resists** re-traumatization

Principles of a trauma-informed approach

- **Safety:** Everyone – both clients and staff – needs to feel physically and psychologically safe
- **Trustworthiness & Transparency:** Decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of cultivating trust with clients, families, staff and stakeholders
- **Collaboration & Mutuality:** Creating a partnership between clients and staff of all levels based on meaningful sharing of power and decision-making
- **Empowerment, Voice and Choice:** Clients are supported in shared decision-making, choice, self-advocacy, and goal setting to determine the plan of action they need to move forward
- **Cultural, Historical & Gender Considerations:** The organization actively moves past cultural biases, offers culturally responsive services, leverages the healing value of cultural connections, and recognizes the impact of historical trauma
- **Peer support:** The organization values and includes support from those with lived experience of trauma and/or their family members

SAMHSA, Trauma Informed Approaches, <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

“As human beings we belong to an extremely resilient species. Since time immemorial we have rebounded from our relentless wars, countless disasters (both natural and man-made), and the violence and betrayal in our own lives. But traumatic experiences do leave traces, whether on a large scale (on our histories and cultures) or close to home, on our families, with dark secrets being imperceptibly passed down through generations. They also leave traces on our minds and emotions, on our capacity for joy and intimacy, and even on our biology and immune systems” (van der Kolk, 2014).

SCHEDULE & STRUCTURE AT AVERTE

At Averte we encourage clients to build a schedule that works for them. By working with members of their team clients are given the opportunity to explore many residential activities, clinical groups, and therapeutic supports as well as hobbies that represent their interests and strengths.

Benefits of Structure and Routine

- Sense of autonomy
- Improved focus, organization, and productivity
- Stress management
- Improved self-esteem and sense of purpose
- Promotes better sleep and healthy habits
- Provides stability and consistency
- Supports goals and skill development

What does the structure look like at Averte?

- **Program Schedule:** Clients have access to a program schedule, which highlights weekly programming such as residential activities, clinical groups, and off campus outings. Averte staff ensure that changes in programming are accurately reported and reflected on the program schedule.
- **Autonomy/Independence:** Clients work with members of their treatment team to create their own individualized schedule. Each resident is encouraged to select clinical groups, residential activities and community endeavors that align with their goals and interests. When residents have free time, they may utilize their time for self-care, socialization, personal wellness, enjoying Averte's amenities, and practicing other healthy ways of managing down time.
- **Variety:** Averte offers a wide array of groups and activities with the goal of appealing to our diverse and ever-changing client population. Clients can pursue volunteer work, partake in on-campus walks or nearby hikes, join creative groups, and explore local communities (including book shops and libraries, outdoor excursions, art studios, and museums). Additionally, Averte's clinical groups rotate on a quarterly schedule based on feedback from residents. Clinical groups include a range of psychoeducational, experiential and discussion/process-based formats; groups are offered in both open and closed formats.
- **One-on-One Time:** Clients can work one-on-one with members of their treatment team multiple times per week. The meetings provide opportunities for residents to work on their goals, assess progress, address barriers, and celebrate successes.
- **Routines & Consistency:** Averte provides consistency through set daily mealtimes, medication times, residential activities, and clinical groups. In general, scheduled one-on-one meetings take place on the same day and time each week, though flexibility is possible with advance communication.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Averte offers a spectrum of highly individualized treatment options to meet the varied needs of adults living with complex mental health challenges, ranging from symptom management to recovery support, trauma work to educational and vocational pursuits.

Whether recently diagnosed, leaving the hospital, or just needing a little extra support to be successful in the world, we have a program to fit each individual's needs. Averte bridges the gap between the structured care of an inpatient stay and the demands of independent living. We believe there is no "one size fits all" approach to mental health treatment -- just as we are all unique individuals, so must be our approach to care. Our program is designed to allow for a large degree of customization within an existing framework. Upon admission, we conduct a thorough assessment used to plan a collaborative treatment plan, integrating clinical and residential care.

Each of our residents has their own personal space, be it an individual bedroom, on-campus apartment or cottage, or a home in the community, and placement may be fluid during one's time in the program. Regardless of the treatment approach, location or timeline, the following services are available as part of treatment at Averte:

- Comprehensive Clinical Assessment and individualized treatment planning
- Individual therapy
- Supportive counseling
- Psychiatry services for medication optimization and management
- Individual sessions with Skills Specialists
- Group therapy
- Volunteer opportunities
- Individual and group vocational support with a credentialed rehabilitation counselor
- Community outings, on-campus activities, and structured residential groups
- Physical wellness opportunities:
 - o Pool
 - o Indoor tennis/basketball/pickleball court
 - o Gym
 - o Hiking trail
 - o Trips to local gym (upon request)
- Life skills support including ADLs, cooking/nutrition, financial, and home-care skills
- Housekeeping services
- 3 meals daily plus a snack
- Access to Wellness Center, including a resident kitchen, wellness library, and communal lounge area

OUR PROGRAMS

Respite Program (30 days):

Our Respite Program is designed to meet the needs of an individual requiring a short reprieve from their current living situation. The goal during this time is safety and stabilization, and services provided may vary depending on the individual's needs. Stays may be extended into our Transitional Program if appropriate and desired.

Transitional Program (3-9 months):

Our Transitional Program is designed to meet the needs of individuals who are interested in a paced transition from residential care to independent living, whether an independent lifestyle in the community or in Averte's Independent Living Program. In this program, residents stay at one of Averte's residential homes while receiving 24-hour access to staff support, comprehensive clinical care, enjoying opportunities to access the community, seeking employment, and more. Candidates for this program may be looking for the next step after a hospitalization or seeking to gain skills to allow for increased independence and deeper, more meaningful relationships.

Comprehensive Program (9-18 months):

Many individuals with complex mental health needs benefit from being able to set their own pace in treatment. Averte's Comprehensive Program provides an opportunity for individuals needing a longer window of services to receive quality treatment at a slower pace, with all services included in the Transitional Program.

Extended Program (Open-ended):

Our Extended Program is designed to meet the needs of individuals seeking long-term support or interested in "aging in place." This program has no maximum stay, allowing the individual to remain in the program as long as they need. The focus of this program is on wellness and quality of life, ideal for individuals seeking a supportive community-based setting where they can create a fulfilling life for themselves. Individuals in the Extended Program have access to all of Averte's services and amenities, while enjoying both the benefits of professional mental health treatment and the social aspects of living in a community.

OUR PROGRAMS

Independent Living Program:

Our Independent Living Program (ILP) provides clients with a safety net and support system as they practice independent living skills and gain confidence in their own home or apartment in the greater community. For some, this program may be a steppingstone, and for others long-term. While receiving specialized support for their next steps toward independence, participants in this program are considered members of Averte's residential community with access to all of our services and amenities.

Wrap-Around Services:

(6 weeks post-discharge): Averte offers wrap-around services to support the transition between residential care and returning to life in the community. Residents electing this service will have access to continued support from their clinical providers during this transitional period to integrate gains made during treatment into their next steps.

OUR SERVICES

Clinical Services

Assessment:

Upon admission to Averte, each resident will meet with a Master's level clinician to complete a Comprehensive Clinical Assessment. This initial evaluation period may last from 1-3 sessions and is designed to gather relevant clinical history to collaborate on an individualized treatment plan. Assessment tools will be utilized throughout treatment to assess needs and progress.

Treatment Planning:

The treatment plan is derived from the resident's goals as stated in their own words and involves identifying clinical and support services that may be used to make progress towards one's goals. Each resident will work closely with their treatment team on the creation of this plan. This plan is reviewed and updated at regular intervals throughout the resident's stay and is a measure of progress as goals are achieved and next steps are identified.

Therapy:

We work to create a trusting therapeutic relationship with each resident that emphasizes personal choice and places primary value on the individual's perspective and personal goals. Each client will work with their treatment team to determine the frequency and focus of therapy. Most residents see their clinician 1-2 times per week for 60 minutes per session, however, individual adjustments may be assessed depending on the individual's needs and goals. Additionally, the modalities used in treatment vary from person to person, and therapy may "borrow" from a variety of modalities depending on the individual's needs and preferences.

Clinical services and modalities offered include but are not limited to:

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- CBT for Psychosis (CBTp)
- Expressive Therapy
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Psychodynamic psychotherapy
- Skills Coaching
- Supportive Counseling
- Vocational Support
- Recovery Support

OUR SERVICES

Groups:

Averte's clinical team offers a minimum of 2 therapeutic groups per day Monday thru Friday. Groups are offered in both open and closed formats. Our clinical team draws from a variety of topics and modalities to engage resident with different needs and preferences. The group schedule is assessed on a quarterly basis, and residents are asked for their feedback and suggestions.

Some examples of Averte's clinical groups include:

- Goals & Tools
- Expressive Arts
- Mindfulness-based CBT
- Self-care
- Healthy Living
- DBT Skills
- Music Therapy
- Life Skills
- Metacognitive Therapy
- Creative Writing
- Living Recovery

Confidentiality in Clinical Services:

Please note that confidentiality is essential to building and maintaining trust within the therapeutic relationship. While you may receive general status updates about your loved one's treatment goals and progress, specific content of clinical services will not be shared with family members, except in certain limited circumstances or at the request of the resident.

Psychiatry Services:

Averte offers psychiatry and medication management services to all residents. Upon admission, each resident will meet with a psychiatrist to complete a Psychiatric Intake Assessment to gather relevant clinical and medical history and gain a better understanding of everyone's medication needs. Residents will work with the psychiatrist to determine the frequency of their appointments, which may vary over time depending on the medication regimen and the needs of the individual.

OUR SERVICES

Wellness Services:

Averte has a variety of on-site amenities and community-based resources to support our resident's overall health and wellness, including:

- On-site gym
- Indoor basketball/tennis court
- In-ground pool (seasonal)
- On-site hiking trail
- Access to personal training and nutrition coaching
- Access to local gym, rock climbing facility, and community centers
- Access to outdoor activities, including hiking, kayaking, fishing, skiing, etc.

Residential Support:

Our Residential Coaches are on site 24/7 to facilitate progress toward treatment goals, assist with access to the community, supervise self-administration of medication, and support engagement in programming. Our Residential Team is in ongoing communication with the Clinical Team and program leadership to share observations and serve as advocates. Residential Coaches engage in ongoing training and professional development to continually enhance the support they provide our residents.

WHO WE SERVE

Averte is a voluntary treatment community serving adults of all ages (18 & up) and genders who are seeking support with their mental health. We provide individualized treatment to individuals with a wide range of treatment needs and goals. Averte's treatment providers are experienced in treating a variety of diagnoses and treatment needs through a person-centered, trauma-informed, strengths-based approach.

Averte serves individuals with complex needs including:

- Trauma
- Thought Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Co-occurring Substance Use Disorders
- Neurodivergence

Common goals:

- Emotional regulation
- Executive function skills
- Improved interpersonal skills
- Self-advocacy
- Realistic self-concept
- Mitigation of specific symptoms
- Behavioral goals
- Educational goals
- Vocational goals
- Skills-based goals (financial literacy, mindfulness, managing nutrition, etc.)

Residential Treatment for Veterans:

Averte is proud to partner with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a member of the Community Care Network. Averte offers veterans a safe, comfortable place to live while receiving 24-hour trauma-informed staff support and clinical services to support their mental health needs and overall well-being. The Averte team works in partnership with each veteran and their VA team to create a collaborative treatment plan designed to meet individualized goals.

THE AVERTE TEAM & FAMILY AS TREATMENT TEAM MEMBERS:

Working with us to support your loved one

We view family support as one of the most valuable resources within a person-centered model of care. Research shows that strong family support systems are among the most important resiliency factors in a person's recovery. We also understand that often family members have been through a lot with their loved ones, and that the path to finding the right mental health treatment support is not always linear and seldom easy. There may be instances in treatment during which your loved one experiences discomfort or even distress – the path of change can be painful and difficult. Receiving communication from a loved one while they are experiencing difficult emotions can be a challenge, as family members generally want to be as supportive to their loved one's well-being and progress as they can, and the best way to provide that support is not always clear. When these instances occur, we encourage family members to partner with us in providing that support – the more we can work together and keep our support aligned, the more effective we can be in moving your loved one through their challenges and promote continued progress.

The Averte Treatment Team

Treatment Team Members and their Roles:

- Client: guides the development of goals by providing their perspective, takes responsibility to work towards those goals
- Clinical Staff: provides clinical conceptualizations, treatment interventions, and communicates with other team members
- Program Manager: provides the residential perspective on client progress, supports residential interventions, communicates with other team members
- Residential Coaches: provide 24/7 support to residents. Residential Coaches assist in the implementation of the treatment plan on a day-to-day basis.
- Psychiatrist: supervises medication management
- Identified Supports: people identified by the client who can serve as contributing to the development of goals, these people must have a client-signed ROI on file

THE AVERTE TEAM & FAMILY AS TREATMENT TEAM MEMBERS:

Family Involvement

Here are some of the ways in which families can play an active, supportive role in treatment:

- Supporting a smooth transition to Averte
 - Ensuring basic medical care and relevant documentation is readily available
 - Responding in a timely manner to communication and requests for information

Transition Checklist:

- ID – ideally, they have one that Averte can keep on file; if not, Averte will gladly work with the resident and family to make arrangements
- Money – we ask that family's work with their loved ones while in care to establish a clear avenue for accessing spending money; we charge additional fee for managing allowance/spending money?
- Health insurance – guardian is responsible for ensuring insurance is active and Averte has the information needed to utilize for healthcare needs; we ask that family members support residents in ensuring an active healthcare plan is in place, however Averte is glad to assist with setting up local appointments to ensure healthcare needs are met
- PCP, dentist, eye doctor, etc. – Averte is happy to support residents with identifying healthcare providers in the local area and scheduling necessary appointments; resident/family is responsible for submitting documentation of a physical within 30 days prior to admission – our regs require us to have this on file, etc..

The client's treatment and perspective are primary and your involvement in your family member's treatment can play a vital role in healing and growth. In order to best make use of that vital role, Averte strives to clarify the scope and limitations of that role for everyone.

THE AVERTE TEAM & FAMILY AS TREATMENT TEAM MEMBERS:

- Empowering client autonomy – Averte values hearing family members’ perspectives in the context of transparency with the client and in light of the client’s clinical and residential needs. The client’s autonomy enables them to have a voice in their treatment and take responsibility for their treatment goals.
- Transparency – Averte takes a “nothing about you without you” stance regarding client care and treatment. We ask that families and other team members support this stance as it is a trauma-informed approach which respects client autonomy, dignity and resident rights.
- Treatment plan meetings – Family members and other identified supports may be included in treatment plan meetings when it is in alignment with the resident’s wishes and fits within the context of what the team sees as clinically beneficial.
- Communication with treatment team members – we owe you courtesy and timeliness in our communication with you. Averte will communicate with you in a manner that is consistent with our duties of confidentiality (see below), while providing you with updates and pertinent information.
 - To check on how your loved one is doing: To check on how your loved one is doing feel free to reach out to the house where they reside. The house manager can provide you with an update if we have a release for you on file.
- Building trust with your loved one’s team – Through ongoing communication and through the work with the client, Averte aims to build trust with you and the treatment team.
- Family visits – Visits from family members and other important people in the client’s life can be healing when the timing is right. Visits are arranged with residential staff and in consultation with the clinical team and with full transparency with the client.
- Focus on building and repairing your relationship with the client - Averte recognizes that, oftentimes, there is repair needed in relationships between the client and important others in their life. Through treatment goals and interventions, transparency, communication, visits and possible family sessions, there are mechanisms to support healing and repairing those relationships.
- Averte can provide family treatment and family sessions. This service would be provided when it is considered within the context of sound clinical rationale by the Treatment Team. The treatment team includes the client and identified supports.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Confidentiality is essential to building and maintaining trust within the therapeutic relationship. While you may receive general status updates about your loved one's treatment goals and progress, specific content of clinical services will not be shared with family members, except in certain limited circumstances or at the request of the resident.

Releases

Clients have the right to choose who can/cannot receive information regarding their stay. If your family member/friend has chosen to not sign a release of information for you, we cannot confirm or deny that they are with us. We understand that this might be frustrating for you, but we must respect the wishes of our client, as they are our priority. If this is the case you will need to reach out directly to the client via their personal device, again, they may choose not to speak with you, and that is their right.

Please note that a release of information does not automatically grant access to all details of your loved one's treatment. Clinical services are still subject to confidentiality, as described above.

Emergency Contact

When choosing an emergency contact, we encourage residents to consider family members or friends who live nearby and someone trusted to make challenging decisions on their behalf. It is important to ensure emergency contacts understand where to access the resident's health history and healthcare provider information, as well as their wishes. .

- **What is an emergency contact?** An emergency contact is the first-person medical personnel will reach out to in an emergency, but please note, an emergency contact may not have any legal authority to act on someone's behalf unless that power has been explicitly provided.

Averte staff may be able to assist residents and their families in accessing information to complete an advance directive for medical care.

For more information, please consult the following resources:

- Department of Health (VT): <https://www.healthvermont.gov/systems/advance-directives>
- Foundation for Health Communities (NH): <https://healthynh.org/initiatives/advance-care-planning/advance-directives/>

SUPPORT FOR YOU

Resources for families

Caring for a loved one with mental illness can be challenging, but remember that you are not alone. Caregivers of individuals with mental illness often find it helpful to talk with others who share their experience.

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** offers many options for supporting families affected by mental illness. Examples include the following programs, which are all available at no cost:

- **NAMI Family Support Group:**
 - <https://www.nami.org/support-education/support-groups/nami-family-support-group/>
 - A peer-led support group for adults with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of mental illness.
- **NAMI Family and Friends Seminar**
 - <https://www.nami.org/support-education/mental-health-education/nami-family-friends/>
 - A standalone program that helps family members learn how to support loved ones experiencing symptoms of mental illness.
- **NAMI Family-to-Family**
 - <https://www.nami.org/support-education/mental-health-education/nami-family-to-family/>
 - An 8-week educational program taught by NAMI-trained family members that helps improve understanding, coping skills, and problem-solving abilities of people supporting loved ones experiencing symptoms of mental illness.

NAMI also has many state affiliates and organizations across the country. Find your local NAMI chapter at <https://www.nami.org/findsupport/>.

In addition, there are numerous support groups and resources available for families affected by specific diagnoses or symptoms. For example:

- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Support Groups:**
<https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/>
- **Schizophrenia and Psychosis Action Alliance:** offers a Families for Care (FFC) support group, as well as a resource line and caregiver toolkit: <https://sczaction.org/>
- **PTSD Family Coach:** a free app from the **National Center for PTSD** to help you learn about the symptoms of this disorder, take care of yourself, and support a loved one experiencing PTSD: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/familycoach_app.asp

If you need assistance locating a support group that is a good fit for you, Averte staff can help.