

Centerstone's Flourish Program Provides Extra Support for Parents

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Centerstone offers several resources for mental health and substance use, including support tailored specifically to parents.

The organization's Flourish program connects parents to support and education resources that help them engage with their children and increase the well-being of their

families. Karla Schulte, a coordinator within the Flourish program, said they serve families with any DCFS involvement or substance use history as well as parents who just want some extra support.

“What I always tell parents is no one really gives you a handbook,” Schulte said. “At the hospital, no one’s handed you a handbook, and as kiddos progress through life, they change, and then your parenting stages change as well.”

The Flourish program views families as a “holistic unit” with the goal to provide intervention to the parents while supporting the kids. Schulte explained that the first step is to link families with treatment as needed, whether that’s mental health or substance use treatment.

The program utilizes counseling, case management and a recovery engagement specialist — someone with lived experience — to support families across Illinois. They will meet with clients at their homes or online to provide services.

They also run virtual group parenting classes, which provide extra support to parents. A parenting class can also be one of the requirements for parents who have a DCFS service plan, so Schulte celebrates with many families as they get one step closer to bringing their children home.

“They learn from the groups and then they go home and they implement those skills with kiddos during their visits or during the times they have overnights. And that translates to them being able to get kiddos home,” she explained. “You see that client through that whole group and then at the end when they’re progressing through their services or they’re getting close to getting kiddos back, it’s really exciting to be a part of that and then get to celebrate that with a client, because ultimately they’re the ones doing the work.”

Schulte said the parenting classes run from 14 to 17 weeks, and they talk about different topics each week. These interventions cover how substance use affects the family, how support outside the home can strengthen the home life, and how to engage with your children and spend time with them, among other topics.

Schulte noted that these classes and general involvement in the Flourish program can help people recognize where there are problems and how they want to improve their family lives. She pointed out that substance use doesn’t discriminate, and people from any background can find themselves struggling. The Flourish program aims to provide the extra support that families need to be successful and healthy.

“I think sometimes this is an opportunity to become more self-aware or more insightful to understand the big picture,” she added. “this is almost like a red flag or the first time that they've even noticed that something was a problem, because it can happen really slowly over time or really fast over time too to where you're like, ‘Oh, gosh, how did I get here?’...Part of our role is to just be there with the family wherever they're at. Sometimes, families can't be ready right away, and that's okay. We're there to be there when they're ready.”

The Flourish program takes referrals from DCFS or self-referrals from parents who want more support. To learn more about the Flourish program or to find out if it's right for you, call 618-462-2331 or visit [Centerstone.org/Programs/Flourish](https://www.centerstone.org/Programs/Flourish). You can also visit [RecoverWithUs.org](https://www.recoverwithus.org) for more information about Centerstone's services and how they can help you today.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or substance use issues, immediate help is available. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 988 and provides confidential support 24/7. For additional resources, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers a National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357), which is also confidential, free, and available 24/7, 365 days a year for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.