



INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL  
CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

## **How IECA Members Support Best Practices in Helping Families Find Residential Therapeutic Programs That Fit Their Needs**

The role of a therapeutic independent educational consultant (IEC) is to help families explore options and make recommendations to help their child/teen/young adult find success in treatment and return to a healthy life. Members of the Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA) who have therapeutic practices must fulfill rigorous standards for membership, including:

- Advanced educational degrees
- Professional experience and letters of reference
- Adherence to ethical standards set forth by IECA, including no financial ties between programs and IECs
- Regular attendance at training, workshops, and conferences to enhance their educational and professional knowledge, based on national and regional trends, and changes in law
- Scores of visits to therapeutic schools and programs to meet with admission, clinical, and administrative staff, as well as current students, in order to understand the work done on campus, the program culture, and the appropriate student who would succeed in the environment
- Mentoring, support, and guidance for newer association members

IECA members with therapeutic practices have been fully vetted to serve as case managers, assisting families for whom initial local and outpatient treatment efforts have often failed and who need to explore residential options.

As case managers, they:

- Take a detailed medical history, examining past testing, clinical notes, and school records in order to understand all aspects about the student, including intellectual capacity, mental health, personality, and interests, as well as the sources of emotional distress
- Interview family members, as appropriate
- Interview therapists, counselors, and attorneys, as needed
- Share knowledge of therapeutic schools and programs and their clinical offerings
- Provide families with information about costs, scholarships, and insurance
- Provide families with options for therapeutic placement
- Provide support for parents and transition assistance following placement

IECA shares concerns about negative experiences at residential therapeutic programs, as brought to light recently in media coverage related to Paris Hilton's personal account, presented in a new documentary about her life, and that detailed by Kenneth R. Rosen

in his newly published book, *Troubled: The Failed Promise of America's Behavioral Treatment Programs*.

It is worth noting, however, that the bulk of specific programs now being written about are largely closed, some even decades ago, and their treatment modalities have long since been abandoned.

Programs recommended by IECA members today are licensed and follow strict safety guidelines through either state or nationally recognized organizations. IECA members refer families to therapeutic programs that use proven procedures and therapies and seek protection for the well-being and safety of those under their care.

IECA does not endorse individual therapeutic programs or accept responsibility for their operations. We do, however, support efforts by the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) and other organizations to assure the health and safety of all teens and young adults in therapeutic programs.

IECA also endorses the heart of the American Psychological Association's statement on the treatment of adolescents: Preference is for teens to be treated in the least restrictive environment, in or close to home, among the first or initial efforts for a teen in emotional trouble, unless they are an immediate danger to self and others.

Above all else, IECA members work in the best interest of their families in order to find the "program fit" that will help their child/teen/young adult. IECA members work with families throughout a program placement to assure a successful return to a healthy life and progression to adulthood.