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## ‘WHATEVER IT TAKES’

The WIT Program has been here at Touchstone for over three and a half years. WIT has established itself in the community as being a leader in providing in-home direct support services to the most challenging and high-risk youth and families in Maricopa County. WIT has served 130 youth and families (38 currently) and over 80 have had a successful graduation from the program. While WIT has only been around for a few years, Touchstone has grown and we wanted to take the opportunity to refresh everyone’s memory on the key principles of the program.

WIT utilizes the Functional Behavioral Approach (FBA), a strengths-based, non-coercive approach to working with children who have complex needs and behaviors. This is a non-traditional method of approaching youth who have not responded well to traditional methods such as rewards and consequences. FBA focuses on addressing skill deficiencies, meeting psychological and emotional needs, and reducing high levels of stress which impair normal functioning. WIT has the ability to provide care mornings, evenings, overnights, weekends, and holidays. The program also has the ability to provide 24/7 care to youth if needed.

### Empathy and Unconditional Positive Regard

WIT works through empathy toward families to help build trust and understanding. Building a relationship with a youth and family is the foundation of our practice. We have to see the world from their viewpoint and understand their struggles. Without this, the youth and family have no reason to trust in the skills we will attempt to teach. It is important to ensure the family does not feel judged and they need to know we will not give up on them. Sometimes, WIT is the first group of people to actually listen to a family and help them to truly feel heard and validated for what they have been through.



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# CEO Corner

## Steve Ginsberg

confident we will be ready for whatever comes our way.

Touchstone needs to look at things from the perspective of our employees, as well as that of a provider. From the provider side, we serve nearly 3,000 recipients, with a large number of them coming through AHCCCS (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System). As an employer, we employ nearly 200 individuals with 3 sites in Maricopa County and a fourth site in Tucson. We have contracts with Magellan, CPSA (Community Partnership of Southern Arizona), PNOs (Provider Network Organizations), ADJC (Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections), AOC (Administrative Office of the Courts) and many different managed care organizations. We have numerous programs that vary from Evidence-Based Programs to a Family Centered Autism Program to Prevention to WIT (Whatever IT Takes) to IOP to Treatment Homes to office based and home based counseling (just to name a few). We provide psychiatric evaluations and medication monitoring as well. We have diversified when it comes to the services we provide and the

populations we provide them to. This is one of many reasons we believe we are in a position to adapt to the changes we may have to face.

While we are relatively comfortable with where we have positioned ourselves in the market, there are some things we simply do not have control over. There are always uncertainties. We do not know what future government edicts may come down and how that will ultimately affect us. We cannot predict how our own healthcare benefit costs may rise or not. So, can I truly assure everyone that things will be okay, not really? However, I can let you know that Touchstone has been around for over 40 years with leadership experience combining for well over 40 years. Thus, in these times of great uncertainty, I believe we have a degree of stability matched by few others. More important, we have a corporate culture that encourages flexibility, creativity and success.

Every quarter Touchstone publishes a newsletter. In each newsletter you will find a section that either reads 'From the President' or 'CEO Corner'. Mr. Dunst, President, and I take turns writing this article. We always speak to each other prior to writing this column re what is it that the readers would most want to know about. Often, we come away unsure what would be of most interest and benefit to everyone. As we are entering the new fiscal year I wanted to let everyone know that things will be just fine. However, as we watch the President and Congress at an en passé, and listen to our own governor cut benefits for the childless adult population, can I honestly say that? The answer is that while we cannot make any guarantees or promises, we can let you know that the management team at Touchstone has prepared for potential cuts and feels very

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### Let's Be Useful and Not Just Helpful

Doing *with* the family, not just *for* the family is key here. We want to empower the youth and family to build long term skills. In order to empower the family we learn about their strengths and weaknesses in various skill sets (i.e. frustration tolerance, impulsivity, language processing). Then we create learning opportunities and moments to practice the weaker skills and enhance their strengths. We look at the triggering events which lead to unwanted behavior and find proactive solutions to either avoid those situations or teach skills to manage them with more positive behaviors. The goal of intervention is to make unwanted and challenging behaviors ineffective and irrelevant by creating new behavior patterns that do not require as much energy and effort yet still adequately meet emotional and psychological needs.

### Getting Connected

We all know that as human beings we have an innate desire to be connected with others. WIT focuses on getting the youth and family connected to their community through their strengths and interests. This is the area where WIT can get creative with the family to explore ways in which the youth can apply themselves in a positive way in the community. We have seen great success with many challenging youth simply by giving them opportunities to participate in normal activities with peers their age, activities they may have been unable to participate in before. School and city sports teams, recreational centers, clubs, church groups, and even getting reconnected with extended family are some of the ways a family can get supported in a therapeutic way and eventually replace WIT's role in their lives.

# Touchstone Therapeutic Groups

“We can be confident (and each of us should convey this confidence to sources of referral and to third-party payers) that group therapy is an effective treatment modality.”

~ Irvin D. Yalom, *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*

Four years ago, Touchstone offered one Anger Management group for teens and one parenting group. Today, Touchstone offers 14 different types of groups in our Phoenix and Mesa locations. Touchstone groups cover all ages of the populations we serve, and almost all groups are at capacity every session. All therapeutic groups at Touchstone consistently run off research-based curriculums by Masters level therapists. All groups are offered in both English and Spanish. Using qualitative forecasting by supervisors and therapists, the group needs of recipients was assessed and implemented. Touchstone has moved to the forefront of all Arizona child mental health providers in our variety and scope of therapeutic groups. Even more impressive, most of our groups include coinciding parent/caregiver components which receive soaring attendance and praise from attendees.

## **What groups does Touchstone now offer?**

Touchstone has created a unique curriculum for our emotional management group for teens. This curriculum is based off the Albert Ellis’s Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT). This group challenges the irrational and unhealthy beliefs held by teens that can lead to substance abuse, depression, poor social skills, delinquency, and more. REBT helps teens create rational and healthy beliefs to replace the unhealthy ones, which leads to better outcomes in a variety of situations. This group promotes the importance of perception, and the need to consider alternative perceptions of others. REBT group allows for significant processing so teens can challenge one another and express their thoughts and emotions. At TDTC, we offer gender specific REBT groups for teens ages 13-17. At our Mesa location, we have a co-ed REBT group, and both locations offer coinciding parent/caregiver components that teach the REBT principles to parents/caregivers so they can continue to reinforce these ideas in home. Parents are able to express their feelings and emotions and gain support from other parents in the group.

The Birth-to-5 and Trauma/Attachment clinical teams have created various groups that specifically address these populations and their needs. The innovative and effective Love and Logic parenting method is taught at both TDTC and Mesa. This group offers a coinciding child component to reinforce this parenting system with the children. Emotional Management Group for 3-5 year olds is now offered at TDTC and Mesa. This group is for both the children and the parents to learn coping skills and basic feelings identification. A Trauma and Attachment Support Group is offered at both locations. This group educates the parents/caregivers of children suffering from trauma and attachment issues. The children have a coinciding component that incorporates art therapy from two therapists currently obtaining licensure in Art Therapy. These groups have gained popularity as many more birth-to-5 children are enrolling in behavioral health and seeking early intervention.

Other therapeutic groups that Touchstone offers includes:

- Dr. Phalen’s Magic 123 Parenting Group for 2-13 year olds and teens
- Emotional Management Groups for 5-8 and 9-12 year olds
- A Girl’s Resiliency Group for 7-12 year olds.

Support and educational groups for parents and caregivers include the following:

- Family Connections Meeting
- Family Connections Educational Series
- Father’s Engagement Group

The support groups are designed to connect parents/caregivers with one another and offer a place where parents/caregivers can express their concerns and feelings. Respite for children is available for all support groups as well as our Magic 123 Parenting Groups.

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# Employee of the Quarter Paul Ruiz

Paul has been employed with Touchstone Behavioral Health for over six years. Paul started as a Direct Service Provider and for the past 3 years has worked in the Intensive Outpatient Program. When Paul started working in the IOP it became quickly apparent that Paul showed tremendous confidence in working in intensive environments as well as dealing with crisis situations. He has developed into a vital part of our team. He continues to bring a positive attitude to work every day.

Paul received his Bachelor's at [Manhattan Bible Institute](#). He previously worked as a teacher and is currently a minister at a local church. Paul is devoted to working with youth and it is evident that Paul genuinely cares for the children in the program.

Paul has a warm, personable style that is not only reflected in the work he does here, but it is also observed within his home environment as a husband and father of three children. Paul is enthusiastic and possesses a great sense of humor which is welcomed by all. His dedication to his work and family has had a profound effect on many



around him. We appreciate Paul's efforts and performance. Congratulations Paul on your well earned status of Employee of the Quarter.

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## What does the future hold for Touchstone groups?

As Touchstone groups have already greatly evolved, they will evolve and improve even more in the future. Curriculums for all groups are constantly reviewed and improved based upon recipient feedback and new research. Touchstone is in the process of creating an outcomes survey for all groups in order to capture measurable and accurate feedback. These surveys will be put into place in August. Touchstone is working on a Living Skills and Educational Group for children diagnosed with developmental disabilities and their parents/caregivers. This group will offer education on resources available for this population, navigational skills with the Department of Developmental Disabilities and the educational system, and living skills teaching techniques for parents/caregivers of children with special needs.

We are extremely excited about the success and reported outcomes from Touchstone's group repertoire. In order to continue improving and building our groups, we encourage any and all feedback. For information, questions, and feedbacks in regards to Touchstone's groups, please contact Tara Pitts at [Tara.pitts@touchstonebh.org](mailto:Tara.pitts@touchstonebh.org).



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