



BETHANY ST. JOSEPH CORPORATION  
Community Services

## MERIT Centre Handbook

MERIT Centre North  
1020 Windsor St.  
La Crosse, WI 54603  
(608) 784-2700

MERIT Centre South  
3900 East Ave. South  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
(608) 788-2900

### **A Great Way to Spend the Day!**

The information contained in this handbook applies  
to all participants regardless of their source of payment.



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WELCOME TO MERIT CENTRE!

Thank you for choosing to spend some of your time with us! We look forward to getting to know you. Hopefully you will enjoy getting to know the other participants and staff. We understand some days feel like great days for trying everything and visiting with everyone and other days you might appreciate a little more quiet time. That's okay. We want your day to fit you!

We strive to offer activities, both at the MERIT Centre and in the community, that interest you. We hope you will share your ideas for things you would like to do or places you would like to go when we are together. Please let staff know if there is anything we can do to make your day more enjoyable.

Our hours are Monday – Friday, 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM. Lunch is served at 11:30 AM and a snack is scheduled for 1:30. (If you ever need something else to eat during the day, just let us know.) See page 1 for a listing of the holidays when we are closed. If you are not feeling well or will not be attending for some other reason when you are scheduled to be with us, please call and let us know you are staying home.

Again, thank you for choosing the MERIT Centre!

Warmly,

MERIT Centre Staff

## **HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION**

The MERIT Centres operates from 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The program is closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

In an effort to protect the health and safety of participants and staff, the Merit Centre may be closed in the event of inclement weather (such as ice storms, heavy snow storms, or extreme heat), illness outbreak, or building issues.

In the event of a closure, participants and care providers are notified prior to initiation of closing, changing, or suspending services.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Please call the MERIT Centre that you attend if you will be late or not attending on a scheduled day. If you do not call and do not arrive on schedule, staff will attempt to reach you to assure your safety. If you should become ill at the MERIT Centre we will call and arrange for your emergency contact to pick you up. Meanwhile, we will do our best to keep you comfortable until they arrive.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from programming. Typically, it is provided by family, friends, or outside agencies. Staff can assist in making or coordinating transportation arrangements, but no direct transport to and from programming is provided by the program or staff.

## **WHAT TO WEAR & WHAT TO BRING**

Casual, comfortable clothing is the best choice for daily wear. Please bring appropriate outerwear to assure your comfort when outside of the MERIT Centre.

You are welcome to bring projects you are working on, comfort items, assistive devices, personal electronics (i.e. tablet, laptop), or other personal items you wish to use during the day or show to others. There is space available to leave a change of clothing if you desire.

Participants who bring money to the MERIT Centre most often choose to keep it in their billfold or purse and keep it with them throughout the day. However, everyone is welcome to place it in their bin, or ask staff to place it in the locked cabinet. Items placed in the locked cabinet are accessible upon request.

## **SERVICE PLANNING**

An Individual Service Plan is developed for each person who attends the MERIT Centre. Together we will develop a plan based on your stated preferences, care needs, and other information shared during the initial assessment and intake process. Service Plans are reviewed routinely (at least every 6 months, when your needs change, and upon request.) However, you are welcome to add, eliminate, or change services at any time by talking to the Director or staff-on-duty in their absence.

## **BATHING & PERSONAL CARE SERVICES**

MERIT Centre provides everything you need to enjoy our spa services including warm towels, soap, shampoo, lotion, and hair dryer. However, if there is a product you prefer to use, you are welcome to bring it. Persons requesting shaving services are asked to supply their own electric razor. Often people prefer to bring their own hair care tools (i.e. preferred combs/brushes, etc.) While the MERIT Centre is able to dry hair, we are not able to use styling tools like curling irons or straighteners. Any personal care that is provided on-site is provided in a private room (with a lockable door) to allow for privacy and hygiene.

## **PROGRAMMING**

A variety of activities are offered throughout the day that promote brain health, social connectedness, and physical health. The MERIT Centre is committed to providing daily opportunities to engage with others who attend the MERIT Centre and the broader community. We welcome friends and family to visit at their leisure and attend special events and activities such as picnics and parties. At the MERIT Centre there are opportunities to exercise, play cards & games, and participate in personal interests such as baking, computers or art. Off-site activities are offered daily (weather permitting) and include exploring local orchards, tours, concerts, festivals, coffee shops, restaurants, antique stores, and other places of interest to individuals attending the MERIT Centre. Additionally, we actively recruit community members to visit and share their special gifts and interests. This can include things like visiting pets, student groups, artists, guest exercise instructors, sewing enthusiasts, musicians, and Bible study amongst others. If you know someone you would like to invite to share their talents, that would be great. Let us know if you would like our help with setting that up. Participating in activities, on or off site is entirely up to you. Regardless of a person's source of payment, all participants are invited and encouraged to join all activities both on and off-site. Off-site activity entrance fees are covered by the organization for all participants. Snacks, souvenirs, personal shopping, or other expenditures made by individuals are at their own expense. Decisions on whether or not to make purchases and what purchases to make is made by each individual participant.

## **DINING**

The MERIT Centres provide a nutritious lunch meal and snacks for all participants. Lunch is served at 11:30 AM and a snack is scheduled for 1:30. Persons wanting something else to eat during the day need only let the staff know.

Dining is designed to be a pleasurable experience in a relaxed atmosphere where you are able to enjoy lunch at your own pace. You may choose with whom you wish to sit and eat; there is no assigned seating. Space is available for persons who prefer private dining.

An alternative noon meal is available upon request or as needed to avoid food sensitivities or diet requirements. No one is required to eat any food item they do not wish to and may select in what order their food is served.

Dining assistance is available as needed and specified in each person's individual service plan. This may include anything from adaptive dishes/dinnerware to individualized staff support. Direct eating assistance occurs at a pace dictated by the participant. Staff are trained to provide assistance in a manner that respects each person's dignity and to focus on cues provided by the person receiving assistance.

## **INTERACTING WITH OTHERS**

Everyone is free to choose who they spend time with, sit next to, and talk to while they are at the MERIT Centre, assuming both persons are agreeable. This includes during lunch, break, activities, free time, and any time you are in attendance regardless of whether programming or services are occurring on or off-site.

## **STAFF**

MERIT Centre staff are employees of Bethany St. Joseph Corporation. All staff complete orientation and training prior to working independently with participants. Continuing educational opportunities are provided to staff routinely.

Staffing patterns vary based on the number of participants in attendance and their individual service plan. As participant attendance or needs increase or change, staffing changes occur to meet the scheduled and unscheduled needs of participants. Each MERIT Centre has a supervisor or designee in charge at all times.

Typically, participants find they enjoy interacting with all of the different staff at MERIT Centre. However, participants may request specific staff to provide their services. The MERIT Centre works to grant those requests as they are able.

## **ROLE OF THE NURSE**

The MERIT Centre employs a part-time nurse who provides consultation, training, oversight, and delegation of predictable nursing tasks to unlicensed program staff. The nurse is not on-site daily and does not provide routine services. You are encouraged to seek medical or behavioral services of your choosing outside of the Merit Center. Any medical care that is provided on-site is provided in a private room (with a lockable door) to allow for privacy and hygiene.

## **ADAPTIVE RESOURCES**

The MERIT Centre strives to support each person in fully participating as independently as possible. This may be achieved by adapting activities, modifying the schedule, or through utilization of adaptive aids or technology. For example, headphones are available for persons who wish to listen to a book rather than read it. Card holders allow persons unable to hold cards in their hand to play games. Large handle utensils or plate guards allow individuals to eat independently. Computer programs accommodate persons with visual and auditory challenges. Whatever your need, please work with staff to identify and implement adaptations that would provide assistance.

## **SAFETY DRILLS**

All participants are instructed on fire evacuation and tornado response procedures during their initial orientation. Fire drills are conducted quarterly and tornado drills are conducted annually.

## **STATEMENT OF RIGHTS**

As a participant in a Bethany St. Joseph Corporation Community Services Program, your care may be provided under the direction of your physician. You have the rights and responsibilities set forth below:

1. To exercise your rights as a program participant, or have your family/guardian exercise your rights on your behalf;
2. To be treated with dignity and respect;
3. To be free of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or financial abuse, neglect or misappropriation;
4. To be supported in maintaining one's independence to the extent that conditions and circumstances permit;
5. To participate or decline participation in any aspect of programming;
6. To choose whom and for how long you interact/participate with during on-site or off-site activities;
7. To a clean, sanitary, and safe environment;
8. To be provided with written notice of your rights in advance of receiving care;
9. To be fully informed, as evidenced by your written acknowledgment prior to acceptance, of these rights and of all rules and regulations governing participant responsibilities;
10. To expect the organization to maintain documentation that shows you have been notified of your rights;
11. To be fully informed, orally and in writing, in advance about the care to be given, and to be informed in advance of any changes in the care/treatment to be provided;
12. To be afforded the opportunity to participate in the individual service plan process and programming participation;
13. To be informed what to do in the case of an emergency;
14. To privacy and confidentiality;
15. To have confidential treatment of your clinical records, that are maintained by this organization;

16. To approve or decline the release of clinical records, in writing, to any individual outside the organization, except in the case of transfer to another health care facility, or as required by law or a third party contract;
17. To access your clinical record upon written request in accordance with program policy;
18. To be advised, orally and in writing, of the amount of charges for services that will not be covered by third-party contract;
19. To be fully informed prior to admission of services available from the organization and of related charges, including any charges for which the participant may be held responsible;
20. To receive services consistent with the Individual Service Plan;
21. To be informed of all the services provided and the charge for each of those services;
22. To be informed of the reason(s) for involuntary discharge and the procedures for appealing that decision;
23. To initiate a complaint or voice a grievance toward care or treatment that is, or fails to be furnished without discrimination or reprisal for doing so;
24. To be informed of the complaint/grievance procedure; and
25. To be informed of your right to formulate advance directives, regarding your health care and to have those directives honored by this organization.

To register a complaint/grievance, you may:

1. Discuss the nature of the complaint with the lead program assistant of the program you attend;
2. Discuss the complaint with the Director - Phone (608) 788-2900 or (608)784-2700;
3. Discuss the complaint with the Community Services Administrator - Phone (608) 783-1516;
4. If the problem still exists, call the Executive Director of Bethany St. Joseph – Phone (608) 788-5700; and
5. If no resolution has occurred you may contact the Licensing Specialist, State of WI  
610 Gibson Street Suite I Eau Claire,  
WI 54701-3667 - Phone (715) 836-3090.

As an organization which provides services to you, the organization has the right to expect you to meet the following responsibilities:

1. To be under medical supervision;
2. To supply accurate, and complete health history information;
3. To inform staff of any changes in your health status;
4. To attempt to have available a family member or individual who is able and willing; to provide information and attend care conferences with you or on your behalf;
5. To be considerate and cooperative with the other participants and staff;
6. To avoid discrimination against staff and other participants because of race, religion, color, sex, national or ethnic origin;
7. To notify staff if you are unable to attend as scheduled; and
8. To notify staff if you are changing your scheduled arrival or departure times.