

STEVEN ELSON, PHD

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CAREER SUMMARY

Thirty-five years in executive leadership of not-for-profit organizations providing mental health and residential services to children and youth with complex trauma and/or presenting challenging and disruptive behavioral/emotional issues. Services provided to more than 50,000 vulnerable children and youth and their families in a highly regulated, compliance driven industry. Payors have included both public (Medicaid) and private (commercial insurance and private pay) and involve multiple and complex funding streams. Significant growth and new lines of business attained in all leadership positions/organizations while achieving state and national recognition for training and service excellence. Consultation and training services directly impacted organizations in 15 states and seven foreign countries. Active involvement in virtually all significant public policy initiatives affecting child welfare and mental health in California. Industry leadership includes Board membership in five state-wide and one national association. Elected/served a term as President in each of the six associations.

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

Executive Leadership • Organizational Growth & Development • Board Structure & Enhancement • Management Training • Program Design • Finance • Business / Program Startup • Quality Assurance / Improvement • Licensing & Regulatory Support • Branding / Rebranding / Public Relations • Policy Advocacy in Children’s Mental Health Services • In-depth Industry Knowledge

EXPERIENCE

STEVEN ELSON CONSULTING | Ventura, CA

Sole Proprietor

2020 – Present

Independent consultation has included work with five California nonprofits ranging in size from \$2 million to \$60 million and a state-wide industry association. Services have focused on helping non-profit agencies that work in the child & adolescent mental health space to increase financial stability, develop new lines of business including contracts with commercial insurance companies, enhance regulatory compliance, meet accreditation standards, improve clinical/services performance, strengthen Board knowledge and skills, and create strategies/plans in sync with community needs and market trends. Served as interim executive director / CEO supporting an agency transitioning leadership. Expert Witness services include expert witness consultation and testimony to attorneys representing plaintiffs and defendants related to mental health, child welfare, congregate care issues, as well as identifying industry standards and trends relevant to civil cases.

CASA PACIFICA CENTERS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES | Camarillo, CA

CEO Emeritus

2020 – present

Founding Chief Executive Officer

1994 - 2020

- Obtained licenses from four different state agencies to open and operate 24/7 residential treatment, emergency shelter supported by a special education nonpublic school with comprehensive medical and mental health services available on 26-acre campus – negotiated County contracts to support programs and services
- Pursued and achieved national accreditation in all programs
- Expanded programs into the community designed to keep youth at home and in school
- Created 24/7 mobile crisis response program for children & adolescents in two Central Coast Counties
- Began housing program (16 beds on & off-campus) and mental health services for transition-age foster youth
- Grew organization to 15 programs in Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties – 350 staff; \$32 million annual budget
- Worked successfully with a high profile 25-member Board of Directors
- Expanded lines of business, diversified funding sources to include schools and commercial insurance

- Established nationally recognized training and consultation programs including Doctoral Internship Program approved by the American Psychological Association
- Navigated through “once-in-a-generation” public policy changes in child welfare and children’s behavioral health and resulting industry upheaval
- Developed 40 bed residential treatment, PHP, IOP and in-home services designed for private placements funded through contracts with commercial insurance
- Launched a successful \$16.6 million capital campaign adding 30,000 sq. ft of treatment (two cottages) and training and administrative space on 26-acre campus
- Oversaw breakout fund development efforts raising more than \$60 million and producing THE annual fundraising event of the region
- Casa Pacifica served more than 43,000 children and families in 26 years

FULLER SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY | Pasadena, CA

Associate Professor (Adjunct Faculty)

1995 - 2002

- Taught course on “Psychologists in Management” for doctoral students in psychology
- Core text – Bolman, L. & Deal, T. *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice & Leadership*, 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

THE SYCAMORES | Altadena, CA

Executive Director

1984 - 1994

- Assumed leadership of the Sycamores when on brink of closure requiring programmatic & financial turnaround
- Stabilized programs & staffing & financial performance
- Participated in successful lawsuit to increase state-set rates for residential services
- Negotiated first Los Angeles County behavioral health contract to supplement residential treatment
- Purchased adjacent property to expand campus by 15% and bed capacity by 15%
- Quadrupled annual revenue over nine years
- Gained state-wide reputation as premier residential treatment center in Los Angeles County

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY | New Britain, CT

Assistant Professor (Adjunct Faculty)

1977 - 1984

- Taught a two-course sequence on “Introduction to Community Psychology” required for graduate students pursuing master’s degree in Community Psychology
- Core Text: Rappaport, J. *Community Psychology: Values, Research & Action*. New York: Springer, 1977.

KLINGBERG FAMILY CENTERS | New Britain, CT

Vice President for Services

1975 - 1984

- Began as staff psychologist and moved through management ranks to oversee children’s residential treatment and outpatient services
- Proposed and implemented program transformation from historical children’s home to residential treatment center
- Developed a model treatment program focused on self-management and self-regulation for children
- Assisted in establishing outpatient therapy program marketed to the “faith community”

UNITED STATES ARMY |

1ST Lieutenant

1969-1972

- Basic Training – Ft. Leonard Wood, MO; Advanced Infantry Training – Ft. Sill; OK; Officer Candidate School – Ft. Belvoir, VA
- Served at Pentagon in Controller of the Army’s Office
- MOS – Personnel Psychologist
- Assigned to Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station (AFFES) in San Juan, Puerto Rico

EDUCATION

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | East Lansing, MI
PHD, Counseling Psychology (1975)

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY | San Jose, CA
MA, Psychology – Emphasis Experimental (1970)

HONORS

ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN’S RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES | Milwaukee, WI
Life Time Achievement Award – 2021 (presented at annual conference, Ft Lauderdale, FL)

CASA PACIFICA CENTERS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES | Camarillo, CA
26 Acre Lewis Road Campus Named – *Steven Elson Campus* – 2020

CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AGENCIES | Sacramento, CA
Rusty Selix Award of Merit – 2020

CALIFORNIA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH | Sacramento, CA
Jim Pries Advocate of the Year Award – 2020

VENTURA COUNTY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY | Ventura, CA
Community Leader of the Year – 2016

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN’S RESIDENTIAL CENTERS | Milwaukee, WI
Life Fellow Award – 2015 (presented at annual conference, Savannah, GA)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

VENTURA COUNTY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY | Ventura, CA
Board Member – 2016-present (current Treasurer)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF VENTURA COUNTY | Oxnard, CA
Advisory Board Member – 2018-present

CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AGENCIES | Sacramento, CA
President – 2012-14

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN’S RESIDENTIAL CENTERS | Milwaukee, WI
President – 2008-10

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES | Sacramento, CA
President – 2003-2004 (Current Board Member)

CALIFORNIA COALITION OF MENTAL HEALTH | Sacramento, CA
President – 2001-2002

CALIFORNIA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH | Sacramento, CA
President – 1993-1998 (Current Board Member, Treasurer)

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN | Sacramento, CA
President – 1992-1993

ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES AGENCIES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA | Los Angeles, CA
President – 1988-1989

PUBLICATIONS/PAPERS

A PARTIAL LIST OF PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Elson, S., Foltz, R., Liberman, R., & Sisson, K. (2020) ***Redefining Residential: Trauma-informed practice and the importance of predictability in residential interventions.*** Publication by the (International) Association of Children's Residential Centers.

Elson, S.E. (2017) ***Assessment, stabilization, and permanency (ASAP).*** Plenary Session Panel at the meeting of the California Alliance of Child & Family Services. Palm Desert, CA.

Elson, S.E. (2015) ***Addressing the acute care challenges faced by youth and families.*** Plenary Session Panel at the annual meeting of the American Association of Children's Residential Centers. Savannah, GA.

Elson, S.E. & Freeman, J. (2015) ***Reputation, culture, and crisis management.*** Workshop presented at the meeting of the California Alliance of Child & Family Services. Napa, CA.

Elson, S.E. & Horne, R. (2015) ***How to use your website & social media to your advantage.*** Workshop presented at the Open Minds California Management Best Practices Institute. San Diego, CA.

Elson, S.E. (2011) ***Riding the wave of economic recovery.*** Workshop presented at the Annual Conference of the Alliance of Children & Families. Washington, DC.

Elson, S.E. & Murtagh, L. (2000) ***Outcomes in children's residential treatment centers: A national survey.*** Publication by the American Association of Children's Residential Centers.

Asarnow, J., Aoki, W., & Elson, S. (1996). ***Children in residential treatment: A follow-up study.*** Journal of clinical child psychology, 25, 209-214.

Elson, S.E. (1995) ***Making children's residential a treatment of choice.*** Paper presented at the meeting of the American Orthopsychiatry Association. New York, NY

Elson, S. E. (1996). ***Children's residential treatment: Last resort or treatment of choice?*** Residential treatment for children and youth, 14, 33-44.

Elson, S.E. (1980, August). ***Managing human services: The supervisor's role.*** Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Montreal, Canada.

Elson, S. E. (1979). ***Recent approaches to counseling: Gestalt therapy, transactional analysis, and reality therapy.*** In H. Burks Theories of counseling (3rd Ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Elson, S.E. & Stewart, N.R. (1977). ***Please counselor, I'd rather do it myself!*** School Counselor, 24, 178-183.

Hector, M., Elson, S.E., & Yager, G.G. (1977). ***Teaching counseling skills through self-management procedures.*** Counselor Education and Supervision, 17, 12-22.

Elson, S.E. & Klingberg, H. (1976, October). ***Attitudes of evangelicals towards counseling: A survey of local churches.*** Paper presented at the meeting of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists, Philadelphia.

Elson, S.E. (1975, March). ***Self-control: Behavioral strategies in counseling.*** Paper presented at the meeting of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, New York.

REFERENCES

Available upon Request