



Center for Behavioral Health Studies

Adolescent Treatment Programs Reduce Drug Abuse

Treatment Outcomes

In the first large study designed to evaluate drug abuse treatment outcomes among adolescents, The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has **found that longer adolescent stays in treatment can effectively decrease drug and alcohol use.**

Most encouraging are the additional outcomes of improved school performance, psychological adjustment and reduced criminal activity.

Age Specific Issues

Adolescent treatment programming addresses peer relationships, educational concerns, and family issues such as parent/child relationships. This may also include having to deal with parental substance abuse. Successful elements of adult treatment programs, such as participation in group therapy and a 12-step program, were added elements included in the adolescent treatment programming.

A research study of 1,100 adolescents who received substance abuse treatment found significant improvement in reduced rates of drug use and improved social behavior

“The results of this study are particularly impressive with the adolescents who had multiple problems”, reports Mona L. Sumner, C.O.O., Rimrock Foundation.

Timely resolution of age specific problems is even more critical for adolescents, since they are still in the process of developing values. Helping adolescents make positive lifestyle decisions and preparing them to

assume adult responsibilities are essential elements of a quality addictions treatment program.

Treatment Programs Varied

These national studies reported that adolescents in the more successful residential treatment programs received education, individual and group counseling. Programs were enhanced by using positive interventions in building social responsibilities.



For maximum effectiveness, the adolescents in the inpatient programs received counseling and a 12-step program, which were coupled with 90 days of outpatient aftercare services. Family therapy was also strongly emphasized.

Follow-up Research

The adolescents were interviewed when they began treatment and then again one year after discharge. Problem severity levels were determined at the initial interview according to a number of preset criteria. Follow-ups were performed by professional interviewers who were not employed by the treatment centers.

Dependence on drugs or alcohol was determined from standardized diagnostic measures. To validate self-reports of drug use, one-quarter of the participants were selected randomly to submit urine samples during the post-treatment interview.

Prior to treatment, 25 percent of the participants used three or more drugs, 36 percent were dependent on alcohol, with 64 percent dependent on marijuana. In addition to substance abuse problems, 63 percent were diagnosed with a mental disorder and 67 percent were criminally active.

Summary

Adolescents showed major improvements in performance in comparison to the year before treatment. **There were significant declines in the use of marijuana and alcohol, which are considered to be the major drugs of abuse for this age group.**

Adolescents also reported fewer thoughts of suicide, lower hostility, and

higher self-esteem. In the year following treatment, more adolescents attended school and reported average or better-than-average grades.

This study confirms that community-based drug treatment programs designed for adolescents can reduce substance abuse while also having a positive impact on many other aspects of their life.

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For further information on Rimrock Foundation's Adolescent Treatment Program, call Jen Porter, Admissions Supervisor at 1-800-227-3953 or 1-406-248-3175, or visit our Website at www.rimrock.org. For more educational information on adolescent drug abuse, contact the Rimrock Foundation Library at 1-800-227-3953 or 1-406-248-3175.