

Treatment eBook

How to find the right help for
your child with an alcohol or
drug problem

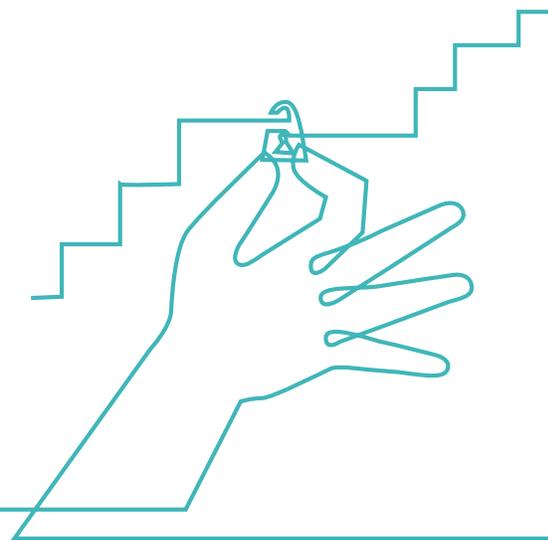


INCLUDES ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS

- What is substance abuse treatment?
- How do I find the right treatment for my child?
- How do I pay for treatment?
- How do I get my child to start treatment?
- What can I do to cope better?

How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

This eBook provides you with information about adolescent and young-adult alcohol and other drug abuse treatment and will help you get the most appropriate care for your child and family. You will learn what alcohol and drug abuse treatment is, how to find the right type of treatment for your child, how to pay for treatment, and the importance of taking care of yourself and your family.



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A Note About This eBook

Before you start reading this eBook you should know that many teenagers and young adults who develop problems with alcohol or other drugs have risk factors that other youth may not. Some common risk factors include:

- Addiction in the family
- Co-occurring mental illness such as depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety
- Trauma such as a death in the family, divorce, or a history of emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Difficult transitions such as moving to a new community, changing schools, or a change in family composition

It is important to know about these risk factors when looking for help for your child so you can understand why and how your child may have developed his problem with alcohol or other drugs. This is not the time to say, *"If only..."* Now you need to put your energy into educating yourself and getting the best help for your child and your family.

You're taking a smart first step by reading this eBook. This book is going to make you an educated advocate for your child and help you find the best substance abuse treatment so he can get his life back on track and your family can begin the healing process.



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My Child Has an Alcohol or Other Drug Problem and May Need Treatment.

If the above sentence is true, then you've come to the right place. Realizing that your teenager or young-adult child needs help for his or her alcohol or other drug problem can fill you with a wide range of emotions. You may be scared for your child's* health or angry that things have gotten to this point. You may be motivated to dive right into the treatment-finding process, or you may have no idea where to begin. But no matter where you are emotionally, mentally, or physically, this eBook will provide helpful and realistic information and advice to aid you in steering your child — and your family — toward recovery.

**In this eBook, the word "child" can refer to your teenager (ages 12-17) or young adult (ages 18-24). However, by law, your child is only a minor until age 18, and is then a legal adult.*

PART I: WHAT IS TREATMENT?

When most people hear the term "substance abuse treatment," they think of either detox or a residential facility. But in reality, detox (detoxification) is not treatment and residential treatment is one of several types of treatment options available for somebody with a substance abuse problem. As you read throughout this eBook you'll discover treatment for abuse and dependence to alcohol or other drugs is actually a set of services.

Treatment occurs in a variety of settings, in different forms, and for different lengths of time. There are many addictive drugs, yet the treatment approach for addiction is generally similar regardless of the type of substance your loved one is addicted to. However, treatment is typically individualized to some degree based on the characteristics of the patient — treatment programs usually address an individual's physical, psychological, emotional, and social issues in addition to his or her alcohol or other drug use.

Unfortunately, when it comes to alcohol and other drug abuse and dependence as with other health conditions, there are no guarantees for the perfect treatment, and it is often difficult to access "quality treatment." Addiction is a manageable but chronic disease, just like diabetes or asthma. Because it is a chronic, relapsing disease, you should not think about treatment as a way to "cure" your loved one. You should look at treatment as a first step in helping your child

In the eBook we use the term abuse and dependence. Medical professionals and treatment providers may use other terms such as substance use disorder.



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learn how to manage his drug abuse and dependence. For youth, successful treatment is complete abstinence from all addictive substances, as well as sustained improvement in emotional, physical, and mental well-being and social functioning.

When looking into substance abuse treatment for your child, you may need to adjust your outlook and way of thinking. Here are some tips as you get started on this difficult journey:

Reconsider the way you measure success. In the past, you've probably hoped for your child to have 100% school attendance or to get an A on a test. But when it comes to substance abuse treatment, numbers indicating "success rate" or "effectiveness" look a little bit different. Because a drug problem for a teenager or young adult can be characterized by possible relapses, going through treatment once may not be sufficient to keep him or her drug free. Relapse doesn't mean that treatment hasn't worked. As with all chronic diseases, relapse is often part of getting better.

Remember that what works for one child may not work for another. At this point you may have heard of a couple of different approaches to getting help for an alcohol or other problem. Treatment for a substance abuse problem is not one-size fits all. Your child may not respond to a treatment program that worked really well for another child. Alternatively your child may do really well in a program that didn't work for somebody else. What works for one individual may not work for your child. Different approaches to treatment help different kinds of people. Before you make any decisions about how to get your child help, read this eBook to help you understand what your family's options are.

Acknowledge what you are going through as a parent.

At this point you may be angry, scared, disappointed, and unsure what to do. All of these feelings are normal. It is important to know that you should get help for yourself and your family as well as your child who has a substance abuse problem.

Do I Really Need To Do Something about My Child's Alcohol or Other Drug Use?

You may be wondering, *Does my child really need to get special help?* Often, by the time a parent discovers that his or her child is abusing alcohol or other drugs, the child has probably been doing so for some time. And the problem might be more severe than the parent first realizes. So, it's important for parents to educate themselves about alcohol and drug dependence treatment and recovery — so they can take the appropriate action. The more parents understand about this topic, the better their child's chances are for getting his or her life back under control.

PART II: HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT TREATMENT FOR MY CHILD?

There are six important steps to take to get the right treatment for your child.

Along the way you will learn about teenage and young adult substance abuse, learn the importance of getting a screening and in-depth assessment, learn the importance of networking when looking for help for a health problem, learn about the different substance abuse treatment settings and types, and learn the types of questions you should ask of treatment providers when looking for a substance abuse treatment program.

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The six steps are:

Step 1: Educate Yourself

Step 2: Screening and In-Depth Professional Assessment

Step 3: Network

Step 4: Treatment Settings, Types of Treatment, Recovery Supports and Services Available

Step 5: Look at Location

Step 6: Make Calls and Ask questions

You will need to educate yourself to understand what quality adolescent substance abuse treatment consists of. Stay open-minded and don't give up. Your child's problem will not be solved overnight. But by educating yourself you are helping your child get his life back on track sooner rather than later.

STEP 1: EDUCATE YOURSELF.

One of the most important things you can do to help your child is to educate yourself about alcohol and other drug abuse and dependence and what treatment for abuse and dependence is. Reading through this guide is a smart first step. You need to learn which questions to ask programs (when we use the word 'program,' this includes all treatment settings including outpatient, inpatient, and residential) to figure out if that program is a good fit for your child and your family. You need to learn what good quality adolescent treatment consists of — the types of programs available and the services that will help your child get better. Educating yourself will make you an informed consumer and will save you time and money and should help your child get better sooner.

Research has shown there are nine key elements that are important for adolescent substance abuse treatment programs to be effective, according to Drug Strategies,¹ these elements include:

- 1. Screening and comprehensive assessment** — to ensure understanding of the full range of issues your child and family may need help with.²
- 2. Comprehensive services** — to address not only your child's substance abuse problem but any medical, mental health, familial, or education problems your child may need help with.
- 3. Family involvement in treatment** — parents' involvement in their child's treatment and recovery increases the success of treatment.
- 4. Services and therapies appropriate for adolescents** — to address the different needs and capabilities of teenagers.
- 5. Strategies or interventions to engage and keep teenagers in treatment** — to help teenagers recognize the value of getting help for their substance abuse problem.
- 6. Qualified staff** — staff should have knowledge of and experience working with adolescents/young adults with substance abuse problems, and their families.

1. Drug Strategies (2003). *Treating Teens: A Guide to Adolescent Drug Programs*.

2. SAMHSA Screening and Assessing Adolescents for Substance Use Disorders (TIP 31) Available: <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/govpubs/bkd306/31k.aspx>

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7. Consideration of cultural and gender differences — this is important because you want your child to be as comfortable as possible.

8. After care — programs should plan for care after the formal treatment program is over to ensure support and successful recovery.

9. Data gathering to measure outcomes and success of the program — although formal evaluations are expensive and not typical, programs should measure patients' progress.

Is There a Difference Between Adolescent and Adult Treatment for a Substance Abuse Problem?

Yes, there are key differences between adolescent and adult treatment and treatment designed for adults will not be as effective for a teen or young adult.

Why? Teenagers need different types of services and have different drug and alcohol abusing experiences. Teenagers are still developing physically, emotionally, and psychologically and most importantly their brains are not fully developed. So, abusing alcohol and drugs can be especially detrimental for adolescents and young adults who have not finished maturing physically or emotionally. And, it is critical that programs for adolescents include the family in the treatment process and that staff are trained in adolescent development.

Adolescent treatment is more focused on acting out behaviors, family dynamics, education, appropriately separating oneself from his or her family, and peer issues. For day programs, in-house schooling is provided. Adolescent programs routinely use group therapy since teenagers are peer-focused, and respond well to group dynamics.

While there are few treatment programs exclusively for young adults (ages 18-25) there are a few adult programs that specialize in this age group. And, some adolescent treatment programs will accept young adults up to the age of 25. It depends on the program so we suggest calling adolescent programs to find out the age cutoff for the program. Otherwise this age group is treated within adult programs which may not be the best fit.

American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Levels of Care

There are five broad levels of care your child may be assigned to depending on the results of the assessment.³

- Level 0.5: Early Intervention Services
- Level I: Outpatient Treatment
- Level II: Intensive Outpatient / Partial Hospitalization Services
- Level III: Residential / Inpatient Treatment Services
- Level IV: Medically Managed Intensive Inpatient

3. ASAM Patient Placement Criteria Available: <http://www.asam.org/PatientPlacementCriteria.html>

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Frequently Asked Questions about Assessments

1. What is the purpose of an assessment?

The purpose of an assessment is to get a comprehensive picture of your child's problems to make sure that he or she is referred to the right type of treatment.

2. Who should conduct an assessment? And who else can help if a person with the appropriate credentials is NOT available?

Ideally, an Addiction Psychiatrist or American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) certified addiction professional should conduct the screening and assessment. However, this type of professional may not be available to you. In that case, look for a licensed mental health or drug abuse counselor with clinical experience working with adolescents, or a general mental health counselor. The important piece is making sure you work with a professional to assess the situation and figure out next steps in your child's care. Ideally, the person conducting the assessment should have at least a master's degree in the mental health field (such as a social worker or mental health counselor).

3. What should an assessment consist of?

An assessment should include the use of at least one standardized instruments — either as an interview or self-administered. The content of the assessment should cover:

- a. Strengths and Competencies of the Adolescent/Young Adult
- b. Substance Use (including history and signs of abuse and dependence)
- c. Juvenile Justice Involvement
- d. Treatment History
- e. School Functioning
- f. Peer Relations
- g. Family Environment (including parenting practices and family functioning)
- h. Physical Health
- i. Mental Health (ADHD, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, anxiety, depression)

Identifying the strengths and competencies of the child in addition to problems will help the clinician set goals for the client and tap into resources to aid the individual in the treatment and recovery process.

4. How do I know if the assessment is asking the right questions?

Use the list above to ask if all the areas listed above are covered in the assessment. Make sure the professional is using a standardized tool or instrument to improve the likelihood of appropriate treatment placement.

5. What is the difference between an intake, a screening, and an assessment?

Intake: This is the first contact with the treatment provider and is an event where a screening or full assessment is conducted. At intake you will begin filling out all the necessary paperwork to enroll your child in substance abuse treatment.

Screening: Shorter assessment process, typically less than 30 minutes; ideally used to determine if a person needs a full assessment. A screening will give an indication but not a definitive diagnosis. Some providers may use a single urine screen as the only screening tool and this is not an adequate screen by itself. A highly trained professional is not needed to administer a screen. If a youth is positive on a screen for substance use disorders, or mental health problems it alerts the clinician to go further. It can be thought of as a first step.

Assessment: Usually refers to a more comprehensive or full assessment, typically 60 minutes or more. It should be comprehensive as outlined above and conducted by a licensed professional. It is important to understand that a one session or even two session assessment at the beginning of or prior to treatment no matter how comprehensive is still limited. A good program and a good counselor should be assessing and adjusting the treatment plan as necessarily throughout the treatment. Dr. Howard Liddle always likes to remind us that "Every assessment is an intervention, and every intervention is an assessment."

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STEP 2: GET A SCREENING AND IN-DEPTH PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT.

It's essential that you get a screening and in-depth assessment of your child by a qualified person.

Here's how the screening and assessment process works:

First: Your child should get a screening. A screening gives you a quick picture of your child's substance use problem and helps determine if your child needs additional evaluation.

Second: If that screening determines that your child has a problem, the next step is for your child to get a full professional assessment. An in-depth assessment should assess your child's educational problems (e.g. learning disabilities), family problems, substance use problems, legal problems, mental health issues (such as depression, anxiety, conduct disorder, ADHD), and any medical/physical issues.

As you'll read below the assessment doesn't just look at alcohol or other drug problems, it also helps to determine if there are educational issues, family issues, medical issues and mental health issues.

The results of the full comprehensive assessment will help the substance abuse treatment professional determine the level of care your child needs including how intense the services need to be and how long your child needs to be in professional care. Professionals in the field refer to this as the ASAM (American Society of Addiction Medicine) Patient Placement Criteria. The ASAM guidelines help match individuals to the appropriate level and type of care needed.

“An assessment is a very comprehensive picture of what's going on with your child,” says Amelia Arria, Ph.D.

An assessment should be a thorough look at the extent of drug and alcohol use, the child's mental and physical health as well as his personal, medical and family history.

“It may involve an assessment of the family dynamics, the child's education and the child's mental health to see if there's some underlying psychiatric disorders which have their onset in early adolescence and typically precede alcohol and drug problems,” explains Dr. Arria.

An assessment helps to determine:

- 1) How severe your child's problem is.
- 2) The level of treatment the child needs (e.g. early intervention, outpatient, intensive outpatient/partial hospitalization, residential / inpatient services — see chart below for more detail).
- 3) The types of services the child needs.

The purpose of an assessment is to help understand how the child is functioning, his quality of life and to determine the type of program the child needs.

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Find a professional who can give your child a screening and assessment

To find a clinic or professional who can give your child a screening and assessment, contact your Single State Agency for Substance Abuse Services <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/SSADirectory.pdf> or call SAMHSA at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Each U.S. State and Territory offers information and support for substance use disorders through a local government office. These offices are known as Single State Agencies and offer information and support for individuals seeking help for a mental health illness as well. Single State Agencies may be stand alone agencies or may be part of a larger department such as a mental health or public health department. These agencies can help you find clinics and professionals in your area who can conduct a substance abuse screening and assessment.⁴ A good place to start is by searching on the Single State Agency's website.

Mental Health Benefits and Parity

1. The good news is that 46 states currently have laws requiring coverage (of varying degrees) for mental health services.

There are roughly three categories of coverage across states: *Mental Health Parity or Equal Coverage Laws*: These laws prohibit insurers or health care service plans from discriminating between coverage for mental illness, serious mental illness, substance abuse, and other physical disorders/diseases (such as heart disease or diabetes). This means you are entitled to the same level of benefits for mental illness, serious mental illness, or substance abuse services as you get for other physical disorders/diseases. How this works exactly varies by state. Click here to find out the type of coverage required in your state. <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14352>.⁵

2. Minimum Mandated Mental Health Benefit Laws:

States with these laws require some level of coverage to be provided for mental illness, serious mental illness, and substance abuse services. Although insurers are allowed to discriminate under these laws and provide less or different type of coverage for mental illness, serious mental illness, or substance abuse services some coverage is required.

3. Mandated Mental Health Offering Laws:

States with mandated offering laws do not require mental health services benefits be offered. With this law states have two options; to require that the option for mental health services be provided to the insured OR if mental health benefits are offered, they must be equal.

STEP 3: NETWORK.

One of the first — and most helpful — steps you can take in finding help for your child is to talk to the people around you. You may feel like you should keep your child's drug or alcohol problem a secret, but you shouldn't. Addiction is a chronic disease, not a moral failing on your part or your child's part. Always keep this in mind, and know that the people you hide your problem from may be the same people who could give you good advice or connect you to the help you need.

Again, be aware that what works for one child or family may not work for another. Friends, relatives, medical professionals, and other parents who have been in your shoes may all have great advice or experience to share — but ultimately, you know your child best.

4. SAMHSA (2009). *Directory of Single State Agencies Available* <http://www.samhsa.gov/Grants/ssadirectory.pdf>

5. *National Conference of State Legislators*

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Networking: How to Approach Others for Help

1. Do you know anyone who has had a similar experience with their child? Start by contacting your family and friends — as well as others you know from work, your neighborhood, your religious community, etc.) — who have experience getting help for someone with a substance abuse problem.
 2. Think about who can really help you. Even if your family and friends don't have experiences specifically with substance abuse, they can support you by helping you sort through programs, talk about your fears, anger, and concerns, and just be there for you as you make difficult decisions. Networking will not only help you get help for your child, it will help you feel less alone and give you support.
 3. Call, email and ask where and how did these others get help for their child? Do they know anyone who has experience with a child needing help? Do they know of programs for teenagers?
 4. Your insurance company can also suggest treatment locations and give you a sense of what will be covered.
- 5 There are many online resources available to help you get in touch with substance abuse experts and other parents of teens and young adults struggling with a drug or alcohol problem. (One example is Partnership for Drug-Free Kids Intervene blog www.drugfree.org/intervene). Be aware, however, that there is a lot of inaccurate information on the web.

STEP 4: UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING THAT'S AVAILABLE.

There are several different types of substance abuse treatment services — and one type you don't know about could end up being the best one for your child. And, treatment services take place in a variety of treatment settings including outpatient, inpatient, and residential settings. Before you make any decisions, look at the following charts which describes the different treatment services available for someone with a substance abuse problem. It is important to

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know the different types of services so that when you make a decision in consultation with the treatment professional that's based on your child's assessment, you will be a fully informed participant in the decision.

The **first chart** describes the different types of treatment settings including outpatient, intensive outpatient, inpatient, day treatment (also known as partial hospitalization) and residential.

The **second chart** describes the different types of treatment services that one may receive while in treatment for a substance use problem.

The **third chart** describes aftercare and provides some examples of recovery support and services available to individuals in recovery from a substance use problem.

Treatment Settings for Substance Use Disorders

TREATMENT SETTING	DESCRIPTION	HOURS*	INTENSITY	LENGTH	WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
Outpatient	<p>Client typically attends treatment at a specialty facility but lives at home.</p> <p>Many programs provide services in the evenings and on weekends so the individual can still attend school or work.</p>	<p>Adults typically attend treatment 9 hours a week or less.</p> <p>Teenagers typically attend treatment 6 hours per week or less.</p>	Low to Medium	Depends on individual's progress, goals, and treatment plan.	Your child may be required to attend the program daily or weekly depending on the severity of his/her substance use.
Intensive Outpatient	<p>Client attends treatment during the day but lives at home.</p> <p>Can require client to attend up to 20 hours of treatment activities per week.</p> <p>Treatment can last from 2 months to 1 year.</p>	<p>Adults typically attend 9 hours per week or more.</p> <p>Teenagers typically attend treatment 6 hours per week or more.</p> <p>Clients typically receive treatment services 2 to 3 times per week for two or more hours at a time.</p>	Medium to High	Depends on individual's progress, goals, and treatment plan.	For individuals who need multiple services, have any medical or psychological illnesses, or have not been successful in outpatient services.

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2004). What is substance abuse treatment? DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 04-3955.

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Treatment Settings for Substance Use Disorders *(continued)*

TREATMENT SETTING	DESCRIPTION	HOURS*	INTENSITY	LENGTH	WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
Day Treatment/ Partial Hospitalization	<p>Client attends treatment during the day but lives at home.</p> <p>Treatment services are provided 4 to 8 hours a day.</p>	Client typically attends treatment 20 hours or more per week	Medium to High	Depends on individual's progress, goals, and treatment plan.	<p>Most families use partial hospitalization programs when their family member needs an intensive and structured treatment experience</p> <p>Day treatment can be appropriate for clients with complex cases that involve co-morbid mental health illnesses.</p>
Residential	These programs provide treatment services in a residential setting. Programs can last from 1 month to a year.	24 hours/day, 7 days/week	Medium to High	Depends on individual's progress, goals, and treatment plan.	<p>Typically, residents go through different phases as they progress through the program. During certain phases your child's contact with you may be limited.</p> <p>Ask about the program's policies and procedures.</p> <p>Ask if the program provides educational and vocational services.</p>

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Treatment Settings for Substance Use Disorders *(continued)*

TREATMENT SETTING	DESCRIPTION	HOURS	INTENSITY	LENGTH	WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
Inpatient	Treatment provided in specialty units of hospitals or medical clinics offering both detox and rehabilitation services.	24 hours/day, 7 days/week	High	Depends on individual's progress, goals, and treatment plan.	Not as common as other types of treatment. Typically used for people with serious medical conditions or mental disorders.
Medication Assisted Treatment	<p>Medication assisted treatment is for people physically dependent on drugs.</p> <p>Medications are available for individuals dependent on opioids and alcohol.</p> <p>Opioid Maintenance Therapy (OMT) is for individuals dependent on opioid drugs such as heroin, OxyContin, or Vicodin.</p> <p>Provided in a specialized outpatient setting.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>There is not as much information available about using medication assisted therapies for adolescents as there is for adults.</p> <p>The treatment program should provide counseling and other treatment services along with the medication.</p>

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SERVICES OFFERED AT ADOLESCENT TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Most adolescent treatment programs offer the treatment services listed in the chart below. If these services are not offered at your child's program, the staff there should be able to help your family find them elsewhere. It is important that individuals with an alcohol or other drug problem receive a full comprehensive range of treatment services. Examples of treatment services include:

Services Offered at Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Programs		
TREATMENT SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Screening	<p>Shorter assessment process used to determine if a person needs a full assessment.</p> <p>A screening will just give an indication but not a definitive diagnosis.</p>	<p>Helps determine if your child needs an assessment. Even if the results indicate your child doesn't need an assessment, this will let your child know you're aware of his/her drug use.</p>
Assessment	<p>A thorough look at the extent and severity of drug or alcohol use, the child's mental and physical health, family functioning, educational needs, personal, medical and family history.</p>	<p>To help understand the severity of your child's alcohol or other drug use, how your child is functioning, his quality of life, his educational needs, and to determine if the program has the resources to get the child everything they need — or refer them elsewhere if they can't meet that need.</p>
Medical Care	<p>Many of substance abusers' medical symptoms may be complications of drug use and clear up after a period of sobriety, but there may be underlying medical conditions contributing to the development of the drug abuse and dependence.</p>	<p>Quality treatment programs evaluate patients for medical problems shortly after admission and offer appropriate medical care, including medication management if indicated.</p>
Recovery or Treatment Plan	<p>As with any health conditions, while there are standards of care it is important that an individualized treatment plan be created that addresses an individuals' specific needs, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. Treatment will vary depending on the characteristics of the patient, the treatment program, the patient's family, and functioning.</p>	<p>Treatment/Recovery plans must be tailored to address all issues identified in the assessment and must be examined weekly throughout treatment to identify progress and areas that may need additional or more intense attention.</p> <p>The plan should start from the first day of treatment and account for clinical services needed during formal treatment, aftercare services needed, and recovery services needed when the client has completed the formal specialty phase of the treatment.</p>

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Services Offered at Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Programs *(continued)*

TREATMENT SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Individual Counseling	Counseling that consists of the client and counselor in a one-on-one session.	Allows individual to explore personal problems and issues that he/she may not be comfortable discussing in a group setting.
Group Counseling	Many programs offer group counseling as a component of the treatment program. Group counseling usually consists of 6 to 10 people with one or two counselors facilitating the discussion.	Members of the group discuss their struggles, experiences, and problems.
Home Based Services	Substance abuse and mental health treatment services that are provided in the child's home.	Examples of these types of programs include: Adolescent Portable Therapy (APT) and Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT).
Educational Services	Grade appropriate classes (or GED classes) for teenagers still in school or older teenagers that have dropped out of high school.	Reduces the disruption of school, allows the individual to earn his/her high school diploma or GED while in treatment.
Vocational Services	Services to determine the vocational abilities, skills, interests, and needs of the individual. Teaches job skills, resume development, and other work readiness skills.	Help the individual become independent, learn important skills and responsibilities, and seek employment as part of his/her recovery.

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Services Offered at Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Programs *(continued)*

TREATMENT SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
<p>Life Skills</p>	<p>Life skills classes teach individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertiveness • Communication • Decision Making • Coping with Anxiety • Learning Healthy Alternatives to Risky Behavior • Reducing and Preventing Health Risk Behaviors • Planning • Problem—Solving • Refusal Skills • Relaxation • Stress Management • Time Management • Understanding Consequences of Substance Abuse 	<p>Life skills are behavioral tools designed to help a teenager or young adult cope with the stresses and challenges of daily life, develop greater self—esteem, and manage their recovery process.</p>
<p>Treatment for Mental Illness</p>	<p>If your child has been diagnosed with a co-occurring mental illness, you should find him a treatment program that can treat his repetitive mental illness or refer him to a professional (e.g. psychiatrist) with experience working with adolescents with mental illness.</p> <p>Ideally, treatment for the substance use problem and the mental illness are integrated. If the treatment provider is unable to treat both the substance use disorder and the mental illness simultaneously, the treatment services should be coordinated with the substance use disorder treatment provider and the mental illness treatment provider coordinating services and care.</p>	<p>When a child has co-occurring disorders, he needs help treating all of his illnesses. Treating substance abuse and dependence/addiction alone will not help underlying mental illness, and treating a depressive disorder alone will not resolve the substance abuse and dependence.</p>

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Services Offered at Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Programs *(continued)*

TREATMENT SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Family Services/Involvement	Services for the family including family therapy, individual or group therapy for parents or siblings, education about substance abuse, treatment, and recovery.	In most cases, family involvement is an important element in treating adolescents for alcohol or other drug abuse. Family involvement in substance abuse treatment helps family members gain awareness and understanding of substance abuse and dependence as a chronic illness, helps the family to have realistic expectations and goals for treatment, helps to improve communication within the family and overall family functioning, and helps the family understand the treatment process.
After Care/Follow-up Care/Continuing Care	<p>Treatment prescribed after completion of a formal structured treatment program in any type of setting.</p> <p>Follow-up care is very important to help prevent relapse.</p>	<p><i>After Care</i> is different from recovery supports and services and is sometimes labeled follow-up care or continuing care. Typical after care services involve the treatment provider checking in with the client for an update on progress.</p> <p>May be as simple as a check-up phone call or an in-person session.</p> <p>Can consist of individual or group counseling or activities designed to help people stay in recovery.</p>

How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

RECOVERY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

Recovery from a substance use disorder is more than abstinence. Recovery is about improving one's quality of life, being emotionally and physically healthy, succeeding in school or work, having healthy relationships, having a healthy social life, and living drug-free. For most people, maintaining recovery requires supports and services after formal treatment is completed. There is a wide range of recovery supports and services available to help individuals in recovery prevent relapses, get emotional support, maintain progress made in treatment, and live drug-free. Some examples of recovery supports and services include:

Recovery Supports and Services for Adolescent Substance Use Disorders		
RECOVERY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES	DESCRIPTION	WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
Recovery or Sober Houses	Transitional residences where people (adults 18 years and older) in recovery live together. Residences often have a small number of clients, a small professional staff, clear and enforced rules about abstinence, and a significant level of structure.	Residents are expected to become employed within several weeks of entry and participate in the upkeep of the residence. Potential residents should be able to make a 3–6 month commitment to live in a group situation where a major focus is remaining clean and sober.
Sober Dorms	Sober or “dry” dorms for college students in recovery from alcohol or other drug addiction.	Ask the university your child is interested in or is already enrolled in if there is a sober dorm. If not, you should ask about the procedure for establishing a sober dorm on campus. As requests for sober dorms increases, more universities will create them for young people in recovery.
Recovery High Schools	High schools that a state approved academic curriculum and recovery supports/services for teenagers in recovery from alcohol and other drug abuse or dependence.	Make sure the school meets state requirements for granting diplomas. For a list of recovery high schools and universities with sober dorms click here: www.recoveryschools.org
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	12-Step/Self-Help group of men and women that come together to share their experiences, provide support to one another, and stay sober.	It is important to find a group your child is comfortable with. He/she should look for meetings with other young people in recovery. There are also 12-Step/Self-Help groups for families of individuals in recovery.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	12-Step/Self-Help group that grew from the AA movement to focus on drugs other than alcohol.	It is important to find a group you feel comfortable with. Look for meetings with other young people in recovery. There are also 12-Step/Self-Help groups for families of individuals in recovery.

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What about Boot Camps?

Another option you and your family may be considering is a boot camp or a wilderness program for troubled teenagers. It is important to know that boot camps and wilderness programs are not one of the levels of care defined by the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Although you may have heard success stories or read about how great boot camps are, we strongly suggest you look very carefully into any boot camp or wilderness program before sending your teen for substance abuse treatment. According to a government report (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08146t.pdf>) these programs are not subjected to federal oversight and there have been thousands of reports of neglect and abuse at privately owned and operated boot camps and wilderness programs for troubled youth. We suggest if you are seriously considering a boot camp or wilderness program you check with the Better Business Bureau for any complaints against the program and ask a few questions including:

- 1) What specific substance abuse and mental health licensing and accreditation does the program have? If the providers are not licensed, do NOT send your child to the program.***
- 2) Has a child has ever died in their care and if so, why?***
- 3) What specific training (especially survival skills training for outdoor programs) do the counselors have?***
- 4) Have there have been any complaints of abuse or neglect at the camp?***
- 5) Can you put me in touch with a few families that have a child who have completed the program so that I can hear about their experience?***
- 6) Who is responsible for medical care? It should be a licensed medical doctor.***

Remember, addiction is a serious health issue and requires appropriate professional treatment by licensed professionals so that your child can learn how to manage his alcohol or other drug problem, how to handle relapse, and how to live an alcohol and drug free life.

How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

What Role Can the Criminal Justice System Play in the Treatment of Substance Abuse and Dependence?

Often, substance abusers find themselves in trouble with the law because of their drug using behaviors. If this is the case with your child, you can ask about the availability of juvenile (if the child is under 18 years) and adult (if the child is over 18 years) drug court for your child.

Drug Courts

Drug courts function within the court system for individuals identified as having problems with alcohol or other drugs.⁶ Typically, the drug court judge leads a team of professionals ranging from treatment, social services, school and vocational programs, law enforcement, and probation depending on the needs of the individual. Research shows that comprehensive treatment through the drug court system should include the family and if possible engage the larger community.

The goals of drug court are:

- 1. Provide immediate intervention to drug user through monitoring and supervision by the drug court judge. Typically the individual meets with the judge weekly;*
- 2. Address any problems that are contributing to continued alcohol or other drug use and build on the person's strengths so he can lead a drug free life;*
- 3. Provide the person with skills and training (educational, life skills, anger management) to lead a drug free life;*
- 4. Strengthen the capabilities and functioning of the families involved to improve the individual's immediate and long-term success of treatment; and*
- 5. Hold the person and agencies serving the individual accountable for the success of the treatment services.*

The most effective drug court models integrate criminal justice and drug treatment systems and services. Treatment and criminal justice personnel work together on plans and implementation of screening, placement, testing, monitoring, and supervision, as well as on the systematic use of sanctions and rewards for drug abusers in the criminal justice system. Treatment for incarcerated drug abusers must include continuing care, monitoring, and supervision after release and during parole.

STEP 5: LOOK AT LOCATION.

Once you've discussed the results of the assessment with the treatment professional and have determined the type of services that would be most helpful for your child and family, you should start looking for programs in your area that meet your requirements.

Location is an important factor when it comes to deciding on a treatment program for your child, because family involvement is a critical element of adolescent and young-adult substance abuse treatment. The closer the treatment program is to your home, work or community, the easier it will be for the entire family to participate in the treatment and recovery process.

6. Department of Justice (March 2003). *Juvenile Drug Courts: Strategies in Practice*

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You may live in an area that doesn't have the level of care your child needs. This could require your child participating in a program (such as inpatient or residential treatment) several hours away from your home — or even in another state. If this is the case, make sure you discuss with the program how your family will be involved (e.g. phone calls, emails, family visits, etc.)

If the treatment professional who gave your child the assessment cannot provide you with information for treatment services in your area, a good place to start your search is SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator (<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>), a searchable directory of more than 11,500 addiction treatment programs around the country that treat alcoholism, alcohol abuse, and drug abuse problems. The Locator includes outpatient, residential, partial hospitalization/day treatment, and inpatient programs for drug addiction and alcoholism in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands. You can also call SAMHSA's hotline at 1-800-662-4357 for the same information. Please note that the Locator is updated annually, so it is possible that a treatment program listed has changed or no longer exists.

You can also ask at your primary care doctor, your child's pediatrician, your child's school, the school nurse, social worker, local family or community center.

Here are some tips about finding treatment in your area from substance abuse professionals:

- **“Tap into the local mental health system,”** says Ken Winters, Ph.D., Professor, University of Minnesota and Senior Scientist at the Treatment Research Institute. “Many experienced and effective mental health counselors are equipped to help young people with substance abuse problems.” Dr. Winters adds that it's more important to find someone who is experienced in working with teenagers than it is to find someone with an addiction background.
- **If you're worried about how to pay for treatment ask the program if they have a sliding scale.** And if your child is 18 or older, find out if your child qualifies for Medicaid. (Find out more about paying for treatment on page 27.)
- **In partnership with the professional treatment provider, use the results of the assessment to guide decisions about the level of care and type of services your child needs.** Teenagers and young adults often don't need the most intense form of treatment to get better, according to experts. But you may feel because of what you and your family have been through that you want your child in a residential treatment program far away from home and friends. Remember, it is important — in consultation with the treatment professional — that you use the results of the assessment to guide decisions about the level of care you child receives.
- **A note about allowing your teen to be part of the process.** Discuss the results of the assessment with your child and what level of care is indicated from the assessment. Remind your teen that you love him and that is why you are getting the help he needs.
- **Before making any final decision,** make sure both parents (or primary caregivers) are involved in the decision about where to get help for your child and, most importantly, make your teen or young adult part of the decision process.

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How Are You Feeling?

You might be feeling frustrated, angry, disappointed or guilty. You may be mad at the things your child has done. You may have watched her encounter depression or face problems with her health, work/school or with money, or even an accident or DWIs/DUIs related to substance use — or perhaps she has stolen from you. You may be worried about the rest of your family. You may also feel scared, hurt, confused, or depressed. You, too, may feel very alone.

- **You are not alone.** Addiction is very common. Twenty-two million people have a current alcohol or other drug abuse problem and nearly 9 million of these people are under the age of 26. Many families are struggling (<http://intervene.drugfree.org/>) with the exact same problem as you.
- **People who have the disease of addiction are individuals like you, your neighbors, and your colleagues at work.** Addiction cuts across all walks of life, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds — affecting men and women, teenagers, young adults, adults and seniors, from the poor to the middle class to the rich, from the rural towns to the suburbs to the cities.
- **Addiction can happen to anyone.** Fortunately, anyone can recover with help.
- **Addiction is treatable.** Your child can get well. There have been parents who have been in your shoes and whose children are now in recovery.

It is Important to Find Help for Yourself and Your Family — Here's How:

You have to get help for yourself — it's also important for other children in the family to get support, and therapy if necessary.

- Many human service agencies provide help, including counseling and guidance centers, mental health clinics, and substance use treatment programs. Your family physician may be able to provide a referral. Another option is your employer's employee assistance program (EAP), a confidential resource used and trusted by millions of people each year that helps employees and their family identify and resolve personal concerns. EAPs have a lot of experience in identifying substance use problems and finding ways to treat them. Ask your human resources department at work about EAP.

Family Therapy

Family Therapy is an important element in treating adolescents for alcohol and other drug abuse.

Family therapy focuses on repairing relationships and sustaining recovery, and healthy communication. By the time your child gets into treatment, you and other family members will probably be feeling angry, resentful, emotionally exhausted, physically tired, unable to trust, and hurt by your child's behavior when he was abusing drugs or alcohol. This is understandable and it is important to address the damage the family as a whole — and as individuals — has experienced by the drug or alcohol abuse.

Therapists help families talk about their feelings and experiences, helps repair relationships, create healthy communication patterns, and strategies to help the addicted individual stay sober. Just as your child needs to get healthy and recover from the drug or alcohol abuse, you and the family need help to recover from the pain of having a child who is addicted to alcohol or other drugs.



How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

- Ask your health insurance company for a referral to approved treatment programs for adolescents and a list of approved substance abuse treatment providers.
- **Al-Anon** is a Twelve-Step program providing support and guidance to help families and friends of people with alcohol problems recover from the effects of living with a problem drinker — whether the person is still drinking or not. Meetings are readily available in most communities across the country. To find an Al-Anon program, call 1-888-4AL-ANON or visit: <http://www.al-anon.org>.
- **Nar-Anon** is a support group for family members of drug users. http://www.nar-anon.org/Nar-Anon/Nar-Anon_Home.html.

“There are far more Al-Anon meetings in some areas than there are Nar-Anon meetings,” explains one Midwestern mother, Annette. *“So, if you can’t find a Nar-Anon meeting, you should feel free to attend an Al-Anon meeting — even if your loved one is using drugs, not alcohol. In my experience, Al-Anon has allowed everyone to participate who needs to,”* adds Annette.

STEP 6: MAKE CALLS, ASK QUESTIONS.

You cannot be sure if a program is the best fit for your child unless you get to talk to the people at that program and ask questions. This will be time-consuming — but worth it. The most important thing you can do to help your child is ask treatment programs/providers valuable questions so you can truly understand how their approach works. You cannot ask too many questions when selecting a provider to work with child.

Knowing what to ask — and comparing the answers from different programs — will help you determine which program your child should try. And, can help you save money (often thousands of dollars) by avoiding the mistake of sending your child to a program that wasn’t a good fit for him or your family.

Use your consumer education skills that you would use in any serious health care decision. Trust your judgment and your feelings about the answers you get from the people you talk to. The responses you receive should be clear and concise.

What if a program doesn’t have everything my child needs, like aftercare or integrated mental health treatment?

Unfortunately you may live in an area with limited adolescent treatment programs that do not offer everything your child needs. If this is the case, ask the program if they can provide referrals to the services your child needs. Ask the program if they can coordinate care between service providers so that your child is receiving all the services he or she needs to complete the treatment program.

A good treatment program should actively help your child tap into recovery supports and services such as a self-help group that is age appropriate (although she may have to “shop around” for one she feels comfortable in), alcohol and drug free social activities, and ongoing counseling.

How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

The following questions are provided to help guide your conversation with treatment programs in deciding which program is the best fit (and most appropriate based on the assessment) for your child and family. These questions are appropriate for ALL types of treatment settings (outpatient, intensive outpatient, inpatient, residential, day treatment) and should be asked regardless of the type of treatment setting your child needs.

Questions to ask about the Program and Staff:

1. Is the program licensed by the state?

Why this is important to ask: Every program must be licensed by the state to operate. Many programs also go through the process to receive accreditation. While national accreditation does not offer guarantees, accreditation is an indication that the program has been carefully reviewed by an independent organization. You may even want to call the accreditation organization to determine if the treatment program continues to be in good standing.

You may also ask other professionals in the community such as your primary care doctor, your child's pediatrician, psychologists, and social workers about the reputations of certain programs.

2. What is the staff-to-client ratio?

Why this is important to ask: If the caseloads of staff members are high, your child may not receive the individualized management and care she needs. Ask about the type (and hours per week) of individualized care your child will receive with her counselor.

3. What is the staff like? What is their background? What is their education? Are any of them in recovery? What is their experience working with adolescents/young adults? What is their experience working with adolescents / young adults with substance abuse problems?

Why this is important to ask: You want to make sure you are comfortable with the people who are caring for your child. It is important that staff knowledge of adolescent development and have experience working with adolescents with substance use disorders.

4. Is the facility clean, organized and well-run?

5. Does the treatment program address sexual orientation, physical disabilities, and provide age, gender, and culturally appropriate treatment services?

Why this is important to ask: It is important that the care your child receives is able to meet his or her needs. This means the treatment should take into account gender issues (boys and girls may have different experiences), age (younger and older teens could have different educational needs), disabilities (teens with a learning disability may need additional educational services), and sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, transgendered, or bisexual youth need culturally appropriate services).

How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

Questions to ask about how involved your family is going to be:

1. Does the program involve the family in the treatment process? And, how is the family involved in the treatment process?

Why this is important to ask: Family involvement is a critical element for treatment of substance abuse and dependence. The more involved the family is the more successful the treatment will be and the family will have the education and understanding to help the child maintain his/her recovery.

2. Is there family counseling? Are there services for parents and siblings of the parent? If not, can they refer the family to appropriate services?

Why this is important to ask: The family — parents and any siblings — need help learning how to trust again, build healthy relationships with their child or sibling, and learn how to function as a family with a child in recovery.

Questions to ask if your child has a Co-Morbidity, Psychiatric or Medical Issue:

1. Is the staff knowledgeable about and willing to consider the use of medication that may help treat addiction?

Why this is important to ask: Medications such as methadone, naltrexone, buprenorphine, and disulfiram (Antabuse) can be effective in helping some addicts. Treatment providers should discuss them with patients and determine if the patient could benefit from using an addiction medication. It is important to know that in younger populations (18 years and younger), there is not as much research on the use of medication assisted therapies to treat addiction. **If your child requires medication to help with his substance use disorder it is critical that he receive appropriate medical supervision and monitoring.**

2. Can the staff/program manage all of my child's medications if necessary? Are there medical doctors on staff to prescribe an addicted patient's other medical or mental health diagnoses? What type of professional (i.e. a medical doctor) provides medical and psychiatric care? What is their availability? How often do they see the clients? Is there emergency coverage?

Why this is important to ask: Many of addicted patients' medical symptoms may be complications of addiction and clear up after a period of sobriety, but this is not always the case.

How to find the right help for your child with an alcohol or drug problem

PART III: PAYING FOR TREATMENT

You may have heard stories about how expensive treatment is. You may have even called around for some quotes — it is shocking how expensive some treatment programs are. But there are options available that can help your family handle the financial burden of paying for substance abuse treatment. We know it is not easy but the more information you have the better able you will be to make good decisions for your child and family.

As you'll see below, there are several options when it comes to paying for substance abuse treatment for your child. These include private health insurance plan, Medicaid, Veterans Administration benefits (if you're a military family), Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), student health services, clinical trials, financial aid, payment plan and a sliding fee scale. These options don't cover everyone, but you may be able to cut personal costs by using one or more of the following:

- **Most private health insurance plans provide coverage for some substance abuse treatment.** Note that coverage for mental health and substance abuse treatment varies state by state and by health plan. If you have private health insurance, call the toll-free number on the back of your card and ask about your treatment benefits, or talk to your employer's employee assistance program (EAP). Precertification may be required before the child enters a program. Make sure you know all the out of pocket costs you will be responsible for before making any arrangements. You don't want to be blindsided by hidden costs. In the event your insurance denies treatment, refer to your benefits plan for instructions on how to appeal. The appeal process varies by state, and there is often a time limit for you to file. The Kaiser Family Foundation provides a guide for handling disputes with your employer or private health plan <http://www.kff.org/consumerguide/7350.cfm>
- **Medicaid is an insurance program for people who lack private health insurance and meet certain financial thresholds.** Your child may be eligible for Medicaid which should pay for substance abuse treatment. Individuals must apply for coverage in their state, and Medicaid services and the types of individuals covered vary by state. To find out if you're eligible, visit: <http://cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/statemap.asp>. If your family is ineligible for Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance

7. National Conference of State Legislators (Feb 2009).

Mental Health Benefits and Parity

Mental Health and Substance Abuse services are an important part of medical care that has not always been covered by health insurance companies. The lack of coverage, limited coverage, associated costs, and availability of services has generated much discussion in the political and medical communities. On October 3, 2009 the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) became effective for group health insurance plans. This law requires health insurance plans that offer mental health coverage to provide the same financial and treatment coverage offered for other physical illnesses. This includes deductibles, co-payments, out-of-pocket expenses, coinsurance, covered hospital stays, and covered outpatient visits. This federal law does not require health insurance plans to provide coverage for mental health services, only to provide equal coverage IF mental health services are provided.⁷

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Program (CHIP) may be an option for your family. CHIP was previously known as the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP). CHIP is available for families that make too much money to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to purchase private health insurance. Coverage and services provided under CHIP varies by state. Some states treat CHIP as an expansion of Medicaid services and other states treat it as a free standing program. Start with your state's Medicaid Office web site to learn about the options available to your child and family.

- **Veterans Administration benefits** are available to veterans and their families. To learn more, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387).
- **Some companies have employee assistance programs available for employed individuals.** Services may be provided on-site, or you may receive a list of substance use professionals in your area. Contact your company's human resources office to learn more about this option.
- **For college students,** student health services often provide group and individual counseling for people with substance use problems. Contact the health or counseling center at the school.
- **Clinical trials** are research studies used to determine the safety and effectiveness of a range of treatment methods, including counseling and medications. These services are provided free of charge because they are part of government funded research. Your child may be eligible to participate in a clinical trial. If you live in or near a college town, addiction expert Gayle Dakof, Ph.D., suggests contacting the university. Schools often have safe and free clinical trials, and your child may be able to participate in one. To learn more about clinical trials go to <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. To find a clinical trial, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse Clinical Trial Network at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/Funding/CTI.html>.

Points to Discuss with a Specific Treatment Program:

- Many treatment centers have financial aid that helps defray the expense. Contact treatment centers directly about the availability of these funds.

Co Occurring Disorders

Many adolescents suffer from depression, bi-polar disorder or some other mental illness often undiagnosed. Unfortunately, many teenagers turn to alcohol or other drugs to self-medicate. In fact, the majority of adolescents and young adults battling substance abuse and dependence may have an undiagnosed, untreated mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, ADHD, or bipolar disorder. When a child gets diagnosed with mental health disorder in addition to alcohol or drug abuse and dependence, he has "co-occurring disorders," also known as a "dual diagnosis" or "co-morbidity."

When a child has co-occurring disorders, he needs treatment for each of his diagnoses. Treating alcohol or other drug abuse and dependence alone does not help underlying mental disorders, and similarly, treating a depressive disorder alone will not treat addiction. If your child has been diagnosed with co-occurring disorders, you should find him a treatment program that specializes in treating co-occurring disorders or can make referrals to services to help treat your child's mental disorder while simultaneously getting treatment for alcohol or other drug abuse and dependence. Make sure to ask treatment providers whether their program is equipped to handle this.

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- Ask your treatment provider to help you create a payment plan. Treatment providers will often work with family members who need to pay for treatment out of their own resources so that the entire sum does not need to be paid at the beginning of treatment.
- Many treatment programs offer a sliding fee scale — a flexible payment scale based on income — so be sure to should ask about this option. Because the fee depends on your family's income, the treatment provider will ask to look at your pay stubs and tax returns to decide what percentage of the actual cost you would pay out of pocket. If you want to only research programs with a sliding fee scale, use the SAMHSA Treatment Facility Locator (see page 22 of this guide) and select the “sliding fee scale/payment assistance” box in the detailed search.

PART IV: GETTING YOUR CHILD INTO TREATMENT

Some parents fear that getting their child to the treatment program — either outpatient or residential — on the first day will be a major challenge for them. So you may find comfort in knowing that many good adolescent treatment programs know how to engage teenagers and young adults in treatment and help them see the importance of getting treatment. If you have concerns about getting your teenager to begin treatment, you should seek help from the program you have selected. This is a good opportunity for you to talk to your child about your concerns for his life, health, and safety. Talk to your child about how the decision to enroll him in treatment comes from your love for him and that you know he may be scared but ultimately it will allow him to live a healthier better life.

Depending on the state you live in, your child may have to agree to treatment. Even if your child is under 18, some programs won't accept you if your child doesn't agree to attend. You may have legal options available to you but it depends on the specific laws in your state.

Some teens and young adults may resist getting help. They may:

- **Not believe they have a problem**
- **Think they can stop on their own**
- **Fear withdrawal**
- **Fear living sober**

Overlooked Resource: Your Insurance Case Manager

It can be frustrating to learn what insurance will and will not cover when it comes to treatment, but Pat Aussem, a mother who has helped both of her sons fight addiction, suggests that you build a good relationship with your insurance case manager. Think of him or her as a partner. “Insurance case managers are a great source of information on resources and can help you navigate benefits,” Aussem says. “I was absolutely amazed at how willing the insurance company was to be flexible and help us.” Here are two ways that Aussem's case manager was able to assist her family:

1. “When we started running out of outpatient days, our case manager told us that we had a certain amount of inpatient days that could be converted on a 1:3 basis to outpatient days,” explains Aussem. This means under her family's plan, one inpatient day was equivalent to three outpatient days.
2. “One of the therapists my son saw was not an in-network provider,” explains Aussem. “The insurance case manager agreed to execute an agreement with the therapist where he would join their network of providers, but my son would be his only patient under this agreement and the provider would be paid his going rate, not the usual nominal contract rate. I was absolutely amazed at how willing the insurance company was to be flexible and help us.”

While dealing with health insurance red tape can often be a headache, Pat Aussem encourages parents to, “be careful not to let your anger get the best of you.”

Remember the age old saying; you catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

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Contrary to Popular Belief, a Person Does Not Need to “Hit Rock Bottom” on His Own to Get Help for an Alcohol or Drug Problem.

Registering Your Child for Treatment

What should you expect when you register your teen or young adult for treatment? Although the registration process can vary from program to program, here are some things you should be prepared for:

- **Most treatment programs require a pre-screening over the phone.** When you contact a treatment provider, you or your child may be interviewed over the phone, but that doesn't mean your child will (or should) end up in that program. If the program is not a good fit for your child, the provider should refer your family to a different program that better meets your needs.
- **There is a lot of paperwork.** However, the paperwork is for your family's benefit — it tells you your rights, guarantees you confidentiality and gives the treatment provider permission to speak to outside sources if it will help your child. You may feel overwhelmed but it is important that you read the paperwork carefully and not just sign at the dotted line.
- **There will be a full intake process.** You and your child will be asked questions about your child's drug use, your family, your child's medical history, educational history and mental health.
- **There may be a search of the individual and his or her belongings.** It is not uncommon for patients to try to sneak drugs or alcohol into a residential treatment center. So be aware that they may take your teenager into a private room and search her clothes for hidden alcohol and drugs. They may also search through her belongings. For some parents and teenagers this will feel like an invasion of privacy, but it is important part of the treatment process to ensure that your child is going into a substance free environment.
- **Aftercare should be part of your child's treatment plan.** “Treatment is not over after discharge from the program; rather, that is when treatment is really just beginning,” says addiction psychiatrist Dr. Harold C. Urschel. “You need to create a successful discharge plan that can be realistically implemented immediately following discharge.”
- **Waitlists exist.** Not all treatment programs are guaranteed to have an open spot when your child needs it. If the program you choose isn't available, you'll have to decide whether to put your child on the waitlist or look into another program.

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We've Been Wait Listed...Now What?

Getting put on the wait list for the program of your choice is one of the frustrating realities of finding treatment for your child. You may feel stuck, desperate, and wonder what to do next. Here are answers to some tough questions about wait lists.

How long will my child be on the wait list? It's impossible to say. Every program's system is different. A good rule of thumb is to think about how many other substance abuse treatment resources are in the area. If resources are limited you may have to wait several weeks. Many programs offer pre-treatment services for individuals that have been wait listed. Ask the program if they offer pre-treatment services and how your child can access pre-treatment services while waiting to enter the formal treatment program.

Should I put my child in a different program with no wait list instead? This depends on the severity of your child's substance abuse. You should decide this in partnership with the professional that conducted the assessment. This can also be a good time to engage your child in the decision making process. If you decide to wait for an opening and use pre-treatment services (see above) in the meantime,

ask your child about the type of pre-treatment services he thinks would be beneficial. Talk to your child about your concerns about waiting to get into the formal program.

Some addicted teenagers and young adults need some form of treatment as quickly as possible. If this is the case, ask the treatment provider to refer your family to other similar programs. Tell them it is critical your child get help now, especially if you're worried about your child's safety. But if you have picked out a program that seems to be the best fit for your child and family, it may be worth waiting for an available spot if you can.

What should we do in the meantime? Ask the treatment provider for assistance in restricting your child's alcohol and drug use. They can help your family come up with an effective limits-and-consequences plan <http://timetoact.drugfree.org/know-set-limits.html> to use until the program has an opening. If your child is on the waitlist for an inpatient program, enroll him immediately in a local outpatient program with an available spot. That way, he'll receive care while waiting to start the more intensive program — and he'll have an alcohol- and drug-free routine to return to when he comes back home.

Once your child has a guaranteed spot in a treatment program, you, your child, and your other family members will probably feel a whole range of intense emotions, all of which are normal. Your child may be angry, scared, apologetic, sullen, or in a few cases, relieved. You might feel sad, relieved, embarrassed, doubtful, mad, guilty, grateful — or all of the above. If you're sending your child to a residential or inpatient program, you may also experience the same feelings that come with dropping a child off at college: separation anxiety, fear, and loss.

It's hard to predict how your child will act when she's about to go to treatment for the first time. Your child may beg, cry, plead and no parent likes to see or hear their child in so much pain. It will break your heart but remember by getting your child the treatment she needs, you're not only potentially saving your child's life; you're helping her live a fuller, healthier life.

Explain that it's very difficult to stop using alcohol or other drugs without professional help once a person becomes addicted. Acknowledge that your child may be angry and scared but she still has to get help. If your child offers to drive herself, say no in the beginning until you feel certain that she is engaged in and committed to treatment. Your child may have good intentions, but at this point, you need to make sure she gets to treatment.

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PART V: TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Recognizing that your child needs substance abuse treatment is frightening and alarming; and you may feel that the process of finding and getting your child into treatment has taken over your life. Although you are probably not thinking about yourself right now, one of the smartest things you can do for your child in trouble and your family is to take care of yourself so that you remain strong, healthy, and sane. Many parents with a sick child forget about their own emotional and physical health but remember, just as your child needs to get healthy and learn life without drugs and alcohol you and your family also need to get healthy and stay healthy.

Seeking professional counseling for yourself is just as important as getting help for your addicted child. While your child is battling an alcohol or other drug problem, you're also struggling with serious issues. "The pain, blame, shame, helplessness, and worry that parents feel are huge," Dr. Gayle Dakof explains. "You need to feel that you are not alone, and I believe parents and caregivers need professional help to help them address feelings of blame and shame."

Lastly, you may find it helpful to visit an online community of parents of addicted teens or young adults such as The Partnership at Drugfree.org Intervene blog www.drugfree.org/intervene. There are established national groups such as Al-Anon and Nar-Anon that have meetings all over the country, and there are smaller, local groups that can be found through a basic web search or the phone book. Like treatment programs, not all support groups are well-run or a good fit for you personally. Shop around and go to different meetings until you find the group that is right for you.

PART VI: EXPERT ADVICE FROM OTHERS

While creating this guide, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids spoke to many adolescent treatment experts, from treatment providers and addiction psychologists to public health officials and parents whose teenagers are in recovery. Some of these experts were asked to give their most valuable pieces of advice for parents whose children are in need of treatment. Here's what they said:

Who Should Bring My Child to Treatment?

If possible, both parents should drive a teen or young adult to treatment the first time — even if you're divorced. Now more than ever, you and your child's other parent need to present a united front, and if one of you stays home, it could send the message that you disagree with the need for treatment or the program being used. Your child should not be able to label either parent the "good, nice parent" or the "bad, mean parent."



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“ Seek professional help if you suspect your teen has a substance abuse problem. There are so many talented, knowledgeable and caring people willing to help you if you just ask. I encourage you to take action, especially before your teen turns eighteen and control is out of your hands. Intervene – you just might be saving your loved one’s life.”

—Pat Aussem, mother

“ Your child may direct a lot of anger at you, but that doesn’t mean you’re wrong. Kids’ anger at their parents almost always dissipates over time.”

—Tessa Vining, director of Phoenix House’s Intervention Moves Parents and Children Together (IMPACT) program

“ Stick it out – don’t give up! And don’t feel like you’re overreacting. Adolescent drug addiction is a child health crisis, and should be treated like other health crises. If your child had a tumor, you would do everything you could to treat it. Drug addiction is no different than a tumor – it’s not going to go away if you ignore it.”

—Naomi Weinstein, director of the Phoenix House Center on Addiction and the Family

“ You cannot outsource solutions to this problem. You must be involved in your teen’s recovery. Treatment of teen addiction requires a lot of hard work from the provider/therapist, the parents, and the teen.”

—Gayle Dakof, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor, Center for Treatment Research on Adolescent Drug Abuse, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine

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“ Get involved in the treatment process, including post-treatment relapse prevention. ”

—Ken Winters, Ph.D., Senior Scientist at Treatment Research Institute

“ You are doing the right thing. It is hard to do this and you do it because you love your son/daughter. It gets better once the family sessions begin. ”

—Ralph Lopez, M.D., adolescent medicine specialist

“ Never give up or stop advocating for your child. Learn the difference between encouraging and enabling and get yourself some support and education. As dire as a situation with your youngster might seem, hope is new each morning. Raise the bottom, don't let them bottom out and know what the difference is. Utilize invaluable resources like drugfree.org and stay in the loop, stay connected with others, and remember, knowledge is power. Reach out. Ask for help. Receive. ”

—Lea Minalga, mother

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Tessa Vining, director of Phoenix House's Intervention Moves Parents and Children Together (IMPACT) Program

* Last name left off intentionally



