

## Substance Use Treatment Programs<sup>a</sup>

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### OUTPATIENT

Licensed, adolescent community-based outpatient programs provide assessment and counseling services for young people with a substance use problem and their families. Services offered include assessment, individual counseling, group therapy, family therapy and intervention services, and intensive outpatient.

#### INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Adolescents with substance use disorders should receive specific treatment for their substance use; general, supportive counseling may be a useful adjuvant but should not be a substitute. Several therapeutic modalities (motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, contingency management, etc.) have all shown promise in treating adolescents with substance use disorders.

#### GROUP THERAPY

Group therapy is a mainstay of substance use disorder treatment for adolescents with substance use disorders. It is a particularly attractive option because it is cost effective and takes advantage of the developmental preference for congregating with peers.

#### FAMILY THERAPY

Family directed therapies are the best validated approach for treating adolescent substance use. A number of modalities have all been demonstrated effective. Family counseling typically targets domains that figure prominently in the etiology of substance use disorders in adolescents—family conflict, communication, parental monitoring, discipline, child abuse/neglect, and parental substance use disorders.

#### INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

Intensive outpatient programs (IOP) serve as an intermediate level of care for patients who have needs that are too complex for outpatient treatment but do not require inpatient services. These programs allow individuals to continue with their daily routine and practice newly acquired recovery skills both at home and at school.

Intensive outpatient treatment works with young people in the community who have tried to control their substance use, but require more intensive support. Sometimes referred to as day treatment or structured outpatient, they are generally comprised of a combination of supportive group therapy, educational groups, family therapy, individual therapy, relapse prevention and life skills, 12-step recovery, case management, and aftercare planning. The programs generally range from three days per week after school with, a minimum of 2.5 hours per day and last one to three months. These programs are appealing because they provide a plethora of services in a relatively short period of time.

#### PARTIAL HOSPITALIZATION PROGRAM

Partial hospitalization is a short term, comprehensive outpatient program in affiliation with a hospital that is designed to provide support and treatment for patients with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. The services offered at these programs are more concentrated and intensive than regular outpatient treatment as they are structured throughout the entire day and offer medical monitoring in addition to individual and group therapy. Participants typically attend sessions for seven or eight hours a day, at least five days a week for one to three weeks. As with IOPs, patients return home in the evenings and have a chance to practice newly acquired recovery skills.

<sup>a</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Adolescent SBIRT toolkit for providers. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, 2015.

**INPATIENT/RESIDENTIAL****DETOXIFICATION AND BEHAVIORAL STABILIZATION**

Detoxification refers to the medical management of symptoms of withdrawal. Medically supervised detoxification is indicated for any adolescent who is at risk of withdrawing from alcohol or benzodiazepines and may also be helpful for adolescents withdrawing from opioids, cocaine, or other substances. Individualized care is provided by an interdisciplinary treatment team of professionals, including psychiatrists, physicians, registered nurses, registered practical nurses, licensed social workers, and licensed mental health and substance abuse clinicians. Family involvement and family sessions are encouraged as part of the patient's Individualized Treatment Plan.

**ACUTE RESIDENTIAL THERAPY**

Acute residential treatment (ART) is a short-term (days/weeks) residential placement designed to stabilize patients in crisis, often prior to entering a longer term residential treatment program. ART programs typically target adolescents with co-occurring mental health disorders.

**RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT**

Residential treatment programs are highly structured live-in environments that provide therapy for those with severe substance use disorders, mental illness, or behavioral problems that require 24-hour care. The goal of residential treatment is to promote the achievement and subsequent maintenance of long-term abstinence as well as equip each patient with both the social and coping skills necessary for a successful transition back into society. Residential programs are classified by length of stay: less than 30 days is considered short-term; long-term is considered longer than 30 days.

Adolescent substance use disorder residential treatment programs provide short-term substance use disorder treatment services for medically stable youth between the ages of 13 and 17 and are appropriate for high-risk youth experiencing health, emotional/behavioral, family, developmental, and/or social dysfunction as a result of alcohol and other drug use, and whose issues have not been resolved in less-intense, community-based levels of care. Length of stay in the programs varies based on the youth's treatment needs (45-90 days). Each youth participates in highly structured, developmentally appropriate individual, group and family clinical services in addition to having his/her medical and psychiatric needs addressed. An in-house educational coordinator coordinates educational objectives with the child's school from his/her community.

Transitional Age/Young Adult residential programs provide a nurturing, structured, and safe environment for young people. These programs promote self-care, self-reliance, and community responsibility through structured activities and the experience of living in an alcohol- and drug-free residential treatment setting. An average length of stay is four to six months depending on treatment and recovery related goals. Services include: assessment; comprehensive substance use disorder treatment; mental health counseling referrals; case management and coordination; psycho-education on a variety of topics relating to health and wellbeing; life skills enhancement; vocational/educational support; recovery support; parent/care giver support; and aftercare planning.

**THERAPEUTIC BOARDING SCHOOL**

Therapeutic boarding schools are educational institutions that provide constant supervision for their students by a professional staff. These schools offer a highly structured environment with set times for all activities, smaller, more specialized classes, and social and emotional support. In addition to the regular services offered at traditional boarding schools, therapeutic schools also provide individual and group therapy for adolescents with mental health or substance use disorders.