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Living With An Addict Help Them Make it Through Alive –

You Can Make A Difference!

We Want to Help You:

- 1. Diagnose the extent of the problem
- 2. Better understand addiction and addictive behaviors
- 3. Learn to live with an addict
- 4. Get the support you need while you endure addiction in the family
- 5. Understand what treatment options are available

You Need to Know How to:

- 1. Get a loved one into treatment
- 2. Choose appropriate treatment
- 3. Get good value for your treatment dollar
- 4. Support a loved one before, during and after treatment
- 5. Prevent relapse

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It's never easy, but it's always worth it. You can get them to stop.

Issue

2008

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION & ALCOHOLISM	7
The Harmful Myth of Rock Bottom	8
What is Addiction/Alcoholism?	10
ENABLING	15
WHAT TO TELL KIDS WHEN THEIR MOM OR DAD IS AN ADDICT?	18
ABUSE AND VIOLENCE	21
LEGAL RIGHTS TO CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT	25
UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS AND ADDICTION	31
INTERVENTIONS	35
The Family Intervention	36
The Professional Intervention	43
The Emergency Intervention	46
The Brief Preventative Intervention	48
Can You Have a Relative That Needs Treatment Committed?	51
Why the State Often Won't Intervene	52

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What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

TREATMENT OPTIONS	54
Glossary of Treatment Options	55
Understanding the Different Types of Residential Addictions Programs	59
INPATIENT OR OUTPATIENT WHAT'S NEEDED?	65
UNDERSTANDING WHY PROFESSIONAL HELP IS NEEDED	70
Reasons to Get Help	72
Get the Help You Need	75
DO YOU NEED MEDICAL DETOX?	76
HOW MUCH DOES REHAB COST ANYWAYS?	79
10 WAYS TO EVALUATE THE QUALITY OF A REHAB	85
ONE WAY TO SPOT A LOW QUALITY REHAB	93
THE BIGGEST RISK TO SOBRIETY AFTER REHAB	97
FAMILY PARTICIPATION DURING AND AFTER REHAB	102
Why Family Needs to Be a Part of the Rehab Process	103
How Family Can Help After Rehab, You Can Make a Difference!	106

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What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

HELPING TROUBLED TEENS	109
So How Can I Get Them to Stop?	110
DON'T SEND A TEENAGER TO AN ADULT REHAB	116
REHAB FOR PEOPLE WITH UNIQUE NEEDS	120
Rehab for Dual Diagnosis Patients	121
What Types of Unique Care Do Dual Diagnosis Patient Need from a Rehab Facility?	122
Rehab for Gays and Lesbians	125
Drug Rehab For Pregnant Women; 5 Unique Therapies Are Needed	128
Are Seniors Too Old For Rehab?	131
THE FAMILY NEEDS TO CARE FOR ITSELF AS IT TAKES CARE OF THE ADDICT	134
You've got to Take Care of Yourself as Well	135

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

INTRODUCTION

Nothing hurts more than watching helplessly as a loved one destroys their health and wellbeing through alcohol or drug abuse. You don't know what to do, nothing you've tried has done any good and it's tearing you up inside watching the decline.

Thankfully, you can make a difference, you can influence change and you can get someone to accept the help they so desperately need. You never need to wait for rock bottom, and since denial is so characteristic of the disease, you should never wait for an addict or alcoholic to realize the need for help on their own.

Nothing about addiction is easy or clear, and although every family experience is unique, we know some of what you are going through, and we know some of the questions you need answered.

Firstly, you need to get informed. There a number of things you need to know to have the best chance at stopping the abuse; and since the drug and alcohol rehab business is such a big money business, it can sometimes be hard to know where to turn for accurate and truthful information, and hard to know just who you can trust.

WE WANT TO HELP YOU:

- ✓ DIAGNOSE THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM
- ✓ Better understand addiction and addictive behaviors
- ✓ LEARN TO LIVE WITH AN ADDICT
- ✓ Get the support you need while you endure addiction in the family

✓ UNDERSTAND WHAT TREATMENT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

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2008 Issue

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- ✓ Get a loved one into treatment
- ✓ CHOOSE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT
- ✓ Get good value for your treatment dollar
- ✓ SUPPORT A LOVED ONE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER TREATMENT
- ✓ PREVENT RELAPSE

We also want to help parents who may be worried about the dangers of drugs and alcohol understand how they can prevent use, how they can spot it, and how to react if they do see it.

There are no guarantees, but you can make a difference. Get educated, learn your options and have the courage and the strength to make the difficult but necessary decisions.

It's never easy, but it's always worth it. You can get them to stop.

Wishing You Success,

John Lee

ChooseHelp.com, 2008

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What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 1 UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION & ALCOHOLISM

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2008 Issue

The best family support is educated family support. You need to understand just what your loved one is dealing with, and you need to understand what you can and can't do to help.

Learn more about addiction and learn how to diagnose the difference between substance abuse and addiction.

Learn how to protect yourself and your family from a violent addict, learn about legal rights to treatment, and learn that although mental illness makes treatment more difficult, you can help a dual diagnosis patient, and that they need help right away.

You can make a difference and you can make things better, but first you need to understand just what you're dealing with.

THE HARMFUL MYTH OF ROCK BOTTOM

Nothing frustrates addictions professionals more than the lingering and harmful social myth of addicts and alcoholics needing to hit rock bottom before they can get better.

It may be the case that many people who *do* lose everything do come to realize a need for help, but that doesn't mean that you have to watch in silence until that tragic day; and if you do, you actually lower the chances of long term success. Earlier is always better. You can influence change, and the sooner you do it the easier it is. The longer abuse continues the more entrenched addiction becomes, the more challenging the ultimate treatment, and the lower the prognosis for success.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Addicts and alcoholics are notoriously bad at self diagnosing the extent of the problem, and very rarely initiate treatment of their own accord. Thankfully, when family can convince of a need for treatment, and when family can insist on a full participation in needed treatment, the recovery rates are just as good as for those few addicts who decide to get help on their own.

ADDICTION IS RARELY INTUITIVE

Addiction is tricky, and even after decades of intensive research, professionals don't yet have all the answers. What they do know is that what makes sense isn't always what works. Addiction is rarely what it seems. It makes sense that people who decide on their own to enter into treatment would do better...but they don't.

While actively using, moments of clarity and rational self exploration are few and far between, and for a lot of addicts, the first few days of rehab are the first real days of clear and focused thought in years. A lot of addicts only come to realize the extent of the problem, the possibility of and the desire for change after a few days of sobriety, a few weeks of therapy and a month or more of rediscovering how good life can be without the pains of abuse.

You never need to wait until things get worse, you *can* convince them that they need help (see the section on interventions) and when you do get them into treatment, they are just as likely as anyone to make a full recovery.

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2008 Issue

Don't wait, act now and end the destruction and end the pain. You can make a difference and you can do it soon.

WHAT IS ADDICTION/ALCOHOLISM?

If you've never been addicted, never physically or psychologically dependant on drugs or alcohol, it can be very tough to understand how someone can destroy themselves so tragically, tough to understand how they can continue to drink or drug even in the face of seriously increasing consequences. Why can't they just stop? Why do they need to lose everything? How can it possibly be worth it?

Once someone develops an addiction though, they are no longer completely in control of their actions. They may seem as though they choose their course in life, and in the beginning they do of course make the decisions to use drugs or drink to excess, but once addicted, things change. Once addicted, a deep *preconscious* part of the brain starts pulling the strings. You're not fully aware of it, you can't control it, but it exerts a great influence...and it keeps you abusing even in the face of very adverse consequences.

Addiction and alcoholism create a loss of control over actions and even over thoughts...and once addicted it is very tough to stop without professional help, and it has nothing to do with willpower or a lack of it.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

WHAT ARE YOU DEALING WITH?

Firstly, you need to evaluate the extent of the problem. Is it drug or alcohol abuse, or is it addiction? The two are closely related but miles apart in severity and treatment requirements.

If you can, get your loved one to take this self-test of addiction, and if you can't get them to take the test, take it for them. Living with an addict you generally get to know their use behaviors pretty well, and can likely answer many of the questions without needing their participation.

THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ADDICTION TEST

- ✓ Do you have a tolerance...do you need more of the drug or alcohol than you used to get the same effects?
- ✓ Do you ever feel withdrawal symptoms after stopping use, or do you ever use any other substance to prevent these symptoms (e.g....using benzo's instead of alcohol)?

Do you ever take more of a drug or alcohol than you had intended on? For example, you go out for a drink at lunch intending to get back to work, and end up have 10 and writing off a day at the office.

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2008 Issue

- ✓ Have you ever tried to reduce your usage, and found that you cannot, or that you soon find yourself using at the same level again?
- Do you have a preoccupation with the drug? Which means, do you spend a great deal of time, thinking about getting, using and then recovering from the use of drugs or alcohol?
- ✓ Have you ever stopped participating in worthwhile activities that you used to enjoy because of your drug or alcohol use? For example, you used to enjoy an early morning hockey league...but with hangovers, cannot any longer.
- Have you ever continued to use drugs or alcohol even in the face of adverse social or health consequences? For example, getting reprimanded at work or gaining excessive weight.

ABUSE OR ADDICTION

Three or more yes answers likely means addiction and two or less yes answers points towards abuse.

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2008 Issue

ABUSE

Two or less yes answers indicate an alcohol or drug abuse problem. Abuse can be quite a serious problem and if behaviors aren't changed abuse is at risk to become addiction; yet while it remains abuse; it is far easier to deal with. While use remains merely abuse the user retains some measure of control over their actions and their consumptions; and if they can be convinced of a legitimate need to stop or slow down, they are often able to do so on their own or with some minimal outpatient therapy.

ADDICTION

Once addicted though, the treatment requirements increase dramatically. Once we become chemically dependent we lose some degree of control over our actions. Addiction manifests in an area of the brain beyond our conscious awareness, and although this area of the brain (the mesolimbic) does exert an enormous influence over our behaviors and actions, and although we appear to be making conscious and willful decisions, in many cases we are merely following the directions of a part of our brain over which we have no control.

With addiction we lose control over our actions and since our will to stay sober is rarely enough, we instead need to learn effective strategies to manage these pre conscious impulses. The brain does heal, and it will revert to a normal state of functioning, but it requires time for this healing process. Getting into rehab and away from access and temptation for a month or more can be enough to diminish

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2008 Issue

the power of these preconscious influences, and allow you a better opportunity to exercise learned strategies to relapse avoidance.

There are no guarantees, and for any real chance at success a full and honest participation in the therapies of rehab, and a long involvement in therapeutic aftercare programming is required.

IF ADDICTED...

If it's clear that you are dealing with an addiction, you will almost certainly need to enlist professional therapeutic help to better the problem. You may not need to start with residential rehab, and many addicts and alcoholics, particularity those people with relatively short histories of abuse and with strong sober social support, can learn the tools they need to overcome addiction on an outpatient basis.

For others though, nothing short of a month or more away from temptation and immersed in intensive therapies offers much chance of long term success and sobriety. To better understand whether you need inpatient care or whether outpatient therapies may still be enough, please read the later section "In or Outpatient, What's Needed".

You may also want to consider seeking the advice of an addictions therapist or psychologist. A single session with an experienced professional can offer insight into the extent of the problem and leave you with concrete suggestions for individually relevant therapies.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Chapter 2 Enabling

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2008 Issue

It can be very hard to live with an addict, and in addition to your concern for that person, you often end up making up for their deficiencies through superhuman efforts of your own. The money gets spent on beer, so you have to get a second job. The driver's license is revoked, so you become a chauffeur. He's passed out in the lawn, so you're up in the middle of the night dragging him into bed...if only so the neighbors don't see.

It's far too easy to enable the behaviors of an alcoholic or drug addict, but one of the most caring things that family can do for an alcoholic is to stop enabling, have the consequences of their intoxicated behaviors fall onto their own shoulders, and see if this alone may be enough to get the addict to seek help.

Enabling refers to any behavior on your part that makes it easier for the addict to continue to abuse. If your husband is too hung over to get to work and you call in sick for him, then you have enabled his drinking and he is not left to face the consequences of his actions. If your wife is arrested for drunk driving, and you rush down to bail her out of jail, you again are not allowing her to face the consequences of her own behavior, and are making it easier for her to continue with drinking.

We enable because we care and out of a desire to protect a loved one with a substance abuse problem, but sometimes tough love is the best love, and it's the only kind of love that has any chance of getting the abuser to change his or her behavior.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW TO STOP ENABLING

- Don't lend money.
- Don't make excuses for the addict or for their behavior...to anyone, not even yourself.
- ✓ Don't compensate for an addict's failings with your own superhuman efforts, i.e.
 His car payments are his responsibility.

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- ✓ Set some limits for your actions and behaviors, be clear as to those limits, and stay firm when he or she tries to change your behaviors. (When she is drunk, she doesn't get to see the kids...no exceptions).
- \checkmark Do not fight with the addict over their behaviors.

These are all very hard things to do, and it goes against our impulses to "do nothing" when our heart is screaming at us to "do something!"; but by doing nothing we are in fact doing as much as we possibly can, and this is the only way we have any power of influence over the alcoholic or drug abuser.

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CHAPTER 3 WHAT TO TELL KIDS WHEN THEIR MOM OR DAD IS AN ADDICT?

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It can be awfully tough for kids growing up in a home with one or more drug or alcohol abusing parents, and too often in an attempt to spare children from the pain of reality, they are not told the truth about the situation.

But even young kids can see that something is not quite right, and the behaviors of addiction can be confusing and scary to a child unaware of the realities of addiction. Kids deserve to know the truth about addiction, and by telling them the truths about the disease, they are more able to thrive in even adverse family situations.

The National Institute on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare has published a guidebook for families, and in it they recommend telling kids three very important things. Things that will help them to accept that they are in no way responsible for the behaviors of an addict, and that they in no way caused any of the behaviors or use.

3 THINGS KIDS NEED TO KNOW

1) Addiction is a disease just like any other disease. That their parent is sick with this disease, and all the scary and confusing behaviors that they witness are all a part of the disease. There are treatments for the disease, but it can be very hard to overcome it.

2) Tell them that they are not alone. Millions of kids just like them also have a parent with the same disease, and go through a lot of the same things.

3) There is no need to hide it. Kids need to know that it is OK to talk about problems in the home with anyone they trust. It's OK to talk about it with another family member, with a teacher, with friends or with a friend's parents.

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2008 Issue

THE TRUTH EMPOWERS CHILDREN

The sad truth is that kids already traumatized with the difficulties of growing up in a volatile home of addiction are later in life very much at an increased risk for addiction themselves. In addition to addiction, many children who grew up in households of substance abuse suffer lasting psychological distress from the long years of shame, fear and guilt so often a part of the child's experience with abuse.

Children will internalize responsibility and guilt for the behaviors of a parent unless they are taught that they have no control over the situation, that they didn't cause it and nobody expects them to be able to fix it.

We never protect children by hiding them from the truth, and you can never hide the real truth of the home anyways. However, by misleading kids about the reality of the problem you deny them the opportunity to grow up free from the baggage of an abusive home, and that is surely no favor at all.

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2008 Issue

CHAPTER 4 ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

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Alcohol and drug abuse causes family violence.

Not all people who abuse alcohol or drugs will become violent, but statistically, family abusers are far more likely to also abuse drugs or alcohol, and violent abuse is far more likely to occur while the abuser is intoxicated.

In some cases, the acute effects of the high can cause aggressive, irrational and dangerous outbursts, for example, a meth addict ending a multi day binge can get paranoid, aggressive and violent. If this violence is very out of character and the addict is not otherwise aggressive or violent, then without the negative influence of drug abuse, the violence should stop.

DOMESTIC ASSAULT

In the case of chronic domestic violence though, although the abuser will often get violent while intoxicated, there is no evidence that the violence will stop with the end of alcohol or drug abuse. Most perpetrators of domestic violence will batter both while sober and while intoxicated. For chronic domestic assault, treatment for substance abuse issues alone will not remove the long term threat to the family, and the abuser will need to participate in additional therapy to learn how to end their violent tendencies.

ELDER ABUSE

Substance abuse and elder abuse, the physical, emotional or neglectful abuse of elderly relatives under the abuser's care also occurs with saddening regularity. The

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2008 Issue

elderly are often targeted for violence and abuse for financial reasons, out of frustration or for no apparent reason at all. Due to their self perceived vulnerability, the elderly are far less likely to report such behaviors to the police or other authorities.

VIOLENCE CAN NEVER BE JUSTIFIED

Whatever the reason and whatever the justifications given, if a loved substance abuser harms the family with violence, emotional or sexual assault, the family needs to look after itself in the interest of self preservation, and self preservation needs to come before the needs of the substance abuser.

You are no help to anyone if you are badly injured, and no matter how you may love someone, if they do you harm, they need to go, or you need to go...and the authorities need to get involved.

You cannot allow someone to terrorize you, and whatever your familial ties, there can be no excuses made for someone who would do you physical or other harms.

If you live with or feel threatened by a substance abusing family member, take steps to get safe and take them right now. If your teen son abuses you, he has to go. Call the police and have them escort him out. You still love him, you can still support his treatment, but you can no longer allow him to harm you or others in the family.

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2008 Issue

If you live with a substance abusing spouse, you need to get out before it gets worse. Get out and get safe as soon as you can, and don't consider seeing him or her until both the violence and the substance abuse have been therapeutically addressed.

If children are at risk, get out. There is no excuse--no possible rationalization--that ever justifies the abuse of children, and you need to get them safe. Remaining in the home puts your children at risk of physical harm, of developmental delays and at risk to propagate the violence themselves as adults. There can be no tolerance for abuse to children.

If you live with adult children who abuse you, threaten you for money or emotionally terrorize you, you do not have to stay with them. Do not believe that you are better off with family. Call the police.

You may love them, worry for them and rationalize their behaviors, but once they get violent, they have to go. Call the police, learn your rights and your options, and take steps to ensure that it never happens again.

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2008 Issue

Chapter 5 Legal Rights to Confidential Treatment

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Your legal rights to treatment... you cannot be discriminated against for present or past participation in medically needed substance abuse treatment.

Too many people avoid needed intervention and treatment out of fear of repercussions. People fear that once they enroll in a drug treatment program and receive needed treatment they will be punished on the job and that they will be discriminated against in both the public and private sectors.

Government has not always acted in the best interests of those suffering through an addiction to drugs or alcohol. In many cases the right course of action is the politically unpopular choice, and politicians ever wary of angering the electorate have a tendency to bend to public sentiment, regardless of the rightness of public perceptions. Thankfully, government has seen the value and the wisdom in making things easier for people to get treatment, and they have enacted legislations designed to ensure access to treatment, to ensure confidentiality of treatment, and to ensure that no one is ever discriminated against for having the courage to get help and to get better.

FEDERAL LAW

If your loved one argues that they cannot get treatment out of a fear of the professional or social repercussions, you can assure them that their rights to privacy are not only guaranteed...these rights are federal law.

The reality is that people who continue to use and abuse illegal drugs have very few rights and are not protected under federal or state statutes against discrimination, but those people who have received treatment for substance abuse problems, and who have achieved abstinence, are very well protected from discriminatory practices by a number of federal and state initiatives, including The Americans with

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2008 Issue

Disabilities Act, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Fair Housing Act and The Workforce Investment Act.

Although the information as follows is not a complete or legal document of your rights against discrimination, you can in general assume that after achieving sobriety or after having participated in substance abuse therapies, your history of abuse can never be used against you on the job, for housing, or for access to public or private programs.

YOUR RIGHTS ON THE JOB

The vast majority of employers are compelled to offer 12 weeks of unpaid leave to any employee seeking time off for a major medically necessary period of treatment. Employers may not sanction or punish any employee who requests needed medical leave, providing they have net certain requirements for eligibility (e.g. have worked with the company for more than one year).

Any medically related information that employers may have access to for insurance, Medicaid or other purposes is also completely confidential, and cannot be revealed without your consent.

Your employer must also provide reasonable allowances to you for medically necessary reasons when it would not cause undue harm to do so. For example, if you need to maintain weekly meetings with a psychologist, you have the right to alter your work schedule to allow you to fulfill a medically required treatment.

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2008 Issue

If on the job drug testing reveals the presence of a legal and prescribed substance such as methadone used therapeutically, an employer can bring no sanctions, nor reveal the presence of the therapeutic substance to anyone without your consent.

You have the right to get treatment, you cannot be punished for seeking treatment, and your employer cannot tell anyone without your consent that you have received treatment.

Additionally, when applying for a job it is illegal for a prospective employer to ask about past substance abuse or a history of treatment for substance abuse. You cannot be discriminated against when applying for a job for having sought needed medical treatment, and employers are not even allowed to ask about it by law.

You also have equal rights to access to federal and state job placement and employment training programs, regardless of any history of substance abuse or treatment.

YOUR RIGHTS TO HOUSING

You cannot be denied access to a rental or saleable property because of your past history of substance abuse.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

You cannot be denied access to public housing because of a past history of substance abuse (although a criminal conviction may alter your status in this respect).

YOUR RIGHT TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

You cannot be discriminated against for any publicly available governmental support programs based on a past history of substance abuse. Programs may include social assistance or welfare, housing assistance, job or employment assistance or licensing programs.

YOUR RIGHT TO PUBLIC/PRIVATE FACILITIES

You cannot be denied access in a discriminatory way to any private facility that provides services to the public. Examples of such facilities include schools, universities, hospitals, emergency shelters, churches, day care centers and senior centers.

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2008 Issue

YOU ARE ONLY PROTECTED ONCE YOU HAVE STOPPED ABUSING DRUGS

All of the above legal protections do not apply to people currently engaged in illicit drug taking, and are only applicable to people no longer illegally using drugs of abuse. Most of the above statutes do protect people who are actively abusing alcohol, but alcohol abuse behaviors will often give organizations or employers legitimate grounds for action against the abuser.

Anyone considering treatment for a substance abuse problem should know that their right to confidential treatment is protected under law and that after achieving sobriety they cannot be sanctioned for a history of abuse or treatment, whether on the job, for housing, within governmental programs, or within private/public institutions.

Resources

If you want to learn more about your right to treatment, please visit:

Employment rights <u>http://eeoc.gov/facts/howtofil.html</u>

Medical leave rights http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/

Housing rights http://www.hud.gov/complaints/housediscrim.cfm

You have a legal right to confidential treatment, and you cannot be discriminated against on the job, in the housing market, or for access to any governmental programs. Find out what your rights are, and get help today.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 6 UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS AND ADDICTION

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

What about when mental illness complicates substance abuse? Or what about when you suspect a mental condition, but that condition has never been diagnosed, and it could well just be yet another of the negative symptoms of the drug or alcohol abuse.

Tragically, mental illness and addiction are too often found together, and the treatment of either is complicated and prolonged due to the effects of the other condition. Sometimes it's assumed that the behavioral and emotive or affective symptoms are merely a symptom of the drug abuse, and it's not until weeks into rehab, when the symptoms don't dissipate, that the corresponding mental health condition is diagnosed.

However it occurs, it's a tough one, but with co-occurring mental health deficits and addiction, the stakes of abuse are even greater than normal, and it's imperative than anyone suffering a concurrent addiction and mental illness get treatment right away.

You may know that your loved one suffers from a mental disorder, you may only suspect it, and you may believe that the symptoms of depression or anxiety that you see are all caused by the abuse of drugs or alcohol. Anything's possible, and you really need to get some professional help to ensure an accurate diagnosis, and to ensure that you select an appropriate form of treatment.

ADDICTION WORSENS MENTAL HEALTH

The biggest problem with concurrent addiction and mental illness is that both problems tend to exacerbate the severity of the other. A mild depression, controllable with medications, can become severe under a regimen of illicit drug self medication, and the depths of depression can compel ever greater drug abuse to ease the pain of the symptoms. Additionally, a lot of the medications used to treat mental conditions are rendered less effective or even ineffective when taken with alcohol or other drugs, and so even if the mental condition has been diagnosed, and

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

is undergoing treatment, the concurrent abuse of alcohol or drugs reduces the effectiveness of otherwise very sound medical therapies.

WITH A DUAL DIAGNOSIS, YOU NEED TO ACT NOW

The stakes are great, and addiction and mental illness just do not mix. If a loved one is suffering a concurrent problem, you need to get them the help they need, and you need to get it fast. But what type of treatment is appropriate for concurrent addiction and mental health occurrence?

The most appropriate treatment will depend on the relative severity of the dual presenting condition. If at the time of treatment the mental health deficit is more severe than the substance abuse, then a psychiatric facility that can stabilize the psychiatric condition may be required. If the addiction is more severe, and is the primary cause of the severity of the mental health concern, then often a residential rehab program and a period of enforced sobriety is all that is required.

HOW TO CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE TREATMENT FACILITY

When considering the most appropriate facility, it's wise to include all medical professionals and case workers currently involved in the care and diagnosis of the patient for their recommendations. You may need to yield to the advice of professionals more knowledgeable than yourself in the interest of arranging

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

appropriate treatment. You will want to ensure that whatever facility the person is sent to, it is staffed with the necessary psychiatric professionals that will be needed for ongoing care and evaluations as the rehab progresses.

Rehab for concurrent disorder sufferers tends to take a little longer, but it can and does work. A period of time away from abuse, fully medicated, and learning the strategies needed to stay abuse free is often all that is needed to better the emotional and mental health of the patient, and to break the cycle of self medication and ever greater abuse.

Patience and empathy are needed, and the patient needs the love and support of their family and friends. If a loved one is abusing, and is either diagnosed with a concurrent mental condition, or you suspect an undiagnosed condition, make every effort to get that person the help they need, and rescue them from the downward spiral that concurrent addiction always becomes.

Psychiatric medications and therapies are very effective, and with ongoing treatment and medications compliance, the odds of a full recovery are great.

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2008 Issue

CHAPTER 7 INTERVENTIONS

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You can nag, scream and guilt until you're blue in the face...it won't do any good; of course most people concerned about the abuse behaviors of a loved one know this all too well already. It is this seeming impossibility to influence behavioral change that propagates the myth that only the addict themselves can commit to change and that only the addict can choose to get better, usually after hitting rock bottom.

While it's true that informal approaches, however impassioned, usually fail to create lasting change in drinking or drug taking behaviors, formal, planned and structured interventions are a very different thing, and have a very different success rate.

The family intervention convinces most of a need for treatment, and alternatively, the professional intervention has been shown to exert more influence over male substance abusers than any other form. Sometimes you can't wait, and you need to perform an intervention on hours notice, learn about emergency interventions; and when abuse has not yet become addiction, the brief preventative intervention can work wonders.

Learn your options, choose what's right for you, and get a loved one to admit to a problem, and better yet, agree to get immediate help.

THE FAMILY INTERVENTION

Recovery statistics are always of questionable merit, and when so many are in a position to profit from impressive statistics of result and recovery, you have to wonder just how these stats are collected and to what extent they accurately reflect reality.

Intervention stats are different though, and addictions professionals universally recognize that an intervention is the absolute best way to convince a reluctant and

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2008 Issue

still using addict of the need for treatment. Interventions will work the vast majority of the time, conservatively with an 80% or better success rate.

WHAT IS AN INTERVENTION?

During an intervention, all family and close friends (and any other people of influence in the addict's life) will joint together to confront the addict in a unified and structured manner. Denial is a hallmark of addiction, and to overwhelm this harmful defense mechanism there needs to be a concerted, united and intense front of opposition. Basically, when everyone the person cares about tells them in one session how much damage the drinking or drugging is doing, it can be hard for them to maintain this wall of denial.

During an intervention, every person will participate with a prepared statement concerning how the drinking or drug use is harming the addict and by extension how it harms them. They will have prepared specific examples of when the addict's intoxication did them personal harm. The addict needs to realize and accept that their drinking or drug taking does not exist in a vacuum, and that when they abuse themselves they also do harm to others that they care about.

The goal of every intervention is to have the addict admit to the real extent of the problem, admit that they do need some help and to proceed immediately to treatment that has been prearranged for them.

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2008 Issue

HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION

The behaviors of addiction often create negative emotions that ripple deep throughout the family, and although all still love and worry about the health and wellbeing of the using addict, intermingled with concern there are often contradictory emotions of anger, of guilt and of shame; and as such an intervention can be a very complex emotional event.

You have to do it, but you have to ensure that you do it well. A poorly run, chaotic and emotionally confrontational intervention can do more harm than good, and derail an excellent opportunity for change.

Here are some tips to make sure that you get it right the first time, and that you get that person into the treatment help that they so desperately need.

1) Practice Practice Practice

You don't want to go into an intervention blind. It's not something that many people will have participated in before, most won't understand completely how it should run or what they are supposed to do and some may be feeling apprehensive about confronting the addict. For the best chance of success, you need to get everyone together and have at least one real serious rehearsal.

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2008 Issue

Before the rehearsal, contact all participants, explain what is expected of them and ask them to prepare a written statement that includes how the drinking or drug taking has harmed them personally, how it has harmed their relationship with the addict, and how they've seen the addict change over time. Make sure that they include specific examples if possible, as examples lessen the ability of the addict to deny the truth of what is said.

You should also ask them whether they are comfortable including an ultimatum. The best interventions combine both the carrot and the stick. Through your loving and concerned meeting of intervention, and through the obvious trouble you have gone through to arrange the event and arrange for treatment, you show your love and concern. The stick part comes in the form of consequences.

"Accept our offered treatment, or suffer this consequence from me..."

2) Don't Get Angry

The addict may have done some terrible things, and a lot of the people participating in the intervention may legitimately feel owed an apology and may feel justifiable anger over past behaviors of intoxication.

Remember though, the intervention is not about you and the day of the intervention is a day during which the focus needs to remain firmly on the addict, and not on your personal grievances. If the tone of the intervention becomes

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2008 Issue

negative, angry or overly confrontational, the message can get lost within a defensive and equally emotional response.

You sit the addict down and you force him or her to listen to what you want to say. Make sure that your message gets through.

When you maintain a tone of concern and of love, the addict cannot react defensively and they must listen and receive what is offered in the spirit in which it is given. For the best chance at success, everyone needs to keep their cool, say what needs to be said, but say it with love.

3) Everyone Needs to Participate

Since denial is such a hallmark of addiction, for the best chance at success, all meaningful people in the addict's life need to participate. If there are many significant absences, the addict might continue to rationalize their behaviors. They may say, well, Uncle Bob and Aunt Jean obviously don't feel the same way that you do, or they'd be sitting here too.

The more people get involved, the more powerful the event. Don't disclude the very young or the very old either. Sometimes the most powerful testimony comes from children, and since they are affected by the behaviors of addiction, they have a right to contribute as well.

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2008 Issue

Those people who cannot be physically present can contribute through phone calls, internet conferencing or through written messages read to the addict during the intervention.

4) Get Professional Help

Hiring a professional interventionist is about the surest step towards running an effective intervention. They will organize fragmented family into a coherent tool towards recovery, they know how to diagnose the extent of the problem and they will ensure that the intervention proceeds as it should and that nothing derails the ultimate goal of getting an addict into treatment.

But they are expensive.

If you can't afford the fee, which can be several thousands of dollars for a top interventionist, you can do it on your own and you can, with a little planning and consideration, run an effective intervention without outside assistance. If you do have the money though, hiring a professional is about the best thing you can do to increase the odds of success.

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2008 Issue

5) Don't Delay... Get Them into Treatment Right Away

At best, the bags are packed, responsibilities arranged for and the car full of gas. You don't want to allow for any barriers to an immediate transition into recovery. There is a real and sometimes brief window of opportunity after the addict agrees to accept help and you want to make sure that you get them into treatment before they change their mind.

If they agree to treatment, even if they don't agree that they need it, they should go. They may well change their tune with a few days of sobriety and therapy. Get them into prearranged treatment as soon as is humanly possible.

A WELL RUN INTERVENTION IS ALWAYS WORTHWHILE

Even if you fail to get the addict to accept of a need for treatment right away, they may in time contemplate the weight of the offered testimonies and decide that they do need help after all. However, even if the addict never gets the help they need, interventions empower the family. Nothing will ever be the same again after it's all laid out on the table...and this is a very positive step towards family healing.

Getting things out into the open reduces harmful internalizing and misdirection of blame and guilt. It leads the family back towards cohesive health, and it never again allows for a minimization of the extent of the problem. At worst, you may need to decide how you can live in peace with a still using addict, and draw your own personal and familial boundaries to ensure lasting harmony.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

You can't do it for them, and if they refuse to go even after a well run, concerned and loving intervention; then at least you know that you've done all that you can...thankfully, most of the time it does work.

THE PROFESSIONAL INTERVENTION

There are close to 30 million chemically dependent people in America, and the vast majority of them retain gainful employment and contribute to society. The problem of substance abuse and addiction pervades all working environments throughout the country, and substance abusers and addicts are in general far less productive, far more likely to get injured on the job, and far more likely to require costly medical leave.

It can be tough for family to know how to act. You don't want to see someone suffer on the job because of your requests for intervention or even for information, but sometimes when the family can't seem to convince of an acceptance for obviously needed treatment, sometimes, the employer can.

If possible, start asking around informally, through trusted friends and colleagues at the workplace about the feasibility and likelihood of the company getting involved and intervening to create change. If you can get the employer to mandate treatment, then the addict or alcoholic will very likely comply with mandated treatment, and has a very good chance of getting better. Since in most cases the company has a vested interest in reducing substance use and abuse, they will often agree to assist you in getting the addict into treatment.

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2008 Issue

It is in everyone's best interest to minimize the problems of substance abuse in the workplace, and since co workers and employees become our friends as much as our occupational peers, there is a personal and emotional reason for a desire to affect change; over and above the important matter of employee performance.

Companies invest considerable time and resources in the training of their employees, and although when faced with substance abuse and declining productivity these employers may be justified to terminate employment, it is often preferable to first attempt to change the behaviors of substance abuse and salvage the resources invested in that person as they also attempt to better the health and happiness of a close workplace friend or colleague.

IT'S NOT EASY, BUT IT'S WELL WORTH DOING

If it were easy to overcome an addiction to drugs or alcohol the level of abuse would never have reached the endemic levels we currently face. No one wants to ruin their health, their family life and sink careers to the face of an addiction, but these compelling diseases often cloud our judgment and our reasoning. Few of us can beat an entrenched addiction without professional help, and far too few of us ever seek treatment help without outside pressure.

Research shows that in the case of male abusers, employer influence is the single greatest factor of influence towards treatment. Employer pressure supersedes that of family or friends, and as such employers are in a powerful influence to effect change.

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2008 Issue

Employers wishing to intervene in the use behaviors of an employee often consider the professional intervention as a way to demonstrate concern and compassion to the problem, but also to illustrate the true harms done to the company out of the substance use and abuse, and also to make clear the repercussions of not getting treatment.

A professional intervention runs in a similar manner to a familial intervention. All colleagues that work with, under and above the employee abuser will gather in a respectful and compassioned way, to share stories of the personal and professional costs to each from the actions of the substance abusing worker. The employers will also make clear in most cases that treatment assistance is a requirement of continuing employment.

Ideally some form of treatment is pre arranged, and professional responsibilities already covered for an easy entry into needed drug or alcohol treatment.

EVERYONE WINS

These interventions are enormously effective in convincing of a need for change and a need for treatment, and when treatment can influence a change in behaviors and a betterment of the problem, everyone emerges far ahead. The company can salvage a valued employee and in many cases friend, and the abuser benefits most of all, with a better life of sobriety.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

THE EMERGENCY INTERVENTION

A well planned and executed family intervention can often convince even the most determined addict of the need to concede for treatment; but a poorly run, confrontational and negative intervention can actually do more harm than good, and it's important to spend some time arranging and practicing before a family intervention to ensure that things run smoothly on the day of the event.

Unfortunately, there are some situations in which the severity and immediacy of the problem does not allow for long and considered planning; and family and friends must act with urgency to prevent immediate and irreparable harm.

THE EMERGENCY INTERVENTION

Whenever the abuse behaviors of the addict present in such a way that immediate harm to self or others is a legitimate possibility, family obviously cannot and should not wait before intervening.

When a long binge threatens health and family, when children are in a dangerous position of neglect, when the risks of suicide seem imminent, or when a person repeatedly drives while intoxicated, the family cannot wait before intervening.

An emergency intervention can be arranged in as little as hours and although it's important to get as many participants as possible, you must compromise inclusion for speed, and do the best you can within the realities of the situation.

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2008 Issue

20 MINUTES OF PRACTICE

If at all possible, the members of the intervention group should meet briefly before the act to discuss ground rules and expectations for the event. Family needs to participate fully and honestly, yet it's important that the overall tone of the meeting remain caring and compassioned, and never accusatory or hostile. The behaviors of abuse and addiction can create great feelings of anger and shame, and these feelings and harms do need to be ultimately resolved for the good of all, but an intervention is not about you, it is about the addict in need, and bringing acrimony and dissention into an intervention does very little good, and can greatly minimize the effectiveness of the act.

The ultimate goal of an intervention is an acceptance of the need for treatment, and an immediate progression into prearranged treatment. This is obviously problematic in an emergency and acute situation and the advice of a trusted doctor or other health care worker known to the family can be invaluable in the selection of an appropriate rehab facility.

When the situation is critical, you've got to act fast, do your best, and accept that perfection is likely unrealistic. When abuse presents with an imminent danger to self or others, it cannot be allowed to continue; and family must convene with speed, compassion and resolve to effect change for the better.

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2008 Issue

THE BRIEF PREVENTATIVE INTERVENTION

You don't have to wait for things to get bad and for a loved one to need intensive treatment, and you don't need to wait until a full family intervention is needed. If use remains abuse and not addiction, often a very brief and easy intervention is enough to reduce drug or alcohol taking behaviors.

The earlier any intervention or treatment ensues, the better the eventual prognosis, and the less intensive the intervention needs to be. It's always better to act sooner rather than later, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention works very well when specific brief intervention strategies are used on people at risk to progress from risky use behaviors to addiction.

DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION... A FEW WORDS FROM A TRUSTED AUTHORITY FIGURE CAN GO A LONG WAY

Once heavy or binge drug or alcohol use becomes dependency, the intensity of therapy needed increases exponentially, and some people can never seem to overcome addiction. It's far better to prevent the occurrence of an addiction, and research has shown that a brief intervention with a trusted authority figure before addiction has emerged can be a very effective way to encourage a reduction in risky use behaviors.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The intervention can be very brief and casual, and may occur only once, with a possible follow up phone call or email...basically, a very minimally disruptive treatment to drug or alcohol abuse.

A brief preventative intervention is simply a conversation with a position in authority, ideally known and trusted, about the dangers of abuse and the benefits of reducing consumption. Often resource and reading materials are given, and there should ideally be some follow up to check on progress in the weeks and months after the intervention.

Physicians, counselors, human resource personnel and others are in a unique position as known and trusted authority figures to enact behavioral change, at minimal cost and with minimal disruption.

WHEN SHOULD THE INTERVENTION OCCUR?

There are two basic varieties of brief intervention strategies, and these are the planned and the opportunistic interventions.

Planned brief interventions often occur at the prompting of a concerned family member or friend, and these arranged meetings occur without a catalystic incident prompting their necessity. The family physician, a trusted counselor or school official may all be approached to meet with an at risk person to discuss use behaviors, to council on the dangers of exhibited behaviors, and to discuss alternative life strategies.

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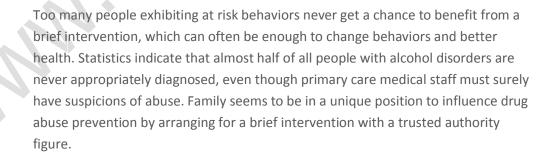
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The opportunistic brief intervention occurs after a catalystic incident, most often occurring as a direct result of substance use behaviors. Users suffering legal difficulties or injuries stemming from substance use behaviors, and suffering the immediate consequences of their substance use, prove very captive and receptive audiences for intervention and counseling.

DON'T WAIT!

It doesn't always work, but drug abuse prevention to curtail risky drinking or drug taking can often succeed after only a brief intervention aimed at regulating behavior; greatly reducing the risks of developing a harmful addiction.

Families can express concerns of abuse behaviors to a trusted authority figure and arrange a planned intervention, and can also ensure that a negative experience (a DUI, or intoxication induced injury) is used as a reinforcing teaching opportunity by calling for an intervention during a very acute receptive state.



What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

It may not work for all, but the cost benefit ratio is firmly tilted in favor of a brief intervention. There can be little harm done by counseling moderation in consumption and encouraging harm reduction. It makes no sense to wait until substance abuse becomes addiction before acting, and everyone benefits far more from early and easy brief interventions.

CAN YOU HAVE A RELATIVE THAT NEEDS TREATMENT COMMITTED?

It seems obvious sometimes, obvious to everyone but the addict that they are placing their life in danger through their abuse, neglecting their basic needs for food and shelter and badly in need of help.

Sometimes, despite our most determined efforts, we just can't get them to see reason and can't get them to concede to a need for treatment. Surely when things get as bad as this we can have them temporarily committed for their own safety and wellbeing?

Unfortunately, the State is very unwilling to intervene except in real emergencies, unwilling for a couple of basic reasons.

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2008 Issue

WHY THE STATE OFTEN WON'T INTERVENE

CIVIL RIGHTS

Firstly and historically, it used to be quite easy to have a relative committed for mental health or substance abuse needs, and in retrospect, civil rights advocates argue that it was far too easy to have someone committed against their will and consent, and for an indefinite length of time as well.

In response to many real abuses of individual rights on cases of questionable merit, the state in the second half of the last century moved progressively away from easy familial commitment of people in need of mental health or substance abuse treatment. The state would intervene only when there was a clear and imminent danger to self or others, and the standard of proof required to meet these criteria was quite high.

In retrospect, and in the guise of civil liberty, the state moved too far away from involuntary commitments and a great many people in real need of temporary psychiatric or substance abuse care were not compelled to get it, and a great many tragedies ensued as a direct result.

The state in recent years has moved back slightly towards making it easier for people in real danger to be treated without their consent, but the requirements for involuntary commitment remain very high, and most addicts, even those who are most certainly harming themselves as a consequence of their abuse, will not meet the stringent guidelines for involuntary commitment.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The regulations vary by state, but in general, to be involuntarily committed a person needs to present with an imminent (and provable based on recent actions) danger to themselves or others, or through their neglect of basic necessities (that cannot or are not being met by family) be placing themselves in immediate and direct harms way.

It can be very tough to prove that an addict or alcoholic is placing themselves in imminent danger, chronic and long term danger is easy, but imminent danger is tough, and as a result few people with substance abuse problems will meet the minimum standards for involuntary commitment.

LIMITED RESOURCES

The second fundamental problem state agencies face when dealing with requests for involuntary treatment is a real lack of resources to treat all people in society in need of mental health and substance abuse care, within their budgetary and personnel constraints. Essentially, unless these agencies are given greater funding they cannot meet the treatment needs of all those people who would benefit from involuntary care.

The regulations do vary by state though, and to get more information about the requirements for involuntary temporary commitment in your area you should visit or call the state court mental health department to learn more. It is worth looking into, and in some cases you may find that the state will do what you cannot, and compel needed treatment on an otherwise unwilling participant.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 8 TREATMENT OPTIONS

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2008 Issue

You know that your loved one needs help, and now you know that by running an intervention that you can make a difference and you can influence change, you need to make a decision about what type of treatment best meets the needs of the addict or alcoholic.

Drug and alcohol rehab is big business, and it can be tough to know if the information you are getting is accurate and transparent, or whether you are getting pushed towards an expensive and actually unneeded variety of treatment.

You need to get educated about the options, learn enough to make a diagnosis of the level of abuse or addiction, and select the type of treatment that is most likely going to work. Any form of treatment is far preferable to no intervention and continuing abuse, but you don't want to waste money, time and hope on inappropriate treatment if you can help it. Learn about the options, and make the best choice for your situation.

GLOSSARY OF TREATMENT OPTIONS

Although you can make a difference and you can get a loved one into treatment, after that it's really up to them. Thankfully, statistics show that once in drug or alcohol treatment even those people compelled to attend end up recovering about as well as those who initiate treatment of their own accord. Because the addict or alcoholic walks the road to recovery alone, with support, but also alone, we use "you" in the descriptions of recovery options.

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2008 Issue

OUTPATIENT TREATMENT OPTIONS

12 Steps Group Meetings, Such as AA or NA

These free peer support meetings can be a great venue to explore your compulsion to use and to gain insight and strength towards recovery. Learning what you need to know from other people also dealing with an addiction to marijuana or other drugs of abuse.

Like AA, narcotics anonymous use the 12 steps to sobriety as a philosophical framework to recovery, and as with AA, you must subscribe to certain core beliefs for the steps to work. You can't fake it, and you either believe in and the process and approach it with commitment or dedication, or you don't, and if you don't, it's not likely going to work for you.

Here are the basic principles of 12 steps recovery:

- You are a drug addict, and whatever you may do; you will be for the rest of your life. You may never relapse, but you will never be able to use in moderation, and you can only hope for continued recovery. There is no cure.
- You need to believe in a higher power, really believe. You can't fake it, and if you can't pray to a higher power, can't feel the guidance and strength of a higher power, then you cannot hope to get much benefit from 12 steps based

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2008 Issue

programs of recovery. 12 steps are not Christian or denominational and any higher power larger than yourself can work, but you have to truly believe.

- You've got to make things right for your past misdeeds. Lingering guilt and shame drags you back to temptations and eventually to relapse, and if you're not willing to make a full and honest amends for your past wrongs, you cannot hope to benefit from the 12 steps.
- ✓ You have to give back. Once you have achieved a certain length and stability of sobriety, you have to help others to also achieve their goals of sobriety.

AA and NA seem to work very well for some, and not at all for others. They are a valid option though, they have helped millions overcome compulsions to use, and they're free and they're everywhere. Don't let any preconceptions deter you from giving the meetings a try. You may be surprised at what you find and you may find that the 12 steps style of support and relapse prevention is just what you need.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

One on one sessions with an experienced addictions therapist or psychologist can also help a lot as you grapple with getting and staying off drugs or alcohol. These can be expensive, but getting some individual attention and help with your particular issues does have real value, and the insights gained from a few sessions can offer you a very solid foundation for your attempt at getting clean.

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2008 Issue

Working with a therapist you should expect to explore any personal issues that lead you to seek such intoxication, and also explore why it is that you turn to intoxication as a coping mechanism. You may also want to explore any unresolved personal issues that linger and contribute to your drug seeking behaviors.

A trained therapist can also help you to devise a tailored relapse prevention plan, help you to identify those things in your life that led you to crave drugs or alcohol and help you to understand just what you can do to beat these temptations.

GROUP SUPPORT THERAPY

A generally more affordable alternative to individual therapy is the participation in a peer support group. Ideally, you will join a group of people with similar world views and facing similar life challenges, and explore together what works and what doesn't on the road to long term recovery and sobriety.

Group therapy generally occurs with 6-10 others, and there is most commonly a trained group leader who guides the sessions and offers insights where appropriate. Group sessions offer a number of benefits to addicts in recovery. Firstly, no one in this world is quicker to spot dishonesty or denial faster than another addict in recovery. You may get away with a lot of your manipulations (even the one's you're not aware of) in a lot of places, but in group they're going to call you on it, and you can't deny their expertise either!

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

You can also learn effective and concrete strategies for staying clean. Exploring together what seems to help gives you some real world workable options to try when you feel you can't go on anymore. Additionally, recovering together with a group of people you can get to know pretty intimately can offer a lot of encouragement and inspiration. Nothing keeps you going more than watching someone that you know struggles as you do, break free from addiction and really reap the benefits of sobriety.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL ADDICTIONS PROGRAMS

Most people don't give much thought to rehab until they or a family member becomes in desperate need of quick entry into a program, and as such it can be pretty confusing just trying to understand what your available options are, and just what these rehab web sites mean when they say, Christian rehab, or executive rehab, or therapeutic community...

Here is a brief glossary and explanation of terms and of the general types of residential care as offered in America today. For more information, also visit www.ChooseHelp.com/rehab-programs

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2008 Issue

CHRISTIAN REHAB

Faith based residential programs represent a major percentage of low cost and free programs on offer today, although secular programs do also exist at low cost. Faith based programs may also exist within the domain of very high cost private rehabs.

Christian rehabs emphasize spiritual healing in the treatment of addiction, and in doing so generally use a modified version of the 12 steps of AA, called the Christian 12 steps. They also emphasize prayer, bible study and religious counseling as a comprehensive spiritual solution to the problems of the flesh. Christian rehabs may also offer secular and pharmacological therapies, such as cognitive education, group addictions therapy and relapse-preventing medications.

For addicts with a belief in a Christian God, Christian rehabs can offer powerfully resonant teachings.

CONVENTIONAL OR SECULAR REHAB

Rehabs offering conventional and clinically based therapeutic care encompass the bulk of private rehab options in America today. These rehabs run programs on average from 28 days to three months in duration, and offer a variety of treatments that can include 12 steps based group meetings, peer support groups, individual therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, family therapy and nutritional and health education and programming.

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2008 Issue

These rehabs offer the greatest intensity of scientifically proven therapies and treatments and can be found at all price ranges, although are normally higher cost options.

These rehabs can offer a great base for sobriety, although you should look for a facility that offers intense and wide ranging therapeutic programming.

DETOX CLINIC

More expensive residential programs will offer medically supervised detox programs; but many less expensive or free facilities' cannot, and demand that you be medically stable and detoxed as an entry criterion. Depending on the drug of abuse, medical detox can occur over a few days to a week or more, and state and private clinics do offer detox independent of residential rehabs. Detox without therapy and treatment is rarely enough to induce lasting sobriety.

EXECUTIVE REHAB

Never a low cost option, executive rehabs exist to provide high luxury, confidentiality of care, and the ability to continue working while in rehab to professionals who feel they cannot or will not enter into a conventional form of rehabilitation.

Please visit **www.ChooseHelp.com** for more information about quality rehab programs, or **call the 24-hours rehab hotline 1-877-830-7020 now!**

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2008 Issue

HOLISTIC REHAB

Holistic rehabs exist to treat addiction and abuse as a problem of the body, mind and spirit; and insist that without a comprehensive and holistic approach to treatment, no long term recovery is possible. In addition to traditional therapies, holistic rehabs will integrate peripheral programs such as equine therapy, meditation, yoga and karate into a treatment matrix.

LONG TERM REHAB

With programs running from 6 months to two years, these rehabs tackle addiction with stamina. In many cases, addicts progress upwards through the programs, gaining additional privileges and responsibilities as they do so. A similar base of therapies to the conventional rehab will be offered, although generally with less intensity; and most rehabs will mandate a form of work therapy to all participants. This work may or may not be paid, but is mandated to instill a sense of purpose and responsibility, as well as to decrease relapse provoking idle hours.

Many of these programs operate as low cost or free entities, and many may be faith based in nature. Two very prominent examples of free faith based longer term rehabs are those as offered by the Salvation Army and the Baptist and Union Missions. Both organizations will offer long term rehabs in all major cities nationwide.

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2008 Issue

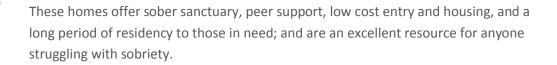
TEEN REHAB

Teens do not do well in general adult recovery programs, and since they face very unique life challenges, they require age appropriate treatment. Teens should never be admitted to an adult facility unless no other options are reasonably possible.

SOBER LIVING HOUSING

Most commonly used as a transitional living environment after a rehab graduation, they can also be accessed by anyone willing to commit to complete sober living. The vast majority of the tens of thousands of sober living houses across America will open their doors to those in need regardless of an initial ability to pay for services, but after a transitional period all members of the house are required to gain employment and contribute a nominal monthly rent against the house expenses.

These houses enforce strict rule of conduct, most fundamentally a requirement for complete sobriety, and anyone who does use drugs or alcohol will often find themselves quickly evicted. Most houses will run some form of therapeutic programming, often 12 steps and group therapy based, and most will require an active and daily participation in AA or a similar program.



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2008 Issue

THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES (TC)

Long term recovery options, these communities run on a model of re-socialization. They believe that a complete relearning of how to live without drugs or alcohol is necessary for any real chance at long term sobriety, and to accomplish this ambitious goal they require a long term participation, generally of at least a year and often longer.

They will offer group, 12 steps or individual therapy at low intensity, but the model is more based on a peer learning and recovery matrix, where recovering addicts learn from one another how to live and act appropriately without using drugs and alcohol. Residents progress through the program earning greater rights and privileges as they show increasing sobriety and mature acts, and will start at the bottom of an informal chain of command, and graduate at the top. Addicts learn how to live with one another, how to work under, with, and over others, and how to have fun without drugs and alcohol.

These very long term communities can be an effective solution for people who have struggled with addiction for a long period, and who may have already tried shorter duration programs with little effect.

These communities exist in all price ranges, but in general provide lower cost care.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 9 INPATIENT OR OUTPATIENT... WHAT'S NEEDED?

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Drug abuse and addiction rob you of your health, your happiness, and your self respect and there is nothing wrong or even abnormal with wanting to tackle such a significant and entrenched problem with the most intensive and most successful form of therapy available, as in a residential setting.

Due to the high cost, the disruption from work and the separation from family, most addictions professionals will recommend that most people start off with outpatient therapies as first attempt at bettering the problem.

While participating in therapies on an outpatient basis you can maintain employment and continue to provide for your family. You can also be there to enjoy your family, tuck your kids in and spend time with your spouse. Outpatient therapy is also far less costly, and even those people unable to access state funded inpatient treatments may find that they can enter into outpatient programs, and often with no waiting period.

WHAT IS OUTPATIENT THERAPY?

You may participate in outpatient therapies of greatly varying intensity. At the most extreme, outpatient therapy encompasses whole days and differs little from inpatient with the exception that you return home each night to sleep. At the other extreme, outpatient therapy can be as minimal as free participation in 12 steps group meetings like AA or NA, participation in a local peer support group, or weekly sessions with a psychologist.

Once you make the decision to enroll in outpatient therapy you can start within hours, literally. There are 12 steps meetings offered at all hours of the day in most major centers, and you can access this supportive therapy free of charge today.

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2008 Issue

DISADVANTAGES OF OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

When it works, outpatient drug treatment is the ideal solution, but too often outpatient drug treatment is encouraged due to the relative expense of inpatient treatment. Public drug rehabilitation programs will generally consist of mostly drug treatment on an outpatient basis, with limited access to inpatient beds.

While remaining within the family and able to work has its advantages; the continuing presence of temptation in the environment of abuse presents a significant obstacle to initial sobriety. Many people find that without getting away from access to drugs and alcohol, they are unable to remain away from abuse during the initial craving filled weeks.

Additionally, the more intensive and committed the participation in recovery, the greater the ultimate likelihood of sobriety. Inevitably, when addicts undergo treatment within their home environment their attentions are focused partially elsewhere, and they are unable to give as focused an effort at recovery.

Although the minimal disruption and low cost of outpatient drug treatment can be very attractive, and may work for some people with a short history of abuse or minor dependencies, most addicts will ultimately require a more intensive period of rehabilitation, as is offered at an inpatient facility.

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2008 Issue

WHO IS OUTPATIENT THERAPY RIGHT FOR?

If you have never before sought any structured assistance for your substance use problems, a logical first step would be to participate in an outpatient form of therapy. Outpatient therapies are easy to find and very affordable, and you need not make any significant changes in your life to participate.

Many people find strength and solace in peer support groups, in AA, or in working with a therapist on individual issues, and you may find that all you need is a little structured support.

WHO NEEDS INPATIENT THERAPY?

✓ If you have previously tried outpatient therapy, and found that you could not maintain sobriety, you need to consider inpatient therapy as a valid next step.

If you have a very long history of intense abuse, you will find the first month or more exceedingly difficult while remaining in the environment of access and temptation, and you may want consider starting with a more intensive form of treatment.

✓ If you have any form of dual diagnosis you may not benefit from outpatient therapy. Dual Diagnosis challenges complicate treatment, and although dual

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2008 Issue

diagnosis patients can and do better substance abuse problems, they often require inpatient care to do so.

- ✓ If you are pregnant, you need inpatient therapy.
- ✓ If you are in danger of losing custody of your children or if your spouse may leave you, you need intense inpatient therapy.
- If your drinking or drug abuse has started to have serious health consequences, you cannot take a chance, cannot waste any time, and you need residential rehab.

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2008 Issue

CHAPTER 10 UNDERSTANDING WHY PROFESSIONAL HELP IS NEEDED

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Fundamentally, the problem seems ridiculous; and when all that's required for a better life and better health is just to stop doing something harmful, it can be tough for those who have never endured an addiction to understand exactly why this is so difficult.

A lot of us abusing don't even completely understand our actions. We just know that we can't seem to stop, and whenever we even try we fail so badly that it seems completely hopeless.

Addiction creates neurological changes in the brain. Your brain just works slightly differently after you become chemically dependant; and once you are addicted, choice goes out the window, and willpower becomes meaningless. Addiction equates to a loss of control over your actions and your use, and very few people can better an addiction with determination alone. You can't stop doing what you have no control over.

Addictions professionals and scientists have been working diligently on the mysteries of addiction for decades, and although complete clarity eludes us, we do now have a much better understanding of what's really going on in the brain with addiction; and we also know some effective strategies to manipulate behaviors and give people a great opportunity to get past devastating chemical dependencies.

You want to do it on your own; you feel badly to need such disruptive and expensive treatment, and you can't even explain why you couldn't just stop. Here are 5 reasons why you need professional help.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

REASONS TO GET HELP

ENFORCED SOBRIETY

Never mind any of the therapies offered, simply staying sequestered away from access to drug or alcohol for a month or more has incredible value. The clarity of sobriety comes only with time, and none of us are truly ready to participate honestly in the therapies of relapse avoidance until we've got a couple of good weeks of sobriety completed. Enforced sobriety also gives our minds a chance to begin the healing process, and we start to relearn how we can enjoy ourselves without a need for intoxication.

Rehab offers a lot, but simply staying sober and away from drugs or alcohol for a month or more can be life changing in itself.

LEARN WHY WE ACT AS WE DO

For a lot of us, there exists something within our beings that makes us seek out intoxication. It may be a lack of confidence, family trauma or anxiety that drove us to abuse initially; but whatever it is that makes us need to get drunk or high, unless we can start to unearth our issues, we are destined to repeat our failures.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

You may not solve all of your problems in a month or more of rehab, but through working with a therapist you will at minimum gain a greater self awareness, and begin the self healing that's always required for long term success and sobriety.

LEARN HOW WE CAN INCREASE YOUR CHANCES BY MINIMIZING YOUR TEMPTATIONS

Addiction occurs deep within the brain in an area beyond our conscious awareness or control (the mesolimbic). While addicted, we act in ways that appear willful and decided, but are in fact just the end result of powerful impulses from deep inside us.

Nothing but time allows the brain to heal and for the damage done by addiction to fade, but we can learn concrete and effective strategies to minimize the influence of the mesolimbic, and hopefully get past the period of its relapse provoking pulls.

Through therapies and cognitive behavioral teachings we learn how we can control not only our actions, but even our thoughts to reduce the temptations that doom so many of us to failure. We also learn concrete and effective strategies that can get you out of situation of temptation, and keep you sober for another day.

Time will heal you, but you need to give yourself time. Therapies and education show you how to get past the first few months of cravings and temptation.

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2008 Issue

DEVELOP A UNIQUE AND WORKABLE RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN

You cannot leave anything up to chance during the first few months of sobriety, and to ensure you stay on a path of sobriety, in rehab you will develop a relapse prevention plan. Most people that relapse do so only after they start to ignore their self produced document of sobriety. Within this living and changing document are the strategies, inspirations and even phone numbers you'll need when you feel you can no longer resist.

You can make one on your own, but developing a plan in consultation with addictions professionals ensures that you've really got something that's going to work, and that accurately reflects the unique threats to your sobriety.

RECOVER AND GET INSPIRED BY OTHERS JUST LIKE YOU

When you try it on your own, it feels impossible; but when you recover in a group with other people that you know suffer the same trials that you do, watching them get better can be a real source of inspiration. Most people working in rehabs are themselves recovering addicts. They know what you're going through, they know what you need to do to get better, and they understand just how tough it can be. Learn what works from others in recovery, and learn how those people who've done it got sober, and stay sober everyday.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

You can't say it's impossible when you spend time everyday with a group of people overcoming their demons, and with a group that already have.

Get the Help You Need

Some people can make a willful decision to stop using and never get drunk or high again. The vast majority of us are not so fortunate, and need professional help to have any chance of getting sober. It's not easy, and if you're like most addicts considering help, you've tried and failed on countless occasions to quit.

There's no shame in admitting you need help. It takes great courage to reach out in your time of need, but there is tragedy in knowing that help is needed and lacking the motivation or determination to get it.

They can get better, they can start tomorrow, and they'll never regret a single thing they do that gets them there.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 11 DO YOU NEED MEDICAL DETOX?

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Detox can be problematic, and some lower cost facilities will not accept patients who need medically supervised detox. They simply don't have the facilities or personnel to ensure your safety during this period.

Most drugs do induce a period of withdrawal and detoxification after cessation of use. Detox is never pleasant, but the detox off of most drugs of abuse is rarely dangerous, and in many cases you can get into treatment without any need for a medically supervised period of detox.

WHICH DRUGS ARE DANGEROUS?

The exceptions are alcohol, opiates (heroin, pain pills) and sedative hypnotic drugs (xanax, ambien). These drugs can induce serious withdrawal and detox symptoms, symptoms so severe that they can be fatal, and no one with a real dependency to any of these drugs should attempt an unsupervised detoxification.

If you need to get into a treatment facility that does not offer detoxification services, you can attempt medically supervised outpatient detox, or you can enter into a detox clinic for a few days. Either option ensures safety and optimal comfort during the process, and will get you into needed treatment soon.

The detox off of drugs like cocaine, marijuana, meth and others can be quite unpleasant, but the detox symptoms do not present a danger to you, and you do not need a medically supervised period of detox.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

If the price of rehab is a consideration, you may not qualify for state funded rehab but may qualify for low cost detox. Alternatively, and a likely quicker option, is to pay for detox, and get into a more affordable long term residential rehab.

You just have to get through it, and the sooner you do, the sooner you can start the real process of recovery.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 12 How Much Does Rehab Cost Anyways?

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Nothing frustrates people searching for help more than the universal reluctance of drug and alcohol rehab web sites to display accurate pricing information...they just won't do it. Private rehabs want to get you on the phone, and get you talking with one of their sales "counselors" before giving away any information that they know you really want.

Drug rehab can be very expensive, but the high prices of treatment are not outrageous when you consider the legion of professionals employed within. Psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, nutritionists, doctors, nurses and other professionals all command very high salaries, and when this outlay is combined with the normal and necessary costs of housing and feeding a group of patients with unique needs, expenses quickly mount.

At rehabs in the highest end of pricing, you are paying primarily for comfort and luxury, and cannot expect a far different therapeutic experience from standard private rehabs. Rehab is tough though, and if you have the money or the insurance, you may want to stay for a month or more in high comfort.

At the bottom end of the scale (excluding state funded rehabs, which may offer a high level of therapeutic services) you obviously cannot expect luxury, but you also may suffer from a significant reduction in private therapy and even group therapy sessions. There are no strict rules though, and while some may make do with only 12 steps based programming, some others who attain funding from the state, from the United Way, or from another agency may offer a comprehensive base of programming, sometimes at no cost at all to lower income participants.

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2008 Issue

GENERAL GUIDE TO THE PRICES OF REHAB

BETTER PRIVATE DRUG REHABS

\$20 000 and up per month.

These drug and alcohol rehabs are the best in the Nation, and should offer an outstanding level of care. You should benefit from excellent therapies, including a very high level of individual counseling with a trained psychologist or therapist. You should also enjoy a beautiful and tranquil setting, private and even luxurious accommodations, nutritionist directed meal programs, great peripheral programs such as yoga, meditation, massage, and excellent sports and gym facilities.

These rehabs are the most expensive, but are also generally the best. All rehab is hard work, and never a vacation, but at first glance these facilities more closely resemble a resort or 5 star hotel than a treatment environment.

STANDARD PRIVATE REHABS

\$8000 and up to close to \$20 000 per month

Private rehabs in this price range make up the bulk or rehab facilities offering services in America today. These facilities in general (and there are low quality exceptions) offer a standard of therapeutic care that will nearly match the more expensive rehabs, but you will not likely get the same intensity and frequency of individual therapy (which is important). The environment, accommodations and

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

facilities will be less impressive, and you may not have as private or luxurious an experience.

AFFORDABLE AND PUBLIC REHABS

0\$ up to close to \$8000 per month

Most non profit publicly run facilities are set up for people without the means to fund a private stay. There are some excellent public and non profit facilities, but they generally suffer from some funding constraints.

They will not offer as much individual therapy, the allowable stay may be shorter, and there may be a waiting list for admission. The facilities and environment tend to be more institutional, and the accommodations rarely private.

These facilities' operate with the best of intentions but live under continual budget strain and shortfall. There are too many people that need low cost help and not enough beds or professionals to give them all the care they deserve.

Although in general, these facilities offer a lower standard of accommodation and of therapeutic care, there are some very impressive independently funded residential facilities that offer therapeutic care rivaling the better private facilities, and all for low or no cost to the participant.

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2008 Issue

SOBER LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

An often overlooked form of residential care is the sober living residence. Most often used as a transitional phase after detox or after rehab, some people find benefit and sobriety through a direct entry into such a facility. Sober living environments are almost universally very low cost, and a majority do not ask for any money upon admission, although within a reasonable length of time you are expected to find employment and contribute a small monthly rental payment.

These facilities work therapeutically through peer support, very structured rules of living and of conduct, enforced sobriety and a temptation free area of residence and through compulsory and intensive participation in AA or another form of 12 steps programming.

These homes generally only ask that you abide by the rules, attend meetings and don't use drugs or drink; and you can basically stay as long as you'd like. There are many thousands of sober living homes throughout the nation, and unlike low cost rehabs, these often do not maintain a waiting list.

GET THE BEST YOU CAN AFFORD

In general and on average, you get what you pay for, and if you can afford more it's not unreasonable to invest in your sobriety with the best treatment you can reasonably attain. That being said, there are quality treatment facilities in all price

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

ranges, including some providers who offer treatment completely free of charge to those in need.

Ultimately, any treatment is better than nothing, and you've just got to commit to change, participate as best and as honestly as you can in your therapeutic opportunity and stay involved in aftercare for long after graduation. If you do give a full commitment to your sobriety, you have an excellent chance of abstinence and a better life, regardless of where you get help.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 13 10 WAYS TO EVALUATE THE QUALITY OF A REHAB

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

If due to your financial circumstance you do not have the luxury of choice between many available treatment facilities, you can rest assured that any treatment is far preferable to no treatment, and entering into a period of enforced sobriety and therapeutic guidance offers a lot towards a better life of abstinence.

If you do have the luxury of choice between available facilities, you need to evaluate which options offer the highest quality of care and offer the best chance at sobriety; and since many of us considering rehabs have never been in treatment, have no idea what's important and can only access information from a website or from a sales call, we feel very uncertain about how to make the best choice.

There are no guarantees, but here are some tangible and quantitative evaluation measures than may help you to decide which available option offers the highest quality of care, and the best chance of success.

1) Does it enjoy a good reputation?

If possible ask for references and ask around. Better rehabs should be able to provide you with contact information for graduates of their program, and talking with these people can give a better idea of the quality of care and the suitability of the program for you. You should also consider calling your local better business bureau to inquire about any complaints, and ask your doctor or health services provider if they have heard anything good or bad about the rehab.

It only takes a few minutes, and it may save you from a costly mistake.

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Page 86

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

2) Is it clean and organized?

Running a successful and comprehensive rehab is tough, and not everyone does it well. It can be hard to evaluate how well the staff do their jobs therapeutically, but if the staff do not keep the facilities clean and well maintained, they are likely performing poorly in other areas as well.

Ideally, you don't want treatment at a facility where staff are overwhelmed, overworked and underpaid. If you have difficulty getting basic information on the phone, if staff do not return your phone calls in a timely matter, or if you do not feel as though you are being treated with respect, you may want to think twice.

If staff cannot provide you with information you need in a courteous manner before treatment starts, you cannot hope to receive care and information once in treatment in a manner any different. You are sick, you deserve respect and compassion, and you deserve treatment at a facility that will treat you well.

3) Is the facility accredited?

You may not have the luxury of deciding between facilities, but if you do, try to find an accredited facility employing professional addictions staff.

An unaccredited facility is not necessarily poor quality, but without accreditation you have no way of knowing how well they perform therapeutically, and whether or not they meet basic governmental regulations on therapeutic care. Accredited

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2008 Issue

facilities will need to offer services with proven effectiveness, need to employ qualified and licensed professionals and will receive regular evaluations from governmental agencies to ensure that standards are being met.

Accreditation does not necessarily signify a very high standard of care, but it does protect against a very low standard of care.

4) Does the facility offer a number of distinct forms of therapies?

No one form of treatment works well for all addicts in recovery, and better residential rehabs will generally offer a few very distinct forms of programming to better ensure that at least one therapy works for most.

If you go to a rehab that offers only 12 steps programming, and you find that you cannot relate to the 12 steps, you are not likely to receive much of value from your stay. Look for rehabs that offer a range of therapies including, 12 steps based, group recovery, individual therapy, cognitive behavioral therapies, and ideally, peripheral therapies such as equine therapy, yoga, karate, meditation and others. The more that's offered; the better the chances.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

5) What does the daily schedule look like?

You have a big job to do and not much time to get it done, and you can't afford to waste your days in a leisurely manner while in treatment. Ask to see the weekly schedule, and look for a program of therapies and events that fills each and every day. Beware of rehabs that offer too much private reflection, free time or personal meditation time. In small amounts these are all beneficial, but in greater amounts simply indicate a low intensity of more valuable therapies.

6) What's the completion rate?

Relying on so called success rates can be misleading. Facilities measure success differently, and some may not make much of an effort to really find out about relapse so as to keep their success statistics high. Treatment completion rates tell you a lot more. In general, the longer you stay in rehab the better your eventful prognosis, and a facility that boasts a very high completion rate likely offers a high success rate as well.

You don't want to enter in to a rehab where most people won't stay until the end of programming. No rehab can offer 100%, and adults are always free to leave if they wish, but rehabs with very low completion rates may have fundamental problems with the staff or programming, and may not be a good choice for your recovery.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

7) Can family get involved?

Family participation in the therapies of rehab proves very beneficial to long term sobriety, and if possible you want to get your family into the rehab facility, and actively participating in education and therapies that are proven to work.

Some longer term rehabs may limit family participation for the first period of care, which is fine; but if possible, you should select a facility that will at some point involve your family in a meaningful way.

8) Do they medicate?

No one therapy works well alone, and for the best chance of success you need to have access to a comprehensive range of tools against relapse. No medications currently available against relapse work well on their own, but when combined with therapies and education, these medications do offer additional assistance towards sobriety. If possible, look for a facility that can offer you pharmacological therapies when appropriate.

Medications may also help to alleviate the physical and psychological pains of withdrawal, and are especially needed for patients with even minor forms of dual diagnosis.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

9) How much aftercare is offered?

Nothing keeps recovering addicts sober better than a long and intense participation in therapies of aftercare following the graduation from a residential facility. The initial weeks and months of freedom offer great temptations, and the success rates for people who do not maintain aftercare therapies are low.

The longer the aftercare is offered, the better.

10) Does the philosophy of care match your beliefs?

If you're not a Christian, even the most comprehensive and high quality Christian based rehab will not offer much of therapeutic value. You need to ensure that you get into treatment that matches you beliefs, that resonates with your cultural background, and that treats you with respect, regardless of your race, gender or sexuality.

GET THE BEST YOU CAN

If you have insurance or money to pay for private care, you should ensure that any facility under consideration satisfies all concerns, and answers all of the preceding questions well. If you can pay, you can go anywhere, and you have no reason to settle for anything less than a perfect fit.

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2008 Issue

If you cannot pay, and are reliant on subsidized or charitable care, you will not enjoy the same number of options and you may be forced to make some compromises. Try to select a facility that answers as many of the preceding question criteria well as possible, and remember that any treatment is far preferable to no treatment.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 14 ONE WAY TO SPOT A LOW QUALITY REHAB

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

It's always heartbreaking to watch a teen who you remember as a still tottering child get caught up in drug abuse and addiction, and although it's tragic, it's sadly common; and hundreds of thousands of families face similar challenges in the home.

Drug abuse and addiction very rarely get better without intervention and professional help, and once you decide to intervene and get residential drug or alcohol rehab treatment for your struggling child, you are faced with the difficult decision of where to turn for help.

IT'S NOT ONLY ABOUT THE MONEY

Rehab can be very expensive and although price is never your number one concern, we all live within our financial realities and you can only afford what you can afford; but once you have determined what your insurance provider will cover and how much you can contribute, you are still likely left with a list of several available and local rehabs from which to choose from.

Most private drug rehabs for teens offer an excellent standard of care, and are staffed by committed and caring professionals. Unfortunately, there are some operators who do not run programs with the best interest of your child in mind, and attempt to maximize profits at the expense of treatment care. You need to ensure that your son or daughter doesn't waste their time, energy and hope at a substandard rehab.

ONE EASY WAY TO JUDGE THE QUALITY OF A DRUG OR ALCOHOL REHAB

There are a number of ways that you can evaluate the quality of a facility, and factors such as the quality of education, the degree of individual therapy offered, and the level of family participation are all extremely relevant; but a very simple

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

way to get a feel for the quality of a rehab is simply by listening to the questions they do or don't ask on the phone.

Any treatment center that claims that they can offer treatment assistance to all in need is either hopelessly optimistic, or more likely, more interested in an admissions check that in the quality of care.

There are some teens, with certain special needs who, will not benefit from the treatments and therapies at a standard drug rehab facility, and a quality rehab should ask certain pre screening questions to ensure that they are capable of providing quality care to each individual patient.

Teen drug rehabs should want to know about any history of violence or anti social behavior and they should want to know about academic performance or learning disabilities. They will almost certainly want to understand the level of abuse they are going to be confronted with, and they should also want to know about family or other social problems.

These are all normal pre assessment questions that quality rehabs will ask to ensure that they are equipped to provide quality care; and if they don't ask them, maybe they don't care.

IF THEY DON'T ASK, THEY DON'T CARE

No one treatment facility is right for everyone and no quality rehab would ever try to provide therapies beneficial to every type of patient; they could never do an adequate job. If a rehab does not want substantial background information, this is a very bad sign and very likely indicates a lower quality rehab, maybe more interested in your money than your child.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

It's not the only way to evaluate a rehab for teens, but it is an easy and informative way to eliminate treatment facilities that may not have your best interests at heart.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 15 THE BIGGEST RISK TO SOBRIETY AFTER REHAB

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The professionals working in rehabs have seen a lot; a lot of pain, a lot of inspiration, and also a lot of eventual relapse, even for those with such an initially great chance at sobriety. They'll tell you that one of the biggest threats to sobriety after rehab is overconfidence.

The day you decide you no longer need aftercare therapies, no longer need to go to meetings, no longer need to see a psychologist; that is the day that the trouble often begins. You may believe that you are ready, that you have beaten your addiction and that you no longer need to spend so much time in therapy; but they'll tell you you're wrong, and they KNOW what relapse looks like.

YOU'RE NEVER READY IN THE FIRST YEAR

Of course there may come a time down the road when you no longer need aftercare therapy, but that time will never come during the first year of sobriety, and probably shouldn't occur for far longer than that. Maintaining sobriety is very difficult, and just by looking at the relapse rates of even the best of drug rehabs you can see how elusive long term sobriety can be. Yet those people that do heed professional advice and that do maintain a commitment to long term participation in aftercare have a much higher recovery rate, and are far less likely to be reenrolling in drug or alcohol rehab for another pass at the same lessons of recovery.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

WHAT IS AFTERCARE?

Aftercare simply means continuing therapy after a residential period of stay, and it does not necessarily signify any particular form of therapy; but a few of the more common forms of aftercare therapy are a continuing participation in 12 steps group meetings, a continuing participation in peer support groups, and continuing sessions with a therapist.

Most better rehabs will offer a long period of aftercare therapy as a part of the admission price, but far too many graduates of a drug or alcohol rehab fail to make use of these vital ties to sobriety, and a failure to maintain aftercare therapy is significantly correlated with relapse.

By maintaining a regular and frequent participation in aftercare therapy, the lessons of rehab are consolidated in response to the actual realities of temptation and cravings on the outside; and through the support of professionals and other addicts in recovery, you can work through those temptations threatening sobriety in a healthy, effective and constructive way.

Aftercare does not necessarily need to occur at a drug or alcohol rehab, and any continuing therapy after residential rehab is considered aftercare; but there is an advantage to maintaining therapy at a rehab. After a month or more of intense and honest therapy you will have likely developed working and trusting relationships with professionals and other addicts in recovery, and working with these same people through the initial months of sobriety often makes the most sense.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

While maintaining individual sessions with a therapist you can also modify your relapse prevention plan to accurately reflect the threats to your sobriety as they emerge after rehab, and discuss ways that triggers to abuse can be minimized and temptations countered.

AFTERCARE ISN'T A "MONEY MAKER"

Drug rehab is big business, and there is no denying that these facilities need your enrolment and your admissions checks for continuing operations, but aftercare is generally different. Most better rehab facilities include a long term participating in aftercare as a part of the price of entry, and they do this knowing how important a lengthy participation in therapy is. Aftercare is generally free of charge to graduates of a rehab; it is not offered as a "money maker" and is offered because it is so vitally important. Whether you go or you don't, they have already been paid and they continue to offer therapy only out of a real commitment to your success.

You go to drug rehab because you need help, because you can't beat an addiction on your own; and few can. You enroll in drug rehab to benefit from professional advice on recovery, and if you're serious about sobriety you'll listen to what's said and try to make a significant change in your life. But too many people, although they pay a lot to get this professional advice, fail to listen when these same professionals stress the importance of continuing participation in aftercare.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

TAKE THE ADVICE OF OTHER ADDICTS IN RECOVERY

Listen to your therapist, listen to those addicts with a few years of sobriety; and take their message seriously. They tell you that aftercare is important for a reason; no one makes much money off of it, and since there is little commercial motivation to get you into aftercare, you can generally believe their recommendations of aftercare as an unbiased truth.

Continuing to abuse drugs or alcohol without seeking help is tragic, but so too is ignoring the advice of those people who know about addiction, want to help you; and so strongly recommend a lengthy commitment to aftercare.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 16 FAMILY PARTICIPATION DURING AND AFTER REHAB

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The family is an unwilling participant in the descent into addiction and it only makes sense that they participate on the journey back out. Your participation in the therapies of rehab can make a huge difference to the recovering addict, and your educated support after rehab can make the difference between sobriety and relapse.

WHY FAMILY NEEDS TO BE A PART OF THE REHAB PROCESS

No abuse happens without affecting the family, and as such families need to participate in the rehab process, as much to heal themselves as to learn how best to help the addict.

When thinking about what type of rehab facility best fits your needs and wants, make sure you consider how much family involvement you expect in the process. Family involvement can be very beneficial, and when working with trained addictions councilors and in group therapy sessions with other families of recovering addicts; families learn what they can do to help, and what they were never responsible for in the first place.

HEALING THE WHOLE FAMILY

Addiction generally brings out the worst in all of us, and the behaviors associated with addiction can be pretty terrible. You'd think that all the rage and anger of a family would be directed back at the creator of this behavior, but often the negative

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

emotions spread through the family, damaging relationships and trust all the way through. A good rehab facility will begin to heal the family of the addict as it also helps the addict recover from abuse.

FAMILY THERAPY

Some of the specific programs to look for are family drug education programs, whole family sessions with a therapist or psychologist and multi family peer group sessions. To really get the most benefit they should be offered over at least a couple of days, and should ideally occur later in the rehab, after the addict has had time to work out some of their issues by themselves.

The period after rehab ends, when the recovering addict is once again faced with the triggers to abuse and the access to drugs or alcohol, is a very high risk period for abuse; and a loving and supportive family, trained in how best to offer support can be an outstanding tool for any recovering abuser. Through the education and family programs at a rehab facility, family members learn how to offer love and support without enabling the behaviors that can lead to abuse. Family members also learn the limits of their help, and learn that ultimately only the addict can change their behaviors.

Family sessions during rehab help a family to heal the damage too often caused by addiction, and a family therapist, trained in addictions, helps the family to resolve some of the issues created by the abuse, and maybe even some of the family dynamics that could promote further drug or alcohol abuse.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The peer family sessions are always illuminating, and families learn that their suffering is not unique, and the devastation caused by addiction is the rule and not the exception.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION BENEFITS ALL INVOLVED

This family involvement heals the family, and increases the likelihood of a successful reintegration into society for the recovering addict at the end of rehab; and as such, family involvement should be a factor to consider when selecting a rehab facility.

A rehab facility that is too far away from the home, may limit the extent of family involvement, and as such may not be an appropriate choice.

Addiction affects everyone surrounding it, and since the family is affected by the addiction, it makes sense that the family participate in the road to recovery. A weekend will never erase all of the heartache of addiction, but it can put a family on the road to healing, and is almost always a very positive thing.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

HOW FAMILY CAN HELP AFTER REHAB, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

If you ran an intervention, or otherwise convinced a family member to get help, you have done a wonderful thing and should be congratulated, but family assistance and support should never stop with the end of rehab. When the addict is reintegrated into the home and the community after a treatment period, family help and support can be important factors in the ultimate ability of the recovering addict to maintain sobriety.

Ultimately, the decision to stay sober must come from the recovering addict, but there are some things that the family can do to decrease the probability of relapse. Convincing an addict to get the help they need is a great first step to recovery, but recovery doesn't end with rehab. It's going to be tough for them after the end of rehab, and the first months especially are a very high risk period for relapse. Here are some steps you can take to help them recover, steps that might just make all the difference.

GET EDUCATED AND GET INVOLVED

Firstly, the family should be involved in the rehab process, and the family of the recovering addict needs to learn how best to support the addict once home, just as the addict needs to learn how to stay sober. Most recovery and rehab programs will include a family component, and caring family members should make every effort to attend and get the most out of this available resource.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

STAY SOBER WITH THE RECOVERING ADDICT

Secondly, the family needs to make it as easy as possible for the addict to transition back into the home environment and newly sober living. The family should provide a sober and alcohol and drug free environment for the addict, and the house should ideally be emptied of all possible intoxicating substances. A recovering addict can always get drugs or alcohol if they truly want to, but sometimes if it is too readily available, the temptation to use can be overwhelming.

HELP TO REDUCE STRESS IN THE RECOVERING ADDICT'S LIFE

Thirdly, support the addict in all areas of their life. Many recovering addicts relapse in response to stress and due to poor problem solving and coping skills. The recovering addict needs to take responsibility for their life, and this is in fact a part of the healing process; but family members should be available to assist in any area that threatens to overwhelm the recovering addict during their first months of recovery. Whether it's helping with the kids, helping with the bills, or just being there for companionship; family should make these first months as stress free as possible, so the recovering addict can concentrate all of their energy on staying sober.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

DON'T LET A RELAPSE HAPPEN

Lastly, the family needs to take action if they suspect a relapse is imminent. There is no need to wait until after a relapse to act, and if you think that the recovering addict is in danger of using, you need to make sure they get into a safe environment. Sometimes all it takes is a visit and some companionship to get the addict back on the right track.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 17 HELPING TROUBLED TEENS

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Teens so full of promise too often become ensnared within the pain and heartache of addiction, and for parents, watching the decline is tragic. Fortunately, parents never need sit idly by, and active and educated prevention and a strong response is always the best course of action to the threat of teen substance abuse.

Learn how you can prevent experimentation, learn how to recognize the signs of drug use, and learn what types of intervention and treatment are most appropriate for your situation.

Learn when rehab is needed, and learn how to select a facility that's going to work for you. Also learn about the dangers of specific drugs and the peripheral risks of drug abuse.

Get educated, get empowered and start to make a real positive, and in some cases, life-saving difference.

SO HOW CAN I GET THEM TO STOP?

If you know for sure that your teen son or daughter is experimenting with drugs or alcohol, you have to take steps to ensure that they stop their harmful drug taking, and take steps quickly to make sure that the problem doesn't get worse.

Firstly, take it seriously but don't panic.

Even if your teen is using heavily, when you get emotional and when you lose your objectivity, you reduce your ability to affect change and you reduce the chances that your teen will listen to what you say. You may be furious, but you need to act concerned and in control.

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What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Addictions professionals generally recommend that when dealing with drug use, you start with the least intrusive method and move upwards if that doesn't work. If you catch your teen experimenting with marijuana, it's not necessarily the time to send them to drug rehab. That may come later, but only as a last resort.

Start first in the family, if that doesn't work, get some professional outside assistance on an outpatient basis, and if that doesn't work, consider inpatient treatment.

You do have to act and in some cases, when you can see that the problem has become severe and is having harmful consequences, you may want to disregard the above stages of intervention and move directly to professionals help. Additionally, the drug of abuse should also influence your reaction. Teens experimenting with alcohol or marijuana need intervention and they need to stop, but whether they stop this week or the next probably does not make a great deal of difference. If they abuse meth or heroin, you can't allow even one more day of abuse, and you need to take more drastic initial measures

For most teens though, you have a good chance to affect change dealing with the situation within the family.

IN THE FAMILY

You need to start with a real communication of your concerns for their health and well being, and before you start talking, you'd better get informed. Your teen likely

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2008 Issue

has a pretty good body of knowledge about drugs...and probably knows more than you do about them. What they know may not be accurate, but if they think it is and you can't contradict them accurately and reasonably, your words aren't likely to have much impact.

Get educated as to the real risks...and no scaremongering either! You'll lose all credibility if you blow the risks out of proportion, and since the real damages done by substance abuse are legitimate and serious, you have no need to lessen your credibility with half truths your teen will very likely spot from a mile away.

Explain the risks, explain your concerns, and explain the family policy on drug use once again. Explain how things are going to change because of their drug use (drug tests, curfews?) and explain clearly and rationally what the consequences for further experimentation or use are. Be prepared to follow through in full with any promised disciplinary consequences.

By talking rationally and with concern your teen is far more likely to listen to what you say, and less likely to react defensively or in anger. Be prepared to reward your teen for an improvement in behaviors. It can be tough to rest the pulls to abuse, especially when friends are all "doing it" and if they can stay off drugs and alcohol, they deserve credit and reward for doing so.

If it becomes apparent that drug use continues after your attempts to keep things in the family, it's time to enlist professional help.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

PROFESSIONAL HELP

Find an experienced family or teen therapist with knowledge of addiction issues, and get your teen participating in some drug counseling. If use has not yet become addiction, brief professional interventions can have a very significant bettering influence on behaviors, and a few sessions of individual and whole family counseling can leave all involved better empowered to deal appropriately with the situation.

Counseling can be expensive, but it's far less costly than inpatient care, and if it can better the situation, it is definitely money well spent.

In addition to individual counseling, you may want to get your teen participating in group support therapy and in teen specific NA or AA

INPATIENT CARE

Getting your teen into rehab should be a last resort, but when it's obviously needed you need to act with confidence and strength to get your teen into a program that's going to make a difference. If nothing else you try seems to have much influence, you can't expect the problem to go away on its own, and you need to take serious steps to protect your teen.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Teen specific drug rehab offers your child the most intense therapies, a necessary and enforced period of sobriety away from access to marijuana and enough time for them to gain a little self awareness and control over their drug seeking behaviors.

You need to stay actively involved in the process for the best chance of success though. Teens are little removed from the kids they recently were, and although they can act tough, they still need the support and love from mom and dad when going through challenging phases of life. Involved parental participation and loving support throughout the rehab process has been proven to exert the single greatest influence over the likelihood of eventual rehab success.

DON'T PANIC - DO ACT

You must take serious action when you find your teen experimenting with drugs and alcohol, but for the best chance of success you need to stay in control, get educated and take the steps that are going to work. Have the courage to do what's needed, even when it gets difficult. Teens are still little more than children, and although they need and deserve some additional freedoms, they require our protection and support from life's challenges and pitfalls.

Very few parents ever look back regretfully from an overreaction to the threat of drug use, but far too many parents, whose kids get trapped in the web of addiction, wish that they had acted before things got bad, and while they still had a real chance to make a difference.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Your kids may now resent your actions to protect them, but they'll thank you for it later.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 18 Don't Send a Teenager to an Adult Rehab

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Teens have enough to deal with during the formative years of adolescence, and when they compound these difficulties with substance abuse, it's not surprising that they can get in over their heads. Teen treatment requirements are unique and must be age appropriate; teens do very poorly in any form of general adult rehab.

But when given the opportunity to conquer their problems in a treatment facility purposefully designed for teen treatment, that combines the essential participation of the family with effective therapies; and one that treats adolescent developmental concerns as an integral aspect of the healing process; teens respond very well and gain a great opportunity to get their lives full of promise back on the right track.

PARENTS NEED TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE

Although it doesn't always feel like it, parents continue to play the singular most important role of influence in their teen children's lives, and that influence must continue through the days of treatment and therapy for a rehab stay to have any real chance of success. Participation can never end with phone calls and parents need to get actively involved, get into family therapy sessions and learn to support the recovering addict as they also begin to heal the wounds that characterize any family addiction experience.

NOT A VACATION FROM SCHOOL

A teen rehab must offer educational support to addicts in recovery. Rehab is not a vacation from responsibilities, and since teen substance abusers often fall behind

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Page 117

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

their peers academically, rehab education offers them a chance to catch up. Rehab schooling offers low student to teacher ratios, and students can get the kind of individual attention and tailored curricula they need to once again excel in the classroom.

DISCIPLINE - COMPASSIONED BUT FIRM

Teen rehabs must provide loving, but very firm discipline. A great many teens suffering through substance abuse and addiction respond to their trials with poor behaviors and an inappropriate response to legitimate figures of authority. Teen rehab counselors understand why teen addicts act as they do and do not react emotionally to outbursts of inappropriate behavior, but neither are these inappropriate behaviors tolerated. Teens coming out of rehab will have learned better how to deal with authority in a constructive and healthy way, and be far more able to participate effectively in school, on the job and in life.

TEENS SHARING WITH TEENS

Teens recover best with other teens. Group therapy gives a voice to teens feeling silenced, and through a collective exploration of the trials of adolescence and addiction, shared strategies to success are learned, and comfort taken from the knowledge of shared pains and difficulties. Working with a therapist also empowers teens to retake control over their lives and actions, and through intensive therapy, teens learn why they act and feel as they do, and how they can choose do better.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Cognitive strategies work for all addicts in recovery, but help teen addicts especially to avoid relapse. Cognitive educational seminars give teens the tools they need to minimize relapse provoking temptation in their lives, and even to avoid the kind of thinking that can get them into trouble.

TEENS WILL RESPOND WELL WHEN GIVEN A CHANCE

Teens show remarkable resilience to the troubles of addiction, and when given professional and appropriate assistance, respond with great changes in behaviors and attitudes.

Growing up is hard, teens are vulnerable, and sometimes they need a little help. Once an addiction presents there is little point in willing it away, and substance abuse problems very rarely get better on their own. Teens respond far better to treatment when they get it early. Waiting for too long before taking action only entrenches addiction, and increases the difficulties of treatment.

Teen substance abusers can get better; they want to lead a great life and hunger to fill all the promise of their potential. Don't let an early addiction derail their lives, get them help, and get them better...they'll thank you for it.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 19 REHAB FOR PEOPLE WITH UNIQUE NEEDS

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Rehab should never be generic, never a one size fits all solution to your problems; and this applies particularly to people within certain sub groups.

Are seniors too old for rehab? Can pregnant women get prenatal care in rehab, and are the needs of Gay and Lesbian addicts met in conventional and mixed sexuality facilities?

What about patients with a dual diagnosis of mental health challenges and addiction, where can they go, and what special treatments do they need?

Rehab is not a cookie cutter situation, and even when segregating people into subgroups, specialized rehabs do not necessarily provide appropriate care to the each individual's needs; but read on to learn more about some of the specific concerns facing seniors, gays and lesbians, dual diagnosis patients and pregnant women, and learn what a rehab needs to provide to offer the kind of care that's going to work.

REHAB FOR DUAL DIAGNOSIS PATIENTS

It goes both ways, patients experiencing psychiatric symptoms are far more likely to have a dual diagnosis of substance abuse, and substance abusers are far more likely to find themselves dealing with a dual diagnosis of depression, anxiety or another psychiatric condition.

It's incredibly common for patients entering into residential rehab to need some form of psychiatric care for a dual diagnosis, and for any real chance at success, it's imperative that these patients get help at a facility well equipped to deliver the

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

unique care that dual diagnosis patients need; both to conquer an addiction, but also to start feeling better mentally as well.

Unless the psychiatric symptoms present with real severity, most healthcare professionals recommend an initial recovery in a drug rehab, as long as that rehab offers programming with awareness to the specific needs of the dual diagnosis patient. The elimination of drugs or alcohol can cause an immediate betterment of psychiatric symptoms, and from a base of sobriety, the problems of the co-occurring disorders can be far more effectively tackled.

WHAT TYPES OF UNIQUE CARE DO DUAL DIAGNOSIS PATIENT NEED FROM A REHAB FACILITY?

A COMPREHENSIVE PRE ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

To offer effective care, rehab professionals need to know exactly what psychiatric symptoms present. These experienced and presented symptoms vary greatly with each patient, and to ensure safety and appropriate therapies, the pre intake assessment needs to be both comprehensive and intensive. Dual diagnosis addicts are notoriously inaccurate with self descriptions of symptoms and of drug taking behaviors, and to ensure a truthful and complete overview of the situation, outside medical staff involved in the case history should be invited to contribute to the care plan, as should the family.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

This pre intake assessment ensures that treatments start from day one with an awareness of the unique challenges facing each individual patient, and that all patients receive the types of therapies likely to offer the greatest benefit.

DETOX

Depending on the drug of abuse, the severity of the addiction, and the medications used in the treatment of psychiatric symptoms; the period of detox can present with some very unique challenges. Detox professionals need to be aware of possible medication interaction effects, aware of how psychiatric symptoms may interact with the symptoms of detox, and be especially vigilant to any great worsening in psychiatric symptoms and the potential risks of harm to self or others.

TREATMENT

For best results, dual diagnosis patients need integrated and comprehensive treatment for both the addiction and the symptoms of illness together. Although separate entities, these two problems interplay and influence one another, and without bettering both diseases, there is little chance of long term sobriety.

Dual diagnosis patients benefit from all of the standard therapies of drug and alcohol rehab, but they need additional psychiatric consultations and a close monitoring of their symptoms, with an adjustment of medications if necessary.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

AFTERCARE

Dual diagnosis patients can and do get better, but the treatment is certainly more challenging. Family needs to be patient and allow for a full stay of residence, and even after the completion of rehab ensure a full and active participation in aftercare therapies, therapies that greatly increase the probability of success.

Depending on the severity of the symptoms, the recovering dual diagnosis addict may benefit from the assignment of a case worker, someone who will check on progress made through the initial months after rehab, and someone ready to intervene should relapse seem imminent.

GET HELP

The dangers inherent in a dual addiction and psychiatric condition demand that treatment proceed without delay. Drugs and alcohol can reduce the efficacy of prescription medications, and they can also increase psychiatric symptoms severity. As symptoms get worse, the natural response is ever greater self medication through drugs or alcohol; a downward spiral with no positive outcomes without intervention

Unfortunately, because of the additional difficulties in treating dual diagnosis patients, low cost and free options are more limited. They do exist, and if you are in financial need make sure you try your county health office for any assistance they

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

may be able to provide, and if they can't help you they may know of a low cost facility that can.

Rehab for Gays and Lesbians

For best odds at recovery, generally, addictions professionals recommend that people participate in therapies and group meetings with people of similar backgrounds and belief systems to themselves.

In response to this and to meet a rising need for rehab and treatment within the gay and lesbian communities, there are increasing numbers of gay and lesbian specific rehab facilities available across the nation.

But do gay and lesbian addicts and alcoholics require a separate facility for recovery, or can they benefit as well within a facility of mixed sexuality?

WHY IS THERE SUCH A PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE WITHIN THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITIES?

Estimates have the numbers of gays and lesbians who struggle with substance abuse and addiction from twice to three times the rate of the general population, and obviously the needs of gays and lesbians need to be taken into account for us to better this sad figure of dependency.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Gay community leaders speculate that there are a number of reasons why addiction and abuse is of particular concern within the population...reasons such as feelings of discrimination and feelings of sexual repression, the overuse of alcohol serving venues as gay friendly community places and the widespread use of crystal meth within the gay clubbing community.

DO GAY AND LESBIAN ADDICTS BENEFIT FROM ANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF THERAPY?

Interview based studies with gay and lesbian alcoholics and drug addicts in recovery reveals that as long as the individual feels comfortable to discuss openly issues of sexuality and how they pertain to addiction within a conventional rehab environment, then any type of facility will provide good support and treatment.

Gay and Lesbian addicts report that they appreciate having therapists and other addictions professionals address their lifestyle and sexuality issues directly.

WHAT ARE THE REHAB OPTIONS AVAILABLE?

Gay and lesbian substance abusers can get treatment either at a gay and lesbian exclusive rehab facility, or at a mixed sexuality facility; but one that observes a determined tolerance and freedom of expression towards all genders and sexualities.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Advocates of both argue the relative merits of each, and it seems that either type of facility can offer good support and treatment, and it simply comes down to an individual comfort level. If you do not feel comfortable discussing personal issues in a mixed sexuality environment, then a gay specific rehab may be the better choice, but if you are comfortable contributing openly and honestly within a mixed a facility then you may have more options available to you.

Ultimately, as long as the staff and participating patients maintain an attitude of respect and tolerance towards all, then any type of treatment center should be fine. Unfortunately, not all rehabs do offer this level of tolerance, and you should inquire as to the training and philosophy of the staff in regards to gay and lesbian specific issues.

Many faith based options in particular may not be appropriate for gays and lesbians in recovery

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

Drug Rehab For Pregnant Women; 5 Unique Therapies Are Needed

Nothing provides a greater opportunity for positive change and the risk of real tragedy than a pregnancy in a substance abusing woman.

The damage done to the unborn child through the continuing use and abuse of drugs or alcohol devastates that child throughout their natural life. The teratogensic effects of substance abuse on the unborn child are a completely preventable tragedy, and we must all do whatever possible to avert this damage.

In many sad cases, the mother to be does not know of her pregnancy until much damage has been done, or even worse, knows of the pregnancy but is unable or unwilling to stop the use and abuse of drugs or alcohol.

Fortunately, many women take pregnancy as a motivation to change their behaviors, if only to protect the health of their unborn child; and to best ensure success when the stakes are so high, pregnant women needing drug or alcohol treatment need to consider residential rehab.

Unfortunately, although pregnant women seem deserving of immediate treatment above all others, the additional complications of treating pregnant women greatly limits the number of available facilities willing or able to take them in.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

PREGNANT WOMEN NEED:

1) Safe Detox

Both the bodily stresses of withdrawal as well as certain medications used to ease detox symptoms can harm the fetus. Pregnant women need to detox in a facility aware of the unique health needs of pregnant women.

2) Intense and Comprehensive Drug Therapies

The personal toll of relapse extends to the fetus, and to ensure a successful period of treatment pregnant women need intensive and comprehensive therapies; ideally incorporating an intense period of one-on-one therapy and other group and cognitive therapies.

3) Prenatal Care and Education

All pregnant women deserve adequate prenatal care, and all unborn children benefit from appropriate medical management of a pregnancy. Pregnant women substance abusers often enter into treatment in imperfect health, and as such the risks to the fetus are proportionally greater. Comprehensive prenatal care within a

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

residential drug treatment facility offers both the mother and child the best chance of health and happiness.

4) Parenting Classes

Drugs don't discriminate, and a substance abuse problem indicates nothing about a woman's background, level of education or future capabilities as a parent; but all women benefit from parenting education, and since mothers newly struggling with sobriety face challenges above and beyond the normal mothering experience, they benefit greatly from parenting education and learned strategies.

5) Intensive Aftercare

The single greatest predictor of long term success and sobriety is an intense and lengthy participation in offered aftercare therapies; with the stakes of relapse so high, pregnant women need intense and frequent aftercare and ideally case management observation.

What has potential for tragedy can turn to beauty if a substance abusing women uses a pregnancy as a motivation for change and treatment. Pregnant women need the most intensive care possible, they need it right away and they need it for as long as necessary.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

ARE SENIORS TOO OLD FOR REHAB?

For any number of reasons, older adults and seniors are increasingly at risk for alcohol abuse and dependence...and as the baby boomers move into old age, the once very rare occurrence of senior drub abuse is becoming increasingly common.

Older adults and seniors may develop substance abuse problems as a coping mechanism to some of the trials and difficulties of aging, as a response to the death of a spouse, or in response to declining health and mobility; but drug or alcohol abuse in seniors is very problematic.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF SENIOR ALCOHOL ABUSE?

As people age they lose the ability to effectively metabolize consumed alcohol, and they are far more affected by limited consumption. A few drinks in an older person can have serious effects, both intoxicating, and physically destructive.

Seniors lose the ability to regenerate cells damaged by alcohol, and their internal organs, systems and mind are more prone to the detrimental effects of chronic alcohol consumption.

They are more likely to experience cognitive impairments, liver and heart damage and a general lack of health and wellbeing. They are also increasingly susceptible to accompanying psychiatric conditions such as depression or anxiety.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The risks of intoxication also include a lack of coordination, the risks of a fall, and possibly the risks of broken bones or other injuries that may reduce mobility and lessen quality of life.

Because older adults tend to take more prescription medications, the risks for negative drug interactions increase, and with interactions come a greater risk for acute and chronic damage, as well as overdose.

WHY DO SENIORS SO RARELY GET HELP FOR ALCOHOL ABUSE?

Although seniors represent an at-risk cohort for substance abuse, they are seriously under represented in treatment programs; for a number of reasons.

Seniors self report feeling shame and guilt for abuse behaviors, and will very rarely initiate treatment on their own. They are also less likely to get noticed for their problem drinking, less likely to have a DUI and less likely to have problems with work or the law; basically, they generally drink in the home, and in secret.

Family is also often reluctant to intervene. Too many otherwise concerned and caring family members do not intervene even when the reality of a problem is clear to all. Many people mistaken believe that they do a kindness by allowing seniors their "comfort" of intoxication. They may also feel embarrassment or may be unsure about treatment options at such a late stage in life.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

The reality is by not intervening you rob them of a chance for a better life. You condemn them to a shortened lifespan, to greater health problems, to greater cognitive impairments and to more psychiatric distress. Allowing someone to continue with alcohol or drug abuse is never a kindness.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR SENIOR ALCOHOL ABUSE?

Older adults and seniors do remarkably well in treatment when they do get help. They are far more likely to finish initiated therapies, and maintain a full participation in aftercare, and have a better than average success rate of abstinence.

Any treatment that is effective for younger adults will work well for older adults, whether it is on an in or outpatient basis.

Seniors often feel more comfortable when receiving treatment and therapy amongst peer of a similar age, but research indicates that this is not necessary, and recovery rates are similar even when in general adult rehab or treatment.

Be Kind to Grandma or Grandpa

You would never let a younger family member drink themselves to death without intervening, and you owe older relatives the same courtesy and compassion. It is never too late for help.

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

CHAPTER 20 THE FAMILY NEEDS TO CARE FOR ITSELF AS IT TAKES CARE OF THE ADDICT

What You Should Know About Treatment, Usage and Effects of Marijuana

2008 Issue

You can't do it for them, but by offering educated support you increase the probability of long term sobriety and an ultimately happy outcome for everyone. Addiction often causes pain throughout the family, and the effects of addiction can ripple through the family for a long while even after sobriety is achieved. The family may also need to heal itself, and sometimes professional family counseling, or family addiction peer group support services are very beneficial in this healing process.

Recovery is ongoing, and although it tends to get easier with time, the family will need to be there for a while; doing everything they can to help the recovering addict stay sober.

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS WELL

ALANON

You're no good to anyone if you break down. You need to get support, get educated and learn what you can do, and what you can never change. Al Anon can help.

Watching a loved one destroy themselves with drugs or alcohol can devastate, and although you don't drink or drug, you suffer greatly as a spectator; and also suffer through the negative behaviors of the abuser. You need to ensure that your health and well being are well cared for, and you are little help to anyone if you fall apart from the stress of it all. An organization with a long history of support for the families of alcoholics and drug addicts is al anon.

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Al Anon is an organization that treats the concerns of family living with an actively using addict or alcoholics. Al Anon teaches what can and cannot be done to influence changes in drug seeking behaviors, and teaches family strategies that can both help an addict or alcoholic concede to treatment, and also allow you to live a happier and less worried life, even if your loved one doesn't stop using.

They can be a fantastic resource of education, of support and of comfort, and you can find an Al Anon meeting anywhere in the nation.

Find a Meeting Near You:

www.al-anon.alateen.org