

Student Assistance Program Resource Guide

A Step-by-Step Guide to Obtaining Substance Use Treatment for Your Teen

You have discovered your teen is using substances or you have noticed changes that are worrying you. You are not alone! When parenting an adolescent, substance use is one of our greatest fears. When it becomes a reality, it can be overwhelming to address the issue. Where do you start? We developed this guide to help you understand the steps you can take to address your teen's substance use.

While any substance use by youth can have negative consequences, the development of a substance use disorder, or addiction, is a real concern. Some teens have more risk factors for developing a substance use disorder than others.

When teens have a genetic family history of addiction, begin their use at a young age, or struggle with other behavioral health conditions, their substance use becomes even more concerning. It is important for parents to be on the lookout for signs of substance use so an intervention can happen as soon as possible. Here are some **signs and symptoms that MAY indicate problematic substance use in your teen:**



Physical Changes	Personality Changes	Productivity Changes	Communication Changes	Friends, Clothing & Interest Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight gain or loss • Increase or decrease in appetite • Increase or decrease in sleep • Heightened sensitivity of senses • Bloodshot eyes • Smells of alcohol, marijuana, or cigarettes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More irritable • Less affectionate • Secretive • Paranoid • Unpredictable • Moody • Hostile • Depressed • Uncooperative • Apathetic • Withdrawn • Easily provoked • Overly sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tardy or absent from school • Late for classes • Not completing homework • Refuses to do any work • Insists teachers are unfair • Sleeps in class • Daydreaming frequently • Drop in grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes defensive when discussing potential drug use • Refuses to talk about any interests of friends • Strongly depends on peer group • Negative view of parents • Uses bad language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New group of friends • Style of clothing changes • Wears drug-related clothing or accessories • Begins dressing like new friends • Less interested in school • Quits activities/sports • Does not want to talk about new peer group

Steps for Accessing Help



STEP1 – Talk to your teen.

The goal is to have a conversation, not a confrontation. The Partnership to End Addiction has a wonderful resource (<https://drugfree.org/article/start-talking>) to walk you through steps for an effective conversation, including setting the stage, remaining calm, facilitating the dialogue, working through barriers, and keeping the momentum going. If you feel your teen needs help, but they are resistant, try these steps (<https://drugfree.org/article/suggesting-treatment>) to motivate change.

STEP2 – Obtain an Assessment.

Discovering your teen is using substances can be scary and overwhelming. Don't know how to help them? Ask the professionals. Trained professionals can conduct Behavioral Health Assessments and will provide recommendations on the most appropriate next steps to help your teen. To access an assessment in your community, check to see if your teen's school has resources listed on their website or contact their school counselor. You can also visit SAMHSA (<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>) or Psychology Today (www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists) and use their search engines to find local support.

The following are a list of possible options that might be recommended to you following an assessment. These are listed from least to most intense levels of care.

Early Intervention

Early intervention is the lowest level of care and focuses on providing education for those using substances who may be at risk for developing a substance use disorder if changes are not made. This education may take place one-on-one with a provider, in a small group with other teens, or even in a classroom setting. The goal is to motivate your

teen to make positive changes and learn healthier alternatives to substance use.

Outpatient Treatment

Outpatient treatment programs can vary in type and intensity and can occur anywhere between one to nine (1-9) hours per week. Generally, an individual meets with a clinician for individualized counseling to address substance use concerns and co-occurring issues. Outpatient counseling may also include a group component. The individual remains at home and school during this time and arranges office-based or virtual sessions with the clinician/therapist/counselor.

Intensive Outpatient (IOP)/Partial Hospitalization (PHP)

Intensive outpatient and partial hospitalization also occur while your teen is still living at home with you, however more hours are devoted to treatment than in outpatient. IOP is for those with more complex symptoms who may also have mental health concerns. IOP may include individual, group, family therapy, and drug testing. It occurs approximately nine hours per week for several weeks in the afterschool or evening hours.

Partial hospitalization programs are sometimes recommended for teens with complex substance use disorders or co-occurring mental health disorders that do not require 24-hour care. In partial hospitalization programs, treatment takes place during the day for up to six hours a day with a total of 20 or more hours per week. Time for school studies is often built into the program schedule.

Residential/Inpatient

In Residential/Inpatient treatment programs, clients live on-site for 24/7 care. Program length is usually between 28 and 90 days. Days are structured to include therapy, medical care, and time to address the individual's overall health and wellness.

Steps for Accessing Help

If you are interested in getting an idea of what level of care your teen might need, you can visit the following link and answer the 13-question assessment tool from Shatterproof.
www.treatmentatlas.org/assessment

STEP3 – Based on recommendations, research providers that meet your needs.

Finding a provider that meets your location and financial needs, and who will connect well with your teen can take some research. Many parents find the best providers for their teen through recommendations from someone they trust, such as a fellow parent who has been in their shoes, their pediatrician, or their teen's school counselor. Doing your research when looking for a provider is important. Here are some questions to consider as you are researching the best provider for your teen.

Outpatient/IOP/Partial Hospitalization Program

1. What are the credentials of the provider?
2. Does the provider treat co-occurring substance use and mental health issues?
3. Does the provider specialize or have training/education in the treatment of substance use disorder?
4. Do they offer individual, family, and/or group therapy?
5. What are the hours of operation?
6. Does the provider accept your insurance or offer a sliding scale fee? What are the out-of-pocket expenses?
7. Are they within a reasonable distance to make treatment there a possibility?
8. Do they have experience working with teens?
9. Do they offer a diverse representative and culturally responsive staff and treatment approach?
10. Do they meet your family's language needs?

Residential Treatment:

1. Is the treatment center accredited by an independent behavioral health body (i.e. CARF)?
2. Do they have a full continuum of care including assessment, detox, treatment, extended care, relapse, and aftercare support?
3. Does their assessment include co-occurring substance use and mental health issues?



4. What is their recommended length of treatment?
5. If detox is needed, what type of program do they offer; medical (physicians and RNs), medically assisted, or alternative (herbal)?
6. Does their on-site treatment team include a psychiatrist, Board Certified Addiction Medicine doctors, Registered Nurses, and staff trained in trauma-informed practices?
7. What types of clinical treatment do they offer? (i.e., DBT, CBT, trauma-informed)
8. What specialty groups are offered? (i.e., anger, grief, body image, LGBTQ issues)
9. Is there a family program and how is it structured?
10. Is the family involved in decision-making, the treatment process, and the recovery phase?
11. Is the treatment gender separate? Does the program meet your teen's gender identity needs?
12. Can they work with your teen's school to allow them to maintain their academic status?
13. What services are offered to address needs for wellness, nutrition, and spirituality?
14. What services are offered to support on-going recovery? Do you leave with a post-treatment plan?
15. What is the cost of the treatment program and are all the services included?
16. Does the treatment center accept insurance, offer a sliding scale fee, or offer any financial scholarships? What will your out-of-pocket expense be?
17. Do they offer a diverse representative and culturally responsive staff and treatment approach?
18. Do they meet your family's language needs?

Steps for Accessing Help

STEP 4 – Set up an intake appointment with the chosen provider and begin treatment.

STEP 5 – Get support for yourself.

Navigating these steps can be challenging. Don't go through it alone. There are many free support groups and resources out there to assist you in getting help for your teen, and yourself. Here are a few to consider:

- Caron's Parent and Family Support Groups
www.caron.org/support-groups/parent-and-family-support-groups
(Your teen does not need to be a Caron patient to attend)
- My Child & Addiction: Parent-to-Parent Podcast
www.caron.org/parent-podcast-series
- SMART Recovery www.smartrecovery.org
- Satell Children and Teens Program (Sibling Support)
www.caron.org/family-treatment/satell-family-children-and-teens-program
- Alcoholics Anonymous Family Groups (Al-Anon)
www.al-anon.org
- Narcotics Anonymous Family Groups (Nar-Anon)
www.nar-anon.org

STEP 6 – Trust the process.

Sometimes as parents, our instincts to trust and protect our teen can cause us to second-guess every move we make. That is why you need to connect your teen with professionals you can trust. Once you've established a provider that you can be open and honest with, that person or team can ensure your teen is getting the level of care they need and can advise you on parenting issues that are making home and school a challenge. Behavior changes with your teen won't happen overnight, but there is hope. Teens can and do get better.



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Access
Additional
Resources
Here

