

## Making Decisions about Substance Abuse Treatment

Many children and adolescents use alcohol and other drugs. Some develop serious problems.

There are many types of substance abuse treatment, based in offices, special treatment centers, and hospitals. The decision to entrust a child or adolescent to any type of treatment deserves serious consideration. Parents are encouraged to seek consultation from a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist when making decisions about substance abuse treatment for children or adolescents.

Properly informed, parents and families can contribute effectively to the treatment process. By asking the following questions when substance abuse treatment is recommended, parents can obtain important information.

1. Why do you believe this treatment in this program is indicated for my child? How do the other kinds of care compare: treatment in a psychiatric hospital, an inpatient specialized substance abuse treatment program, an educational program, a residential, a mutual-help program such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, or no treatment at this time?
2. What are the credentials and experience of the members of the treatment team, and will the team include a child and adolescent psychiatrist with knowledge and skills in substance abuse treatment?
3. What treatment approaches does this program use regarding chemical dependency; detoxification; abstinence; individual, family and group therapy; use of medications; a twelve-step program; mutual-help groups; relapse prevention; and a continuing recovery process?
4. Based on your evaluation, does my child have other psychiatric problems in addition to the substance abuse problem? If so, will these be addressed in the treatment process?
5. How will our family be involved in our child's substance abuse treatment including the decision for discharge and the after-care?
6. How will the issue of confidentiality be handled during and after treatment?
7. If this treatment is provided in a hospital or residential program, is it approved by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)? Is this substance abuse treatment program a separate unit accredited for youngsters of our child's age?
8. How will the issue of confidentiality be handled during and after treatment?

## Making Decisions about Substance Abuse Treatment continued

9. How long will this phase of the treatment process continue? Will we reach our insurance limit before treatment in this phase is completed?
10. When my child is discharged from this phase of treatment, how will it be decided what types of ongoing treatment will be necessary, how often, and for how long?

Parents should be careful not to be pressured into a treatment decision. If questions or doubts persists, a second opinion may be helpful.

**Note:** A Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist is a physician with at least 5 years of additional training beyond medical school in adult, child and adolescent psychiatry.

**701.476.7216** referral or more information

**877.333.9565** toll free

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