

North Shore University Hospital at Glen Cove Adolescent Services Unit

The Unit, which I run, treats
adolescent substance abusers and
their families.

DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM

This is the principal component of the Unit, although traditional outpatient services are provided to parents and families (as part of after-care and when patients don't require intensive treatment).

DAY TREATMENT POPULATION

The program has the capacity to treat 37 adolescents, most of whom are dually diagnosed. Most of the patients have depression, ADHD, PTSD, etc., along with their substance abuse difficulties. The program is co-educational.

REFERRALS

Adolescents are referred to the Adolescent Services Unit by school districts, the court system, other facilities, or private practitioners.

DAY PROGRAM APPROACH

Overall approach is comprehensive. A healthy and safe milieu is created. In this context adolescents participate in individual, group, and family therapy; activities and workshops; and educational classes. Parents participate in family therapy and in a Parents' Group. The treatment has structural, psycho-educational, behavioral, and medication components.

OUTPATIENT APPROACH

Generally, the approach encompasses individual and family therapy. Again, the treatment has structural, psycho-educational, behavioral and medication components.

HOW DO THINGS REALLY WORK – DAY PROGRAM

Generally, for the day program to be effective it takes about a year and requires parent support. (Overcoming the resistance of adolescents and parents is a significant treatment issue.)

The program should attempt to establish a strong liaison between itself and the home.

It is important to have a structured, safe program to promote health, but it also allows for correct diagnostic assessment as well as intervention.

It is important to recognize that symptoms are significant amongst the day program adolescents.

It is important to implement structure both in the home and in the program.

There is a need for greater use of medication.

We have seen significant results with zyprexa, prozac, and other medications.

HOW DO THINGS REALLY WORK - OUTPATIENT

Generally, the family structure has to be sufficiently intact to support adolescents' efforts to grow and change. In most cases the family needs to provide a reasonable environment and structure.

Where My Interests Lie

What I would like to see is some streamlining of the day program process
– because of cost factors, insurance limitation, and simply the need for
greater efficiency.

Toward this end would want to have research evaluate the efficacy and
efficiency of family therapy; parent group treatment, individual and
group therapy; and pharmacotherapy.

The forging of productive relationships with schools, which could lead to
appropriate case finding and referral; and appropriate continuity of
care.

BARRIERS TO ABOVE

There are difficulties integrating research into practice.

There are difficulties with adolescents being compliant.

There are multiple factors affecting adolescents and thus their review is difficult.

Researchers need to be sensitive to clinicians in the field, and clinicians should be willing to hear researcher's input.

Schools may be resistant to research.

There may be resistance on the part of providers in communicating fully with schools.