

Parent Time: Supporting Yourself and Your Child

Purpose:

The purpose of this program is to enhance parents' ability to help their children, whether the children are in treatment, have completed treatment, or are still actively using alcohol or other drugs. It is equally important to support parents and help them feel strong and confident in helping their children. The curriculum includes information about substance abuse, substance abuse treatment, adolescent development, relapse, and resources and guidance for parents in caring for themselves and supporting their teen. It also includes modules and activities aimed at strengthening relationships.

The program provides parents with a great deal of information particularly about substance use, abuse and adolescence. While information provided is general, the group process is aimed at helping parents use the information to better understand their children. Equally important is building connections among parents. The modules are designed so that information is provided as part of the interactive process.

Goals:

The goals of this program are:

- To explain the nature of substance use, abuse and addiction, with emphasis on dynamics of adolescent substance abuse;
- To explain the nature of substance abuse treatment;
- To acknowledge parents' concerns and provide a forum for discussion;
- To support parents in strengthening their relationships with their children;
- To provide parents with support in caring for themselves;
- To provide information on supports and available help;
- To provide an opportunity for parents to meet other parents.

Modules:

One-What is Substance Abuse: The program begins with introductions and the opportunity for parents to voice questions they have about substance abuse and/or treatment. These questions should be recorded on a flip chart and displayed at each subsequent session to review which questions have been answered. The first Module provides information (on handouts and in discussion) on: substance use, abuse and dependence; specific drugs; effects and concerns for adolescents; and risk and protective factors. The information is provided in the context of understanding the nature of the child's substance use. Information on drugs prevalent in the community where the program is offered should be included.

Two-What is Substance Use Disorder Treatment: This Module explores parents understanding and expectations of treatment. An overall description of substance use treatment is included, with time allocated for specific details about the treatment program. If offered in connection with a treatment setting, program rules, schedules, contact information and other material should be available and provided to parents.

Three-Adolescent Development and Substance Use and Abuse: Information on handouts provides an overview of developmental stages immediately preceding

adolescence and a summary of the major developmental processes of adolescence. In addition, information about affects of substance use and abuse is provided. This information is available to parents as they explore their child's development. The Module focuses on the importance of connections as developmental processes and as resources for recovery.

Four-What to Expect After Treatment: This Module addresses challenges the teen and parents may face once residential treatment is completed. Motivation and relapse are explored in the context of recovery. Using a strengths-based approach, forces which support recovery are listed and parents are asked to consider how they might support these forces. Parents will spend much of this Module working with each other in developing strategies and exploring their hopes and fears.

Five-Communication: Active Listening: This Module focuses on building parents' skill and confidence in listening. It is an experiential Module, starting with exploring parents' own experiences of being listened to, then using set scenarios to practice listening, and finally using parents' experiences with their children as practice and exploration. It is important that each participant have the opportunity to practice in some part of this Module.

Six-Listening During Conflict: Building on listening skills, this Module is experiential. A range of activities are provided, and facilitators will be encouraged to choose those which best suit the group, and their abilities. Activities will focus first on listening when one disagrees with what is being said. Following exploration of listening when in conflict, two approaches to conflict resolution will be explored: Talking Circle and Mediation. Facilitators will be able to choose to explore both (using two sessions) or one. Both will be presented through participation in scenarios. Participants will then have the opportunity to use their own experiences to practice with the group.

Seven-Monitoring: The previous two Modules will form the foundation for providing parents with opportunities to develop strategies to effectively monitor their children's activities. Monitoring will focus on parents' ability to engage their children so that children will tell them where they are going and who they will be with. The differences between monitoring and controlling will be explored. Presentation will include information on monitoring as protection of children. Scenarios will be used for skill practice, and participants will be invited to use their own experiences.

This Module contains a supplement on surveillance: tools and techniques parents use to track their child's whereabouts, communications and drug use. This information is offered in the context of exploring what using these devices would mean to the relationship.

Eight-Supporting Parents: The primary focus of this Module is helping parents make concrete plans to care for themselves. Facilitators should gather information about AA, Al-Anon and Al-Ateen resources, family therapists, and parent support groups. Parents are encouraged to make a plan to continue meeting.