

KIDS HELPING KIDS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In a long term, day treatment program, "Kids Help Kids" learn to apply a set of principles that will enable them to better manage their emotional and behavioral responses to life's situations. Most teens who abuse chemicals use a kaleidoscope of drugs in their attempts to "get high." While not usually physically addicted to any one drug, the child has developed a very intense belief system that supports drug use. A variety of harmful effects of this belief can be observed in their lives - deterioration of school performance, disruption of family relationships, arrests, depression and withdrawal. Removing teenagers temporarily from access to drugs will not change their drug usage when they return to their regular environment.

The KHK program incorporates a number of features that have been found to foster comprehensive and lasting behavior changes. First, the program makes use of positive peer influence through group raps to challenge the clients' past beliefs and behavior with respect to drugs. These raps are primarily led by peer counselors - kids who have also been through the program and are then trained as staff members. All aspects of treatment are under the direct and continuous supervision of clinically trained adult staff.

Though the major emphasis is group therapy, individual attention is given to each teenager. When a teen enters treatment he/she is called a "newcomer" and is assigned an "oldcomer," someone who is further along in treatment and will take responsibility for talking individually with that child and teaching the newcomer about the program. Each child is also assigned a primary counselor, a professional case manager, an individual treatment plan is written.

The Program is divided into five phases. During the first phase the teenager attends the program 10.5 hours daily and lives at night in a temporary home with an oldcomer and the oldcomer's family. It is during this phase that the teenager is taught the basics: The Twelve Steps, the Five Criteria for Rational Thinking, the Three Signs, and the Serenity Prayer. As part of the 12 Steps, the child also learns to write moral inventories (M.I.'s), an instrument designed to help develop insight, set goals, and develop self-esteem. Each child writes an M.I. nightly throughout the program. It is during this phase of the program the teenager experiences the awareness and commitment stages of rehabilitation as he/she is encouraged to be honest about feelings and past behavior. Honesty is reinforced by rewarding the teenager with permission to talk to the individual's parents and the privilege of responsibilities.

When the child progresses to second phase, he/she returns home and practices using the basics, while rebuilding family relationships. As he/she progresses through each phase of the program, faulty, dysfunctional styles of thinking are challenged and replaced with rational, functional thinking. On third phase he/she goes back to school or work and focuses on achievement. On fourth phase the child earns leisure time and concentrates on friendships and the appropriate use of leisure time. The focus of fifth phase is on sharing awareness and serving as role models to group members and the community.

During each phase of the program the child experiences new emotional and behavioral insights, gaining a more positive relationship with himself/herself, the family, and significant others. At the same time the client has achieved educational, occupational, and leisure goals, etc. By completion of the fifth phase of the program, the adolescent has learned the valuable insight that each individual is the cause of his/her own feelings and actions, and a set of principles (the Basics) that will help the person to be accountable for himself/herself and others in the pursuit of the daily affairs of living.

The families, also victims of the drug problem, become involved in the rehabilitation process. Parents are expected to attend Parent Raps and Open Meetings which are held on Monday and Friday evenings, respectively. During the meetings and raps, parents learn the same "Basics" that are taught to their children and are encouraged to apply the "Basics" in their own lives. Parents also learn a series of skills to better understand the basis of their thoughts and feelings and to communicate more effectively with their children. Parents are expected to serve as temporary host parents for the new children entering the program. This enables them to experience the workings of the program first-hand as they, too, grow along with their children. Special raps are also provided on Monday evenings for siblings in the family. Opportunities for volunteer work are also made available, as the parents are encouraged to get involved to help keep the costs of the program at a minimum.

While the program does not advocate or promote any particular religious view, the underlying philosophy of the program does stress a concept of "spirituality": A new life does, in fact, occur as a teenager is reunited with his/her family and is given a second opportunity to pursue meaningful, drug-free, life goals. Each participant is encouraged to give credit to a "higher power" for this change and particularly is encouraged to continue to "seek through prayer and meditation to improve conscious contact with God as the person understands Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out."

No client or prospective client shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

State Licensed as Day/Night Intensive Treatment Program