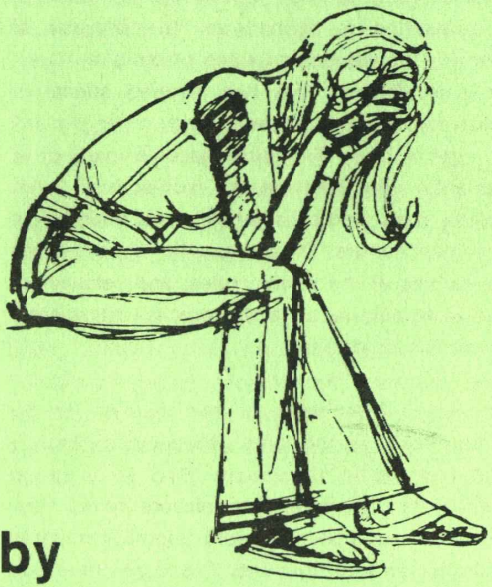
STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT STRAIGHT



by

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STRAIGHT, INC. is a not-for-profit adolescent drug rehabilitation program that was founded in September of 1976 by some community leaders and some parents who had children in a previous program. Our therapeutic modality can best be described as Re-acculturation Therapy. Acculturation is defined as "the process of learning the values and rules of one's culture." Drug-use for our kids has involved alienation from family, achievement, and other "main" cultural values. The kids become part of a deviant, chemically-based sub-culture with values, rules, and behavior which are alien to the dominant culture. The therapeutic process is the re-learning of the values, rules, and behavior of the main culture. It is the process of re-entry into the main culture.

The basic instrument of this re-entry or re-acculturation is the large group (approximately 200 children in Cincinnati). The large group represents adolescent peer pressure for recovery, since the same peer pressure originally initiated the children into drug-use. The large group is a transitional or therapeutic sub-culture which serves as a bridge for the children back into the main culture. The large group is both the group of kids and the group of parents. It is based in part on the Alcoholics Anonymous concept "that those people who have a problem and are recovering can best help other people who have the problem". So STRAIGHT, INC. is "kids and parents helping each other". STRAIGHT, INC. is a self-help community with trained leaders.

The main objective of the therapeutic process is the reconstruction and revitilization of the family system. The term "growing down" is used in the program for re-learning the child role in the family. The family systems approach is used to work with the entire family in order to mend family communication with peer support for each family member.

The "nuts and bolts" therapeutic tools include a modified version of Alcoholics Anonymous' steps and signs, which we call the Tools of Personal Change. The program also utilizes "cognitive therapy" techniques which begin with changing thoughts in order to alter feelings and resulting behaviors. Finally, the program uses a combination of intensive therapy, that is twelve solid hours a day of therapeutic work, and a structured progressive approach where children earn their way through five phases of the program to graduation.

First Phase is the period immediately after a child enters the program. It lasts for a minimum of 14 days. The child is working on "self". This involves developing honesty about one's past as a "druggie" and about one's "process" (thoughts and feelings). The child lives with a more advanced child on the program, who is his Oldcomer, and is in the building from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

Second Phase is the exciting moment when the child "Comes Home". Now the child lives at home instead of the foster home and adds working on the family relationship to working on himself. He is still in the building twelve hours a day Monday through Saturday and seven hours on Sunday.

Third Phase has to do with working on achievement through school or a job while continuing to work on self and family. This phase also represents the first time a child faces "do drugs" peer pressure again. He has to face old friends at school and say "No". The child goes to school or work on weekdays then into the program in the afternoon and evening. He is in the building all day on Saturday and Sunday.

Fourth Phase is the time when the child begins staged withdrawal from active involvement in the program. He comes in to the building after school three weekdays and then one of the two weekend days. He is working on constructive use of leisure time and on creative friendships. He is permitted, on a written permission basis, to go places for recreational activities with family and/or friends in the program of the same sex.

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Finally, Fifth Phase means only three days in the building, more personal freedom, and working on service to others. Fifth Phasers assist the staff in working with the Group. Graduation is called "Seventh Stepping" (from the Seven Steps). The program takes from six to twenty-four months to complete, depending on the individual child. Most children complete their programs in ten to fourteen months.

The program also has an emphasis on family participation for both parents and siblings. It offers a variety of services including Raps for parents and siblings, individual counseling, and family conjoint counseling.

The program is staffed by a small number of adult professionals who supervise a large number of young people staff members who themselves have been through the program and subsequently trained as counselors.

Straight, Inc.
A Non-Profit, Family Oriented Drug Rehabilitation Program
For The Youthful Drug Abuser

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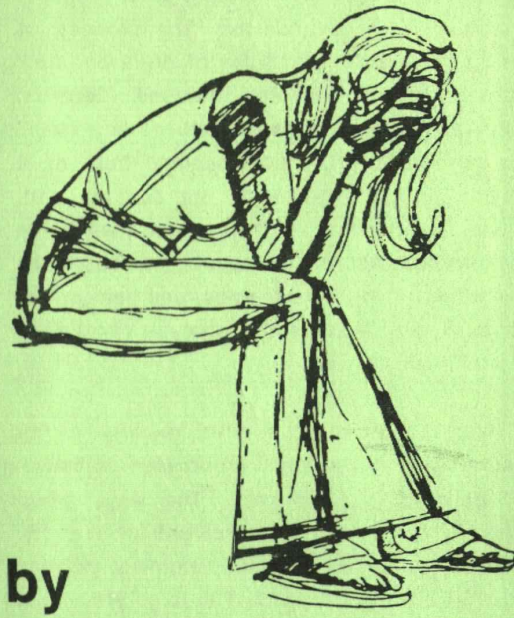

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