



How To Find A Drug Treatment Program for Your Teen

When calling or visiting a prospective drug treatment center, don't hesitate to ask as many questions as necessary about its staff and services. A program that meets the following guidelines should inspire reasonable confidence in its caliber of care.



1. The program works towards an abstinence-only policy, but does not expel teens who use drugs.
2. The program includes a comprehensive evaluation by an experienced physician to diagnose and treat any associated medical, emotional (/english/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/default.aspx) or behavioral problems.
3. The staff includes a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist (/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/Mental-Health-Care-Who's-Who.aspx) with expertise in adolescent behavior and development and in treating substance use disorders.
4. The facility maintains a low ratio of patients to staff.
5. Support groups led by a professional facilitator and self-help groups are integral components of treatment.
6. If the center treats both minors and adults, the adolescent unit should be separate from the adult unit.
7. The program must include family therapy.
8. The program must include an aftercare or planning process phase, typically consisting of outpatient counseling or attending a peer support group for at least 1 year.
9. Depending on the teen's needs, the program should include academic classes, vocational training, social-skills training, physical education and other services intended to aid his reentry into society.
10. The program's administrators should be willing to discuss financial arrangements.

Inpatient programs and hospital-based outpatient programs should be approved by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the largest accreditation organization of its kind. To find out if a treatment center is accredited, call the JCAHO at 630-792-5000.

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.



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