

# New substance abuse treatment resources focus on teens

23 January 2014

Resources to help parents, health care providers, and substance abuse treatment specialists treat teens struggling with drug abuse, as well as identify and interact with those who might be at risk, were released today by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The release came before the start of National Drug Facts Week, an annual observance to educate teens about drug abuse. NIDA is part of the National Institutes of Health.

Adolescents' drug use, as well as their treatment needs, differ from those of adults. Teens abuse different substances, experience different consequences, and are less likely to seek treatment on their own because they may not want or think they need help. Parents can work with [health care professionals](#) to find appropriate treatment, but they may be unaware that the teen is using drugs and needs help. According to the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, only 10 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds needing substance abuse treatments receive any services.

"Because critical brain circuits are still developing during the teen years, this age group is particularly susceptible to drug abuse and addiction," said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. "These new resources are based on recent research that has greatly advanced our understanding of the unique treatment needs of the adolescent."

A new online publication, Principles of Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment: A Research Based Guide, describes the treatment approaches. Highlights include:

- Thirteen principles to consider in treating adolescent substance use disorders
- Frequently asked questions about adolescent drug use
- Settings in which adolescent [drug abuse](#) treatment most often occurs
- Evidence-based approaches to treating adolescent substance use disorders

- The role of the family and medical professionals in identifying teen substance use and supporting treatment and recovery.

To increase early screening of adolescent [substance abuse](#), the "Substance Use Disorders in Adolescents: Screening and Engagement in Primary Care Settings" educational module was created. The online curriculum resource for medical students and resident physicians provides videos demonstrating skills to use in screening adolescents at risk for or already struggling with substance use disorders. Both the patient and physician perspectives are highlighted. Although created as a training tool, the resource is also free to anyone in the public seeking information on how to interact with teens at risk for addiction. The resource was developed by the NIDA Centers of Excellence for Physician Information, in collaboration with Drexel University College of Medicine and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, both in Philadelphia.

**More information:** NIDA has many other resources that will be promoted during National Drug Facts Week, Jan. 27-Feb. 2, 2014. For more information on this observance, go to: [drugfactsweek.drugabuse.gov/](http://drugfactsweek.drugabuse.gov/)

Provided by NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse

APA citation: New substance abuse treatment resources focus on teens (2014, January 23) retrieved 6 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-01-substance-abuse-treatment-resources-focus.html>

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