

TWIN LAKES CENTER

FOR DRUG & ALCOHOL REHABILITATION

We can help you get your life back!



A newsletter for adolescents courtesy of your friends at Twin Lakes Center

Adolescent Trends in Drug and Alcohol Abuse



The good news: Teenagers are smoking less marijuana and fewer cigarettes. They are drinking less alcohol and snorting less cocaine.

The bad news: The abuse of prescription medications by teenagers continues to rise, and heroin use is also steady or rising.

According to the yearly studies completed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), adolescents continue to experiment with chemicals at alarming rates. The fact that prescription pill use, particularly opiates, continues to rise is illustrated right here in the adolescent unit of Twin Lakes Center.

Of the adolescent patients admitted from February 2007 through March 2008, 37% of them identified marijuana as their

primary drug of choice. Opiates, including heroin and prescription pills, were listed as the drug of choice for 32% of adolescents, with 17% stating alcohol was their drug of choice. The idea that almost twice the percentage of teenagers are in treatment for an opiate addiction compared to alcohol abuse is concerning...

Twin Lakes Center has dedicated our adolescent unit to meeting the needs of each teenager who comes through our doors. Seventy-five percent successfully complete the program, and many of our past patients call the facility to update the staff on their successes in recovery. Staying clean as an adolescent is a daunting task, but one that can be managed, as proven by the success stories of many past patients.

Adolescents at Twin Lakes Center

It is the goal of the adolescent program to provide unique and individualized care to adolescents, meeting them where they are in the stages of change and helping them to move forward. The program continues to change as the adolescents' needs change, and the staff members who work with the adolescents are constantly growing and learning and adapting their skills to best meet the needs of the current community of teenagers.

One of the attributes that distinguishes Twin Lakes from other adolescent programs is our size. With a maximum of ten adolescents at a time, each one is sure to receive individual attention and personalized learning. Counselors provide daily group sessions as well as

weekly individual sessions and family sessions on a regular basis throughout the length of stay. In addition to the scheduled sessions, counselors also spend significant amounts of time with the clients throughout the day, giving them individual attention as needed and just interacting with the group on a more informal level. We believe a lot of information can be obtained outside a scheduled session when the community members are just sharing stories, so the counselors are very involved with gathering information in a more casual setting, in addition to using the more formal tools to complete documentation and develop treatment plans.



With a diverse staff of energetic, dedicated chemical dependency technicians, the adolescents are always abuzz with activity. Many of the skills taught in the program rely on experiential learning, as adolescents become more engaged when they are active. For instance, a discussion on peer pressure is followed up with each adolescent receiving a candy bar, with instructions not to eat it. The twist is that one

(continued on back, see "Twin")

WHAT TO BRING

Twin Lakes Center wants our adolescents to feel the comforts of home as much as possible while they are here, so we encourage the following items in the packing process:

- Pillow and blanket (we provide but many patients prefer their own)
- Sneakers to play sports (may get muddy)
- Sweatshirts and warm jackets (even in summer, it gets cool at night)
- MP3 players or CD headsets
- Books to read during free time
- Hygiene products (we provide them if you don't have but most teenagers prefer their own brand of products)
- Clothes for at least a week (each adolescent has one day for laundry per week and there is no cost for laundry facilities)

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Some of these items may be obvious, but just to be sure:

- Tobacco products of any kind
- Lighters/matches
- Pens
- Laundry detergent (we supply it)
- Coins (no vending access)
- Phone cards (phones are monitored and free of charge)
- Stamps and envelopes (we supply them)
- Tank tops, even to go under other shirts
- Short shorts
- Pants with big rips or rips in inappropriate places
- Clothes with drug references
- Bandanas or any gang-related colors
- Magazines
- Picture frames with glass in them



Here is one of the poems written by an adolescent patient (used with the patient's permission)

Third time's a charm is what I say
But what's going to happen on the 28th day
I think this is the last time God's gonna
give me a chance
Because he doesn't want to see me lying
in bed doing the heroin dance
I always said this would
never happen to me
But a week later I sat and
watched my arm bleed
Thinking about it gives me chills
How did I think that was such a thrill

("Twin" continued from front)

adolescent was encouraged prior to the activity to eat the candy bar, tempting the others to follow suit. Processing discussion follows the activity to highlight how difficult it will be when surrounded by the same peers who use chemicals and not give in to the pressure. Other focused skills include effective communication, non-verbal communication, teamwork, anger management and conflict resolution.



It is our belief that adolescents respond better when they feel like the information relates to them. Treatment films include current movies that address situations they face and highlight the consequences of addiction. Each week, the community chooses an approved film to watch, and then they discuss the ways they related to the film and the things they can learn. Movies such as "Walk the Line", "Coach Carter", "Thirteen", and "Crash" are just a few of the choices for this activity, which is one of the favorites among the patients. The program also includes certain television shows that the adolescents relate to their own experiences. The technicians and counselors also encourage the adolescents to examine their music choices and to use their love of music as a coping skill rather than to glamorize their drug culture. One example includes having the adolescents write a rap-like poem to say goodbye to their addiction. We believe meeting the adolescents on their level will keep them interested and eager to learn.

Recreational activities are also seen as an integral part of the program, and the adolescents spend at least one hour per day engaged in recreational activities to practice teamwork and communication, as well as give them an outlet for some of the energy they seem to have in endless supply. Due to the rural setting

of our program, the adolescents enjoy a variety of activities, including long walks, fishing, basketball, volleyball, wiffle ball and kickball. There is a PS2 as well as a foosball table and a weight bench to occupy their time when the weather is not conducive to being outdoors. Our location also allows the adolescents to observe unique pieces of history, including off-grounds trips to the Flight 93 memorial and a visit to the many windmills gracing the countryside of Somerset County. The community may also earn the privilege of other activities off-grounds, which have included going to the movie theater, miniature golfing, ice-skating or trips to the local state parks. Each summer for the past several years, one community has also been able to earn the privilege of a trip to Idlewild Park for a day of rides and relaxation. We believe that the more adolescents learn it is possible to have fun without being under the influence of chemicals, the more likely they are to find fun things to do on their own.

Twin Lakes Center is also dedicated to addressing the variety of needs faced by our patients. The prevalence of co-occurring disorders cannot be denied, and the staff members here are always learning more about how to treat the adolescent who is challenged in both mental health and substance abuse. We commonly see adolescents who struggle with ADHD, Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder and/or Oppositional Defiant Disorder. These patients receive a treatment plan that addresses the relationship between their addiction and their mental health diagnosis and focuses on teaching the adolescent coping skills to manage both issues.

For more information, please visit our website at www.twinlakescenter.org or call 814-443-3639 and ask to speak with Bree Yoder, Director of Residential Services.