Adolescent Treatment and Recovery Specialty Online Training Series
Part 6
Pitfalls on the Road to Excellence in Counseling Adolescents
Presented by:
Robert Schwebel, PhD
PITFALLS ON THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE

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NAADAC ADOLESCENT SERIES
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PITFALL # 1

USING THE ADULT TREATMENT MODEL

Abstinence: My way or the highway

- Long-time addicted individuals
- Many had suffered serious losses
- Many had caused considerable harm to themselves and others
- They felt powerless over drugs.

ADULT TREATMENT MODEL BASED ON ADULT LIFE EXPERIENCES

- Many in early stages of drug use
- Many enjoying pleasures of drugs without serious consequences
- Protected with a roof over their heads
- Trauma: harm from others
DID NOT CORRESPOND WITH THE DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES OF ADOLESCENTS

1. Establish an independent identity (Erikson)
2. Master formal logical thinking (Piaget)
3. Prepare for adulthood

PITFALL # 2
THE MAD RUSH FOR ABSTINENCE

“You can’t have kids using drugs”
Say NO To Drugs

THE FOUR F’S
Fakers
Fighters
Flee-ers
Followers
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ABSTINENCE?

• ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, BUT PROBLEMS OCCURS WHEN...
  - RUSHED
  - PRESSURED
  - TOLD IT’S THE ONLY SOLUTION

CHILLAX

• Slow Down

STOP THE RUSH

• You can’t make people quit. They have to decide for themselves.
  - Let go of control
  - Start where young people are at, not where you wish they might be, not where they might pretend to be, and not where they might be for a brief moment of time.
WE NEED A DECISION-MAKING MODEL

- Young people in the early stages of change and have to make their own decisions about drugs.
- This is developmentally appropriate

STAGES OF CHANGE

- Teaching kids to quit using drugs who have absolutely no intention of quitting.
- Consciousness raising.
- Taking action.
PITFALL # 3
PRESUMED AND ASSUMED TRUST

Presumed Trust (dreaming)
Counselor: "My client won’t open up or talk about drugs." (safety and honesty)

Assumed Trust (naivete)
"I’m going to quit" (take with a grain of salt)

RELATIONSHIP FIRST: UNDO NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS

• I’M NOT HERE TO TRY TO CONTROL YOU, MAKE YOU QUIT USING DRUGS, OR TELL HOW HOW TO LEAD YOUR LIFE
• MY JOB IS TO SUPPORT YOU IN MAKING YOUR OWN WISE DECISIONS AND TO SUCCEED WITH THEM SO YOU CAN HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE.

DECISION-MAKING MODEL WITH OPTIONS

- Keep using without making changes
- Abstinence
- Set new limits
- Set parameters
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PITFALL # 5
HARM-BASED COUNSELING

CONVINCE ME

HALF-BAKED DECISIONS

DRUG BENEFITS

FUN, RELAX, SLEEP, FORGET PROBLEMS, CALM ANGER, EXCITEMENT, CHEER UP, BLOW MY MIND

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PITFALL # 6

- AVOIDING DISCUSSION OF DRUG BENEFITS
  - I let them... (thin threshold)
  - Yes, but... (righting reflex)
  - ENCOURAGE, NOT ALLOW

PITFALL # 7

- BAN WAR STORIES & GLAMORIZATION

ASSESS AND EDUCATE

PITFALL # 8

- SIMPLISTIC EXPLAINING TO KIDS, COURTS, AND PARENTS
  - Counselor: “It’s up to the kids. They decide.”
  - KIDS SAY: “SO, IT’S OK TO USE DRUGS.”
  - PARENT RESPONSE
  - COURT RESPONSE
Discussing drug benefits changes the narrative. Can’t focus narrowly on drug.

- People use drugs in response to the circumstances of their lives.
- Once they start using drugs, their use affects the circumstances of their lives.

PITFALL #9

DRUG TREATMENT SILO

- Not just drugs
- More than treatment

HOLOGIC LIFE COUNSELING THAT INCORPORATES WORK WITH DRUGS

Marriage of mental health and drug counseling (integrated care)

PITFALL #10

THINKING SMALL

You can only focus on drug use – that’s your domain, alley. But…

- Uses when anxious
- Uses to fall asleep
- Uses when bored
- Uses when meeting new guy/girl
- Uses when in pain
- Uses when angry
THINK BIG

- Help clients with whatever issues concern them most.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (INTEGRATED CARE)

- Problem solving skills
- Teach life skills
- Learn to deal with a wide variety of issues

EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS

- No judgment, no labels, no stigma (Facing life & developmental challenges)
- It's up to you. (Maturing toward adulthood)
- You decide. (Self-determination)
- You can do it. (You have power)
- I'll back you up. (Sounding board, support)
Mastery Counseling

- Mastery Living: People who want to take control of their own destiny.
- They identify issues.
- Work on issues.
- Mastery Counseling identify and work on issues.

STAGES OF MASTERY COUNSELING

- Identify an issue
- Clarify the issue
- Identify and confirm a session goal
- Possibilities
- Solutions
- Resolution

PITYFALL # 11
PLAYING "GO AHEAD, TRY TO MAKE ME QUIT"

Marijuana is harmless. It grows in the earth…

You haven’t proven marijuana is dangerous…

Yeah, yeah, I know about the harm but you still haven’t convinced me to quit…
PITFALL # 12
BE COOL

• SELF-DISCLOSURE
• Power Play “Prove you can help me”
• Curiosity
• Mistakes

HOW CAN YOU HELP ME?

I KNOW WHAT YOU DO SATURDAY NIGHT.

HOW CAN YOU HELP ME?

YOU’VE NEVER EVEN USED DRUGS.
HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

What matters most?

What issue do you want to work on?

PITFALL # 13
SETTLE FOR AN ENGAGING CONVERSATION OR THERE OR NOTHING

*I'm good!*

PITFALL #14
OVER-ADVISING

- Rush in with answers

INSTEAD
- Ask lots of questions to clarify and understand
- Narrow it down to a solvable problems
PITFALL # 15
NOT ENOUGH COUNSELING
HUMILITY

YOU CAN DO IT MESSAGE

Leap of power: You may feel powerless. You may have been told you are powerless. But, in fact you can take control of your life and your drug use!!

What do you want to work on today?
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UPCOMING WEBINARS

- **September 14th, 2022**: From Virtual to Real Life: Effective Group Treatment
  By: Fredrick Dombrowski, PhD, LMHC, MAC, CASAC, and Samson Teklemariam, LPC, CPTC

- **September 21st, 2022**: Effective and FUN Role-Plays
  By: Myrinda Schweitzer Smith, PhD

- **October 20th, 2022**: Myths and My Abrupt: Nurturing Development in Adolescents
  By: Lisa Connors, LCPC, NCC, MAC, ABD

- **October 26th, 2022**: Hey, What about Me? I Need to Grieve Too!
  By: Myrinda Schweitzer Smith, PhD

- **November 9th, 2022**: Implicit Memory and Connection in Addiction Treatment
  By: Maire Daugharty, MD, LAC, LPCC, MFTC

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- **Part 3**: Working with LGBTQ Youth: Suicide and Substance Use Disorder
- **Part 4**: Navigating Self and Other Regulation in Adolescent Co-Occurring Treatment
- **Part 5**: The Healing Power of Belonging
- **Part 6**: Pitfalls on the Road to Excellence in Counseling Adolescents

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- Indianapolis, IN
- Conference registration includes local travel and professional development.

Thank You

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