

The **G.U.T.S.** team of professional therapists specializes in adolescent group therapy.

Additional Groups Offered:

- Teen Survivors of Sexual Assault

- Adolescent Girl's Support Group

- Teen Anger Management

Services:

- Dual Diagnosis
- Individual Counseling
- Family Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Psychological Evaluations
- Drug Screening

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CHOICES & CONSEQUENCES

A working guide for healing alcohol and drug use

EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING GIRLS TO LIVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY LIFE



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[Learning about teenage chemical dependence](#)

Chemical dependence in teenagers differs from chemical dependence in adults. There are two important things to consider when working with a teen that is using alcohol/drugs: how far the usage has progressed and how deeply entrenched the individual is in the adolescent delusional system. What you learn about each will determine the direction of treatment.

The Difference in Teen Addiction

1. Poly drug use is higher among teenagers than adults.
2. Teens use for more internal reasons.
3. The levels of abuse are harder to determine among teenagers than adults.
4. The addiction process happens more quickly in teens.
5. The emotional arrest takes place much earlier with teens than adults.
6. The delusional system of alcohol/drugs is more complicated for teens.
7. Teens have more built-in enablers than adults.

Why Teens say they use:

- Relieve boredom
- Feel good
- Forget their troubles and relax
- Have fun
- Satisfy their curiosity
- Take risks
- Ease their pain
- Feel grown- up
- Show their independence
- Belong to a specific group
- Look cool

Adolescent Behavioral Red Flags

- + Withdrawn, depressed, tired and careless about appearance
- + Hostile and uncooperative; frequently breaks curfew
- + Relationships with family members have deteriorated
- + Hanging out with a new group of friends
- + Grades have slipped and school attendance is irregular
- + Loss of interest in sports, hobbies and other favorite activities
- + Eating and sleeping patterns have changed

- + Difficulty concentrating
- + Eyes are red rim and nose is running in the absence of a cold
- + Household money has been disappearing

The presence of pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, lighters and eye drops may be an indication that your child is using drugs.

If you have suspicions that your child is using drugs you should voice your suspicions openly, avoiding direct accusations, when he or she is sober and you're calm.

Additional factors that contribute to adolescent abuse:

- Biological Risk's genetic predisposition to chemical dependency.
- Lack of supervision: Kids who have large amounts of free time with little supervision.
- Life Crisis: A death, divorce, illness and moving to a new community are all examples of life stressors.
- Peer Pressure: Studies indicate that an adolescent's chance of problem or heavy drinking is five times greater if a best friend is also a drinker.
- Early beginnings: The earlier a child learns to sedate anxiety with a substance, the greater the problem.
- Parenting Style: Parents intent on being buddies, rather than functioning from an adult executive position, have problems confronting the child and setting limits around substance abuse.

Character building and resisting the pressures of drugs and alcohol:

- Preventative role playing to practice saying NO
- Rehearsing key phrases to safeguard from drug peer pressure
- Learning to assess the degree of their disease
- Relapse prevention plans and contracts for sobriety
- Self- esteem and confidence building techniques designed to help and support their new, clean life
- Choosing communication over avoidance
- Healthy confrontation of denial
- Assertiveness training/boundary setting

TREATMENT

There are common themes in treating teenage alcohol and drug abuse. The teen's physical, psychological and spiritual needs must be incorporated into treatment. Medical, family problems, academic issues should be integrated into the overall treatment plan. Family, individual, and the support group are offered at all times. **EMDR** is available to help the teen resist relapse and build strength towards sober living. **Drug testing** is available each week with the parent's permission.

Reintegration: Staying Sober

The teen is sober and now it's important to support the reality of living without chemicals. During this period of treatment the teenager learns to work through the painful feelings of being an adolescent. Healing from the developmental arrest and progressing into healthy behaviors will lead to the rebuilding of trust and creating successful relationships.

"I have friends now that know how to have fun without drinking" Emillee age 16