



Choosing the Right Treatment Option

When a parent becomes aware of his or her child's problem with alcohol or drugs it can be shocking and traumatic. Parents and teens often feel anger, fear, disbelief, resentment and sadness, among other emotions. As professionals, one of our jobs is to help parents make sound decisions without allowing their negative feelings and fears to cloud their judgment when encountering substance use. First acknowledging the problem and consequently choosing the right treatment option can be difficult, but it doesn't have to be.

In crisis mode, parents rarely have time to consider their own feelings and frustrations. They see the urgency, have limited information and need to make a good treatment decision. They need to [get help](#)...NOW.

First Steps

The first thing parents should do is decide if they want to use their health insurance. If the answer is yes; contact your [insurance company](#) for the providers in the area. When you contact a provider, consider asking these questions:

1. Do you provide a comprehensive assessment?
2. Does your program treat adolescents?

3. How do you determine what is the best treatment for my child?
4. How do you include parents in treatment?
5. When can we get an assessment?

What are the Options?

The professionals at ASAP help our clients and families determine the most appropriate [level of care](#). This could be individual treatment, intensive outpatient, inpatient, or something different based on each adolescent's needs. ASAP makes its recommendation based on [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) criteria, several tests, a parental assessment, and the clinical interview.

How do we Know It's Right?

Think of this treatment decision the same way you would choose treatment for other medical illnesses. A serious substance abuse problem will not "just go away," and although treatment may interfere with your typical routine, it will help you and your family return to your normal life as quickly as possible. Within reason, the treatment decision must be based on getting an accurate diagnosis and the what is clinically appropriate, not based on after school schedules or other potential conflicts.

Chemical dependency is an illness, like juvenile diabetes or cancer, and must be treated as such. If a child contracted these diseases, how the treatment interfered with a sports schedule or other activities would not be a concern. Remember that choosing the right treatment may not be the same as choosing the most convenient option, but it will give your child the best chance for a life free of drugs and alcohol.

