



September is Recovery Month

Experts Share Tips for Effective Treatment Programs

Mount Kisco, NY - (September 11, 2007) - Substance abuse continues to be a problem in Westchester County, especially among the County's youth. According to estimates based on the New York State School Survey, the Adult Household Study, and the New York State Heroin Study, more than 17% of Westchester youths aged 12-17 are chemically dependent.

Dr. Adrienne Marcus, executive director of Lexington Center for Recovery, one of the largest providers of alcohol and substance abuse treatment in the Hudson Valley, recommends the following when seeking out an effective treatment program.

Qualified and experienced staff members - First and foremost, treatment center staff and their expertise should cover multiple disciplines. Staff should include psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers as well as Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC).

Treatment organizations should also be certified by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, which ensures that the agency and its personnel are qualified to treat chemical dependency.

Thorough assessment - Individualized and personalized treatment programs should be geared to each person's experiences, problems and needs. Before accepting a client into its program, a treatment center should ask for information on current and past substance use, prior and current withdrawal symptoms, the outcome of earlier rehab or counseling, and emotional and medical history.

Combined supports - Individual counseling sessions several times per week help customize treatment to a person's unique needs. Group sessions provide support, insights, and the opportunity to problem-solve with others. They also create a sense of community.

Combined therapies include strengthening motivation, building coping skills that help avoid temptation to use substances, identifying new ideas for substance-free activities and building problem-solving skills. Effective programs also change as the patient's needs change and evolve.

Age-appropriate treatment - Effective treatment programs for teens provide support for the variety of issues teens face regularly, including emotional, social and academic stresses. Additionally, family members should be encouraged to participate in treatment to help in their support role for the individual in treatment.

Expertise in mental and other illness - Those with substance abuse problems may also be battling mental or physical illness. A facility with a psychiatrist and other mental health specialists on staff will be able to integrate therapies to address multiple diagnoses. They can also prescribe, or coordinate the prescription of, medications when necessary.

Social and other services - Persons battling substance abuse may be facing other challenges with work, housing, family, parenting, or legal issues. An effective program has access to appropriate resources within the community that can assist patients with social and other support services.

A transition strategy - The end of formal, intensive treatment does not mean that recovery is complete. In fact, recovery is a lifelong process. There should be ongoing support, strategies, and schedules for continuing recovery in the "real world."

Clients should be encouraged to participate in regular outpatient counseling as well as participate in a substance abuse self-help group, like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA). For more information about these organizations or to find a local meeting, visit www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/ or www.na.org/.

Relapse strategies - Relapse is very real. Effective treatment programs offer relapse prevention instruction, coping strategies, and counseling sessions to identify emotional, social, and other triggers that may lead to relapse. They also monitor patients regularly with urinalysis and other tests that detect drug or alcohol use.

Once discharged, patients are encouraged to return for short-term or longer-term treatment and/or support groups in the earliest stages of a relapse. This helps to prevent a return to former habits.

The key to a successful and long-lasting recovery is to identify an appropriate and reputable treatment program. Conduct research. Meet with a counselor. Ask questions.

For more information about how to talk to your kids about alcohol and drug use and abuse, please call Lexington Center for Recovery at 914.666.6740.

LCR's administrative headquarters is located at 332 East Main Street, Mt. Kisco, NY. Westchester County clinics and programs are located in Mount Kisco, NY; New Rochelle, NY; Yonkers, NY; White Plains, NY; and Peekskill, NY. The agency's Dutchess County clinics are located in Poughkeepsie, Beacon, Millbrook, Rhinebeck, Dover and Red Hook, NY. For additional information, call 914.666.0191 X 218 or visit www.lexingtonctr.org.

About LCR: Lexington Center for Recovery is one of the largest providers of alcohol and substance abuse treatment in the Hudson Valley. It has treated approximately 30,000 people in its 25-year history and has 18 distinct programs throughout Westchester and Dutchess counties. A vital community resource, LCR eliminates barriers to entry and success in an alcohol and substance abuse recovery program by providing support services to clients and their families. Its innovative programs are affordable and aimed at different needs and ages. LCR is licensed by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.

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