

RESPONDING TO SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS (SUDs)

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KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

Responding to client/student substance use as counselors can be intimidating and scary. Important for counselors to have working knowledge, however. Even if kids are not using, they could be part of a family with active addiction or recovering members. School counselors can play a critical role in many ways

Role and scope of practice

- Importance of practicing with one's knowledge and training base (scope)
- Acknowledging that there is overlapping practice between counselors and other healthcare professional particularly relating to substance use (medicine, nursing, psychology, social work, addiction treatment providers)

Screening

- Brief assessment. Can lead to further assessment, treatment, or monitoring
- Evidence-based tools. Examples:
 - S2BI: Screening to Brief Intervention
 - BSTAD: Brief Screener for Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs
 - SBIRT: Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to treatment

Referral

- Knowledge of community resources
- Not just for your students but for their family members
- Don't simply rely on the Internet. Network with providers in your community
- Greater treatment options than ever due to virtual/remoted care providers
- Due diligence

Treatment

- Levels of Care: Ecosystem, Continuum of Care, Integrated care
 - Mutual help groups (AA, NA, SMART)
 - Peer recovery support
 - Private practitioners (LPC/LCSW/LSATP/MD)
 - Outpatient/Intensive Outpatient (IOP)
 - Partial Hospitalization or Day Treatment
 - Residential or inpatient treatment

Intervention

- Formal (professionally facilitated) vs. informal
- High variability in quality and credentialing
- Exercise due care

Confidentiality

- Balance safety concerns with privacy concerns
- Consult with other professionals
- Know your school system/division policies re: substance use by students and confidentiality/privacy
- Importance of informed consent

SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Review the [American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards](#) as they pertain to confidentiality. How will you navigate confidentiality concerns when working with a student who discloses they are using substances as a coping mechanism?
- How can I use the information presented in this series to inform the prevention work you do?
- How can you inform and work with your administration to appropriately respond and support students who are found with illegal substances on school property?
- How can this information aid you in your ability to support a student with a parent who has a SUD?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Virginia Department of Education Resource Document on Substance Abuse Prevention \(2021\)](#)
- [American School Counselor Association: A School Counselor's Role in Substance Abuse Prevention](#)
- [Lock and Talk Virginia: Access to Free Lock Boxes for Medicine](#)
- [SAMHSA Treatment Locator](#)
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- [Al-Anon Family Groups](#)
- [SMART Recovery](#)
- [Faces and Voices of Recovery](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#)
- [Addiction Technology Transfer Network](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). American Psychological Association (2013)

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