

Alcoholism Teens

The alcoholism teens deal with is different in many ways from that of adults. While the disease shares some similarities in persons of all ages, the alcoholism teenager faces some unique challenges that we will talk about here.

Relationships

All alcoholics tend to have difficulty in their relationships with others, but this is a greater problem for teen alcoholics than for adults. That's because teens are forced into relationships whether they want to be or not. The adult alcoholic may lose his job or his marriage, but the law says the alcoholism teenager must go to school and must continue to live with his family.

In addition, the teenager is expected to follow rules in these relationships that adults are not expected to follow. Teen alcoholics have difficulty dealing with authority figures and adhering to rules. They get into frequent arguments and these arguments may escalate into physical fights. Teens have poorer impulse control than adults do.

Poor School Performance

Teen alcoholics generally have poor school performance. Adult alcoholics often have poor job performance, sometimes so poor that they lose their job, but this does not have the same effect as the poor school performance has on the alcoholism teenager. The adults still have their education and job skills to fall back on after recovering from alcoholism, while the teens are far behind their classmates or have left high school with no marketable job skills.

The Law

Adult alcoholics often have legal problems. They may be arrested for driving while under the influence, they may get into fights while drunk, etc. Teens may do the same. But by merely suffering from alcoholism, teens are breaking the law; it is illegal to drink when underage.

Teens can get into legal trouble for other things that don't bring adults to the attention of the law, as well. For instance, the alcoholism teenager may be truant from school frequently. The law says children must attend school, and there can be legal consequences if they don't. Adults who are frequently absent from work, however, may lose their job, which is a serious matter, but it's not a legal one.

Treatment

Because of these and other differences, treatment programs for teen alcoholics must be different than for adult alcoholics.

For instance, treatment programs for a teenager must include a strong family component. While family therapy is often recommended as part of a comprehensive treatment program for adult alcoholics, it is essential for teens. The fractured family relationships must be repaired in order for the teen to be successful in recovery. The family must also be educated about alcoholism and must be taught how to best provide structure and support to the recovering teen.

An academic component is also necessary for alcoholism teens. As discussed earlier, poor school performance is nearly always present with teen alcoholics. Remedial education may be needed in order to bring students up to grade level. For older teens, vocational training may be provided in order to assure they have marketable job skills.

Treatment programs for teens usually rely heavily on group therapy, because teens are heavily influenced by their peers. In the group setting, peer pressure can be used in a positive way to influence teens to make more positive choices in their lives. Adult treatment programs use group therapy as well, but it does not have the same effect as it does on teens.

When selecting a treatment program for an alcoholic teen, it is important to choose a program that is designed specifically for teens, not a program for adults that also takes teens. This is an important distinction to make, in order to ensure the teen gets the proper treatment to enable him to recover.

<http://www.learn-about-alcoholism.com/alcoholism-teens.html>