What is The Seven Challenges program?

The Seven Challenges is a comprehensive counseling program for youth and young adults that incorporates work on alcohol and other drugs programs. It is designed to motivate youth and young adults to evaluate their lives, consider changes they may wish to make, and then success in implementing the desired changes. It supports them in taking power over their own lives.

Seven Challenges is implemented as the counseling component of an outpatient program and can be delivered in a variety of settings with different levels of intensity to meet the needs of the client.

Clients are provided a book of readings describing common substance use knowledge, attitudes and behaviors as well as possible outcomes stemming from use. The readings are organized or arranged based on the concepts covered in each of the Seven Challenges.

Each client is also asked to work with journals. The journals are a unique feature of the intervention and they are used to elicit information related to each of the Seven Challenges and assist the client expressing their thoughts and feelings related to each challenge. The clinician reviews the journal and provides a therapeutic response to the information covered in the journal. The journaling activities are spread across as many sessions as needed. The journaling aspect of the program is a private, written exchange between the counselor and the young person. It is complimentary to the group and individual counseling work done in sessions. Groups cannot exceed ten individuals.

The Seven Challenges program is funded through a four-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

What are the Seven Challenges?

Key to the intervention is the use of a set of "Seven Challenges" to frame the dialogue between the client and therapist. The Seven Challenges are:

1) We decided to open up and talk honestly about ourselves and about alcohol and other drugs.

2) We looked at what we liked about alcohol and other drugs and why we were using them.

3) We looked at our use of alcohol and other drugs to see if it has caused harm or could cause harm.

4) We looked at our responsibility and the responsibility of other for our problems.

5) We thought about where we seemed to be headed, where we wanted to go, and what we wanted to accomplish.

6) We made thoughtful decisions about our lives and about our use of alcohol and other drugs.

7) We followed through on our decisions about our lives and our drug use. If we saw problems, we went back to earlier challenges and mastered them.

Requirements within the model?

1) The youth and/or young adult must engage in working with the seven challenges.

2) Confidentiality is tantamount to the philosophy with The Seven Challenges. Counselors must follow standards of threat to self or others. The youth/young adults will also be in groups and family sessions.

3) The model encourages family, parent and peer involvement.

THE SEVEN CHALLENGES®

It is important to reiterate that it is the youth and/or young adult that will guide his/her process without pressure, judgement, or requirement of abstinence. In this way, the youth is afforded the freedom to trust the process and become open with internal and external honesty, as well as to address those negative motivating factors that have otherwise been undisclosed due to fear of judgement or consequence. In doing so, those issues that had been motivating the youth to use or misuse substances can be openly processed, allowing for more healthy, thoughtful, decision making and behaviors.

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES & HOSPITALS
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Sample materials for the Book of Readings, journals and Implementation Manual may be accessed at
http://www.sevenchallenges.com/materials/

A Life in the Community for Everyone
SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

THE SEVEN CHALLENGES®

The Seven Challenges

- 12-25-year-old Substance Use and Co-Occurring Treatment
- School-Based
- Home-Based
- Outpatient
- Community Health Settings
- Residential Settings of all kinds

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

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The Seven Challenges

Substance Use and Co-Occurring Treatment for 12-25-year-olds

Translating Respect and Compassion into Responsible Action

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