



Circle of Life Addiction Awareness Workshops

The Circle of Life Adolescent Workshop for Addiction Awareness (AAP)

At Circle of Life we developed a program that we are currently running in secondary schools, primarily focussed on Grades 9-12. The AAP is a 4 series workshop. It is designed to be used over 4 double Life Orientation periods (Approx 80-90 min). This is a program that has been designed by both a recovering addict and an addiction specialist. It is based on the latest prevention research from NIDA (National Institute of Drug Abuse). There is an amazing connection that develops with the learners through the honest sharing of a facilitator who has 'been there'. The honesty of that encounter often sets the stage right at the beginning and it has been rewarding to watch adolescents open up around this stuff.

We incorporate a therapeutic process during the workshop and choose to work class by class to allow for an intimate space to be created for each group member. Within this space we can allow the learners to process and understand some of their feelings, establishing a sense of normalcy around their difficult emotions. During the space of educating and sharing we will be building a bond that will have a level of trust.

In changing the way the learners view addiction and their 'party drinking/using' we hope to allow the bond of trust we have built to be the doorway through which any of the learners who are concerned about their alcohol/drug usage to anonymously submit a request for help. We end this process with a final intervention during which the learners are able to confidentially disclose to the facilitators if they think they may have a problem. A facilitator will then discuss one on one with the learner the way forward. If they are prepared to move to the next level we will inform the school so that the parents can become involved and we will provide a comprehensive list of referrals (12 Step and Family Support Groups, Inpatient and Outpatient Programs).

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Mission Statement

- Our mission is to create awareness around addiction in the school environment among the adolescents. Binge drinking, substance experimentation and substance abuse are becoming a major concern. The chances of effectively reducing the danger facing adolescents today are increased, not by locking our kids away from their peers, but through educating our youngsters on the serious life threatening consequences that accompany substance abuse in any form. By equipping the adolescents with knowledge and understanding we empower them as well as you, the parents/teachers to deal with these challenges every day.
- To incorporate a therapeutic process in which all parties can work with the struggle adolescents face as they go through high school both within their peer group as well as in their home environment. Through and within this process we will focus on building a bond with the adolescents so as to establish a level of trust that will allow the learner to process and understand their feelings, establishing a sense of normalcy around those difficult emotions.
- To not only educate the group about alcohol, the various drugs and the medical consequences involved, but to also provide insight into the horrors of addiction and the fact that it is an illness, an epidemic that is growing at the same rate as it is destroying people's lives.
- In changing the way the adolescents view addiction and their 'recreational drinking/using' we hope to allow the bond of trust we have built to act as the doorway through which any of the learners who think they may have a problem to anonymously submit a request for help – we will follow this with an intervention that would allow the school to step in and refer the student and their family to relevant help.



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Session 1

Group 1 Introduction – Focus the class on the workshop
Entering into their world/frame of reference
Using space to begin sharing experience
Building the foundations of a warm, honest therapeutic relationship
Meaning and importance of confidentiality

Group 2 Process Group
Theme: Family Issues
Focus on feelings and building trust

Session 2

Group 1 Dynamic Interaction
Alcohol & Nicotine

Group 2 Process Group
Theme: Different Peer Groups

Session 3

Group 1 Dynamic Interaction
Marijuana

Group 2 Process Group
Theme: Sexuality

Session 4

Group 1 Dynamic Interaction
Ecstasy/Drugs at Home

Group 2 Process Group
Sharing and acknowledging meaning of experience
Ending the therapeutic relationship
Final Intervention



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Final Intervention **(during and after final session)**

- Anonymous requests for help via questionnaire
- 10 minute counselling session per request for help
- During counselling session we would ascertain whether the learner is amenable to inform the parents in order to get the appropriate assistance
- After receiving permission during the intervention we would provide a referral database of treatment centres and support groups to assist the family.

Crisis Intervention – first step 6 week adolescent outpatient program (F-SAP)

First Step is an outpatient recovery centre with programs for both adults and adolescents.

F-SAP takes place after hours and is a comprehensive treatment process for adolescents between the ages of 12-19. We are able to work with the following addictions/compulsive behaviours: **drug/alcohol abuse, eating disorders, self harm (cutting) & gambling.**

The program incorporates:

- Group Psychotherapy
- Individual Psychotherapy
- Family Therapy (group and individual)
- Family Support Groups
- Art Therapy
- 12 Step Support Groups