

Working with Youth Who Use Substances

Category: Workshop

Abstract Body

The four pillars of the Canadian government's substance use strategy are evidence-based prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement. Prevention and early treatment are especially relevant to the adolescent age group, as problematic substance use typically begins during this developmental life stage. In the current toxic drug supply crisis, increased policy attention and provider expertise in adolescent substance use disorders will lessen the overwhelming burden of disease on all four pillars.

This workshop will first present an evidence-based, comprehensive model of care for the treatment of adolescent substance use disorders. Then, using interactive case-based stations, we will explore treatment strategies for adolescent substance use focusing on the various domains of adolescent functioning. These will include early intervention and prevention efforts, psychosocial therapies including emphasis on family/caregiver involvement, harm reduction and engagement in prosocial activities, and holistic management of youth mental, physical and sexual health. In the second part of the workshop, we will address the complex topic of autonomy in adolescence with a Medical Ethics-led panel discussion, including the potential risks and benefits along the voluntary-involuntary spectrum of adolescent substance use care.

Key Words

- Adolescent/Young Adult Populations
- Ethical issues
- Quality Improvement
- Treatment Models/Programs

Learning Objective # 1

Review a comprehensive evidence-based model of care for the treatment of adolescent substance use disorders

Learning Objective # 2

Explore the risks and benefits of voluntary and involuntary treatment of adolescent substance use disorders

Reference # 1

Fadus M, et al. Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment: an Update on Evidence-Based Strategies. *Curr Psychiatry Rep* . 2019 Sep 14;21(10):96

Reference # 2

Winer, J et al. Addressing adolescent substance use with a public health prevention framework: the case for harm reduction. *Ann Med* . 2022 Dec;54(1):2123-2136

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