

The Seven Challenges®

A program specifically for young people with drug problems, is designed to motivate a decision and commitment to change and to support success in implementing the desired changes. The program simultaneously aims to help young people address their drug problems as well as their co-occurring life skill deficits, situational problems, and psychological problems. The challenges provide a framework for helping youth think through their own decisions about their lives and their use of alcohol and other drugs. (<https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/the-seven-challenges/detailed>)

Program Components	Intervention Strategies	Targets	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ed/open group model for adolescents ages 13-25 • Up to 10 youth and/or individual sessions • Groups Led by trained Masters level staff with clinical oversight or individual/ telehealth sessions provided by trained staff, with clinical oversight. • Session frequency and length should be responsive to the severity of problems; minimum of 90 minutes of service per week for lower intensity of problems • Comprehensive counseling program to address drug problems, co-occurring mental health diagnoses, life skill deficits • Fidelity to the model assessed through self-report checklists, quarterly surveys by clients on counselor adherence to the model reviewed by Program Specialists, clinical supervisors observing facilitated sessions, and program specialist • Flexible implementation, ongoing support, and monitoring from the developers: staff trained via Model Support Calls quarterly with clinician and on-site QA visit by model developers • Sessions can be delivered in multiple settings including residential, outpatient, in-home, schools, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Seven Challenges Journals, book of readings, and activity books to build framework • Journaling support for clients with comprehension or writing deficiencies provided by trained facilitators • Holistic counseling and therapeutic activities • Parent Orientation and follow-up • Developing youth decision making process including preventative and stop-gap problem solving • Facilitated group process • Structured Journaling time during group (not homework) • Pressure monitoring and peer support • The Seven Challenges are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide to open up and talk honestly • Look at what we like about alcohol/drugs and why we use them • Look at our use and if it has caused harm or could • Look at our responsibility • Think about where we were headed/want to go • Make thoughtful decisions about our lives • Follow through on our decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase protective factors & decrease risk factors in the following YASI domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Use/Abuse • Attitudes/Beliefs/Consequences • Family • Community/Peer Association • Accepting responsibility for delinquent/criminal behavior • Understanding the impact of his or her behavior on others • Willingness to make amends • Optimism/hope for future • Readiness for change • Problem-solving skills • Impulse-control skills over delinquent/criminal behavior • Goal-setting skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase youth and parental “buy-in” to treatment • Informed decision making by youth • Understanding of drug use logic (i.e. needs met) as well as associated costs • Building of Relapse Prevention Skills and behavior alternatives • Improved mental health • Clinically appropriate, youth-specific referrals • Address unmotivated and resistant clients by avoiding power struggles, provide clients with space and time to make individual decisions without pressure for abstinence-only. • Check-in process at the beginning of each session to identify most pressing issues to client and work on those issues first • Closure at the end of each session to ensure client addressed what they wanted/needed during session • Expectation of clients to be active group participants willing to work on their own issues or assist others with theirs in the event they do not have an issue they are ready to address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives and avoidance of substance abuse • Decrease drug use • Improve overall mental health • Improve relationships • Improve school/work performance • Increase awareness of past and present issues and how they relate to societal issues (discrimination, etc.) to help young people put their problems into a societal context and then take control of their lives and move past problems • Prepare clients for adulthood as a responsible person through empowering the client to make their own decisions about their life choices