

Nashua organization expands its treatment to help younger addicts

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NASHUA -- A local organization that offers treatment for substance use disorders will now be providing services for younger people who are struggling.

The staff at Greater Nashua Mental Health's Child, Adolescent and Family Services division will soon be trained in the Seven Challenges model.

This model is an approach to treating substance use disorders, and it is particularly effective with young people, according to a release.

"We are really excited to be adding this excellent program to our toolbox of treatment services for our adolescents and their families," said Kate Bernier, director of Child, Adolescent and Family Services, in a statement.

The program is designed to help young people identify their own motivation and empower them to meet their needs in positive ways -- without drugs.

"We know that this results-based program will allow us to actively engage young people and provide them with effective tools they can use for the rest of their lives," Bernier said.

The training, which is designed to help those who are age 12 to 25, will be funded with a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' Bureau of Behavioral Health, according to the release.

"The training is going to happen fairly soon. The scheduling is being worked out right now," Bernier said on Monday.

Dr. Robert Schwebel came up with the Seven Challenges model in 1991 with the goal of "addressing substance abuse issues as well as co-occurring problems and life skill deficits," according to the program's website.

"The Seven Challenges is now used across the United States in a wide array of services, including in residential, intensive outpatient, schools and home-based settings," the site says.

The nontraditional approach includes the following seven steps: talking honestly about drugs and alcohol, discussing the attraction to drugs and alcohol, determining whether substance use has or could cause damage, looking at personal responsibility and others' responsibility for substance issues, examining participants' goals, making choices about one's life surrounding the use of drugs and alcohol, and following through.

"As a state in which substance misuse among youth is significantly higher than not only the national average but also the other Northeast states, the need for developing and implementing treatment and recovery services that will meet the unique needs of youth and young adults is vital," reads a statement from Greater Nashua Mental Health.

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