

Drug/Alcohol Issues

Background Notes

Many of the clients that DHS comes into contact with have substance abuse issues. Most branches in the state have specialized teams called ART teams (Addiction Recovery Teams) to assist in assessing clients with drug and alcohol issues and to assist caseworkers with case planning. Large percentages of people who abuse drugs/alcohol have low self-esteem and many have a history of trauma. People who abuse drugs/alcohol may be in denial about the amount they use. They may also feel guilt and shame about their use of substances, which makes it even more difficult to admit that they use and seek help. The children in these homes have experienced chaos, inconsistent parenting, neglect, frequently witness domestic violence and often have experienced abuse themselves.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Find out if your office has an ART team. If so, who are the members of the team and how do you access their services.
- Talk to a worker experienced in working with substance abusing clients about the indications they are under the influence of a substance and how they handle it.
- What questions or observations does the worker make to determine how the parent's drug use is affecting their children?
- Make a list of at least three strategies for interviewing a person who may be under the influence or who has a recent history of abusing drugs/alcohol.
- What services are available in your community for parents who are having substance abuse problems?
- What services are available in your community for children whose parents are addicted?

Discoveries:

- *Add the list of providers to your list of resources for future reference.*
- *What did you learn that will increase your success with families with substance abuse issues?*