

The Seven Challenges® is a treatment model designed for adolescents and young adults with substance abuse problems. It helps teach young people how to make informed, motivated, thoughtful decisions that will help them attain their goals. Instead of telling youth that they have to stay drug-free, we give them the tools to make their own decisions and look at the pros and cons of their substance use. We help young people discern where their responsibilities lie as well as how they are impacted by events and attitudes for which they are not responsible. The focus of treatment is on the issues that are important to young people, not only substance abuse problems.

The Seven Challenges® program encompasses:

- ✓ teaching young people new life skills
- ✓ looking at how their substance use - and other behavior - will bring them closer to or get in the way of achieving their goals
- ✓ helping them understand what it takes to remain drug-free in the community
- ✓ supporting them in making committed decisions
- ✓ preparing for success when they commit to making changes

Developmentally Appropriate

The Seven Challenges® program helps young people master developmental tasks—to define their own identity, to learn systematic logical thinking and to prepare for adult roles and responsibilities—as they think about and examine their lives, their drug use and the potential impact of their drug use upon their future.

Research-based

The Seven Challenges® program is based on the latest research, especially findings about:

- The underlying and co-occurring psychological problems that often accompany drug use and put youth at risk of substance abuse
- The stages of change in overcoming drug problems
- Preparing individuals to change through motivational enhancement
- Trauma and resiliency
- Counseling outcomes
- Relapse prevention

Culturally Sensitive

The Seven Challenges® program and materials were developed working with a culturally diverse group of young people. The program uses an empowerment model, putting personal problems in the context of broader social and environmental issues.

Holistic

The Seven Challenges® program addresses the drug use behavior, the underlying causes (including psychological and co-occurring problems) and lifestyle issues.

Respect

To succeed in working with youth, **The Seven Challenges®** places a special emphasis on creating a climate of mutual respect within which young people can talk openly and honestly about themselves.

Understanding

Working through **The Seven Challenges®** helps youth understand what needs they are meeting by using drugs, what harm they are causing, what risks they are taking and what is needed to successfully become and remain drug-free. We raise consciousness, inspire hope and motivate internally driven decisions to change.

Partnership

Our clinicians join with youth and their families as problem-solving partners. We help young people address co-occurring problems and learn to meet their needs in positive ways so they are in a position from which they can sincerely make a commitment to change. We teach the skills needed and provide the support that facilitates success.

***The Seven Challenges®** is available in all OCFS facilities for every youth assessed as needing substance abuse treatment. Services include individual sessions with clinicians and youth counselors; supportive interactive journaling, where youth work on each of the seven challenges; and group treatment, where youth bring in issues to work on, help each other develop solutions to those issues, and introduce topics to discuss, and group leaders introduce activities and teach skills.*

Challenging ourselves to make wise decisions about alcohol, other drugs and our lives.



Office of Children
and Family Services

The Seven Challenges®

1. We decided to be open and talk honestly about ourselves and about alcohol and other drugs.
2. We looked at what we liked about alcohol and other drugs, and why we were using them.
3. We looked at our use of alcohol or other drugs to see if it has caused harm or could cause harm.
4. We looked at our responsibility and the responsibility of others for our problems.
5. We thought about where we seemed to be headed, where we wanted to go and what we wanted to accomplish.
6. We made thoughtful decisions about our lives and about our use of alcohol and other drugs.
7. We followed through on our decisions about our lives and drug use. If we saw problems, we went back to earlier challenges and mastered them.

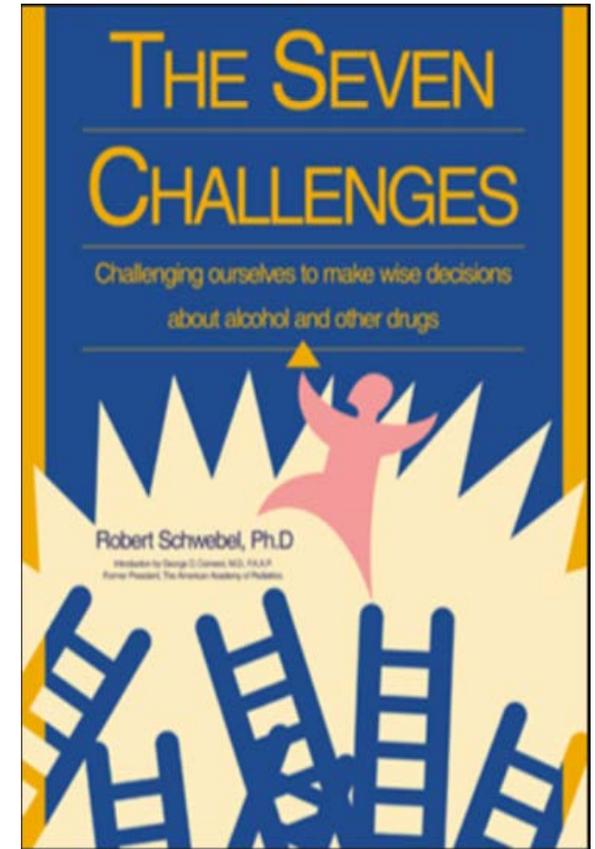
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

The child's facility clinician
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-OR-

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