

MEDIA REVIEW

Edited by Cathy M. Hudgins, PhD

***Treating Adolescent Substance Abuse Using Family Behavior Therapy: A Step-by-Step Approach.* B. Donohue and N. H. Azrin. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.**

Despite 40 years of concerted effort, substance abuse issues have grown ever more prominent in our society. Corresponding with this growth had been an alarming increase in adolescent substance abuse. Data provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse indicate that over 16% of 16- to 17-year-olds reported using an illicit drug in the past month. The potential consequences, both short and long term, are staggering for these youth, their families, and society as a whole. For this reason, large quantities of federal resources have been devoted to the development and validation of effective treatments for adolescent substance abuse. Unfortunately, a considerable gap still exists between science and practice.

Donohue and Azrin (2012) provide a useful and accessible means of bridging this gap with their treatment manual, *Treating Adolescent Substance Abuse Using Family Behavior Therapy: A Step-by-Step Approach*. The authors introduce family behavior therapy (FBT), based on the community reinforcement approach, which has been documented to be effective with adults. Donohue and Azrin introduce FBT in an easy-to-understand manner and provide a sound theoretical and empirical background for its use. FBT incorporates not just the substance-abusing adolescent but also the family, making them an integral part of the treatment process. FBT's strong focus on strengths and being positive serves to actively engage adolescents and their families in treatment. Additionally, adolescents and their families are active in the planning of treatment, deciding on the nature of the contingencies provided in the contingency management plan and deciding on the structure and timing of sessions. This really creates a sense of autonomy and collaboration for families in the treatment process.

Reading about an exciting and empirically sound treatment model is one thing, but putting it into practice in the real world is often an altogether different proposition. In this area, Donohue and Azrin's treatment manual truly excels. Clinicians are provided with a wealth of handouts, guidelines, and brief assessments that allow them to quickly and easily implement each

session. Clinicians are able to maximize the time spent in session and easily check to ensure that all components of the session are addressed appropriately. The sessions are wonderfully structured for the clinician, which should translate into a standardized delivery. And yet, FBT has a great deal of flexibility built into its design so that clinicians can use their clinical judgment to tailor the treatment to the needs of the client. That sense of autonomy and adaptability is vital for clinicians to feel comfortable using a treatment manual. Donohue and Azrin achieve this goal beautifully.

Adolescent substance abuse is a problem of epidemic proportions in our society. FBT provides an exciting option in the treatment of adolescent substance abuse, which is exemplified by Donohue and Azrin in their treatment manual, *Treating Adolescent Substance Abuse Using Family Behavior Therapy: A Step-by-Step Approach*. It provides useful strategies to engage both the youth and their family in therapy. Donohue and Azrin provide a manual that achieves both structure and flexibility, which allows the clinician to use it easily without feeling restricted. Their work is an exciting addition for those who work with adolescent substance abuse.

Michael Murphy
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student
Radford University
Radford, VA

Copyright of Journal of Family Psychotherapy is the property of Taylor & Francis Ltd and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.