



silent treatment

ADDICTION IN AMERICA

The newspaper series

On **August 2**, *Silent Treatment: Addiction in America*, a national public education initiative, will place a spotlight on addiction treatment and recovery across the country. This multi-media project, produced by Public Access Journalism LLC and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will explore why 9 out of 10 of the 23 million Americans addicted to alcohol and other drugs do not find their way to treatment, as well as promote the power and possibility of recovery.

Kicking off the project is a five-part newspaper series distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune News Service free to newspapers and their websites across the United States. The series will be available to editors **August 2**, just in time to promote events planned for September's National Recovery Month 2006.

The articles, companion website content and broadcasts are designed to spark a national dialogue and community action by offering:

- Innovative perspectives on the issues of addiction, treatment and recovery
- Compelling personal tales told through newspaper articles, broadcasts, an online recovery blog and podcasts
- Promising new strategies being integrated into treatment that increase the odds of successful recovery
- Valuable resources and networks, how-to guides and the latest research on causes of addiction, treatment access, recovery, public policy initiatives and healthcare trends

Start now by using the series as a launching pad for community action

Silent Treatment provides a progressive way for advocacy and research groups focused on addiction to initiate or expand outreach efforts and mobilize communities. Media outreach, local tie-in events and group partnerships can promote awareness and sensitivity to addiction — whether you're focused on causes, treatment, prevention or recovery. Here's how:

RECRUIT your local media and plan a campaign.

Consider the five-part newspaper series the foundation for your action plan. National and local efforts around Silent Treatment begin with encouraging your local newspaper to print the series. In June, newspaper editors will begin to receive advisories announcing the series. To get a jump on planning, use April and May to begin partnering with other local organizations to approach media outlets; take advantage of those partnerships to organize activities that promote recovery and address treatment needs in your community. Keep in mind that newspapers are more inclined to run a series when their local communities ask for it. In June, arrange a meeting with the managing editor, news editor or feature/health section editor of your local newspaper. Come prepared with ideas, programs, events and story subjects that focus on local issues.

ENCOURAGE newspapers, radio and TV stations to report on state and local success stories and sponsor community tie-in events.

Enlist a local radio station to host an interview with a local counselor, author or expert or to sponsor a "Recovery Walk." Organize a talk show call-in day. Suggest the newspaper report on innovative treatment programs or upcoming community events.

INCREASE public awareness of treatment options by hosting tie-in events during National Recovery Month.

Encourage partner organizations to team up on activities or initiatives that promote treatment and recovery, addressing addiction at the local level. Host an "Artists in Recovery" show; sponsor a "Recovery Walk" or expert's panel.

DEVELOP directories of local resources for the public and media on issues covered in the series.

Compile a list of treatment options and recovery groups in your community, with contact information and a description of services, or create a calendar of events and provide the listing to your local newspaper.

NETWORK with other programs to create demand for change.

Use the Silent Treatment e-newsletter to distribute news and updates in your e-newsletters and on your website and link to www.silenttreatment.info.

CALL us for updates, guidance and to share ideas.

For more information on the series:

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**Make Use of This
Important Multimedia
Opportunity to Increase
Awareness in Your
Community About
Addiction, Innovative
Treatment and Recovery**

www.silenttreatment.info

Overview: Breaking the Silence

Thirty-five years ago, when Ron Clark founded Rehabilitation Addiction Programs Inc., in Washington, D.C., his theory was that the community itself was one of the most powerful influences on substance abuse treatment. Until then, the community approach was considered radical and untested, not widely used outside Alcoholics Anonymous. Today it's just one of the many tools available to treat the more than 22 million Americans aged 12 and older who abuse drugs and alcohol. Researchers have shown that genetics play a part in addiction. Psychologists have linked addictive behavior to familial and societal problems. Chemists have discovered triggers that set off and sustain

addictions. And in courtrooms across the country, there's an overwhelming connection between addiction and the crime, spousal and child abuse on display every day. Experts agree that addictions originate from a complex set of circumstances best approached with individual, customized treatment that considers age, gender, race and even culture. No one size fits all. Still, despite an era of increased openness and acceptance, addiction is often denied, unrecognized and untreated. Nine out of 10 addicted Americans still don't find their way to treatment. Those who do then face a lifelong recovery process, where real life and all its temptations, stereotyping and discriminations await.

Addiction: Where it Starts

For decades, people addicted to drugs or alcohol had only themselves to blame; they lacked discipline, or they were weak, or they suffered from character flaws — so went conventional wisdom. But in the last 15 years, nearly two-dozen studies suggest otherwise: Addiction is in the genes. These studies say learned behavior is certainly part of the problem, but they also offer striking new and strong evidence that half of all Americans addicted to alcohol and drugs can blame genetic wiring. Getting the research to the medical community and treatment centers has been difficult for years,

however; even when the studies find themselves in the hands of health-care professionals, little is done to apply the findings. For starters, most of the nation's treatment centers remain in private hands, and there's little collaboration between them and the nation's hospitals. All this is changing. More centers are establishing formal relationships with hospitals and a waterfront of outpatient support services. Medical schools are training a new generation of health-care professionals with the new science, and pharmaceutical giants are using the research to launch new medicines that suppress addictive tendencies. "It's a

Youth: The Danger Zone

The dangers of alcohol and drug abuse to the developing teenage brain are becoming increasingly — and alarmingly — understood. An early initiation into drinking dramatically increases the risk of becoming alcohol-dependent later in life. One study found that teens who drank excessively and consistently recalled 10 percent less on memory tests than their non-drinking peers — in some cases, the impact was seen years later, after months of sobriety. Early substance abuse also is an overwhelming burden on the country's juvenile justice system, involving 80 percent of all teen arrests. The economic cost is huge: When one youth leaves high school for a life of

addiction and crime, it costs society up to \$2.3 million. All of these factors are changing the face of treatment for teens. Because kids as young as 12 with alcohol and drug problems almost always have a psychiatric disorder, programs across the country are moving away from a 12-step therapeutic model, which relies heavily on a structure many now believe may not translate well to young people — either because few ever hit bottom that early or are able to grasp the concept of a higher power, two bedrocks of the 12-step plan. As one counselor put it, teenagers think they are the higher power. One new model is The Seven Challenges, which acknowledges the fact that kids often will fight change by

Courts: Treatment vs. Punishment

Nearly 80 percent of all crime in the United States is drug or alcohol related, which makes prison potentially the largest addiction treatment center in the country. But inside jail walls, treatment varies enormously. Many states have assigned whole prisons as drug treatment facilities; in other cases, addicts do the last year of their time in special prison units devoted to treatment. But the real problems begin with release, and re-entry into the real world. Most ex-offenders are not required to undergo follow-up treatment — and most don't. The result is a revolving door. In San Francisco, despite the fact that drug counselors typically show up at the jailhouse door offering

newly released offenders rides directly to treatment, only 35 percent ever make it there. And when it comes to treatment for imprisoned women, the offerings are slim or none. Many programs refuse to take pregnant women or mothers of young children. But success is being found around the country. The Rebecca Project in Washington, D.C., advocates for creating family-centered residential programs for women inmates. In Chicago, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) runs the Winners' Circle, modeled on a therapeutic community to help men and women remain drug and crime free. Drug courts, which deal specifically with non-violent crimes, have grown phenomenally over

Recovery: A New Activism

A very public push is trying to force the lifelong process of recovery from addiction "out of the basement," where Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and other programs have long been held. From a film festival on the subject of addiction and recovery in Westchester County, N.Y., to an exhibit of artworks created by teens in recovery in St. Louis or well-known artists in Los Angeles, there is a new movement afoot to erase stigmas and acknowledge the lifelong realities of navigating life as an addict. The unofficial spokesman

for this campaign is the middle-aged son of TV journalist Bill Moyers, William Cope Moyers, who speaks publicly about his own near-death experience from drug abuse and urges recovering addicts to talk about their situation. At the same time, recovery programs are becoming more open to recognizing the needs of people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. A new private high school in Madison, Wisc., caters exclusively to high school students trying to stay sober after undergoing treatment for drug and alcohol problems. In

Ideas for Local Stories & Activities

And some drug addictions are less acceptable than others. Crack cocaine, for example, continues to be seen as a problem only for African Americans. Methamphetamine is viewed as the drug of poor, rural types. Yet, in Alabama clinics, those addicted to prescription drugs make up 70 percent of clients. "A doctor gave it to them, or they get it illegally," said a Montgomery addiction counselor. "There is still the picture that substance abuse, real addiction, is not a mainstream thing, that addicts are deviant people. That it's not happening to the businessman or the kids who go to the affluent schools. But it is."

- Look for local policy initiatives that highlight innovation and encourage newspapers to write a local story
- Compile a listing of community offerings into a treatment and recovery media directory
- Enlist your local radio station to host a daily "Let's Talk Recovery" minute during morning drive time, featuring local people in recovery sharing their experiences, strength and hope
- Organize a Mayor's Proclamation Day or citywide observance

good time to be addicted," says Thomas McClellan, a Philadelphia researcher. "The treatment is catching up with the research. We're going to save a ton of money and, more importantly, lives."

- Sponsor a public education seminar on addiction causes or new treatments
- Enlist your local public television station to host a panel discussion on addiction
- Offer a Recovery Film Festival and facilitated panel discussion
- Partner with the faith-based community to sponsor Recovery Sundays featuring ministers highlighting addictions and recovery in their sermons
- Host a Candlelight Vigil in remembrance of those who have died from addiction

focusing not on sobriety, but on recovery. Santa Cruz, Calif., began taking a "whole village" approach to the problem five years ago, slashing the number of teens in its county Juvenile Hall by combining the resources of the criminal justice system with treatment programs that rely on weekly meetings for every youth, attended by a probation officer, mental health provider, alcohol/drug provider, family advocate, teacher, family members and youth development staff. "You can provide effective treatment in the community for \$4,000 a year," said Jeffrey R. Bidmon of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department, "or you can spend \$80,000 a year on a residential, in-custody program."

- Organize a Parent Workshop that presents prevention and intervention strategies
- Sponsor a Clean and Sober Youth Dance or Camp Out
- Organize an education program, alcohol screening or health fair to raise awareness about addiction prevention, treatment and recovery
- Partner with a local sports team to pay public tribute to recovering youth
- Along with local school officials, organize a Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Contract for Life signing

the past 15 years — from a single court in 1989 to 1,621 courts last year. They offer an intensive alternative to prison, with random drug testing, peer counseling, parenting and job skills classes, anger management, and rewards and sanctions. Pressure is at the heart of drug court's effectiveness. "The reality is that everyone who's gone into treatment has had some kind of coercion — if not from a family member then from an employer who says if you don't get some help, you're going to lose your job," says Karen Freeman Wilson, head of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

- Sponsor an Open House at your treatment center
- Hold a Recovery Banquet that honors local addiction counselors and recovering members of the community
- Host a panel discussion with local law enforcement and judicial representatives
- Partner with criminal justice professionals to offer a training day for judges, probation officers, etc.
- Celebrate National Addiction Counselor's Day, inviting the community, other service providers and politicians to join the celebration
- Organize a Softball Game between local treatment providers and drug court staffers and invite the media
- Have recovering offenders speak at schools about the dangers of addiction

Hartford, Conn., a new support group, African Men in Recovery, was designed specifically for black men. Yet even with new attitudes and programs, there are lingering, inflammatory issues almost as old as addiction itself: the inadequacy of government funding, the debate over whether public money should aid religious-based recovery groups and the sticky politics of getting recovery assistance through an employer's health insurance.

- Sponsor a Poetry Jam that invites local poets in recovery to share a poem that expresses the role of recovery and healing in their lives
- Collaborate with the faith-based community and treatment providers to organize a Family Picnic or Block Party to celebrate recovery
- Organize a Walk or Ride for Recovery with proceeds to benefit local treatment centers or recovery groups
- Host an Art Expo that offers a collection of pieces from various local artists in recovery



Important Dates:	
April-May:	Create local partnerships to promote project
April 1:	Groups receive <i>Silent Treatment</i> outreach and promotional materials www.silenttreatment.info goes live
June 2:	Newspaper editors receive advisories and promotional brochures
June and July:	Groups meet with local media
August 2:	Series is distributed for publication
September 2:	Series reprints are available for distribution

For more information, visit us on the web at: www.silenttreatment.info

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