

# **The Adolescent Substance Abuser**

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**Dedicated to my parents, Jan and Jeanette  
and to my husband, Jannie**

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**“Our youth is comfort seeking, have poor manners, ignore authority and do not respect their elders. They are tyrannical. They don’t get up when adults enter the room, they talk back at their parents, they are bad”.**

**Socrates 970 – 339 B.C.**

## **EKSERP**

Recent research into the adolescent substance abuser has been motivated by the recognition that the successful rehabilitation of such persons may depend on the development of a positive self-concept.

Literature dealing with the Gestalt Therapy, the Adolescent; Chemical Dependency, Addiction and Substance Abuse have been discussed. The various stages and elements of social development of the adolescent were discussed in order to determine whether there exists a correlation between a dysfunctional family life or “unfinished business” and the cause of substance abuse.

The interviews conducted with thirteen (13) respondents, who were referred by the court and/or educational institutions, indicate that there is a definite connection between the poor self-concept of the adolescent substance abuser (based on previous traumatic experiences) and substance abuse. The research indicates that the majority of these adolescents choose to abuse substances for comfort – to compensate for the fragmentation in their lives.

In accordance with the Gestalt Therapy which advocates an integration of the various elements of the self – a holistic view - the researcher found that it was possible to treat the addiction successfully if the adolescent could deal with the “unfinished business” in his/her past.

Consequently, the final Chapter of this study sets out guidelines of the development of a therapeutic programme founded on principles of the Gestalt Therapy.

## OPSOMMING

Navorsing het bevind dat die suksesvolle rehabilitasie van die adolessente dwelmmisbruiker afhang van die ontwikkeling van 'n positiewe selfbeeld.

Literatuur in verband met die Gestalt Terapie, die Adolessent, Chemiese Afhanklikheid, en Dwelmmisbruik is bespreek. Die verskillende ontwikkelings fases van die adolessent is in oënskoue geneem, ten einde te bepaal of daar 'n korrelasie bestaan tussen die wan-funksionerende gesin, onopgeloste sake uit die verlede en die oorsaak van dwelmmisbruik by die adolessent.

Onderhoude is met dertien (13) respondente gevoer, hierdie respondente was deur die Secunda/Evander hoewe en een skool in Secunda verwys. Tydens die onderhoudsvoering het dit geblyk dat daar 'n definitiewe verhouding is tussen 'n swak selfbeeld van die adolessente dwelmmisbruiker en traumatiese insidente van die verlede. Hierdie navorsing toon dat die meerderheid van die adolessente dwelmmisbruiker, dwelms misbruik vir die effek daarvan en om te kompenseer vir traumatiese insidente van die verlede, waarmee hulle nog nie vrede gemaak het nie.

In ooreenstemming met die Gestalt Terapie, wat die integrasie van verskeie elemente in die self aanspreek - 'n holistiese siening – het die navorser bevind dat dit moontlik is om die verslawing suksesvol te behandel, mits die adolessent bereid is om met die “onopgeloste insidente” van die verlede te werk en te hanteer.

Ten slotte, in hoofstuk 5 van hierdie navorsing, het die navorser sekere riglyne daargestel vir die ontwikkeling van 'n terapeutiese program, gegrond op die beginsels van die Gestalt Terapie.

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