



## ECHO Idaho: Counseling Techniques for Substance Use Disorder CASE RECOMMENDATION FORM

**Presenter Credential:** LMSW

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this patient's case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

**Summary:** The patient is a 17-year-old female in foster care with a significant history of abuse, neglect, and separation from her twin sister, who is currently in a substance-use treatment facility. She lives with a foster mother she does not feel supported by, is a high-school junior, and has Medicaid insurance. She has diagnoses of depression, anxiety, and PTSD, and is engaged in individual therapy but resists treatment overall, minimizing her behaviors. Her substance use began very early, including cigarette use since age 7 and heavy alcohol and marijuana use since pre-adolescence; she was recently ticketed for drinking. Medically, she has a history of spinal fusion for scoliosis and limited family medical information. Socially, she is friendly, future-oriented, and identifies friends (who also regularly use substances), as her support system; she does not wish to be adopted. The provider aims to support her transition to adulthood and reduce substance use, with limited time before she turns 18, and seeks guidance on effective strategies to prevent escalation of substance use in teenagers.

### Recommendations:

- Strengthen Future Orientation & Planning:
  - Explore concrete plans and goals for the future and connect those goals to actions she can control. Help her identify goals that do not depend on others (foster mom, boyfriend, friends, etc.).
  - Encourage her to map out timelines (18<sup>th</sup> birthday, graduation, 1-5 years) to visualize her future direction.
  - Frame all interventions around preparing her for independence at 18.
  - Discuss how her current choices either help or hinder the life she wants in Moscow – college, stability, and autonomy.
- Enhance Autonomy & Control:
  - Increase her control in sessions (choice of seating, topics, pacing).
  - Use collaborative adult-to-adult communication to model healthy interactions.
  - Reframe consequences: "Adults make choices, and we accept the outcome of those choices".
  - Validate how early-life loss of control may drive current spite and resistance.
- Build Motivation Through Values & Identity:
  - Engage in value clarification (moral code, personal identity, differences between birth/foster families).
  - Explore the emotional wound around abandonment and fear that changing her behavior might cost her friendships.
  - Discuss what substance use provides and whether these align with her long-term values.
- Address Substance Use Through Harm Reduction:
  - Introduce harm-reduction conversations (not abstinence-focused until she drives it).
  - Highlight risks related to losing control if her substance use continues to get her in trouble.
  - Normalize developmental patterns (externalizing blame) while redirecting toward self-reflection and ownership. Help her examine these patterns in a non-confrontational way ("how's that working for you?").
- Build Rapport & Expand Adult Connections:



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- Assess potential supportive adults, including BF's grandmother; encourage gradual development of one to two trusted adult relationships.
- Explore vocational rehabilitation or structure programs to increase supportive adult contact and build skills.
- Leverage Resilience & Empowerment:
  - Highlight her resilience and survival skills; frame behavior change as empowerment rather than compliance with authority.
  - Explore how early exposure to substances removed her choice at age 7, and now emphasize the power (and fear) of having choice today.

**Consider presenting follow-up for this patient case or any other patient cases at a future ECHO Clinic session.**

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