

Alcohol & Drug Treatment for Youth

Northwest Family Services provides school-based, alcohol and drug treatment services.



When a student walks into the office for an alcohol and drug assessment, the outcome or chance for success is never an absolute. For the student whose story is about to be shared, his journey has still just begun, but his current level of progress has hopefully planted a seed that will generate even more success. No matter how small progress may seem, adolescents need to have this progress be acknowledged and continued to be encouraged.

Due to being suspended from school due to a drug related incident, this resulted in obtaining a drug and alcohol assessment. At the time, “John” did not believe his use was any issue at all, and was causing no harmful effects to his health or his school performance. Even so, he committed to at least showing up to treatment. He was closed off originally, just listening to the information presented, and then a few sessions were missed. When “John” finally walked back into my office he admitted to a relapse.

“John” continued to struggle with the trust of his parents as well as school staff, which eventually resulted in another suspension. After some work around what was really important to him and pinpointing a motivation, it appeared “John” was willing to give treatment a shot, at least for the next 12 weeks. Fast forward a few weeks, “John” had been clean and sober for about a month. He submitted a Urine Analysis, which came back negative for all substances.

To see a student remain clean and sober for 30 days is amazing, but the biggest success was “John’s” own reaction to this negative urinary analysis (UA). To see someone so proud of himself for what he had accomplished, especially when others in his life did not believe that he could, was extremely powerful. Although no one can predict whether or not “John” will return to use at some point in his life (as he has a lot of years of peer pressure ahead), I can confidently say that the feeling of being proud is going to stick with him long after treatment has been completed.