

Addiction Treatment in Grand Island Supported by Youth Education Programs

By Sean Woodard - April 6, 2018



Grand Island youth programs are assisting children of parents receiving addiction treatment for substance use disorders.

The Central Nebraska Council on Alcoholism and Addictions' (CNCAA) [Kids Power program](#) has been providing kids with resources to help them understand and cope with substance use disorders that run in their families.

Jerry Moe, the national director of Children's Programs at the [Betty Ford Center](#), traced Nebraska's historical development of drug education programs for children. In the late 1980s and early '90s, community members would gather together for training sessions focused on how to work more closely together to address how alcohol and drugs were affecting children.

The concern over limited addiction awareness resources for children influenced CNCAA to develop Kids Power in the late 1990s. Although funding remains an issue, Kids Powers' popularity is inspiring neighboring communities to replicate the program.

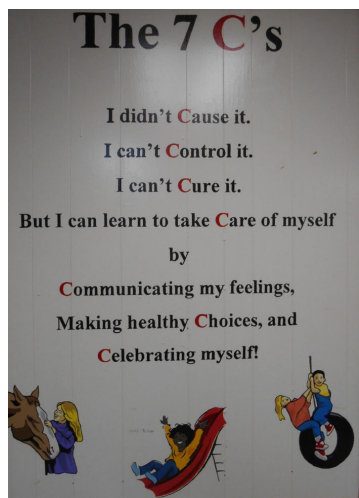
Kids Power works with kids between seven and 11 years of age. According to CNCAA's Executive Director Connie Holmes, children who attend their 8-week program often say they feel alone, confused about the problems at home, or as if they are to blame for a parent's substance use.

Kids Power offers children a safe place to share their feelings and learn life skills. In addition to a lending resources library, it offers many group activities.

Parents with substance use disorders encourage their kids to attend and drive them across the state, Holmes said, sometimes 70 to 80 miles one-way on a weekly basis.

"The parent's perspective would be 'let's help my kids learn so this doesn't happen to them,'" Holmes said. "We're breaking that cycle of addiction. The program gives them hope."

Louise Dexter, programs assistant at Kids Power, mentioned that Kids Power incorporates Jerry Moe's '7 Cs,' which remind children that although they cannot be accountable for their parent's addiction, they can take steps to better care for themselves.



Courtesy of Connie Holmes, CNCAA

Moe said: "Programs, like the Central Nebraska Council, really use [the '7 Cs'] as a focal point in terms of a compass that children can always come back to when they think about what's going on in their family."

Kids Power also adapted Jerry Moe's backpack full of rocks activity. The backpack acts as a metaphor for the problems and emotional weight their parents carry inside once they start using drugs or drinking alcohol.

"There's a bag of rocks and on each rock is written an uncomfortable feeling, like sad or frustrated," Holmes said. "They take turns going around the circle and sharing when they may have had that feeling. The idea is to get these kids more comfortable with identifying feelings and talking about them,

then helping them understand that if their mom or dad are in treatment, counseling, or a recovery program, they're learning the same things, too."

Holmes and Dexter have seen kids benefit... [\(Continue Reading\)](#)



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