

UM Drug Treatment Program Highlighted in National Report

A drug treatment program developed at the Center for Treatment Research on Adolescent Drug Abuse at the University of Miami School of Medicine has been singled out in a first-ever comprehensive national guide to drug treatment programs for teens. UM's Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) is one of seven programs detailed in-depth in the new publication called "Treating Teens: A Guide to Adolescent Drug Programs." The guide was put out by Drug Strategies, a non-profit research institute that promotes more effective approaches to the nation's drug problems while supporting initiatives to reduce the demand for drugs through prevention, education, treatment and law enforcement.

Multidimensional Family Therapy is an outpatient family-based drug abuse treatment for teenage substance abusers. The program was developed at UM seven years ago by Dr. Howard Liddle, Director of the Center for Treatment Research on Adolescent Drug Abuse at the UM School of Medicine. The MDFT treatment program has demonstrated success in treating a range of adolescent drug problems in both early intervention studies to intensive outpatient studies. "Our studies show that the effects of this treatment are durable," said Dr. Howard Liddle. "We have followed kids and their families for one year after treatment ends, and results show that positive changes, including significant decreases in drug use, better grades, and dramatic improvements in the family's functioning, persist a year after treatment.

The program has received numerous national honors, including being honored as "Best Practice for Substance Abuse" under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Health. The program has also shown success with teens in several other cities, including Philadelphia, San Francisco and Oakland, and it is currently being taught and implemented in various U.S. cities and treatment agencies.