



For more information about A-CRA

If you would like to read more about the research-based treatment that we provide, the training for our staff, or what other parents and caregivers have said about the approach, visit <http://ebtx.chestnut.org>.



Lahey Health
Behavioral Services

Team Fourteen

Beverly – Haverhill – Lawrence

AND

Chestnut 
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Evidence-Based Treatment for Youth



A Guide to A-CRA

What is the Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA)?

The treatment model known as A-CRA recognizes that, at least initially, alcohol and drug use is about reinforcing consequences—that make us more likely to repeat actions. This is true whether we are hanging out with friends, playing a favorite game, eating a good meal, or using alcohol or other drugs. People who use alcohol and drugs get something out of it – or they wouldn't keep doing it.

The overall goal of A-CRA is to help youth reconnect with or discover new sources of positive reinforcement within their community to compete with alcohol or drug use. How do A-CRA clinicians do this? By listening to and learning from their clients what is important to them. They then help them connect to pro-recovery activities that have meaning and value to their client. In addition, A-CRA clinicians help their youth identify goals and learn how to achieve them. Adolescents also learn a variety of new skills, such as problem-solving and positive communication (with caregivers, friends, and others), which help them attain a better quality of life. Practicing new skills is a critical

component of the skills training used in A-CRA. Every session ends with a mutually-agreed upon homework assignment to practice skills learned during sessions.

This intervention has been implemented in outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential treatment settings. This research-tested intervention has been used in over 300 organizations across the United States and Canada.

How is A-CRA structured?

A-CRA is typically conducted in a Community Agency, Outpatient Clinic, Residential Care Facility, or in home, school or other settings.

The A-CRA sessions are positive, strength-based and focused on the individual's needs. Clinicians have a variety of A-CRA procedures to choose from based upon the issues adolescents raise during sessions. Within a broad framework, the model includes guidelines for three types of sessions: individuals alone, parents/caregivers alone, and individuals and parents/caregivers together or individuals and their significant others together.

According to the individual's needs and self-assessment of happiness in multiple life areas, clinicians choose

from a variety of A-CRA procedures that address day-to-day stressors, communication skills, and active participation in positive social and recreational activities with the goal of improving life satisfaction and eliminating alcohol and substance use problems.

Goals of A-CRA

- Decrease the use of alcohol and drugs
- Improve communication with family and others
- Increase participation in non-using social activities
- Increase positive relationships with peers

For more information:

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