

NEW DAY NEWS



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Heroin

IMPORTANT FACTS

- Heroin is an opiate drug that is synthesized from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seed pod of the opium poppy plant
- Usually appears as a white or brown powder or as a “black sticky substance” known as black tar heroin
- It can be injected, snorted/sniffed, or smoked. All three methods of administering heroin can lead to addiction and other severe health problems.
- Heroin enters the brain, where it is converted to morphine and binds to receptors known as opioid receptors. These receptors are located in many areas of the brain (and in the body), especially those involved in the perception of pain and pleasure.
- After an intravenous injection of heroin, users report feeling a surge of euphoria (“rush”) accompanied by dry mouth, a warm flushing of the skin, heaviness of the extremities, and clouded mental functioning. Following this initial euphoria, the user goes “on the nod,” an alternately wakeful and drowsy state.
- With regular heroin use, tolerance develops, in which the user’s physiological (and psychological) response to the drug decreases, and more heroin is needed to achieve the same intensity of effect. Heroin users are at high risk for addiction—it is estimated that about 23 percent of individuals who use heroin become dependent on it.
- Heroin abuse is associated with serious health conditions, including fatal overdose, spontaneous abortion, and—particularly in users who inject the drug—infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. Chronic users may develop collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, and liver or kidney disease. Pulmonary complications, including various types of pneumonia, may result from the poor health of the abuser as well as from heroin’s depressing effects on respiration.

(from National Institute of Drug Abuse)

The mission of The Starting Place is to improve lives through education, treatment and support services related to substance abuse, mental illness and co-occurring disorders



Joel Kaufman, Ph.D.
CEO

The Perfect Storm?

As the "Oxy Express" runs dry as Florida is starting to shut hundreds of pill mills and tighten up lax laws, addicts are starting to increasingly seek out treatment.

At the same time a reemerging trend in South Florida is that heroin use and abuse is on the rise. It does not take a "rocket scientist" to understand that if an addict cannot obtain a prescription Opioid for non medical use, it is not a quantum leap to use an illegal Opioid. Increasing heroin purity in recent years has also resulted in a greater number of initiatives because injection is no longer a prerequisite for use.

Also, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) heroin has become more available in part because criminal Columbian drug organizations made a strategic decision earlier in this decade to cultivate the opium poppy, produce heroin and sell it in the US. This coupled with increased availability of Mexican heroin and increased involvement of Mexican drug trafficking organizations in trafficking South American heroin have resulted in significantly greater quantities of heroin being transported across the Southwest border.

Is this a perfect storm? - drying up of the availability of prescription Opioids for non medical use, increase in production and trafficking of heroin into the US, trends of increasing use of heroin, addicts increasingly seeking out treatment for Opioid abuse, and continuing decreases in funding for substance abuse prevention and treatment services. How many more Janis Joplins, John Belushis, Kurt Cobains, and others will die from heroin abuse before we realize we have another emerging health epidemic related to America's insatiable appetite for drugs.

Mental Health Services

Due to funding from Broward County, Community Partnerships Division, the Starting Place will have a greater capacity to serve youth ages 7 through 17 that have mental health and behavioral issues. The **Children and Youth Mental Health Program** provides services for youth with mental health issues which result in functional impairment which substantially impairs the youth's role or functioning in family, school or community activities. For more information contact 954-327-4060

Family Strengthening Program

The Starting Place is beginning **Strong Families**, a program to provide prevention/intervention services, case management and parent education to families at risk of abuse and neglect and/or where maltreatment has already occurred. Starting Place will serve families with children and adolescents, primarily between the ages of 11 to 18 that are at-risk of child maltreatment due to multiple factors, particularly those with a family history of substance abuse. This program is provided due to funding from the Children's Services Council. For more information contact 954-327-4060.

Our Services and How to Contact Us

The Starting Place provides outpatient substance abuse and mental health services to children, teens, young adults and their families. Our services include assessments, individual counseling, family counseling, case management, psycho-educational and therapy groups, psychiatric services, school based services, and aftercare/continuing care. Services are office-based and in-home and school-based. Our hours are tailored to meet the needs of our clients. Fees are based on a sliding scale and we also accept a few different insurances.

If you would like to set up an appointment or speak to someone further about our services, please contact us at (954) 327-4060. You can also check us out at our website at www.startingplace.org

<http://www.facebook.com/thestartingplace>

