

Helping Troubled Youth

(NAPSA)—Drugs, depression, anxiety, and school failure are widespread problems for American teens—but they can be helped.

Teens are failing to negotiate the demands of our culture in increasing numbers, and parents are desperate. When it becomes too dangerous to keep a child at home, the alternative is often a residential placement, a wilderness program, or a therapeutic school.

How can you obtain reliable help? Parents typically search the Internet frantically, but most find the information confusing and overwhelming. All programs sound alike, and how can one trust the glossy pictures? Are there any standards to judge residential programs?

To help parents and others, the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) was founded in 1999 for the specific purpose of raising standards of care in residential programs. It provides information to the public about member programs, sponsors national and regional conferences on treatment of adolescents and works to elevate the standard of care for adolescents who need out-of-home placement.

The association currently has 113 member programs in 26 states and is the nation's leading organization for assisting programs and professionals dedicated to helping children and teens with emotional and behavioral problems.

Its mission is to promote the healthy growth, learning, motivation, and personal well-being of



Families seeking special schools, camps and other programs for troubled children can get help from a new directory.

program participants through treatment rooted in respect, integrity, and sensitivity to individual needs.

Members agree to a code of ethics that covers a range of issues from accurate representation of programs and activities to respect for privacy and confidentiality. Members must be licensed or accredited regionally and must agree to follow The Principles of Good Practice that are published in the directory and on the Web site. The ethical and practice standards established by NATSAP provide the basis of a sound and competent residential program for adolescents.

Information about member schools and programs can be obtained by visiting the NATSAP Web site at www.natsap.org. The Web site has a directory of member programs and descriptions as well as other reliable and useful information about responding to an adolescent crisis.