

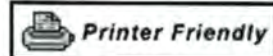


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The Cincinnati Beacon

Kids Helping Kids and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - Is There a Connection?

Sunday, March 05, 2006



Posted by [The Dean of Cincinnati](#)

A guest column submitted by Christine Flannery

On an ordinary late July day last year, while watching the television show Dateline, my life turned upside down all over again. I unexpectedly encountered a past that I spent so many years trying to forget. Little did I know at the time, I was about to completely fall apart. Dateline ran a piece on two children's deaths caused by being restrained while in 'treatment.' Memories of seeing other children brutally restrained came flooding back uncontrollably. As I struggled to see my computer screen through my tears, I immediately typed a letter to Dateline. Two days later, I posted that same letter on an internet discussion site opposed to ABC's Brat Camp. To my shock and disbelief, I then noticed a reference by another person as being a Straight, Inc. survivor. Turns out, I had accidentally stumbled on a forum full of Straight, Inc. survivors! As I read other survivor stories, I rapidly came unraveled as a flood of emotions overwhelmed me.



Over the next few weeks, I became increasingly dysfunctional as persistent and invasive memories of my time in Straight constantly interfered with my ability to concentrate at work and school. There were even times I would find myself crying while at work. Before long, it was impossible for me to function at work, in school, and in my personal life. Out of total desperation, I set aside my Straight, Inc. related fear of therapy, and sought help. So, in early September 2005, my therapist, who has a PhD in Psychology, diagnosed me with post-traumatic stress disorder related to my time spent involved in Straight, Inc. 20 years earlier. I then started a 90-day medical leave of absence from work on September 21 and within two weeks, I had also stopped attending classes. Taking time off from my life and

http://www.cincinnati beacon.com/index.php/magaddiction/comments/kids_helping_kids_an... 4/3/2006

attending weekly therapy sessions was a necessity since severe depression, severe anxiety, Straight nightmares, memories and flashbacks and an avalanche of emotions overwhelmed me to the point I had become utterly incapable of functioning in the real world.

As it turns out, I was essentially reliving all the emotions I suppressed while I was actually in Straight, Inc., which explains the avalanche of emotions, flashbacks, nightmares, etc. Suppressing real emotions was practically a necessity in Straight, Inc. If a child dared express fear, homesickness, that he/she felt confused about being in Straight, Inc., or simply voiced any unhappiness with the program, the 'client' would be harshly confronted by a group of angry teenagers. In therapy, I learned that suppression was my technique to survive Straight, Inc.'s extremely cruel and unbearable environment.

Once I understood that I was re-experiencing those suppressed emotions, I slowly was able to identify their specific sources. First, I was reliving all the shock, disbelief, confusion and fear I felt during the initial weeks of my captivity. Since I had never used drugs prior to Straight, Inc., it was extremely difficult to even understand why I was essentially being punished for something I never did. Being in Straight seemed very surreal to me. I remember thinking things like, "This can't be real, this can't be happening to me." I prayed over and over again that Straight was just a bad nightmare and that I would wake up and Straight would be gone. On a certain level, I simply could not accept Straight as my reality. So, after a few short weeks of unanswered prayers, the rest of my time in Straight transformed into, for lack of a better expression, something of an out-of-body experience. In psychological terms, this phenomenon is known as dissociation.

At the same time that I was struggling understand the reasons for being in an essentially private jail, Straight, Inc.'s so-called 'positive peer pressure' traumatized me tremendously. I was utterly terrified by Straight's brutal peer confrontation 'therapy.' The untrained teenage staff and teenage clients repeatedly confronted me for lying whenever I insisted that I never used drugs. Confrontation in Straight, Inc. was downright inhumane: teenagers repeatedly inflicted brutal verbal attacks, accusations, insults, name calling, yelling and screaming upon anyone deemed not being honest. As a result, every moment I was in the Straight warehouse, I constantly felt extreme fear that I would be confronted. That extreme fear of confrontation never left me: ever since leaving Straight, Inc., I have experienced numerous problems with anxiety and panic attacks in everyday life when this fear arises.

As I relived Straight, I also relived the nightmare of witnessing other children being violently abused for the smallest 'infractions.' For example, many untrained teenage clients would viciously restrain a 'misbehavior' who simply refused to 'motivate.' Before Straight Inc., I had never been exposed to violence and abuse. No words can convey how terrified I was, 24 hours a day, every day. Exposure to Straight's violence and abusive punishments also made a lasting impression on me. This explains why I reacted so strongly to Dateline's story regarding two teenage deaths caused by violent restraint.

By now, you are probably wondering what my story has to do with Kids Helping Kids (KHK). It has everything to do with KHK! Sharing my experience about my Straight related PTSD is extremely important, since KHK uses the exact same 'treatment' methods, same 'disciplinary' tactics, same phase structure, same forms of extreme humiliation, degradation, and verbal assault, same rules, same untrained 'peer staff' concept. In fact the only significant difference between Straight, Inc. and KHK is the name of the program. For example, a side-by-side comparison of Straight, Inc. and KHK documents reveal that both programs are virtually identical. "KHK [was also] co-founded by [a] former Straight officer George Ross." In addition, Maia Szalavitz reveals in Help at Any Cost, that "...former Straight staffers still run Straight-like programs across the U.S. in Ohio (Kids Helping Kids)..."¹

My PTSD diagnosis, related to my time in Straight, Inc., does not seem to be isolated or unique since survivors of Straight descendant/copy-cat programs have also been diagnosed with PTSD. Former

Straight, Inc. National Director, Miller Newton, founded one such Straight descendant program, KIDS of New Jersey (KIDS). At least two former KIDS clients have been afflicted with PTSD related to their time spent in KIDS. As of April 2000, "Lulu Corter, [who] had been held in....KIDS for thirteen years: from age thirteen to age twenty-six, had been seeing a therapist for post-traumatic stress disorder."² Expert testimony verified Lulu's condition: "there is...no question in my mind that she...suffers from PTSD from the ordeal of trying to survive the KIDS program."³ "Donald*", now a banker, [testified that] ...[h]e had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of his KIDS experience."⁴ Kids Helping Kids is yet another Straight, Inc. spin-off program. Two former KHK clients have reported to ISAC that they suffer from PTSD, which is related to their KHK experience.

These documented Straight, Inc., KIDS, and KHK related PTSD cases all raise disturbing questions: How many other former clients of Kids Helping Kids are afflicted with this disorder as a result of their 'treatment' in KHK? How many undiagnosed cases exist? How many diagnosed KHK related PTSD cases are simply unreported? Should we as a society tolerate any program where some of its survivors are reporting diagnosed PTSD related to their time in such program?

I do not assert that every child subjected to Straight-like programs, including KHK, will automatically become afflicted with PTSD as a result of the program. I do stress however, that I believe that there is a certain level of risk that some children subjected to Straight, Inc. descendant/copy-cat programs such as Kids Helping Kids, may develop PTSD. Admittedly, some children may be more vulnerable than others. For instance, Straight-like programs "are most likely to harm the kind of people who do not need "rehabilitation" – i.e., people with a strong conscience, people who are highly empathetic, who are eager to please others, and who feel shame at not measuring up to their own standards of goodness."⁵ This by the way, describes me perfectly as a teenager. I do not claim to know which types of kids are likely to develop KHK related PTSD solely based on my experience. However, Ms. Szalavitz raises just one possible PTSD risk factor that is worthy of public debate and expert psychological analysis.

Psychiatrist Dr. Jay Kurdis recently explained how PTSD can be related to a child's experience in a Straight-like, descendant/copycat program. Dr. Kurdis provided expert testimony in the 2003 civil trial against Miller Newton (former Straight, Inc. National Director), which revealed that:

...post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur when someone is confronted by 'an overwhelmingly scary, actual real threat to life and limb, **or to something as important as that**, and in the face of that threat, [finds himself] helpless to do anything about it. The diagnosis was first introduced in relation to Vietnam veterans, some of whom had had terrifying combat or prisoner-of-war experiences that left them anxious, depressed, paranoid, overreactive to loud noises, and susceptible to vivid nightmares and flashbacks of the traumatic situation. **Research shows that the longer that people feel helpless in frightening situations, and the less control they feel they have, the more likely they are to develop PTSD.**'⁶

In all Straights and Straight, Inc. descendant programs, such as Kids Helping Kids, KIDS of New Jersey (KIDS), etc.... "the whole program was deliberately designed to make participants feel powerless."⁷

In my opinion, any program that runs the risk of causing any emotional, mental, or psychological damage, including PTSD to a child is too risky to even exist in the first place. I don't object to treatment when absolutely necessary. I do however, strongly object to any program, including KHK, that uses the Straight, Inc. so-called 'treatment model.' I oppose any program, including KHK that uses confrontational 'peer pressure.' Speaking from my personal horrifying experience with the Straight, Inc. 'treatment model,' which nearly destroyed me, I believe that any program that closely follows the Straight, Inc. model could be dangerous to a child's well being. I again stress that the Straight Inc. treatment model IS currently being used by KHK. I strongly advise parents of a child struggling with

drug addiction to avoid Kids Helping Kids and seek help for your child elsewhere.

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- 1 Maia Szalavitz, *Help at Any Cost: How The Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids* (New York: The Penguin Group, 2006), 60.
 - 2 Maia Szalavitz, *Help at Any Cost*, 190 & 193.
 - 3 Maia Szalavitz, *Help at Any Cost*, 222.
 - 4 Maia Szalavitz, *Help at Any Cost*, 205.
 - 5 Maia Szalavitz, *Help at Any Cost*, 73.
 - 6 Maia Szalavitz, *Help at Any Cost*, 221.
 - 7 Ibid.

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1. *L ene* says:

05 Mar 2006 at 11:20 pm | #

These people call themselves "Faith Based" and there is nothing Christian about their actions. To intimidate and abuse (mentally, physically, or emotionally) an addict or alcoholic when they first enter treatment and are the most vulnerable is damaging. Unprofessional people, even though they may have the best of intentions, should not be allowed to provide therapy just because they have been in the program longer. People can easily develop the kicked dog syndrome and shut down so they can't be reached. This is a way we protect ourselves in an abusive situation.

Christine, I'm happy you got the help you needed to turn the corner, welcome back. Good post, you've got talent. Glad you're using it to give something back.

2. *WestEnder* says:

06 Mar 2006 at 03:22 am | #

Ironically enough, it may be your visceral reaction itself which best allows you to understand why people can easily treat others this way, both on a small scale like this as well as a large scale like a dictator.

Normal adults are supposed to have a well-developed understanding of the consequences of their actions. Part of that is understanding how we affect others, or empathy. You feel strongly about this situation because you can put yourself in their shoes and know how it would feel.

For those with normal empathy, it seems silly to point it out since everyone has it. But that is exactly the thing: not everyone has it. People are deficient to varying degrees (just as people are excessively empathetic, or "oversensitive" to varying degrees). Not everyone can put themselves in the shoes of others. It may seem bizarre but it's true.

They know what hurts them but they cannot make the simple analogy to how it would hurt others. They know something is bad, they just aren't able to care about it. People with empathy defects can seem like total hypocrites for just that reason; they know something is bad but only if happens to them. To put it simply, they can't feel your pain. It's a psychological defect.

Keep in mind, the brain is an electronic machine. "Caring" isn't a magical aspect of humanity. It is a physical and chemical process. It requires neurons and connections. If they aren't there, then neither is "caring."

I think it's fairly obvious that a society that does a better job of developing those connections in its children will be a more caring society. Seems like an idea worth trying.

3. *Royal Water* says:

06 Mar 2006 at 01:34 pm | #

The way KHK treats kids is abhorrent. Do they think they are helping? I think they are in it for the money... over \$1million in 2004 for starters. The treatment is the SAME as it was nearly 25 years ago, no advances, no new equipment, no nothing. It's like raising the price of a Bible, you know? Come on... The public may or may not care, but, in the end the clients are left with the scars. This kind of treatment does not belong in this or any other society. What do you think an average person would say to you if you told them you had to watch them take a crap? Come on, this is a black and white case of overt abuse. Laws are being broken, exceptions are being made by your state's government and it's time to stop it. I agree, it would be nice if people cared, but, even if they don't, this kind of treatment is definitely wrong.

RW

4. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

06 Mar 2006 at 02:20 pm | #

Even more ironic than your observations Westender is the fact that Straight and Straight-like programs such as Kids Helping Kids (KHK) made a half-hearted attempt to teach the concept of empathy and sensitivity. Unfortunately, Straight-like programs such as KHK apply a very misguided version of empathy and sensitivity. Compliance = empathy and sensitivity. Non-

compliance in any shape or form = brutal confrontation, abuse, etc. For example, if a child was complying to the satisfaction of staff (a.k.a. applying the program, admitting to having a drug problem, etc.), then empathy and sensitivity took the form of relating to each other in group. This meant that teenagers gave each other feedback by putting themselves in another child's shoes. However, empathy and sensitivity was cast aside in favor of harsh confrontation if someone disobeyed the most trivial of rules, or if the client simply voiced any apprehension, doubt, unhappiness, confusion, etc. about being in the program. Keep in mind that this type of confrontation is NOT productive in Straight-like programs, but rather is an onslaught of in your face verbal abuse: yelling, screaming, belittling, insults, accusations, etc.

Anyway...I see your point, especially about the hypocrisy. I either experienced or witnessed countless examples of verbal, emotional, psychological, and physical abuse coming from the very same people who supposedly 'understood' the meaning empathy and sensitivity. I strongly suspect that in the minds of those in charge the ends justified any and all means.

Christine

5. *Antigen* says:

06 Mar 2006 at 03:21 pm | #

Kris: For instance, Straight-like programs "are most likely to harm the kind of people who do not need "rehabilitation" – i.e., people with a strong conscience, people who are highly empathetic, who are eager to please others, and who feel shame at not measuring up to their own standards of goodness."5 This by the way, describes me perfectly as a teenager.

Lene: To intimidate and abuse (mentally, physically, or emotionally) an addict or alcoholic when they first enter treatment and are the most vulnerable is damaging. Unprofessional people, even though they may have the best of intentions, should not be allowed to provide therapy just because they have been in the program longer.

Lene, I don't mean to single you out personally. I quoted you because your comment is one that I hear and see over and over and over again. Kris just connected w/ a bunch of other program vets a short while ago. I've been inviting conversation on the topic since around '98. And I hear this over and over and over again till, no offence intended, it makes me want to gag!

To all, the Straight, Inc. line of programs almost *never* take in kids who actually have authentic substance abuse problems in need of intensive treatment. It only happens occasionally by coincidence. And, in the spirit of giving credit where credit is due, those people who have actual, compulsive, life threatening substance abuse problems to begin with **AND** who have a strong desire or resolve to quit generally do seem more likely than the rest of us to come out the other end with at least something to show for it. **But we're talking about probably less than 1% of the kids under "treatment" by this method!**

Am I angry? Well, no, not really. Just frustrated. You see, Program culture and beliefs have so pervaded our culture as to make the whole world seem like the Program sometimes. Do you really believe what I tell you about this? After all, 20 odd years ago, I was a teen aged drug rehab client. I'm telling you what I dared not say out loud, or even think back then. I never had a drug problem! I didn't even smoke cigarettes and I could count on my fingers the number of times I had consumed alcohol or pot. I also *believed* that that made me different, better than all these

other messed up kids in the program. For that I am deeply sorry.

Eastender provides a perfect example of how deeply this flawed philosophy has pervaded our society. Up until fairly recently, you wouldn't find the word empathetic in any respectable dictionary. The word you're looking for is *empathic* (you can run "empathetic" against almost any dictionary and find that it is listed, grudgingly, as a synonym.) I know where that erroneous usage came from. It was some uneducated member who had enough status in some Synanon based group to not be questioned or corrected.

Please understand this, if nothing else. Those same untrained teenagers who believe that therapy means humiliation, sleep deprivation, physical violence and isolation from the world, friends and family are the very same ones tasked with "diagnosing" their prospective clients as addicts. Their "diagnostic criteria" can be seen here <http://www.kidshelpingkids.com/WarningSigns.html> (read it in the voice of Miss Cleo for the full effect)

And *these same people*, lunatics that they are, have got a lot of sway in our public policy. Royal Water, when will you publish the correspondence between ISAC and ODADAS? I think any and all Ohioans would immediately understand this aspect of the problem if they could read that back and forth.

To summarize, ISAC has been trying for well over a year to get ODADAS to earn their entitlement income by *actually* investigating abuse complaints against KHK. They simply refuse. Why? Because they're *true believers*! That makes them dangerous. At the very least, doesn't it piss you off that you're paying them with your hard earned tax money to cover up child abuse? No amount of evidence, and certainly not the word of someone who was "diagnosed" as a substance abuser by one of their Super Aware 16yo clients a few decades ago, will have the least bit of effect on them.

Want to know what will? It's a tall order, but I'm a hopeless idealist. If you want to compel the State and other authorities to put a stop to this madness, you have to speak out. Yeah, you, you people who haven't been tagged and bagged as hopeless reprobates by these lunatics. I'm not asking you to take the word of us strangers from out of town, either (though I should note that Kris attended Straight **Milford** prior to the name change). I want you guys, those who are the least bit piqued, to ask around among the people you know, find out if any of your friends and neighbors are among what must be thousands of local people who have had been the recipients of Straight/KHK or other of Drug Free America and Drug Free Ohio foundations' "benevolence". You might also look into whatever other areas of the public sector ODADAS is involved in. Are they setting up boot camps in Ohio like the one in Florida where guards beat Martin Lee Anderson to death on his first day, then the local coroner tried to put it off on "sickle cell trait"? If I had to wager a bet, I'd say they probably are doing that. THAT is one reason why we never even considered Ohio when we went shopping for a better community in which to raise our kids when we left Florida.

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of it's victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busy-bodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those that torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.

--C.S. Lewis, God In The Dock

6. *Dave* says:

06 Mar 2006 at 04:11 pm | #

Interesting to me that it is called a program. The human mind is compared to a computer. These operations like many TV programs are used to modify behavior. Like our educational system KHK is demanding conformity. Do as your told, get in step, don't question authority and most importantly do not tell anyone. Like basic training in the military, they strip you of any connection to your former life, it makes good automatons but crushes any sense of personal emotion or empathy. The military as a model is inhumane and many are scarred for life by their experience. Nobody teaches you to think because thinkers begin to question decisions and they can't have that. Would many decide not to go murder people in a far off lands if given the opportunity? Through the use of dehumanization these organizations attempt to mold you into their image of what they want. Mostly because they have convinced themselves they are doing the right thing. Unquestioning obedience is what the chicken hawks in our country demand.

The pendulum is about to swing against these organizations and criminals, when it does the good people of America must get behind it and add momentum. Like Ghandi in India change can come about with consistent effort. He defeated the British Empire and won freedom for his people, without ever firing a shot. KHK is a focal point of this change and whatever Higher Power you believe in is creating the conditions to make it happen. This will not happen by going quietly about our lives with blinders on. Where racial, gender, class, or sexual injustice exists it is time to be heard. Only by saying; "hey, wait a minute, that is not right, I object" can we stop these criminals from furthering their agenda. We as people must call into question the staff and owners of KHK and other similar organizations because the recovering kids are unable do it for themselves. Keep the faith.

To those of you out there with first hand knowledge of the abusive conditions I ask you to write a letter to the Attorney General. Post it here and we can collaborate to demand change. It doesn't have to be perfect just say what you think. By myself I am angered and frustrated and getting more upset by the day. Together we can send a message to set this effort in motion. I look forward to hearing from you and working to make it happen.

"Just like the trees and the stars,
you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should."

7. *Antigen* says:

07 Mar 2006 at 01:07 pm | #

Yes! Or please, turn up in Columbus ~

NOON Friday March 31 McKinley Memorial, Capitol Square, Statehouse, Columbus OH

FOR:

Peaceful Demonstration to end the abuses being perpetrated by Kids Helping Kids and to urge the Ohio government agencies to do their jobs and stop ignoring the abuse. There will be TV coverage.

Contact: metalgod8@yahoo.com

And a little more on language. Remember Orwell's writings on Newspeak? This is just one of probably hundreds of little things that drive a thinking kid nucking futs in these places. In the more commonly accepted reality, Empathy means having the ability and inclination to put yourself in someone else's place, to understand how they must feel, to be sensitive to their feelings and needs. In the Program, empathy means the opposite; to be able to read their minds and know when they're not being "honest" enough. In the real world, honesty means telling the truth when appropriate, meeting real obligations w/ honor. It's a well used word and one could go on and on about it's definition in different contexts. In the Program, that kind of honesty was verboten. Honesty meant confessing to whatever one was accused of, true or not. Honesty meant towing the party line on everything and doing it w/ a reasonable facsimile of strong emotion to match the party line. Awareness; if you have any contact w/ KHK people, you're bound to hear that one from time to time. Awareness, by the Program lexicon, means the ability to see what staff tells you to see, even to predict what staff would want you to see and to actually *see* it w/ so much clarity that you'll feel real hot indignation toward anyone else who doesn't see it too. And it's always safest to have the awareness and honesty and empathy to see as plainly as the lunatic drug warriors do that damned near *everybody* is a druggie in need of treatment and that anyone who disagrees is a dangerously delusional druggie who's so full of self loathing that they want to bring you down so they don't have to see themselves for what they are.

<http://fornits.com/images/drugfreeamerica.gif> Drug Free America only exists on a map of Flat Earth. We all know that, on some level, don't we? I used to think these tyrannical altruists knew it too and were just lying about trying to help us. After all these years, new information has changed my views. They truly are deluded. I'm not exaggerating a bit above. They really believe it.

8. *Antigen* says:

07 Mar 2006 at 01:08 pm | #

<http://fornits.com/images/drugfreeamerica.gif> ????

9. *Lene* says:

07 Mar 2006 at 10:50 pm | #

Antigen,

Sorry for displaying my ignorance about Straight/KHK. Thank you for enlightening me. I do have one question that comes to mind. Are these kids schooled on the premissis? I have no idea about the size or scope of this operation. Sounded to me like it was in a warehouse next to storage units. Again, I plead ignorance. I have never been involved in this type of program. Visiting fornits.com hasn't educated me. I'd like to help so please don't assume we've walked the same path. I think there are many concerned citizens that fall into my category. Take the lead in educating us, please.

10. *Royal Water* says:

07 Mar 2006 at 11:45 pm | #

Lene,

The kids are only allowed to go to school when they reach 3rd phase. They can get "set back" to 1st phase at any time throughout their time there in the program. When we were there on Feb 10, a

couple of the kids came up to wait for the bus but turned around about 1 minute later and ran back to the building. The bus then stopped but they did not come back out and get on it, so they missed the bus. When the program was called STRAIGHT, INC. anytime "outsiders" were in the area, and especially if they were drinking, smoking, etc... we were never allowed to talk to them or even look at them for more than a split second. Otherwise, a "headgame" would develop in our heads. KHK is a cult. The kids were so scared that they would get in trouble for seeing our signs about KHK IS ABUSIVE, MOTIVATING IS BOGUS, SHAME ON PENNY WALKER, BAN ILLEGAL KHK HOST HOMES, etc... that they missed the bus. Hopefully they didn't actually get consequences for that, but, they did miss the bus. The Milford Exempted Village Schools lists KHK as a treatment program on the drug policy paperwork which is given to parents/students at the beginning of the school year. One of the principal's there is on the BOD of KHK. Come to Columbus on the 31st... we will be there to educate the public about what is wrong with KHK and other related programs. This is a BIG issue.

11. *Royal Water* says:

07 Mar 2006 at 11:55 pm | #

Here's a link to some jpg's of ODADAS papers... this isn't all of them but it is the latest one. ISAC had sent them over 100 pages of PROOF, evidence, etc... they claim we didn't. It's a mess... We never urged them to shut down the program. We did urge them to investigate. This link takes to several "non-truths", but it is quite clear that their position in this matter is to ignore the abuse. Whatever it takes.

Here's the link:

<http://fornits.com/wwf/viewtopic.php?topic=12697&forum=25&start=0#148260>

12. *Royal Water* says:

08 Mar 2006 at 12:01 am | #

And another one, this one was transcribed by yours truly. Keep in mind that the complaint we sent had at least 8 topics of concern, not just the few they listed. Of interest is how COCKY they seem. It's like "We're keeping that program open regardless!"

Here's the link:

<http://fornits.com/wwf/viewtopic.php?topic=11143&forum=25&start=0#121402>

13. *Royal Water* says:

08 Mar 2006 at 12:05 am | #

And some more transcriptions... This should be good for starters...

<http://fornits.com/wwf/viewtopic.php?topic=9254&forum=25&start=0#96783>

<http://fornits.com/wwf/viewtopic.php?topic=9339&forum=25&start=0#98453>

<http://fornits.com/wwf/viewtopic.php?topic=9357&forum=9&start=0#98830>

14. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

http://www.cincinnatiabeacon.com/index.php/magaddiction/comments/kids_helping_kids_an... 4/3/2006

08 Mar 2006 at 12:41 pm | #

Thanks for your interest Lene...

In response to your first comment Lene....I wanted to say that you are absolutely right....when people/kids are facing difficult issues such as serious drug or alcohol addiction, or are otherwise vulnerable, the last thing they need is to be kicked while they are already down. I shut down only after a few weeks in Straight and was unreachable for years as a result of the abuse I endured in Straight. I know this happened to many others kids as well. It is my personal belief that people facing addiction or any other problems for that matter need understanding, compassion, and guidance from a professional (IE. someone with a degree in psychology). The very idea that unqualified teenagers 'who have been there' can provide therapy instead of professionals with years of experience to other kids is downright ridiculous and dangerous.

There is a huge difference between experimenting with drugs or alcohol, or other issues causing problems, and addiction. They are two completely different things. Experimenting does NOT mean that the child is addicted to drugs or alcohol. Certainly I understand that this concerns many parents. But I believe that the child's other underlying problems should be addressed long before resorting to drug/alcohol treatment. In my opinion, most troubled kids just need guidance, therapy, love, compassion, and understanding along with structure, rules, and accountability. Only in extreme cases should a child be subjected to treatment.

Unlike KHK and other Straight-like programs, I'm sure you recognize the difference between a teenager with some issues and one with a full blown drug/alcohol addiction. The Straight treatment modality does NOT recognize this difference whatsoever. According to that philosophy, trying drugs/alcohol once time justifies extreme intervention. Even more shocking, children who had not started trying drugs were considered dry druggies and still in need treatment to prevent 'their inevitable drug use.' In addition, behavior is the focus of the program - NO underlying problems are addressed as everything is considered the fault of the child. In other words, the Straight treatment modality is in part based on blaming the victim. For example, in my case, I had been struggling with my parents divorce for years, and as a result, I had some unresolved issues that showed up in the form of anger and other "unacceptable behaviors." I will be the first to admit that I did mistreat my step-mother and step-brother. I did get drunk once. Looking back, its obvious I was taking out my anger on them....but really I just missed my mother and was angry that I rarely if ever got to see her. In Straight, I was harshly verbally abused for even mentioning my mother. I was not allowed to discuss how much she hurt me, nor was I permitted to have any contact with her. I also had to take full responsibility for all problems at home regardless of whether or not I was really to blame or not. I was not allowed to discuss anything but my drug problem (imagine how confusing this was for me, a child that had NEVER tried drugs). This is just what happened to me. There are countless other examples of how Straight-like programs blame the victim and/or disregard underlying issues in the name of treatment.

15. *Lene says:*

08 Mar 2006 at 03:13 pm | #

Royal Water,

I followed the links provided and the investigation by ODASAS. What a joke. They received input and answers to questions from staff and directors. They interviewed 2 clients and a couple of parents. Why they didn't get input from graduates of the program and question a broader

audience, past and present, shows the attitude of bureaucrats who sit comfortably shuffling papers while getting paychecks. This is often done to justify their existence. The support of this activity will only stop by demanding better performance and accountability. Again, I show my lack of knowledge. What are M.I.'s? Operating across multiple state lines, as KHK and TRI-STATE DRUG REHABILITATION AND COUNSELING PROGRAM, INC. do, would bring them under federal as well as state oversight, wouldn't it? The abuse in Florida at camps is no different than what is being experienced by kids in Milford. You indicated that ISAC had sent over 100 pages of proof. Did you retain copies? can those be scanned and compiled? Is a list of past clients available and has any attempt been made to contact them? Have public information requests been submitted regarding any complaints that have been filed? Dean is very good at this and I'm sure he will direct this effort because he has an interest in this issue. (Dean, Like how I volunteered you?) It is only by collective voice that we will be heard. Like instruments in an orchestra we can raise the tempo.

TWWBGW

16. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:
08 Mar 2006 at 03:32 pm | #

Lene,

Check out these links which provide information about KHK, including moral inventories. These links will answer some of your questions and provide further information about KHK.

<http://isaccorp.org/khkandstraight.html>
<http://isaccorp.org/documentsam.html#khk>
<http://isaccorp.org/kidshelpingkids.html>
<http://thestraights.com/essays/straight-like-defn.htm>
<http://www.thestraights.com/flowchart.htm>
<http://www.thestraights.com/articles/kids-cincinnati.htm>

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