



Tips for writing letters of encouragement to youth seeking outpatient substance use treatment

1. Give a warm "hello."

- "Hi friend!"
- "Hello :)"
- "Hello there :)"

2. Say your name and why you're writing to them

- "My name's name. I heard you're going through a hard time so I wanted to let you know I'm rooting for you."
- "I'm name and I wanted to write you a card to let you know how proud I am of you for getting help."
- "My name's name and I wanted to write you a card reason."

3. Acknowledge that they're going through some hard times

- "Although I don't know exactly why you're in treatment, I know it wasn't easy."
- "I know things have been really hard for you."
- "I'm sorry to hear you're going through some tough stuff right now."

4. Empathize/Sympathize

- "Although I haven't gone through the exact same thing, I have been in treatment before so I know what it's like to ..."
- "Although I haven't been in treatment before, I know what it's like to feel X, experience Y, go through Z..." (mental health, parent's substance use, some other hardship, etc.)
- "I don't know what you're feeling, but it'd be normal to feel ..."

5. Acknowledge how strong they are for being in treatment.

- "I'm not sure if it was your choice or not to seek treatment, but either way, you're really strong for doing this."
- "I know treatment isn't easy and it's going to be really hard, but I'm proud of you for being brave enough to do this."
- "It takes a lot of strength and courage to seek treatment. I hope you see the hard work you're doing to learn different ways to cope with whatever you might be struggling with."

6. Encouragement

- "You have come so far just by being in treatment."
- "I am proud of you for how hard you're working to make these changes."
- "I know it's hard, but you're doing an amazing job and I'm proud of you."
- "I hope you give your the credit you deserve because you're working so hard!"

7. Bring up healthy coping skills

- "What have you been doing to cope with all the stress that's been going on? I know whenever I'm stressed, I copied skill ..."
- "Whenever I'm struggling or having a hard time, I like to copied skill ... It helps me relax, feel better about myself, etc. ..."
- "What coping skills are you learning in treatment? One of my favorite coping skills is copied skill because reason ..."

9. Tell them about Teens for Tomorrow and invite them to apply to join next year

- "I'm a part of Teens for Tomorrow and I think you'd be a great fit! Teens for Tomorrow is explain. It's so important to have people with your experience because reason. When applications come out, I hope you'll apply!"
- "I volunteer with Teens for Tomorrow, which is explain. It would be great if you'd consider applying next year because reason."

8. Give them resources and explain what they are and how they can help

- Teens for Tomorrow / teensfortomorrow.clark.wa.gov
- TeenTalk / ccteentalk.clark.wa.gov / call 360-397-2428 / text 360-984-0936 / email ccteentalk1@hotmail.com / @PeppyPenerson on social media / M-Th 4-9 pm, F 4-7 pm
- Teen Link Substance Use Prevention / call or text 1-866-833-6546 / 1-10 pm 7 days a week

10. Final encouragement and warm goodbye.

- "Again, stay strong and keep up the great work! You got this! - First name only"
- "I'm so proud of the work you've been doing to stay clean. You're doing amazing! Keep it up! - First name only"
- "Again, I'm so proud of you for being in treatment and doing what you can to get better. Keep it up! - First name only"

As long as you write from the heart, you can't go wrong! 