

Scott Sells is the author of *Treating the Tough Adolescent: A Family-Based, Step-by-Step Guide*, written for family therapists, and *Parenting Your Out-of-Control Teenager: 7 Steps to Reestablish Authority and Reclaim Love*, written for parents.

He addresses teens' most frustrating and frightening behaviors: disrespect, truancy, running away, alcohol or drug abuse, violence, unprotected sex, and suicide threats.

In advising parents how to choose a therapist, he writes, "If the counselor seeks to work only with your teen and exclude you from the process, red flags should go up immediately. Like you, your teen does not live in a vacuum. The surrounding environment influences him or her." He advises, "In your first session, ask the counselor if he or she uses a systems theory approach. If he or she says 'no,' ask why, and what approach they take instead. If the counselor says 'yes,' ask him or her to describe specifically how this approach has been used with other out-of-control teens. You are looking for answers that indicate that the counselor is prepared to involve everyone in your teen's life—from you to the school to friends and family—in solving your teen's problem. If the counselor looks confused or gives you answers that don't make sense, move on."

Sells's techniques are creative and interesting. He really understands what does and doesn't motivate teenagers. His advice goes beyond behavioral methods to curtail problematic behavior. He realizes that parents need to express affection and nurturance to their teens. He gives ideas for how parents can have fun with their teens without abdicating their duty as parents to keep the teens safe and progressing toward becoming self-sufficient adults.

Jay Haley was a strong influence on Sells's work. Haley writes of Sells, "Essentially the work is concerned with changing the hierarchy of families in trouble when the problem adolescent is in charge of the family and the parents are not. What is unique, and should be common in the field, is the way the therapy is supported by research data."

Dr. Sells is an Associate Professor at Savannah State University in Georgia. He has been a keynote speaker at national AAMFT and NASW events, but this is the first time he is speaking in Massachusetts. MAMFT would appreciate it if you would pass along information about this conference to your contacts at DCF, DYS, local schools, and agencies that work with teenagers.

This conference is an incredible value, especially the MAMFT members' early registration rate of \$99. It includes continental breakfast and buffet lunch. I get a lot of flyers in the mail re various trainings. I know that you could pay almost twice as much to get six CEUs for a training from someone of Scott Sells's stature with no food included. Be sure to register by February 2 (Groundhog Day,

easy to remember) to get the early registration rate. It's possible that this conference will sell out, so don't wait.