

Substance Abuse Conference Teaching Plan

Evidence of a Problem

Alcohol

In a study, released in August 2005, underage drinkers said they found it easy to obtain alcohol from an adult, particularly at parties. More than **one-fourth** of the teens said they had attended a party where kids consumed alcohol with parents present. And almost one-third of the teens said it was easy to get alcohol from their parents with their parents' knowledge.

The Monitoring the Future survey conducted by the University of Michigan has found that, nationwide, about **75%** of high school seniors and **39%** of eighth-graders say they have consumed alcohol in the last year.

"The perception out there is that 90% of teens get alcohol using fake IDs and by going to bars. That's not true," says Dr. J. Edward Hill, president of the American Medical Assn. "They are getting it from social sources: parents, **older friends**, older siblings and others. Parents need to become aware of the fact that a large percentage of alcohol comes from their own homes or the homes of other parents."

"The rationalization among parents is teens are going to do it anyway, let them do it under my supervision," says Pat Hines, executive director of Safe Moves, a Los Angeles nonprofit program on traffic safety education that recently developed a program for teens on drinking and driving. "Parents think they can control it. I think that's a fallacy. [Drinking] becomes almost acceptable when a parent establishes those parameters."¹

Marijuana

According to a 1999 national survey by the Hazelden Foundation, the vast majority of parents (98 percent) said they would be upset if they discovered their teens were using marijuana. However, less than half (**40** percent) of parents advised teens not to use and just one in five (20 percent) emphasized it's illegal during the most recent dialog on the topic with their teens.²

In 2002, an average of **7,000** Americans per day tried marijuana for the first time and over two-thirds were under age 18.³

Kids use marijuana far more than any other illicit drug (not including alcohol). Among kids who use drugs, **60** percent use only marijuana.⁴

Inhalants

Use of inhalants increased significantly in 2004 among eighth graders. Nearly **one-in-five** have used an inhalant.

According to the 2004 Monitoring the Future Study, the proportion of young people who believe it is dangerous to use inhalants has declined among eighth and 10th graders over the past three years.

Inhalants are the **third** most abused substance among 14 to 15 year olds.⁵

Steroids

The percentage of boys in 2001 who reported using steroids in 8th, 10th and 12th grade was 2.3%, 3.3% and 3.8%, respectively, while percentages for girls remained constant at around 1% across the three grade segments. Sadly, only 59% of 12th graders perceive a "great risk" with taking steroids. Apparently there is no lack of availability for steroids as **44%** of 12th graders say steroids are "fairly/very easy" to get.⁶

Risk Factors

All youth are at risk of developing substance abuse problems if they are exposed to addicting substances and use them repeatedly. But a number of risk factors increase the chances that they will become drug involved, including:

Family History

- Alcoholism or **addiction** in the family

Family Environment

- **Domestic violence** or child abuse
- Lack of adult **supervision**

Psychology

- Childhood aggression
- Lack of **problem-solving** skills
- Depression
- Compulsiveness

School

- Rejection by **peers**
- Lack of commitment to school

If a student has some of these risk factors, he or she is not doomed to become a substance abuser. Even kids at high risk may never develop an addiction. By taking steps now, you can help student avoid or delay any drug experimentation. And delay is key: kids who start experimenting at an early age are at considerably higher risk for developing addictions. Someone who makes it to age **20** without abusing drugs or alcohol is less likely to develop a substance abuse problem.⁷

The Cycle of Addiction

When a person uses marijuana or methamphetamines over a period of time, the body becomes unable to completely eliminate it all. Marijuana and meth are broken down in the liver. These metabolites (the substances the body converts the marijuana and methamphetamines into) although removed rapidly from the blood stream, become trapped in the fatty tissues. The problem that needs to be addressed is that these marijuana and meth residues remain for years. Tissues in our bodies that are high in fats are turned over very slowly. When they are turned over, the stored marijuana and meth metabolites are released into the blood stream and reactivate the same brain centers as if the person actually took the drug. The former addict now experiences a drug re-stimulation (or "flashbacks") and drug craving. This can continue to occur for years, even decades.

Craving is an extremely powerful urge and can cause a person to create all kinds of "reasons" they should use marijuana or meth again. That person is now trapped in an endless cycle of trying to quit, craving, and relapse.⁸

Preventative Steps

1. *Do a **family history** to determine whether your family has shown signs of alcoholism or other addiction.* (Exodus 20:5, There can be a cumulative effect to sin.) If so students are especially vulnerable. Let them know they can take steps to abstain from substances that cause addiction.
2. *Evaluate your **own use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.*** (Proverbs 23:26, nothing communicates quite like the power and conviction of a living example) If you walk in the door at night and grab a beer or light up a cigarette every time you get tense, what are you conveying to your child about how to cope with life and its' stresses? (Handout #1)
3. *Foster strong **family bonds** to help counter powerful peer influences.* (Proverbs 4:3-4, Speak now or forever wish you had) If kids have a sense of belonging within their own families, they will be less likely to seek it elsewhere. (Handout #2)
4. *Set clear **expectations for behavior.*** (Colossians 3:12-25, Your child needs to know more directly that which will please you, than that which will discourage you.) Thousands of teens reported that their biggest reason for choosing not to drink or choosing to drink less than they would have is that their parents would be upset by it.
5. *Let your kids know that they can talk to you about anything, without **harsh judgment** or lectures.* (Ephesians 6:4, keep the lines of communication open) And be on the lookout for teachable moments, like when your child raises the subject of drugs or when an anti-drug commercial comes on television.
6. *Expose your children to activities like sports, art, music, reading, or drama, so that they develop **avid interests.*** (Ecclesiastes 5:20, God gives and sustains joy for living) When kids are bored they are more likely to experiment.
7. *Help your child feel apart of his or her **school.*** (Acts 18:24, Consistently remind your children that the goal of education is not so that they might get a better job, but rather to be better equipped for God's mission for their life) Go to school functions with your child whenever you can. Research shows that children who feel bonded with their school are less likely to use substances.
8. *Teach your child to make **independent** decisions.* (Proverbs 22:6, the goal is long-term success) Allow your kids to make some of their own decisions, so that when faced with offers of drugs or alcohol, they can resist pressure.
9. *Teach your child to **cope** with frustration and stress.* (Mark 1:35, Healthy, biblical, coping skills need to be communicated in word and deed) When your child is upset, help him or her to learn ways to feel better, such as talking about it, taking a walk, praying, journaling, or various other relaxation techniques.
10. *Teach your child to be **skeptical** of sales pitches.* (Proverbs 23:29-35, What often looks good from afar, is often far, far from good.) Whether watching commercials or passing a billboard advertising cigarettes or alcohol, help your child discern between the salesman's interest and his or her own. Consider talking your child through Proverbs 23:29-35 comparing the promises and the actual results of alcohol or drug use.⁹

PROVERBS 23:

²⁹ *Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?*

Alcohol promises: Happiness, **Friendships**, Camaraderie, a Buzz

Alcohol delivers: Sorrow, Conflict, **Fractured** relationships, Bodily harm

³⁰ *Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.*

Alcohol promises: **Reliability**

Alcohol delivers: **Addiction**

³¹ *Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly!*

Alcohol promises: Personal **satisfaction**

³² *In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.*

Alcohol delivers: Personal **destruction**

³³ *Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things.*

Alcohol promises: Higher **reality**

³⁴ *You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging.*

Alcohol delivers: **Altered** reality -- **stupidity**

³⁵ *"They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"*

Alcohol promises: A buffer, an **escape**

Alcohol delivers: A beating, **enslavement**

Sources

¹ <http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-drinking8aug08.0.2657312.story>

² http://www.planetpsych.com/zPsychology_101/substance/teendrug.htm

³ <http://family.samhsa.gov/monitor/usingpot.aspx>

⁴ http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/drug_info_truth_facts.asp

⁵ http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/drug_info_inhalants_quickfacts.asp

⁶ <http://www.cpyu.org/Page.aspx?id=76735>

⁷ Fall 2005, Leading Student Ministry magazine, LifeWay Church Resources.

⁸ <http://www.narcononquebec.ca/marijuana.htm>

⁹ Fall 2005, Leading Student Ministry magazine, LifeWay Church Resources.

(Some scripture verses and references were added)