Evidence of a Problem

Alcohol
More than ______ of surveyed teens said they had attended a party where kids consumed alcohol with parents present.

The Monitoring the Future survey conducted by the University of Michigan has found that, nationwide, about ______% of high school seniors and ______% 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 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."

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

In 2002, an average of ______ 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, ______% use only marijuana.⁴

Inhalants
Use of inhalants increased significantly in 2004 among eighth graders. Nearly ______ ______ have used an inhalant.

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

Steroids
Only 59% of 12th graders perceive a "great risk" with taking steroids. Apparently there is no lack of availability for steroids as ______% 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 ______ in the family
Family Environment
- _______________ ____________ or child abuse
- Lack of adult ______________

Psychology
- Childhood aggression
- Lack of ________________ skills
- Depression
- Compulsiveness

School
- Rejection by _________
- Lack of commitment to school

Someone who makes it to age ______ without abusing drugs or alcohol is less likely to develop a substance abuse problem.

The Cycle of Addiction
When a person uses marijuana or methamphetamine 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 methamphetamine into) although removed rapidly from the bloodstream, 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 bloodstream and reactivate the same brain centers as if the person actually took the drug. The former addict now experiences 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.

Preventative Steps
1. *Do a _______ _________ 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 _______ _________ 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?

3. *Foster strong _________ _________ 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.
4. **Set clear guidelines 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 criticism 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 well-rounded individuals.** (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 community.** (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 wise 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 discern 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.

**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, ____________, Camaraderie, a Buzz
Alcohol delivers: Sorrow, Conflict, ____________ relationships, Bodily harm

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

Alcohol promises: ____________
Alcohol delivers: ____________

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

Alcohol promises: Personal ____________

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

Alcohol delivers: Personal ____________
33 Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things.
   Alcohol promises: Higher __________

34 You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging.
   Alcohol delivers: __________ reality -- __________

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 __________
   Alcohol delivers: A beating, ________________

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
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.
   (Scripture verses and references were added)