

Networking For Prevention

Newsletter to the Community

Marijuana info...?

Marijuana -- pot, weed, refer -- is a mind-altering substance. It's a mixture of dried leaves or flowers of the hemp plant which is either smoked or eaten. The active chemical in marijuana is THC which is absorbed in the fatty tissues of major body organs such as the liver and the lungs. Traces of THC are often present in urine test days or weeks after usage.

Marijuana can be harmful in a variety of ways. It impairs short-term memory, motor coordination, and peripheral vision which can cause problems in the user's ability to perform complex tasks such as driving, studying, and athletics. Users may also experience dizziness, difficulty walking, paranoia, or anxiety attacks depending upon the amount of THC in the drug and the way in which it is used.

Among young people, usage sometimes starts around 13.5 years and peaks in the late teens and early twenties. Chronic usage has been linked to health problems, truancy, fighting, and arrests among adolescents. Marijuana use puts young people in contact with users and dealers of other drugs thereby exposing them to risks, pressures, and urges to use other drugs. Studies of drug patterns among high schools students have indicated that few young people use other illegal drugs without first trying marijuana. Studies have also indicated that the marijuana used today is many times more potent than that used in the 1960's & 1970's.



...Designer Drugs!

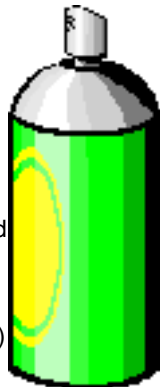
Designer drugs are modifications of mind-altering drugs manufactured by untrained, unlicensed chemists. They are created by changing the molecular structure of existing drugs to create new substances. Designer drugs are often more potent and more dangerous than the originals. Effects can include psychiatric disturbances such as anxiety and paranoia. This class of drug is associated with the club scene and "raves", all night dance parties. Street names of designer drugs vary according to time, place, and maker. The more popular designer drugs are MDMA (ecstasy), a stimulant and hallucinogen, fentanyl (China White), used as a substance for heroin, and PCP (angel dust) which can cause psychoses.

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"Inhalants - The Silent Epidemic" by Isabel Burk, MS, CHES

Children as young as eight are huffing (inhaling product fumes through the mouth) or sniffing household products to get high. The 1996 PRIDE Survey revealed inhalant abuse among Rockland County students: 9% of fifth graders, 9% of eighth graders, and 7% of tenth graders admitted to huffing or sniffing a product at least once.

Why inhalants? The products are cheap or free, easy to get, legal, erroneously perceived as safe, hard to detect, and unrecognized by adults. More than 1,000 common household products can be abused. Products most often inhaled are correction fluid, butane (lighter fluid) gasoline, whippets (nitrous oxide) and gases from aerosol cans. Users will feel dizzy, disoriented, shaky, uncoordinated, may black out or feel faint. Because inhalants affect the brain and thought processes, abusers may not know where they are and often experience memory loss. Hearing and vision are affected as well. Inhalant abuse is very dangerous. Sudden sniffing death - cardiac arrest - can occur any time a youngster abuses inhalants. Long term effects include brain and organ damage, extensive memory loss, irregular heart rhythm,



Isabel Burk, MS, CHES, Director of the Health Network is a nationally known, award-winning, expert on health and prevention.

She is author of the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services Training Manual on Inhalants; author of the Virginia State Inhalant Resource Guide and chairperson of the American School Health Association's Council on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs.

"Are You Confused?"

How can children be protected from inhalants?

impaired lung function and damage to the optic and auditory nerves.

Ask if they've heard of "huffing" or "sniffing" or "whippets". Refer to inhalants as poisons, chemicals, toxins. Clearly state your family's values related to safety and express concern for the health and safety of anyone abusing poisons. Keep track of household, office, workshop chemicals. Let children see you read product labels and follow precautions.

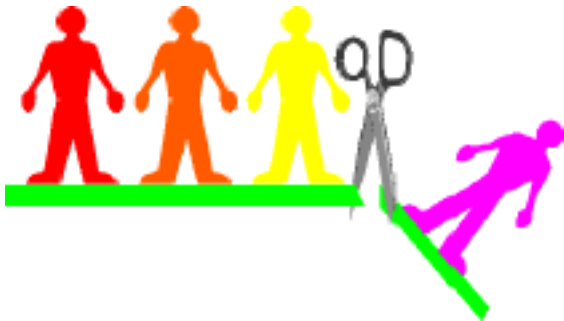
What can I look for?

Chemical odors or product stains on face, fingers, or nose. Look for quantities of discarded containers. Note if household, office, or art products are disappearing.

Helpful Numbers - Rockland County Resources

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition	800-269-4237
Community Awareness Network for a Drug-Free Life and Environment, Inc. (CANDLE)	845-634-6677
Ramapo Counseling Center	845-352-8900
Reach Out Haverstraw Counseling Center	845-429-5731
Rockland Council on Alcoholism and other Drug Dependence	845-358-HELP
Clarkstown Counseling Center	845-634-6369
Nyack Reach Out to Youth Counseling Center	845-358-2884

Conflict and Young People by Liz Freidman



Providing practical information and support to promote healthy life choices for Rockland's youth.

Conflict

Conflict is a fact of life, a part of our everyday experience. It results when people have different needs, interests, and perspectives. Conflict between parents and children, and among siblings is an inevitable part of family life. It often develops when children assert their independence and express their desires and needs. Conflicts need not be competitive, aggressive, or violent. When handled in ways which resolve problems and meet the needs of all concerned, conflict is productive. It creates change, fosters personal growth, and improves relationships. The key lies in identifying the issues, in understanding and effectively communicating the feelings brought up by them, and in recognizing that people can and do resolve differences in peaceable and respectful ways.

Communication

Ever think about **pegs**? You know. Things that help support or strengthen other things. Like the dowels used in furniture or the stakes used in anchoring tents to the ground. Pegs keep things from falling apart or collapsing. Taken one at a time, they're so small, but together, they play a big role. Now, ever think about holding relationships together with young people?

What is conflict in a young person's life?

They talk about hitting, screaming, and kicking. To their minds, conflict means violence. It means hurting someone with fists or guns. The truth is that on a daily basis, young people do not tend to experience these forms of physical violence. And according to national studies, violent school crime is on the decline.

Yet young people today must deal with other forms of violence. They experience name calling, teasing, harassment, taunting, and bullying. The old school rhyme, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me", is false. When young people do not have effective strategies for handling conflicts, they often resort to verbal taunting. These forms of verbal violence are the foundation upon which acts of physical violence are built. We need

to give young people skills in handling their differences so that they do not rely on verbal or physical forms to violence to address their problems.

Conflict resolution education assists young people to define their conflict, understand what they would like from the situation, and use appropriate strategies to resolve it. AS adults who care about young people, we want to stop them from hurting each other. The ways to assist them are to prepare them to effectively handle their own conflicts, to help them understand the positive and negative consequences of the strategies they choose, and to know when they need us to intervene. Teaching young people effective conflict resolution strategies goes a long way in preparing them to handle any situation they may face. *(Liz Freidman is Project Director of the Conflict Management in the Schools Project, Center for Conflict Resolution, Volunteer Counseling Service. She educates teachers and students in conflict resolution and peer mediation. She can be reached at 845-634-5729)*

Consider the Following "Pegs"

P ositivity	"We can resolve this together. Let's talk privately. How can I help?"
E ncourage Discussion	"Nobody has all the answers. How do you see things? This is how I see them. Maybe we can find an answer that will satisfy both of us."
G ive Time and Effort	"Let's turn off the TV. This is important. I'll make my phone call later. I really do want to listen to you."
S ay, "I Love You"	

Communication pegs.
Little things. Strong results.

Conflict Resolution By Janet O'Shea, CSW

The Clarkstown School District is incorporating conflict resolution programs in each of its schools. Programs will reach all students by the end of next year. Concepts are introduced in class and reinforced by teachers and administration. Though conflict resolution programs are a good way to introduce problem solving skills, below are some suggestions to help out them to use at home.

Develop the habit of using "I" statements rather than "You" statements. Instead of placing blame, talk about how the situation makes you feel and what you need to feel better. If your children are struggling with a situation, encourage them to think of as many solutions as possible. Help them think through each one and its consequences before choosing one. Remember, what you think they need and what they think they need to solve a certain problem, may differ.

They may need room to work it out their own way. Encourage children to problem solve with family issues. These may be as small as siblings arguing over the front seat or more serious emotional issues. This aids them working out solutions among themselves where everyone is satisfied with the outcome.

Is your child feeling isolated? Arrange play dates or start a club that other kids may want to join. It gives them a chance to practice problem solving skills outside the family.

Janet O'Shea, CSW is a student assistance counselor in the Clarkstown School District.

How Parents Can Help Their Children Resolve Conflict **Communication is Key**

An important way parents can help their children resolve conflict is by modeling the process of dealing with conflict. Children learn how to handle conflict by experiencing how others handle conflict with them, and by observing how important people in their lives handle conflict. Ways of helping children with their problems include learning non-violent and creative methods of solving problems and putting those methods into daily practice at home. These include working together to find solutions. Start from the place that there may be lots of ideas for solving a problem. Become "fluent" in finding many solutions. Have fun with the conflict. Don't see it as damaging but as a basic and constant part of daily life.



A problem solving method that is useful for many problems:

Define the problem.

Dealing with many problems at once can be confusing. We may not be certain what the problem is or whose it is. Clearly defining a problem helps us to come up with appropriate solutions.

Brainstorm. Allow time to imagine a variety of solutions. Don't discuss or judge them during the brainstorming but generate ideas and "piggyback" on other ideas.

Choose a Solution. This might take some discussion. Be open to listening. We can become better listeners by practicing paraphrasing and active listening. This means we try to listen for feelings and encourage the other person to say more by using a non-judgmental tone.

Implement the Solution. Decide who, what, when, and how in carrying it out.

Evaluate how the solution went. Do this at a later date. Set a time to see how things are going.

Become informed. Parents can learn about conflict resolution by attending parent workshops and by reading. For a reading list and more information, contact: Children's Creative Response to Conflict Box 271, 571 North Broadway, Nyack, N.Y. 10960 or call 845-353-1796

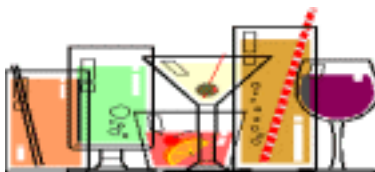


"What Else?"

Does resolving conflict with young people mean giving up parental authority?

Part of responsible parenting is setting limits. Some things are non-negotiable, especially if they put a child in danger. For example, teens are not allowed to drink alcoholic beverages. And it is reasonable to disallow children from attending unsupervised events. Kids may beg the issue, "But everyone will be there" and express negative feelings, "This is so unfair!" They may also view limits as parental distrust. These feelings can be acknowledged in a firm, loving and caring way: "I hear you. I trust you. You're hurt and angry that you can't go to the party. I know how much you want to go. And I'm sorry you're upset. But, with no adult supervision, things can get out of hand and interfere with your safety. And I won't risk that"

Binge Drinking & Alcohol Poisoning



Binge drinking is the act of drinking four or more drinks (for females) or five or more (for males) in a row in one sitting. It is neither social drinking nor an adolescent "rite of passage".

Binge drinking increases the risk

of injury and illness when combined with other high-risk behaviors and other drug use. And it is the primary cause of alcohol poisoning, a state of acute intoxication. Alcohol is oxidized by the body at the rate of about one ounce (one drink) per hour. When young people binge drink, they consume very large doses of alcohol in a short time. This leads to rapid and steep increase in blood alcohol level which can lead to unconsciousness, coma, and respiratory shut-down. Left untreated, alcohol poisoning can lead to death in a short period of time. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning and knowing what to do to help the victim can save his or her life.

...What to Do!!

- 1. Call 911** Do not second-guess how sick the person is. Better to be safe than sorry...or dead wrong.
- 2. Stay** with victim.
- 3. Make sure** the victim doesn't choke on his or her own vomit. Turn the victims on his or her side and be prepared to clear the mouth and airway of vomit.
- 4. Do not let** the victim "sleep it off". He or she may never wake up.
- 5. Tell** the emergency medical personnel that it was an alcohol overdose.
- 6. Be specific** about how much the victim drank, what he or she drank, as well as the signs and symptoms the victim has exhibited.
- 7. Each moment** you waste before calling 911 increases the chances of death for the victim.
- 8. Don't think about the legal consequences** of alcohol poisoning. Your child's/friend's life is at stake.



...Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning

- Cold, clammy, bluish skin
- Breathing slowly - fewer than 8 breaths per minute or 10 seconds between breathing
- Incoherent speech
- Passing out or semi-conscious
- Vomiting or vomiting while sleeping
- Person has consumed large quantities of alcohol (beer, wine, or liquor) in a short span of time

Adult Liability for Providing Alcohol to Minors

by Judge Victor Alfieri, Jr. Clarkstown Town Justice



The recent P.R.I.D.E. survey in Rockland disclosed an alarming use of alcoholic beverages among teenagers.

We must all do our part in curtailing use of alcohol by under-aged persons. Adults should be aware of criminal and civil liabilities for furnishing alcohol beverages to minors.

Gatherings where alcohol is available are attended by

minors each weekend. Some parents feel that underage drinking is a "right of passage" and that it is safer to allow a party to take place on their premises so that they may supervise the use of alcohol by their minor children.

Such feelings of "safety" may ease their state of mind, but the adult's criminal and civil responsibility is in no way lessened by having the party on their premises. After a minor partygoer leaves the "supervised" party, that minor may be operating a motor vehicle. Alcohol blocks the messages going to the brain and alters perception, emotion, vision, hearing, and coordination. Approximately 6,000 young people die annually in incidents linked to alcohol. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people. Although young people, aged 17 to 23 comprise only 10% of the population, they are involved in 20% of the traffic crashes.

An inexperienced driver who has consumed alcohol and operates a vehicle enhances the chances of an accident occurring because reflexes, response time, and thinking capacity are reduced. The host of a party where alcohol is served and the owner of the vehicle are jointly liable for injuries and damages. The most effective way to curtail underage drinking and the operation of a motor vehicle by an impaired minor is for parents to take action.



Always ask your minor child about the party they plan to attend and call the host parent. Do they plan to supervise it and prevent

consumption of alcohol beverages? Our children are our most precious resources. As one would take prudent action to protect one's assets, parents should, for stronger reasons, act to protect their children. Consumption of alcohol by minors is not a "right of passage". It is a criminal event, the results of which can be devastating.

Judge Alfieri is a member of the Clarkstown Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking. The Coalition offers speakers to address community groups on the issue of underage drinking which include a judge, a police officer and a school administrator. To arrange for a speaker, contact Sharon Hittman at 845-358-6468

...In what serious incidents has alcohol played a part?

Murders	60%
Death by House Fire	50%
Drowning	45%
Fatal Automobile Crashes	44%
Suicide	36%
Child Abuse	30%

Data from 9th special report to Congress on Alcohol & Health - 1997.
Submitted by Isabel Burk, M.S. CHES

...How are alcohol and marijuana use related to alcohol poisoning?

The use of alcohol with marijuana prevents the alcohol from being expelled from the body. Vomiting is one way the body rids itself of alcohol when a person drinks too much. Marijuana is a chemical substance which reduces the urge to vomit, causing blood alcohol levels to dangerously increase., increasing risk of alcohol poisoning and death.

Teenage Parties - Tips



Whether your teen is giving the party or going to one, there are some things that you can do to ensure your child's safety.

When giving parties:

- 1. Plan parties** in advance and set a time limit. Always know the guest list. Knowing who is invited can prevent "open party" situations. Set definite starting and ending times. Consider daytime parties. Plan specific activities such as swimming, skating, renting movies, etc.
- 2. Agree to rules ahead of time.** These might include:
 - no alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
 - no leaving then returning to the party
 - no gate crashers allowed
 - leave lights on at all times
 - some rooms in the house are off limits
- 3. Know your responsibilities.** Be aware of what is going on. It is illegal to serve drugs, including alcohol, to minors
- 4. Invite other parents** or couples to attend. This provides you with adult company. Other adults can help with problems that arise during the long evening. Invite the parents of your child's friends into your home to meet you.

When going to parties:

- 1. Call the host.** Before you give consent for your child to attend a party, make sure of the basic rules (such as no alcohol will be allowed and that there will be parental supervision). Know where your child is going and with whom. When dropping off your teen at a party, make sure your child is safely inside the house before you leave.
- 2. Make it easy for your teen** to leave the party. Adult availability is important if there is drinking or drug use or any reason that your teen desires to leave. Make arrangements that your child can call you or another designated adult who will come. Urge your child to never ride home with any driver who has been drinking or using drugs. Let your child know that restrictions or punishments are unnecessary for a call that alerts you that things are getting out of hand.
- 3. Be up to greet your child** when he or she comes home from a party. Chat with your child. See how things went.

Top 10 Reasons Teens Can't Drink Alcohol Compared with an adult, a teen...

- 10 Has not achieved full growth of body
- 9 Has organs that are not fully mature or efficient
- 8 Has less blood volume to dilute alcohol
- 7 Lacks life experience to compensate for alcohol's effects
- 6 May not see long-term consequences
- 5 Has lower tolerance for alcohol
- 4 May act on impulse
- 3 May emulate TV, media
- 2 Is more easily influenced by peers
- 1 Is not legally allowed to drink

(Submitted by Isabel Burk, M.S. CHES. Director, The Health Network)

Networking Resources

The Daytop Parents Educating Parents Program (DPEP) teaches parents to recognize warning signs of a drug problem so they can intervene early to prevent addiction. DPEP provides speakers for schools, religious, and community organizations. Programs can be adjusted to fit audience needs in content and duration. Contact 845- 353-2730 for more information. **The Rockland Alliance for Prevention (RAP)** was formed in 1990 as a grassroots drug abuse prevention coalition. RAP works with local governments and views substance abuse among youth and families as a significant local program steadily wearing at families and communities. Among the problems related to substance abuse are addiction, illness, accidents, violence, unwanted teenage pregnancy, school failure or dropout, joblessness, and homelessness. RAP has responded by promoting efforts which foster healthy, safe, and productive lives for all Rockland County residents. Efforts include disseminating information on the risks of all forms of drug abuse, developing and teaching life and social skills as alternatives to drug use, identifying problems early and making appropriate referrals, promoting changes in community standards and attitudes. RAP develops and implements educational, media campaigns, and resource materials to reach diverse communities.

Submit articles and information to:
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