

## Notes from Red Ribbon Week Drug Awareness Night, Oct 2007

### Part I. The New Face of Drugs

- \* Drugs have changed considerably in the last few years
- \* Old world = syringes, dirty, dangerous. New world = flavored pills that look like candy
- \* We are used to taking pills to “feel better” - new drugs capitalize on this mentality
- \* Used to take about 10 years to develop & market a new drug
- \* Now, can develop in 48 hrs, have on streets in 1 month
- \* Hard for law enforcement agencies and others to keep up, issue timely warnings

#### Marijuana:

- \* Has changed in the last 6 months
- \* More deceptive than ever:
  - \* Odorless versions can be used right under someone’s nose
  - \* Gumball version looks like candy - potent enough to kill a 7 year old

#### Methamphetamine (the Devil’s Drug):

- \* Incredibly dangerous - immediately begins eating at brain and body
- \* 90% addiction rate - if 10 adults take, 9 will be addicted *on first try*
- \* Barriers have decreased - used to be perceived as dirty/risky, now available in flavored pill form
- \* Users don’t feel costs at first, don’t change appearance (can look like a beauty queen & be using)
- \* New forms: Yaba = looks like candy, Strawberry Quick looks like Kool-Aid
- \* Young women take to lose weight
- \* Goes after dopamine

#### Ecstasy (the Love Drug):

- \* Makes you “happy” and “spiritual” (all the feelings they tell you should have in church - often find scriptures at drug busts for Ecstasy)
- \* Wiped out the success of the ward on drugs
- \* Looks like pills
- \* One of the most popular drugs in local youth culture
- \* Contains a form of meth
- \* Often offered in place we consider “safe” (church, school buses)
- \* Mimics effects of serotonin (natural feelings of love), but destroys ability to feel real love

#### Prescription Pain Killers (the true epidemic):

- \* Oxycontin, Lortab, Percoset - pain pills. Try to avoid using if at all possible.
- \* Kids have a very high chance of being offered pain pills
- \* Coricidin (cough medicine) commonly abused, as are sudafed, dramamine, accu clean

## Part II. Prevention/Interventions

- \* How do you protect? Go after roots (addiction is the fruit, but what is the root?)
- \* The root is: People take drugs because they feel bad about something and want to escape to something that feels good. Something is missing, they have a hole, and try to fill it with drugs.
- \* Risk factors: family conflict, low commitment to school, depression, rebellion, perceived easy availability, unrealistic understanding of danger
- \* Protective factors: excel at something you love, good communications skills, involvement in school, family involvement, parental support & involvement
- \* Additional protective factors: values, guidelines, expectations, togetherness, interaction, connection, bonding, support
- \* **Focus on increasing protective factors:**
  - \* One study found that if you if you increase protective factors from 3 to 6, drug-free increases from 32% to 86%
  - \* Protective factors make you feel good in *real* ways, help to fill the hole
- \* Parents are the most potent and underutilized factor in preventing substance abuse
- \* TALK - openly, frequently, and credibly (need to understand kids' world). One study found that talking gave a 750% increase in protection.
- \* If kids can make it to 11<sup>th</sup> grade without ever trying alcohol or drugs, they are on a good path
- \* **Recommended practices:**
  - \* Family Activity Night at least once a month skyrockets protective factors
  - \* One on One parent/child talks at least once a quarter (talk about what you've learned about the child, share positive things, talk about drugs or other life-critical issues)
  - \* Have family dinner together as often as possible