

DRUG ADDICTION AMONGST THE YOUTH

Kobus Pienaar
(CAD ORGANISER)

Signs of drug use:

Red eyes, stains on hands, poor appetite, weight loss, sloppy appearance, poor hygiene, poor school performance, strange behavior, rebellion, sleep strange times, disappear without reason, mysterious behavior, lying, new friends, locking up room and wardrobe, stealing, poor health, drug tools, smelling strangely, aggression, anger, argumentative, disobedient, suicidal, reject structure.

Reasons for drug use:

Experimentation, curiosity, peer pressure, excitement, boredom, rebellion, draw attention, poor self-esteem, insecurity, poor rolemodels, pressure to succeed, dependent personality, family problems, advertisements, television, drugs as medicine, escape, self-pity, abuse, pain, hopelessness.

What parents should avoid:

Panic, threats, whining, blackmail, false accusations, hysterical or neurotic response, antagonism, losing temper, ignore or accept bad behavior, humiliated child, labeling, fear, forced promises or undertakings, expecting immediate healing, overprotection, make excuses, deny or ignore problem, forced treatment, lecture or sermon, blame, self-blame, chase child away, hidings.

What parents should do:

Always stay calm, help child to beat illness, parents must unite, gather evidence, confront calmly and lovingly, explain choices and consequences, putting pressure on child, help child to make correct decision, taking away privileges, prohibit unacceptable behaviour, enter into contract, implement consequences, find support, child must follow house rules if he wants to stay there, keep communication channels open, ask open questions, maintain confidentiality, focus on positive aspects in child, build self-esteem, spend quality time with child, talk about addiction, daily family meetings, do problem solving together as a family, teaching child to say "no", avoid sarcasm, show respect, show love, give child duties in home and garden, attend church together, family meals, read and do homework on drugs, discuss house rules regularly, meet child's friends, know where your child is, set a good example with alcohol or smoking, do fun things together, attend school functions, do room inspection as part of house rules, praise good behaviour, show love physically by kisses and hugs, teach child new skills step by step.

Negative parental feelings:

Guilt, self-blame, denial, embarrassment, shame, helplessness, anger, hopelessness, loneliness, despair, fear, anxiety, depression, hatred, frustration, jealousy, fatigue, insomnia, illness.

Aftercare and support:

Child and parents need support and counseling, love, understanding, empathy, healing, recovery, growth, warmth, interest, enjoying the sober life, establish new lifestyle, learn new skills and hobbies, make new friends, spiritual growth, handle

distrust and condemnation, skepticism, avoid loneliness.

Projects Youth Group:

Theatrical performance, debate, sports, gym, excursions, camps, tours, dance party, chess, concert, hobbies, outreach to addicts, singing, coffee bar, games night, movie or video, potjiekos competition, fundraising, orchestra, internet cafe, soup kitchen, testimonies, visits to schools or children`s homes, attend church together.

High-risk children:

Child whose parent is addict or abuser, unstable family, little communication in family, parents with little time or with little patience for children, parents arguing and fighting, family without love or care, physical or emotional or sexual abuse, child feels afraid, guilt, blame others, feel depressed, nervous, tense, raw pain, risky behaviour, lonely, no friends, learning problem behaviour, no recreational activities, boredom, too much spending money, easy access to drugs, gangsterism, easily influenced, delinquent, unemployed, not in school, no house rules.

Factors that contribute to decision to stop substance use:

1. Experience more damage and pain by using substances
2. User carries consequences of using himself, eg. hungry, dirty, prison
3. Consequences of using drugs become too much to handle

Tough Love:

Stop trying to save the child, child must carry the consequences, do not help the child or make it easy and possible to use substances, child must look for work, find accommodation, pay fines or bail, do tasks around the house, do homework, be charged for theft, violence or crime.

How to break addiction:

Believe that you can be normal without substances, decide to quit, go through physical detoxification under medical supervision, handle psychological craving by talking to others and perseverance, withdrawal is a sign of recovery, concentrate only on today or the next hour, focus on next 10 or 30 minutes, use strenght and experience of successful and healthy addicts at aftercare group like CAD, stay away from temptations, mingle with winners, think clean and sober, remind yourself of bad times caused by drugs, avoid "HALT" (hunger, anger, loneliness, tiredness), eat healthy food, get exercise, sleep enough, treat yourself as a reward for success, be alert, avoid risks, be honest, go for professional help or rehabilitation center like Ramot if you cannot quit, do a proper aftercare programme, accept addiction as a disease and that you cannot use alcohol or drugs socially, enjoy the new life.