

Some Thoughts, Ideas, and Observations on Drug Usage among Young People

Numerous resources suggests that marijuana use among young people is becoming very common. It might even be the case that more teens use / experiment with marijuana than they do with tobacco, and maybe even alcohol.

What to Look for

Most people who work with teens can identify regular and heavy users of marijuana by changes to facial features, such as bags under the eyes, bloodshot eyes, and an ashen or pale complexion.

Contrary to popular messages, the effects of regular and heavy marijuana use is significant. Heavy and regular users become irritable, edgy and even angry. Often they sleep for very long periods of time.

Aside from some obvious drug paraphernalia – pipes, rolling papers, baggies, small scissors, etc, - teens who use marijuana regularly will likely have the following less obvious items on their person (in their backpacks, in their cars, etc.)

- Bottles of Visine
- Bottles of Cologne or Perfume
- Multiple Lighters
- Bottles of air fresheners such as febreze
- Dryer / fabric softener sheets.

Suggestions

Parents are encouraged as much as possible to:

- Have an “open phone” policy with their kids especially if parents are paying the phone bills.
- Have a reasonable “open door” policy with their kids regarding rooms and cars.
- Discourage young people from wearing “pot culture” clothing (anything red, yellow and green, or bearing images of marijuana leaves) to school.

Talking Points

Conversations around marijuana use can be challenging given the very mixed messages about the matter from politicians, the media etc. Here is a useful perspective:

Most people, teens included, agree that anyone drinking liquor before school or during their lunch break likely has a drinking problem. People who keep open liquor in their cars likely have a drinking problem. It is exactly the same with marijuana use. People who smoke marijuana before school / work or while at school / work have a problem with marijuana.

Our school gives the message that regardless of what happens regarding marijuana laws, it will never be okay to be in possession or under the influence of marijuana at school or work, any more than it will be okay to be drunk at school or work.